

**A Critical Analysis of Public Perceptions on Opinion Polls:
A Case of the 2013 General Election**

By:

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the degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Communication Studies at the School of
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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

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Signature: Date:

This thesis has been submitted for the award of a Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Dr James CeaserOdhiamboOranga

Signature: Date.....

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family for their encouragement and support. To my parents, Geoffrey Ndung'uTheuri and Eunice Wanjiru Kamau, who have always taught me to be humble. In addition, this thesis is also dedicated to my late brother, John Kamau and my sisters, Jacqueline and Rachael Theuri.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to critically analyse public perception on Kenyan opinion polls, with a focus on the 2013 general election. The aim of this study was to recommend how to improve the future practice of political opinion polling in Kenya by evaluating public attitudes. The study therefore had four specific objectives. That is, to establish levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls, to test what pollsters are regarded as more or less credible by the public, to determine what factors influence the public perception of Kenyan opinion polls and to gather public suggestions on how to improve opinion polling in the country. When these four objectives were turned into questions, they comprised the queries that would guide the study.

This study used a descriptive research design. The target population comprised 14, 339, 337 million of the actual voters who participated in the 2013 general election. These comprised the Kenyan voting public aged 18 years and above. The final sample of 1, 500 Kenyans comprised voters who were selected through a purposive non-probability sampling, at a margin error of + three per cent, at a 95 percent confidence level. The study achieved a response rate of 67.4 percent or 1,011 Kenyan voters. Data was generated through primary and secondary research. It was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Scientists (SPSS) software, using frequency and cross-tabulation distributions. It was then presented using tables and bar charts and analyzed with frequencies and percentages to show the relationship between the variables.

The study revealed that majority of the Kenyan voting public are not confident about public opinion polls. Hence, they perceive them as not credible due to a variety of reasons. For instance, owing to the negative effect of their results, lack of knowledge of what they entail, and viewing them as manipulation tools used by politicians and media. The study also revealed that opinion polls only determine voting behavior if cited by media and the politicians. The Kenyan public, however, are optimistic about opinion polls as they made recommendations about how they can be improved. For instance, pollsters can embark on an awareness campaign to educate the public about polls in terms of methodology and their importance as a voice of the common person. Furthermore, the public felt that since the media influences mass agenda during elections, pollsters can train them on how to report in terms of: data collection methods, sampling error, type of sample used, respondent selection, question wording and weighting.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAPOR	American Association for Public Opinion Research
ABC	American Broadcasting Corporation
AD	<i>anno domini</i>
CNN	Cable News Network
CORD	Coalition for Reform and Democracy
DN	Daily Nation newspaper
DP	Democratic Party
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
ESPOMAR	European Society for Public Opinion and Marketing Research
FM	Frequency Modulation
ICC	International Criminal Court
IHRC	Infotrac Harris Research and Consulting
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KTN	Kenya Television Network
MP	Member of Parliament
NARC	National Alliance Rainbow Coalition
NARC-K	National Alliance Rainbow Coalition-Kenya party
NEP	National Election Pool
NMG	Nation Media Group
NTV	Nation Television
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement

Opinion '99	Opinion '99
PNU	Party of National Unity
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SPEC	Social, Political, Economic and Cultural issues
SPR	Strategic Public Relations
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
TNS-RMS	Taylor Nelson Sofres Research and Marketing Services
TV	Television
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US	United States
WAPOR	World Association for Public Opinion Research
WSJ	Wall Street Journal

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, definition and examples of opinion polls, historical perspectives of opinion polls both globally and in Kenya, the link between opinion polls, media and public opinion, problem statement, study objectives, research questions, limitations and scope of the study, definition of key concepts used in the study and conclusion.

1.1. Background of Study

The term public opinion is an often misunderstood concept. For instance, there are over fifty definitions of the term (Childs, 1959). These definitions convey the different aspects of the opinion communication process. Monroe (1975, p.6), for instance, defines public opinion as the distribution of individual preferences within a population. This implies that public opinion is the sum of private opinions within a population on any particular issue. Key (1967, p.14) further defines it as “the opinions held by private persons that governments find it prudent to heed”. Bardes and Oldendick (2012) argue that public opinion is the aggregate views held by individual adults on matters of public interest. These three last definitions are consistent with the argument by Dahl (2005) that in a representative democracy, citizens should be allowed to exercise their freedom of expression on political matters, such as the criticism of regime officials, socio-economic order and prevailing ideology, without severe punishment from the state.

An analysis of all the above definitions reveals that public opinion constitutes the views of individual adults in the political communication process, such as elections. Therefore, it is the view of individual adults who can vote, normally aged 18 years and older, that matter in such instances. This is because government officials pay attention to such a group when they make policy on matters of public interest, which are those that are relevant to the public at any point in the political process, say before, during and after an election or referendum (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012). From these analyses, a working definition of public opinion for this paper can emerge. Public opinion is therefore, the aggregation of anonymously expressed opinions by adult individuals on matters of public interest.

1.1.1.What are Opinion Polls?

Various researchers have defined what an opinion poll is. For instance, Gawiser and Witt, (1994) define an opinion poll as a measurement of what the public thinks. It also refers to a collected set of replies to a question or set of questions by a small percentage of general public with the aim of gauging public opinion on a particular issue (Merriam-Webster, 2014). Opinion polls may further be defined as the scientific measurement of voter attitudes conducted by a public opinion polling firm (Huckshorn and Spencer, 1971).

From the three definitions above, various elements about what constitutes an opinion poll can be deduced. Polls assume that public opinion is the sum of adult individual responses on a given policy issue to a survey instrument used for data collection (Biggs and Helms, 2007). Each response is individual, every respondent counts the same as another, and the total responses comprise public opinion. Opinion polls discover ignorance and attitudes of the public, rather than

knowledge (Gallup and Rae, 1940). They are also scientific, only carried out based on the research design that a pollster has chosen based on his/her objectives. Therefore, surveys such as call-ins and push polls, are unscientific. For this study, an opinion poll can thus be defined a tool that measures the informed collected opinions of people aged 18 years and above with regard to a particular social, political or economic issue (s) based on given scientific methodology by a professional polling organisation.

1.1.2. Types of Opinion Polls

There are various types of opinion polls, which this study will mention in relation to the 2013 general election.

In-depth surveys are the most common type of polls. These surveys assess public opinion on one or more topics in depth to analyse change over time and the impact of events and strategy (Biggs and Helms, 2007). For instance, in Kenya, Infotruk Harris Research and Consulting (IHRC) carried out its own in-depth poll between March 11 and 12 2012, to test the reaction of Kenyans over the decision of the IEBC to settle on March 3, 2013 as the date of the first general election under the new constitution, a fact that had caused disagreement between some Kenyans who opted for December 2012 elections instead (IHRC, 2013).

Panel polls are the ones in which the researcher interviews the same people at two different points in time while asking the same question (Lake, 1987). This enables the researcher to make some assessments regarding changes in opinion, as well as determine some of the reasons for changes in opinion, as well as determine some of the reasons for the change. Panel polls often are used to assess the effectiveness of a public education campaign to influence opinion or

knowledge on an issue (Lake, 1987). A Kenyan example includes panel polls carried out by IHRC between April and May 2012. The aim was to establish the popularity of the six Kenyan presidential candidates and political parties. 42 percent of respondents rated presidential contender, RailaOdinga, as the most popular candidate in April 2012, while in May the same year only 35 percent did (The Star, 2012). While the results from the Supreme Court (2013) suggested that instead Uhuru Kenyatta was the most popular candidate with a 50.07 percent vote, Odinga's popularity rating in March 2013 had risen with a 43.28 percent rating.

A straw poll refers to a poll that tries to read the readers' collective minds by simply asking a large number of people the same question (Sidlow and Henschen, 2011). An example of this is local Kenyan television stations ask viewers at the start of prime time news to send their opinion about a given topic at the start of the broadcast and the results are polled at the end of the telecast. The question may be, "Should the government accept corruption?" Feedback is categorized as either yes or no.

An omnibus survey refers an opinion poll that is run weekly or monthly on a routine basis, with a nationally representative sample by one of the large opinion poll and market research companies (Rose, 1997). It is useful in a pilot opinion poll to test the validity of a questionnaire such as the accuracy of questions posed or if whether the characteristics of a sample reflect those of the population. For instance, Social Political Economic (SPEC) polls by IpsosSynovate carried out its own omnibus polls between November and December 2014. The aim was to test the change of opinion across a sample 2,500 Kenyan respondents, with regard to insecurity in the country and withdrawal of charges against President Kenyatta by the ICC (IpsosSynovate, 2015).

Benchmark polls: this refers to an opinion poll that provides an election campaign with information (Brox, 2009). For instance, the electoral strength of a candidate and that of his/her opponents, how the voters perceive the candidate and his/her opponents and demographics of the voters. It is therefore used at the onset of an election campaign's public opinion. They require many questions and a huge sample size. An example includes a January 2013 presidential popularity poll by IpsosSynovate conducted to establish the popularity of various Kenyan presidential candidates among voters prior to the 2013 general election (The Star, 2013). Findings report that 40 percent of the respondents preferred Odinga while 36 percent preferred Kenyatta. However, the election outcome revealed that Kenyatta was the popular candidate with a 50 percent vote over Odinga's 43 percent.

Trial heat or brushfire polls: these are polls that gauge how a candidate has fared in an election campaign compared to other candidates by other pollsters (Traugott and Lavraks, 2007). Unlike a benchmark poll, it employs a small size. For instance, in Kenya, Consumer Insight carried out trial heat polls between two televised debates held in February 12 and 25 2015 to address how the Kenyan voters assessed the presidential candidates strength on issues affecting the masses, such as devolution and insecurity. The sample size comprised only 328 Kenyans with access to television (Daily Nation, 2013).

A tracking poll is used to assess a rapidly changing trend occurring over a short period of time (Biggs and Helms, 2007). For instance, tracking polls by IpsosSynovate between January and February 2013 showed that none of the two leading candidates, Odinga and Kenyatta in the 2013 general election would win the election in the first round with a 50 plus one vote. Rather, there

would be a second round, whereby Raila with 46 percent lead would likely win over Kenyatta's 40 percent (Daily Nation, 2013). However, the actual results were different. In the first round, Kenyatta won the election with a 50 percent vote.

1.1.3. Global Perspective to Opinion Polls

The history of opinion polling dates back to the beginning of civilization (Herbst, 1995). Then, American and British governments conducted censuses from their populations. An opinion poll resembles a census, with the main difference is that while the latter surveys an entire population, polls are restricted to a representative sample from a target population (Herbst, 1995). The first documented case of a government census dates to 6 *anno domini* (AD), is when the biblical parents of Jesus Christ, Joseph and Mary, went to Bethlehem city, Palestine, to participate in a Roman census. In 1086, the first census of the British settlements occurred in the well-known Domesday Book (Herbst, 1995). Other government censuses occurred in the Italian cities of Florence and Venice during the Renaissance period in 15th century Europe, then later in the United States of America (USA) and Britain, in 1790 and 1801, respectively (Herbst, 1995).

The history of public opinion polling can be traced to the early 19th century (Atkin and Gaudino, 1984; Brettschneider, 2008). Straw polls were first used on July 1824, with coupons printed in newspapers to attract readership (Bradburn and Sudman, 1988). They were published in the *Harrisburg Pennsylvania*, showing presidential contender Andrew Jackson leading John Quincy Adams. The *Raleigh Star* newspaper later jumped on the bandwagon, whose poll had showed Jackson well ahead. The polls were right as Jackson won the 1824 American election in a landslide victory of 178 electoral college votes over Adams' 83 ones (Moon, 1999). Straw polls

were later published *New York Herald*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *St Louis Republic* and *Boston Globe* during presidential elections, thus making them important in the history of election polling (Smith, 1990, p.31; Robinson, 1932, pp. 47-51). However, their credibility fell in the 1936 election. *Literary Digest* used them to assess public opinion on such issues as bonuses for war veterans, prohibition and tax reduction (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012).

The criticism of polls used in the early 19th century is that they were unscientific. For instance, the straw polls represented the members' biased sentiments, often taken in social gatherings such as public meetings (Teer and Spence, 1973). Bradburn and Sudman (1998) are much more dismissive of the newspaper straw polls throughout the 19th and 20th centuries because they published ballot forms as part of the publication, and invited readers to fill them in. Thus, no scientific methodology was applied to identify a target population, while others reflected researcher bias in the anticipated responses. Even where straw votes were taken by supposedly independent canvassers at election meetings, polls from different locations were simply added up without any real concern for potential biases in the sample. Though haphazard, these early polls are similar to those conducted today because they influenced politicians to manipulate the public (Teer and Spence, 1973). At the end of the 19th century, the *Columbus Despatch* newspaper was the first to introduce scientific polling in its surveys through sampling (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012). It trained journalists, sending each of them into designated areas of a particular city to collect data from a representative sample. In the American presidential election of 1904, the *New York Herald* newspaper used a sample size of 30,000 registered voters in the state, with the aim of measuring local opinion about the election (Moon, 1999).

In the 20th century, numerous newspapers, such as the *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Examiner*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, and *New York Herald* conducted polls on political candidates and on political issues (Robinson, 1932). By 1932, there were various local or regional media-polling organizations in the USA (Robinson, 1932). Apart from newspapers, other media forms such as magazines, took an interest in public opinion polls. For instance, in 1912 the *Farm Journal* became the first magazine in the USA to undertake its own poll (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012). However, it was the *Literary Digest* (henceforth to be referred to as *Digest*) magazine that became a prominent player in political opinion polling in 1916. It continued to make successful predictions and acquired a reputation as a market leader of public opinion polls. Besides trying to predict the election winner, the *Digest* surveys, like those of today, also included questions to measure public opinion on topics of the day (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012).

The *Digest* polls were based entirely on postal ballots, rather than the *ad hoc*, interview-anyone approach of the early 19th century straw votes (Converse, 1987). This implies that the *Digest* had at least grasped the basic principles of sampling, just like *Columbus Despatch* before it. A sample was selected from available population frames, such as lists of telephone subscribers and records of car registrations, with responses mailed through postal ballots. This meant that the *Digest* surveys had high response rates because the postal technique was cheaper compared to using research assistants. It also meant that the sampling frames used were large. Consequently, during the 1936 presidential election 1936, the number of postal ballots sent out had risen to around 10 million, and the response rates had returned to well over 2 million (Converse, 1987), thus giving the *Digest* polls credibility.

Besides these attributes, the *Digest* polls earned respect due to their ability to predict the winner of the presidential races. Fuelled by this success, the *Digest* slightly diversified and conducted large-scale postal surveys on attitudes towards the Prohibition Laws from 1922, 1930 and 1932 (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012). The success of *Digest* was in using large samples, whose results could accurately be generalized to their target population. However, researchers at that time had come to discover that smaller but representative samples could also provide accurate results (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012).

Early statisticians who drew attention to the importance of systematic and objective collection of data include in the 20th century through the interview survey include Charles Booth, Henry Mayhew and Owen Chadwick. For instance, Englishman Booth, introduced methods of data collection and analysis that became known as the “English social survey” (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012; Converse, 1987). The application of such methods as fieldwork, examination of detailed cases, quantification and organization of the data by individual records, were later adopted in the USA during the study of agricultural conditions and practices in the first quarter of the 20th century (Converse, 1987, pp. 21-26). British economist Arthur Bowley introduced sampling methods that have formed the basis of almost all social surveys until the latter half of the 20th century. From Britain, sampling techniques crossed to the USA, where they were applied in market research in 1911 by such firms as the Business Bourse, Curtis Publishing Company, the Harvard Business School and the Kellogg Company (Converse, 1987, p. 202).

In the USA, journalist Walter Lippmann was the pioneer of public opinion research. In his book, *Public Opinion* (1922), he argued that the media plays a key role in determining people’s thoughts and actions, since they were often ignorant of public affairs. Lippmann thus closed the

gap between media and opinion polls by arguing that media coverage of opinion polls is enough to manipulate to influence the ignorant masses into voting for a presidential candidate.

In the 1920s, however, surveys were often poorly organized. This is because polling was done by untrained journalists, who often interviewed anyone they found (snow-balling sampling), or by asking interviewees to mail the responses to the newspaper concerned (Robinson, 1932). The population would comprise rich people, like magazine subscribers, auto-mobile owners and selected registered voters. It was not, however, not until the invention of scientific polling that survey coverage began to take its present shape. Before the 1936 election, the media and pollsters relied on straw polls (Holst, 2009). The 1936 US presidential elections changed this. Before that, the American magazine *Literary Digest* was the most prominent medium in terms of doing straw polls and predicting the election outcome. Whereas between 1916 and 1932, the magazine had accurately predicted the election, in 1936, it failed. Pioneer pollster and journalism professor George Gallup employed scientific sample surveys instead of straw polls to show that Democratic candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt could win the election with a 62 percent lead over the *Digest*'s candidate Republic Alfred Landon, who trailed with 57 percent (Gallup and Rae, 1940). Analysts concluded that unlike *Digest* which had relied on a large but unrepresentative sample to make its prediction, Gallup had instead relied on a representative sample with fewer respondents (Holst, 2009). Besides Gallup, other pollsters who used scientific polling to accurately predict a Roosevelt victory include Archibald Crossley and Elmo Roper.

During this period, government agencies in the USA greatly expanded their use of surveys, with the Department of Agriculture being a prominent user. It surveyed farmers on their attitudes about the Department's efforts on farm programs (Bradburn and Sudman, 1988) through

probability samples and standardized interviewing techniques. Soon, other government agencies, adopted survey techniques during World War II (Converse, 1987), where the American defense had a unit that conducted surveys for other federal agencies that needed survey data, such as the Office of Facts and Figures and the State Department. Even after the war, the government continued commissioning and conducting surveys (Alpert, 1952). This led to advances in the surveying field, such as sampling, questionnaire design and data collection, which were adopted into the modern public opinion research (Converse, 1987). The polling industry flourished as institutes of survey research and public opinion were opened up in universities and publications were launched such as *Public Opinion in a Democracy* (Hadley, 1947).

While the 1936 American presidential election presented a breakthrough for advocates of the scientific approach to data collection, the 1948 election provided a sharp reminder of its limitation. For instance, though pollsters Paul Cherington, Gallup, Roper and Crossley predicted a return victory for Republican candidate New York Governor Thomas Dewey over Democrat candidate President Harry Truman, with a 44.2 percent lead and a 5.0 to 15.1 percent margin of error (Dautrich and Yalof, 2011). Prominent magazines such as *Fortune* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune* wrongly hopped on this train of thought because these pollsters had successfully predicted the 1936 election (Dautrich and Yalof, 2011). So confident of this prediction was the *Tribune*, that on Election Day, its headline read “Dewey Defeats Truman”. However, Truman won the election, much to the dismay of these magazines and pollsters (Dautrich and Yalof, 2011). In a 1949 report to the Social Science Research Council, a committee on pre-election polls noted that pollsters had failed to examine their data carefully during the 1948 pre-election period and did not spend enough effort considering the behaviour of undecided voters who shifted their in opinion towards Truman at least two weeks before Election Day on October 29,

1948 errors in sampling and interviewing (Dautrich and Yalof, 2011). Other criticisms levelled against pollsters were using faulty methodologies based on ‘*ad hoc*’ research designs as well as errors in sampling and interviewing (Dautrich and Yalof, 2011; Crespi, 1989). Thus, pollsters had to improve their methodology in future election polls (Herbst, 1995).

1.1.4. Perspectives on Opinion Polls in Kenya

In Kenya, public opinion polling dates back to the post-independence era (Kiage and Owino, 2010). However, due to censorship, they were often carried by international donors such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID), credibility in the Kenyan polling industry came in 2005. The pioneer of public opinion polling IpsosSynovate (formerly Steadman), made a correct prediction prior to the 2005 constitutional referendum. It predicted that 43% of the voters would support the draft constitution. Consequently, 57% of the actual voters rejected it (Mutahi, 2008). This implies that public opinion polls can lead to voting behaviour. Other political pollsters include Consumer Insight, Infotrac Harris Research and Consulting (IHRC), Smart Octopus Polling Company, Strategic Research and Communications and Taylor Nelson Sofres-Research and Marketing Services (TNS-RMS). According to Mutiga (2011), “the Kenyan polling industry is active and one of the most vibrant in sub-Saharan Africa”.

In Kenya, current appellate judge (formerly Nominated Member of Parliament [MP]) NjokiNdung'u used public opinion polls to lobby for the Sexual Offences Bill in the 9th Parliament. Eventually, the Bill was passed with only minimal adjustments and became the

Sexual Offences Act (IpsosSynovate, not dated). This suggests that politicians can use public opinion polls to influence public policy.

Polls also influence the undecided voters to make a voting decision. Thus, public opinion polls can also influence voting behaviour. In Kenya, though political public opinion polling had existed during the post-independence era (Kiage-Owino, 2010), it was in the 1997 general election that polling was used to predict an election outcome. However, in the 2002 general election year, the autocratic political climate of the Kenya African National Union party (KANU) government era prevented the publication of opinion polls due to censorship of freedom of expression (Mutahi, 2008). Thus, the government promoted a culture of silence where people could not express their opinions. After 2002, with the increased democratic space that came with the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government, political opinions were polled from the general public to provide public opinion on social, political, economic and cultural (SPEC) topical issues. This suggests that a democratic, not an autocratic political system, is favourable to public opinion polling.

In many democracies, the ultimate expression of public opinion occurs when the citizens are called to cast a ballot in an election (Zaller, 1992). An election is an instrument in which the citizens exercise their sovereign will by evaluating regimes, punishing or rewarding political leadership on the basis of performance and policy (Kanyinga et al., 2010). Though Kenya has had regular elections since the advent of democracy in 1992, the country had its first general poll under a new constitution on March 4, 2013, which experts viewed as signifying a new beginning in terms of socio-economic and political rights (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). These were

factors that had been missing since independence in 1963. The constitution, for instance, offered Kenyans a devolved government, whereby they would be able to vote for six types of leaders at both the county and national level. These leaders are the president, senators, governors, Members of Parliament (MPs), county ward and women's representatives. Among the political party coalitions that had declared their interest in these six-tiered leadership positions were the Coalition for Reform and Democracy (Cord) [RailaOdinga], Jubilee [Uhuru Kenyatta], Amani [MusaliaMudavadi], National Rainbow Coalition of Kenya (Narc-K) [Martha Karua], Alliance for Real Change (Mohammed Dida) and Safina (Paul Muite).

However, polls from Kenyan pollsters revealed that it was mainly a horse-race between two presidential candidates, Odinga and Kenyatta, with Mudavadi trailing in a distant third position (Siringi, 2013). The results of a public opinion poll by pollster IHRC published on February 20, 2013 revealed that 46 percent of the voters would back Odinga; Kenyatta would trail behind with a 44.5 percent of the vote, while Mudavadi had 4.3 percent, in the first round. However, the results of the election were different, resulting in the underdog effect: out of the 14, 337,399 Kenyans who voted, 6,173,433 decided that Kenyatta had won, while Raila lost with 5,340,546 valid votes (Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission [IEBC], 2013). Even after an election petition filed by Odinga disputing the results, the Supreme Court as the arbiter, maintained that Kenyatta was validly elected with a 50.07 percent lead over Raila's 43.31 percent (Supreme Court, 2013). This implies that just like in the 2007 election, IHRC might have erred in the 2013 one due to a bad sample. It also implies that Kenyan polls are not used for strategic voting. It also implies that in the 2018 general election, the Kenyan public will be more

wary of opinion polls since in 2013 and 2007 they were biased towards the wrong presidential contender.

All Kenyan pollsters either poll public opinion independently or for their clients, such as the media, lobby groups, political parties, government agencies, international organizations or individuals. For instance, between December and February 2013, the *Daily Nation* and Standard newspapers and Citizen Television (TV) commissioned Consumer Insight, IHRC, IpsosSynovate, Strategic Research and Communications to carry out benchmark and trial heat polls before the March 4 2013 general election. If the pollster independently carries out its own poll on matters of public interest, they make this public through the media. On the other hand, if it is on behalf of a client, the pollster delivers it personally to them (Opanga, 2010). All Kenyan pollsters are regulated by the Publications of Electoral Opinion Poll Act Number 39 of 2012. It regulates the disclosure of opinion poll results with regard to methodology, sponsorship and publication in the media. Before it, pollsters complied with the Statistics Act, whereby Sections 18 and 19 required that polling firms should submit their plans to conduct a survey and the ensuing results to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KENBS) (Mutahi, 2008).

1.1.5. The Linkage between Opinion Polls, the Media and Public Opinion

The media is a key moulder of public opinion (Traugott, 2009). This occurs when journalists are trying to report on public affairs. In opinion polling, for instance, journalists use the surveys to make news about public opinion. By publishing political opinion polls and interpreting the findings, the media may simultaneously influence citizens' attitudes on political matters and put pressure on political actors to deal with public policy to fulfill the expectations of citizens (Hotlz-Bacha, 2012). For the public, opinion polls are a way of learning the truth about

politicians in order to remove myths that might otherwise mislead public discourse. In addition, the media discussion of polls in elections and constitutional referenda can be positive because the public enjoys the competitive aspect of who is ahead of whom (Genovese and Straub, 2004). Consequently, public opinion polls stimulate and intensify their interest in such democratic processes. Political communication studies show that journalists are not always trained in interpreting public opinion poll results. For instance, in a study done on newspaper coverage of opinion polls in Hong Kong after the city handover to China from the United Kingdom in 1997, findings suggest that while opinion polls indicated that the Chinese public favoured a change of government, the media was more interested in reporting about the popularity rating of different political candidates (Lee, 2006b). This suggests that uneducated media audiences may be misled into believing that such results are factual.

It is against this context that global news media and their audiences are so fascinated with public opinion polls, especially during election campaigns. McCombs (2004) argues that the main sources of the public's information are the mass media and political elites whose views are reported in them. But are they able to critique the information that they receive? Research suggests that citizens are very poorly informed about public affairs in general (Bishop, 2004). Even if they are, people do not have the time to engage in informed debate, but instead rely on their perceptions.

The media uses public opinion polls for two reasons: either to create or report news. Thus, they either commission pollsters or do them internally (Holtz-Bacha, 2012). In America, organizations such as Cable News Network (CNN) have created a partnership with either *USA*

Today newspaper or *Time* magazine to conduct polling prior or even employ polling organizations such as Gallup or Harris Interactive or Nielsen to conduct their research (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012). The potential of public opinion polls to strengthen the democratic process cannot be achieved without the co-operation of the news media. The topics that the mass media choose to cover in forums like the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* that largely set the mirror-like agenda for the questions pollsters ask (Gollin, 1987). Public opinion polling organizations frequently encourage respondents to answer questions by presuming they are familiar with the topic. For instance “As you may know...” “As you may have heard...”, implying that they lead respondents to answer queries in a way that they know. Thereafter, newspapers became the Gallup opinion polls. In another instance, though Martin Luis Guzman pioneered the use of public opinion polls more than fifty years ago in Mexico, polling became common practice only in 1988 through the publicity generated by the country's newspapers when trying to predict the outcome of the presidential election (Herbst, 1995).

1.2. Problem Statement

Democracy is a political system characterized by a free press and adults who vote for their leaders in free, regular and fair elections and (Dahl, 2005). This implies that public opinion polling is a form of democracy where registered voters can express their views about political leaders and issues without any fear from any government official. Lavraks and Traugott (1992) argue that opinion polls engage and raise the political interest of citizens in elections by providing information about the horse-race between candidates. Furthermore, they can encourage citizens to become more educated on certain elections and even turn out to vote in huge numbers. The media plays a key role in elections by reporting opinion poll results impartially and

rationally (Camp, 1996). Thus implies that poll results published in the media may influence voting behaviour. According to McNair (2003), “the accuracy of public opinion polls is dependent on the application of representative sampling procedures”. In addition, the questions must be carefully formulated to avoid distortion, amplification and exaggeration of response. There must also be allowances for sources of error, the results must be well interpreted and the timing of polls must be taken into account. This implies that politicians who are against polls on the basis of the wrong sampling procedures applied by pollsters are justified. It also implies that such pollsters are mocking the democratic role of public opinion polls.

Research shows that voting behaviour caused by opinion polls can either result in the bandwagon effect, where people vote for candidates who lead in pre-election polls (Marsh 1984), or underdog effects (Ceci and Kain, 1982), where voters go against the most favoured candidate by opinion polls. The underdog effect might be used to explain why Uhuru Kenyatta won in the Kenyan 2013 general election, as voters voted for him instead of RailaOdinga, who pollsters IHRC and Consumer Insight, had implied that he would largely win.

If an underdog effect results after an election, it implies that opinion polls lack credibility. Credibility in opinion polling is determined by an accurate scientific methodology and rigour (Goldfab and Axworthy, 1988). All that pollsters do is to identify an election problem relevant to the voters, formulate the correct research design, sampling technique and error, a representative sample, data collection instrument, quantify it and analyse the results. They must also be capable

of monitoring the shift in opinion and circumstances during an election campaign (Jacob and Shapiro, 2000).

This is was the case in 1936, when three pollsters, George Gallup, Elmo Roper and Archibald Crossley, accurately predicted that Franklin Roosevelt would win the American election (Roshco and Crespi, 1996). In Kenya, IpsosSynovate (formerly Steadman Group) accurately predicted that the Wako draft constitution would be rejected by 57 percent of Kenyans. Consequently, only 43 percent supported it (Mutahi, 2008). Thus, the credibility of opinion polls has to do with their ability to accurately predict election outcomes, which implies an accurate view of public opinion.

However, if they fail, pollsters are shunned by the public, politicians and the media. This is why in a Taiwanese study, 76 percent of respondents in a study said that they did not trust presidential election polls, while 17.1 percent said that they did (Hu et al., 2000). This was a telephone survey of the perception of Taiwanese voters towards election opinion polls. In Kenya, the situation is no less different, where after the 2013 and 2007 general election, inaccurate poll prediction of election outcomes led to the shame of Kenyan pollsters, IHRC and IpsosSynovate in the eyes of the public (Makulilo, 2013; Mutahi, 2008).

Prior to the 2013 general elections, Kenyan pollsters IHRC, IpsosSynovate and Smart Octopus Company a month before the election, on January 26, 2013, had predicted a second run-off in the March 4 general election, one in which RailaOdinga would emerge as the winner (NTV, 2013; Capital FM, 2013). A second run-off would have meant a second election, one in which none of

the six presidential candidates received the constitutionally requisite of 50 percent plus one votes (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). However, in another poll published on February 22, 2013 though IpsosSynovate had indicated that Uhuru Kenyatta would win the election in the second round with a 44.8 percent vote at a +/-1.26 margin of error, official results showed that he won with 50.07 percent vote (IEBC, 2013; Supreme Court, 2013). This might explain why the Daily Nation newspaper, one of the commissioners of the IpsosSynovate poll, had increased media coverage on RailaOdinga's coalition, CORD (Media Council of Kenya, 2013).

Smart Octopus had also predicted a Kenyatta win on January 27, 2013 with a 45 percent vote, with Odinga second at 32 percent (The Standard, 2013). Yet, generally, the election outcome reveals that the Kenyan polling industry is flawed. Both IHRC and IpsosSynovate were wrong in their methodology, which was inaccurate in prediction the accurate vote for the winning candidate and a second election. Could this inaccuracy point to an inaccurate methodology?

Yet, since pre-polling results from the 2013 general election contradict official one, they imply Kenyan pollsters are suffering a credibility crisis. It is from this gap that this study seeks to address four issues with the main objective asking: what is the attitude of the Kenyan public towards opinion polls? The specific questions are: What are the levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls? Does the Kenyan public consider opinion polls as more credible or less credible? What factors influence public perceptions on Kenyan opinion polls? Based on suggestions by the public, how can opinion polling in Kenya be improved?

1.3. Study Objectives

The study will be guided by one general research objective and four specific research objectives.

The general objective will be to evaluate public attitudes on opinion polls in Kenya. The specific objectives will be:

1. To establish levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls during the December 2012- February 2013 period.
2. To test which Kenyan pollsters are regarded as more credible or less credible by the public during the December 2012- February 2013 period.
3. To determine what factors influenced public perception on Kenyan opinion polls during the December 2012- February 2013 period.
4. To gather public suggestions on how to improve opinion polling in Kenya.

1.4. Research Questions

The study will be guided by one general research question and four specific research questions.

The general question will be: What is the attitude of the Kenyan public towards opinion polls?

The specific research questions will be:

1. What are the levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls during the December 2012- February 2013 period?
2. Which Kenyan pollster did the public consider as more credible or less credible during the December 2012- February 2013 period?
3. What factors influenced public perceptions on Kenyan opinion polls during the December 2012- February 2013 period?
4. Based on suggestions by the public, how can opinion polling in Kenya be improved?

1.5. Justification of the Study

Public opinion studies in Kenya have in the past been commissioned by media groups. The aim is to shape public opinion of their own audiences during elections (Larfargue and Katumanga, 2008). For instance, the Nation Media Group (NMG) commissioned various Kenyan pollsters to carry out a poll before the 2007 general election (Daily Nation, 2013). These pollsters comprise Consumer Insight, IHRC, IpsosSynovate, as well as Strategic Research and Public Relations. It was published on February 27, 2013, a week before the March 3, 2014 general election. Since the results of these report something different from the IEBC, that is a RailaOdinga over a Kenyatta one, this study therefore sheds light on what happened wrongly, that is voters used tactical voting resulting in an underdog effect, while helps to carrying out objective and informed research on the above issue that would reap several benefits to public opinion research.

For instance, similarities between the 2013 Kenya election, and 1948 presidential polls in the USA. This is where those presidential candidates in both counties, who pollsters had predicted would win, instead lost the election. It would also help the public to identify the “Bradley effect”. This effect refers to the discrepancy between opinion polls and the actual results after an election (Barron, 2008). The effect is named after a black American candidate contesting for the Californian State gubernatorial seat in 1982, Tom Bradley (Elegbe, 2009). Bradley was contesting the seat against a white candidate, George Deukmejian. Though opinion polls prior to the election showed Bradley would win the election, he lost to Deukmejian as actual results showed that white undecided voters voted for his opponent. Thus, this study will demystify Kenyan pollsters and the industry to the general public.

The findings may also be important from an academic point of view. This is by testing the theories and hypotheses that relate to media and public opinion polling. This can help by testing their relevance and accuracy from an African and Kenyan perspectives. These theories include agenda-setting, building, framing, priming and propaganda, which explain the types of public opinion polls used by Kenyan pollsters. Another implication is how Kenyan opinion polls result in either the bandwagon or boomerang and the underdog effects. Other concepts from a Kenyan perspective such as margin of error, public attention and influence relevant to academicians are explained in this study. The bandwagon effect refers to how majority of the public decide how to vote by conforming to the majority opinion, while underdog is when a few people go against the perceived majority opinion (Perse, 2001).

This study may further be important as a critical reference point for formulation of the country's public opinion policy. Though there is already a Publication of Electoral Public OpinionPoll Act and Media Act, there is further need for more guidelines in these industries that will be able to accommodate voter perceptions in decision-making with regard to publicopinion trends. Thus, this study may be useful by providing a centralized focus on new empirical evidence relating to voter preference on the practice public opinion polling.

Moreover, the study may serve to add to the body of literature on public opinionresearch for reference by future researchers and communication scholars. It would gradually bridge the gap on public opinion polling research, an area that is not heavily studied in Kenya. The findings of this study may also prove useful to potential investors in the polling industry. While the Kenyan media-polling partnership is a part of a historical trend, the current inclination is for country's

pollsters to merge with established international political public opinion poll firms. For instance, the 2007 partnership between IHRC and the independent market research American company, Harris Interactive Global Network (Mutahi, 2008). Harris Interactive is an international network of affiliate market research firms. It is widely known for its Harris Poll, one of the longest running, independent public opinion polls and for pioneering on-line market research methods.

The partnership between the two led Infotrac to produce its own Infotrac Harris poll to collect public opinion on SPEC topical issues. Infotrac Research and Consulting also changed its name to Infotrac Harris Research and Consulting (IHRC, 2010). Furthermore, IpsosSynovate (formerly Steadman Group) was acquired by French political opinion pollster, Ipsos in 2008 (Rubadiri, 2008). Therefore, this study would enable them other potential investors in Kenyan political surveying to understand what determines public opinion polling from the Kenyan public point of view. The investors would also know the methodological pitfalls to avoid and make necessary adjustments to their customers. For example, to achieve the Kenyan democratic ends of public opinion polling through better research methodology.

1.6. Limitations and Scope of Study

The scope of this study was confined to three months. That is from December, 2012 to February 2013. The researcher anticipated that this time would be adequate to study the objectives of the study under review.

Furthermore, the researcher only compared the opinion poll results prior to the March 4 2013 general election from all Kenyan pollsters: Consumer Insight, Infotrac Harris Research and Consulting (IHRC), Smart Octopus Polling Company Limited, Strategic Research and

Communications and Taylor Nelson Sofres-Research and Marketing Services (TNS-RMS), which were published in the mainstream broadcast and print media networks, that is The Capital Group (Capital Frequency Modulation radio and website), Citizen Group (Citizen TV), Nation Media Group (*Daily Nation* newspaper and Nation Television), Mediamax Network Limited (*The People* newspaper), the Standard Media Group (The Standard newspaper and Kenya Television Network) and Radio Africa Group (The Starnewspaper). The focus was be on benchmark and trial heat opinion polls published in the media from October to February, 2013.

The researcher anticipated that it might be difficult to get a sample of 1500 Kenyan voters to respond. This is because it might take too much cost, effort and time. However, this was be overcome by collecting data through open and close-ended questionnaires.

The researcher also anticipated that there would be a non-response bias. This refers to how respondents fail to answer particular questions because they may be confused as to what researcher expects from them (Berinsky, 2002). The researcher solved this by making use of a pilot questionnaire to test its validity from a sample of the target population. From it, the researcher was be able to know if the study objectives and questions were addressed and if elicited the desired responses. The results were then be used to draft and revise the final questionnaire.

1.7. Definition of Key Concepts Used in the Study

Agenda-building: is the process through which political actors get their issues noticed by the media and the public through a four-step model (Lang and Lang, 1981).

Agenda-setting: this theory refers to the idea that the media do not tell people what to think, but what to think about (Cohen, 1963).

Bandwagon or boomerang effect: The bandwagon effect refers to how majority of the voters opt to vote by conforming to the results of opinion poll results.

Benchmark polls: this refers to an opinion poll that provides an election campaign with information (Brox, 2009).

Bradley effect: the tendency for minority candidates to fare worse on Election Day, than in pre-election polls (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012).

Call-ins: polls employed by television stations, where respondents are not scientifically selected but rather participate by calling a particular number (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012).

In-depth surveys: In-depth surveys are the most common type of polls. Lasting for 20 to 60 minutes, these surveys assess public opinion on one or more topics in depth to analyse change over time and the impact of events and strategy (Biggs and Helms, 2007).

Margin of error: this refers to amount of error or precision that the researcher can tolerate when undertaking a study. For instance, a five percent margin of error implies that the findings of the study could vary by as much either negatively or positively (Royse, 2007).

Media framing: this refers to how the media highlights certain aspects of news through selection, resulting in the audience regarding the news as important and memorable (Entman, 1993). This news may be opinion poll results, which may influence voting behaviour or bandwagon or underdog effects.

Media priming: this concept refers to how the media using public opinion polls to pinpoint advantageous issues for the electoral campaign to emphasize through selection and salience thus making them memorable to audiences (Entman, 1993; Geer, 1996).

Omnibus survey: refers an opinion poll that is run weekly or monthly on a routine basis, with a nationally representative sample by one of the large opinion poll and market research companies (Rose, 1997).

Opinion poll: a tool that measures the informed collected opinions of people aged 18 years and above with regard to a particular social, political or economic issue (s) based on given scientific methodology by a professional polling organisation.

Panel polls: are the ones in which the researcher interviews the same people at two different points in time while asking the same question (Lake, 1987).

Push polls: polls that push a respondent to support a particular candidate (Sidlow and Henschen, 2008).

Strategic or tactical voting: this refers to a situation where public opinion poll results are used by voters to make calculated decisions on how to vote on Election Day (Nesbitt-Larking, 2007). For instance, insincerely ranking another candidate higher in the hope of getting the latter elected because s/he has a higher chance of winning than the voter's preferred contender (Coxall, 2013). Thus, strategic voting is not about sincerity, but about voting that results in a desired or tactical outcome.

Straw or pseudo poll: A straw poll refers to a poll that tries to read the readers' collective minds by simply asking a large number of people the same question (Sidlow and Henschen, 2011).

Tactical voting: this refers to a situation where a voter casts the vote for a candidate that is likely to win instead of one's preferred choice (Shafritz, 1988).

Tracking poll: A tracking poll is used to assess a rapidly changing trend occurring over a short period of time (Biggs and Helms, 2007).

Trial heat or brushfire polls: these are polls that gauge how a candidate has fared in an election campaign compared to other candidates by other pollsters (Traugott and Lavraks, 2007).

Underdog Effect: this is where a few of the voters going against the perceived majority opinion (Perse, 2001).

Panel polls: Panel polls are the ones in which the researcher interviews the same people at two different points in time (Lake, 1987).

Public attention: this refers to the effect that public opinion polls have on intended audiences such as politicians who use survey results to the public with regard to determined policies (Jacobs and Shapiro, 2000).

Public attitudes: these are “relatively durable orientations toward an object” and opinion captured by pollsters as poll responses (Carpini and Keeter, 1996). They are durable as they comprise knowledge and values. Public attitudes are contrasted with non-attitudes or a situation where people have no genuine opinion on an issue yet respond to a survey question as if they do (Fishkin, 2012).

Public Influence: this refers to the effect that the media have on the political process when they either commission or publish opinion polls, whereby increased media coverage on a candidate over the others influences public voting on Election Day (Jamieson 2000).

Public opinion: Public opinion is the aggregation of anonymously expressed opinions by individuals on political matters, regardless of their origin.

1.8. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to critically analyse the public perceptions on Kenyan public opinion polls, with a bias on the 2013 general election with the objective of recommending how public opinion polling during future elections can be enhanced. Other objectives are to: establish levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls; test which Kenyan pollsters are regarded as more credible or less credible by the public; determine what factors influence public perception on Kenyan opinion polls and to gather public suggestions on how to improve opinion polling in Kenya. The study would be significant to the following societies: academicians, future researchers, media, the public, investors and policy makers in the political opinion polling field.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature by various researchers on the evaluation of public attitudes on opinion polls in Kenya. These literature will hopefully provide insight on other objectives for the study, such as: the levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls, identifying the pollsters which the public view as either less or more credible, determining what factors influence public perception on Kenyan opinion polls and gathering public suggestions on how to improve opinion polling in Kenya. The study has also reviewed four theories in relation to public opinion polling. These are framing, priming, propaganda and spiral of silence theories. In the end, this literature review will hopefully identify a research gap and point to a further direction for future research.

2.1. Evaluation of Public Attitudes on Opinion Polls in Kenya

An attitude refers to the favourable or unfavorable evaluation of an object based on cognitive, affective or behavioral information (Maio and Haddock, 2009, p.4). It is thus about liking or disliking an object, which can either be human or inhuman, such as a political candidate or an issue, respectively. Another implication of this definition is that an attitude is a mental state, though with an ability to make an individual either respond by liking or hating an object. This paper will define an attitude as a mental or expressed discriminate or indiscriminate judgement about an object.

When it is either orally or verbally expressed, an attitude becomes an opinion (Allport, 1935). The quantitative measurement of attitudes as opinions in the 1920s was considered groundbreaking in social psychology because it was used to study societal problems (Likert, 1932; Thurstone, 1928). These problems include immigration, media effects, World War II, and the Cold War (Hovland et al, 1953). Therefore, the difference between an attitude and opinion is that the former is an internal state but when externally expressed, becomes the latter. There are scholars who argue that attitudes and opinion are synonymous (for instance Bain, 1928), though others consider them to be distinct, stating that attitudes can only be measured if they expressed as opinions (Thurstone, 1928). This paper will treat attitudes in the latter sense. That is, human attitudes can only be known if they are expressed as opinion, which then makes them measurable through polls.

It is not surprising that the scientific measurement of the voter attitudes with regard to elections led to the rise of public opinion polling industry in the 1930s. At the center of the polling debate with regard to voting is how attitudes influence public opinion (Greer, 2009). Elections and referenda are democratic institutions that enable citizens to choose their leaders (Lindberg, 2008). Thus, elections provide pollsters the opportunity to ask citizens their attitudes regarding public policy issues and aspiring leaders, then quantify and analyse the opinions (Lewis, 2013). These opinions enable the citizens to make the best judgment about whom they should vote for (Gallup and Rae, 1940). This is why George Gallup used pre-election opinion polls was able to accurately predict that the American people would vote for Franklin Roosevelt in the 1936 presidential election with a 55 percent vote (Dautrich and Yalof, 2011, p.282). Though the actual results showed Roosevelt won with a 61 percent vote, studies show that Gallup was right about the opinions of those he polled. Unlike his competitor, the *Literary Digest* Gallup's poll found

that poor people were supportive of Roosevelt's liberal economic policies, whose aim was to rescue them from the adverse effects Great Depression of the late 1920s. Soon, other American pollsters such as Elmo Roper and Archibald Crossley became household names because of their scientific expertise in polling and ability to provide credible information about election outcomes.

Ever since then, public opinion polling has centers around two debates, that is, the pluralist and confusions positions. The pluralist position, with journalism Professor George Gallup as its main proponent, argues that polling allows the citizenry to actively and regularly participate in the political decision-making process, such as elections (Gallup and Rae, 1940). An election is a regular and fair institution in which the citizens exercise their sovereign will by casting their vote for those who will govern them on the basis of performance and policy (Kanyinga et al. 2010). Since polls simulate how people vote directly on all political issues, Gallup views public opinion polls as a mini-census that compensates for the limitations of elections by granting the public a more immediate mandate. Polls exercise this function in a world where direct democracy is unrealistic and where representative democracies can potentially relapse back to government by elites (Gallup and Rae, 1940). This implies that polls are important where there is dictatorship to break censorship of freedom of expression. Take the United States where since the early 20th century, political polling has been used to predict how the public feel about their leaders, yet in Mexico, studies show that it began in 1986 due to censorship (Converse, 1960; Wilkie et al., 1990).

Gallup, therefore, believes that the ordinary citizen is capable of choosing political leaders to govern him or her by rationally evaluating their proposed policies. That is why during polling, he

would pose questions that would reveal the citizen's concern, not just those that would either interest editors, pollsters or sponsors of opinion polls (Gallup and Rae, 1940). An example of such questions includes: 'what is the most important problem facing the country today?' This is what he referred to as social innovation, that is, polling of the public on the issues defined by the public, for the benefit of the public (Gallup and Rae, 1940). This is people-centered view of opinion polls is what makes them believable.

In Kenya, Gallup's pluralist method has been exemplified in Consumer Insight and IHRC opinion polls commissioned by NMG, whereby the citizens pointed to various problems that they would have wanted the next Kenyan president to address, like unemployment (24 percent), education (15 percent), corruption and tribalism (21 percent) and national security (7 percent) (Wanyonyi, 2013).

Gallup also believes that the media plays a key role in strengthening the democratic process by reporting opinion polls in an unbiased and analytical manner (Camp, 1996). Since the media has the advantage of a wide reach, it could publish polling results to its audience (Crespi, 1980). This implies that this could induce rational debate on the issues that would result in an informed public opinion ready to cast their vote in elections. However, the media is only interested in horse-race aspect of opinion polls instead of analyzing the polls in relation to the social context (Gallup and Rae, 1940). Therefore, this enables policy makers to make use of polling as a main source of information and the citizens to analyse the information given by the media so that they can detect and correct any decisions that deviate from the will of the majority. Gallup therefore argued that polls were more accurate assessments of public opinion than newspapers and interest

groups (Gallup and Rae, 1940, p.25). However, he recognized that the problem of “non-attitudes” in polls which cannot be measured by pollsters (Gallup, 1947).

Non-attitudes can be defined as how respondents in a survey lack an opinion on a question that a pollster has posed (Converse, 1964; Fishkin, 2012). For instance, “do you have an opinion on this issue?”, and the response is a non-attitude such as “I do not know” (Bishop et al, 1980) or a manufactured response (Zaller, 1994). Studies on democracy suggest that although this political system requires a highly informed public, it is more of an ideal than reality. That is why non-attitudes occur. Berelson et al (1954) for instance opines that majority of the public are not knowledgeable about politics to participate meaningfully in democratic processes such as voting. Other studies argue that while the public can distinguish between public policy issues, they may not have a lot of information on it (Graber 2001). Non-attitudes is also more prevalent among respondents who less educated than those who are not (Carpini and Keeter, 1996).

Albig (1956) and Key (1967) follow in Gallup’s train of thought by proposing that public opinion polls may be an indication of democratic development. This implies that all democratic governments require the results of opinion polls to gain support in the society. Gallup and Rogers, though with differing views, were the first proponents of practically combining politics and opinion polling, though the idea was initially suggested by Dewey (1927) and Lippmann (1920). Later studies show that Gallup’s ideas hold true as American presidents, such as former president Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, were able to learn what the public thinks about certain issues through polls (Geer 1996). This implies that opinion polls have a powerful influence on

political leaders. In Kenya, this is why the Daniel Moi, MwaiKibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta regimes have used opinion polls in elections to assess their rule through the public's eyes.

Sociologist JurgenHabermas (1989) later advanced the plurality notion of Gallup. He argued that a “public sphere” would enable the public to form their opinion, enabling them to become rational and independent from the state. This implies that the public sphere acts as a link between the ordinary person and the state. The European public sphere of 17th and 18th centuries was in the form of civil society institutions as cafes, reading rooms, museums and universities (Habermas, 1989). This is not the case today. The public sphere today comprises public relation firms, lobbyists, opinion pollsters and media organizations.

Research show that the media reportage of opinion polls influences the public to vote in elections (Chan 1993; Lee, 1999), though the press may commission opinion polls to mainly generate news stories that favour it more than the public (Paetz et al., 1980). In Kenya, print and broadcast media organizations such as Citizen TV, NMG and Standard Media Group commissioned pollsters to assess public opinion prior to the March 4 2013 general election by conducting benchmark and tracking opinion polls. These pollsters were Consumer Insight, IpsosSynovate, IHRC and Strategic Research and Public Relations (PR). A poll by IHRC and IpsosSynovate commissioned by NMG between and January 12 and 20, 2013, found that none of six presidential candidates would win the election in the first round. However, CORD contender RailaOdinga would win in the next round with a 46 percent vote (Shiundu, 2013). In a study by the Media Council of Kenya of the analysis of press coverage of opinion polls in the Daily Nation, findings suggest that it was skewed towards the CORD coalition (2013). Official results

by IEBC showed that the IpsosSynovate polls was wrong, as Jubilee contender Uhuru Kenyatta won in the first round with a 50.07 percent vote in the first round (IEBC, 2013). This implies that public opinion polls have an influence on media coverage, even when they are wrong. Though Kenya media reliance on opinion poll coverage is good for their agenda, in 2017, prior to the 2018 general election, perhaps the press could be more investigative.

Conversely, those who oppose Gallup's pluralist ideas propose that public opinion polls should not be used by political leaders to dictate how they should rule (Rogers, 1949a). This is because opinion polls are the collected views of the public, yet the latter have "unstable views on public policy issues". Called the "confusion theory", it posits that if leaders are likely to fail if they follow the unstable opinion of the public offered by pollsters. Rogers's claim follows politician Edmund Burke's ideas on representation. Burke argued that political leaders in a representative democracy must consider and respect their constituents but should avoid following their will at every step of their decision-making process (Burke and Stanlis, 2000). This implies that Burke believed that public opinion is not powerful. His views were re-echoed by journalist Lipmann in 1920, who argued that the media does influence public opinion (1925). Lipmann's empirical study of the Russian Revolution as published in the *New York Times* between 1917 and 1920 led him to conclude that though the newspaper's coverage was questionable, the American public formed an opinion out of it because they could not interpret it themselves. Going by public opinion poll results today, the public does not entirely rely on the media as a source of political information, instead other sources such as the family and church.

However, Rogers agrees that officials should use public opinion polls to identify potential sources of opposition to their policies (1949a). This can enable public officials to use polls to shape society's perceptions and influence people in favour of certain issues (Rogers, 1949a). Therefore, decision makers frequently try to manipulate the media into publishing poll results selective in order to advance a particular agenda resulting in the bandwagon effect. Whether political elites succeed or not in their efforts either to obtain reliable information from the polls or to shape public opinion by manipulating poll results depends largely on the media's will and ability to scrutinize and question the information received (Rogers, 1949a). This implies that while Rogers disagrees with Gallup on the democratic use of opinion polls, political leaders can use them to monitor the views of their and simultaneously manipulate public opinion to accept their policies. Yet, both the pluralist and confusion position agree that the media is critical to opinion polling, because this institution has the ability to influence what the public think about.

Rogers' position is consistent with global empirical evidence, as political leaders use poll results to market their ideas about what the public ought to think. For instance, former Canadian premier Pierre Elliot Trudeau used opinion polls results in 1980 to monitor public support for issues on price controls, which reported that the Canadian public would not support leaders who advocated the increase of taxes on oil, as proposed by the Progressive Conservative government of Joe Clark in the budget (Laschinger and Stevens, 1992). Unlike Clark who did not pay attention to public opinion poll results, Trudeau won the 1980 election. Similarly, the 37th American President used favourable public opinion poll results to persuade citizens to accept his policy to increase the military offensive in Vietnam (Katz, 1997). In Kenya, during the January 2013 general elections campaign, CORD presidential candidate Raila Odinga used favourable opinion

polls from pollster IHRC, showing he was leading the other candidates with a 46 percent vote to convince voters to vote for him (The Standard, 2013). He however lost the election to Uhuru Kenyatta.

Does the voting public agree that polls are a true reflection of their opinion? Various studies show mixed reactions. For instance, though people are proud of scientific polls, like the Gallup one, they question how it is possible for a sample of 1,000 people to accurately represent the entire population of all Americans? (Gallup and Newport, 2009). Why not poll the entire population? Are results from a sample believable? Yet, statistically, this can be explained by sampling theory. It holds that if a sub-set of people or sample, from the wider population can accurately represent their opinion with a known certainty (Lake, 1987). This implies that is not necessary for the pollster to interview every subject in the population. This is because it is too costly and time-consuming. To ensure that the sample results will be accurate, the subjects should be randomly selected. What if the sample is not representative? Or, what if the pollster encounters any error while collecting data, such as a bad interviewing, question wording or sample frame? This is error, which refers to the difference between population value and sample value (Butler, 2007). Gallup (1972) claimed that inaccuracy in sampling is normal, so long as pollsters justify their sample with regard to objectives of the study, demography and the cost of data collection (Butler, 2007).

For instance, in 1936, the Gallup Poll sampled 3,000 rich and poor Americans and rightly predicted that Franklin Roosevelt would win the election with a 55 percent vote. Yet, *Literary Digest* magazine with its sample of two million rich Americans inaccurately predicted the

election (Babbie, 2009). This validates why a huge sample is not as useful as small but representative sample. In Kenya, despite IpsosSynovate using a sample of 5,971 registered Kenyans, it was almost accurate in predicting that 14.3 million Kenyan voters would choose Uhuru Kenyatta as Kenya's next president, with a 44.8 percent vote at +/-1.27 margin of error at 95 percent degree of confidence, though official results showed that he won with a 50.07 percent vote. This implies that a representative sample is more accurate than a larger sample.

Despite this scientific assurance, the public still view opinion polls with skepticism. For instance, in a study by Herbst (1998), citizens do not like opinion polls because they believe that they are used to by political leaders to give them an advantage over their opponents, hence biased and unreliable as sources of political information. American citizens also believe that their political leaders respond to their demands as reported in opinion polls (Page, 1982).

Whatever the case in the two polar ends of the political survey debate, an evaluation of citizen attitudes of public opinion polling reveals that though the public participates in opinion polling, they are skeptical of the effect it has on political leaders and the media.

2.2. Testing Whether the Public Regards Pollsters Either as More or Less Credible

Credibility refers to the condition of being reputable or believable, resulting in trustworthiness (Oxford, 2009). In politics, public opinion polling is considered as a credible aspect of democracy in America (Herbst, 1995). Credibility in opinion polling is determined by an

accurate scientific methodology and rigour (Goldfab and Axworthy, 1988). All that those who conduct opinion polls do is to identify a problem relevant to the voters, formulate the correct research design, a sampling technique, a representative sample, data collection instrument, quantification and analyse the results. This is why in 1996, 75 percent of the respondents surveyed by Gallup Poll expressed their faith in the credibility of public opinion polls (Gallup and Moore, 1996 as cited in Bardes, p12; Semetko and de Vreese, 2004). Credible pollsters who have become household names such as Gallup and Harris Interactive in America, Market and Opinion Research International in Britain and IpsosSynovate, IHRC, Smart Octopus Company Limited, Strategic Research and Communications, TNS-RMS and Consumer Insight in Kenya.

Yet, credibility of public opinion polls is more of an ideal than reality. Research shows that pollsters often use benchmark and tracking polls, whose purpose is to know which issues, are important to a voter before and during an election campaign, (Roll and Cantrill, 1980). For instance, trial heat polls used to forecast the 2002 German Bundestag election (Gischwend and Norpeth, 1998). However, pollsters may use other types of public opinion polls such as call-ins and push polls. The polls are not credible as their samples are not random, hence unscientific (Traugott and Lavrakas, 2008). Furthermore, their aim is to persuade television audiences to give political support for a political party, coalition or candidate. For instance, in Kenya, call-ins are used in the television broadcast news on Citizen TV and KTN.

In the case where push polls are used, they lack credibility because they push the respondent toward a particular candidate (Taylor, 2000). This may be through leading questions or providing skewed responses. For instance, in America, push polls were used to in the Presidential primaries

of the 2000 presidential elections. The George Bush Junior's polling team used push polls to discredit Arizona Senator John McCain's proposal to introduce a heavy taxation law on Americans (Saletan, 2000). The push polls focused on McCain's character assassination, such as his wife alleged drug addiction. As a result, Senator McCain lost the Republican primary to George Bush. Professional survey associations such as the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) condemn push polling because they report false and misleading attacks on candidates and simultaneously damage the reputation of the genuine polling industry, though useful to election campaigns (Bardes and Oldendick, 2012).

Critics argue that though respondents may answer the question in a push poll, they may not have considered it before being asked by a pollster (Bourdieu, 1993a). Berelson et al (1954) for instance opines that majority of the public are not knowledgeable about politics to participate meaningfully in democratic processes such as voting. Other studies argue that while the public can distinguish between public policy problems, they may not have a lot of information on political issues and leaders (Graber 2001). This implies that the push poll is questionable. For instance, "between CORD candidate RailaOdinga and Jubilee candidate Uhuru Kenyatta, which candidate's victory would cause unhappiness?" (IpsosSynovate, October, 2013). The choices given were candidate who favoured either a Raila or Uhuru victory. The poll was carried out by IpsosSynovate and commissioned by USAID in October 2013. The population comprised Kenyan citizens at the Coast. In this case, since 46 percent of the respondents indicated Uhuru and one percent Odinga, the response may create the impression that Uhuru Kenyatta is unpopular. The question also implies that respondents might not have considered the question as important, or they replied because they were not given other candidates to choose from.

Other methodological reasons include pollsters who skew samples for those who commission opinion polls. The reason is to make them more representative by calculating the responses of the people in groups that are a minority in the study (Battersby, 2013). This has two implications that are unscientific- that the sample is not random, and, the margin of error or probability of accuracy is false. The truth of the public or respondent deception bias is also another variable, which occurred in the Gallup poll of 1948. Respondents may say that they are going to vote, though this may not occur. For instance, though IpsosSynovate on February 22, 2013 had predicted that Uhuru Kenyatta would win the vote with a 44.8 percent vote over Odinga's 44.4 percent using a +/-1.26 percent margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level, the official results by the IEBC and Supreme Court showed that IpsosSynovate still fell short of the accurate prediction with a difference of 5.27 percent. What this implies that the margin of error by IpsosSynovate was also faulty. Yet, in another poll by IpsosSynovate carried out between January 20-12, 2013, it had predicted a run-off between the candidates, with Odinga as the winner. How could the public trust the pollster to make an accurate prediction, days before the election?

Another reason for the lack of credible opinion polls is horse-race journalism. This refers to how media organisations pit one presidential candidate over another during elections on the basis of opinion poll results (Graber, 1997). This was the case in the 2000 presidential election in America, where exit polls by media polling conglomerate, National Election Pool (NEP), had predicted a win for the then vice-president Al Gore, though Bush won the election (Roberts, et al, 2012). It later emerged that there were sampling errors in the NEP poll. This implies that if journalists report the wrong opinion polls results, it diverts public attention from real issues.

Inaccurate media reporting of opinion polls is another cause for lack of credibility in opinion polls. In a study of opinion polls published by various newspapers including the *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal*, (Welch, 2002) found that journalists do not give their readers the methodological aspects of poll results, which might prompt the reader to misinterpret or disregard the polls. In another study, an opinion poll's credibility is lowered when broadcasters of US network news fail to correct statement about the poll results, for instance margin of error without understanding what it means (Larson, 2003). They neither explain if a poll will be representative of voters' expectation instead of an election (Lewis et al., 2005). What this implies that media audiences can make the wrong voting choices based on what they read from the media.

Since the 1960s, global presidents, senators and governors have hired their own pollsters during election campaigns (King and Schnitzer, 1968). For instance, in a review of the Gallup poll presidential election prediction, the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) newspaper (1996) found that it has forecasted all 20 American polls from the start of scientific polling in 1936 to 2008. Despite this, there are firms whose research methodology is questionable when they have biased samples, slanted reports and unethical procedures (Krosnick, 1989). For instance, the public dismissal of the *Literary Digest*'s demographically unrepresentative sample in 1936, which though huge sample did not poll all demographics.

Researchers argue that opinion polling methods are understandably subject to a substantial range of error (Bogart, 1972). Bad interviewing, unrepresentative cross sections, poor questionnaire

design and slips in data analysis can all contribute to make the final results unreliable, apart from the statistical tolerances of probability laws (McNair, 2003). This explains why opinion poll results are often viewed with much skepticism, yet the public is largely ignorant of sampling principles (Bogart, 1972). A perfect case of this occurred in Kenya. A month prior to the 2007 general election, the United States (US) embassy in Kenya doubted the accuracy of opinion polls projections because the sample that local pollsters used resulted in a wide lead for the presidential candidate for the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) political party, Raila Odinga (Mutiga, 2011). This wide lead would likely fuel ethnic tensions if he were to lose the election.

The basis of the wide lead was due to the wrong sample chosen by pollster IHRC from a raw population size, rather than the regional distribution of registered voters. Consumer Insight sample from voter registration rates, its poll results showed that Odinga had 41% while President Mwai Kibaki from the Party of National Unity (PNU) had 40.6%, with a 0.4% gap. This was a more accurate predictor of the election outcome due to the wide variances in high population density areas in the country. Conversely, IHRC used a sample from a raw population size, which showed that Odinga had a 47.3% lead, while Kibaki followed at 37%, a 10.3% gap (Mutiga, 2011; Mutahi, 2008). Thus, although Odinga was leading in both polls and likely to win the general election, the narrow gap between the two candidates by the Consumer Insight poll reflected an accurate sample and justifies the argument by the US embassy. In what is still disputed today, the IEBC (formerly Electoral Commission of Kenya [ECK]), announced on 30th December 2007 that Kibaki had instead won the general election by a 46% vote to Odinga's 44% (Larfargue and Katumanga, 2008).

However, the narrow, rather than wide gap between the candidates, justifies the fear by the US embassy. Public opinion polls by Kenyan pollsters, such as IHRC, who had been using the sample from a raw population size, were inaccurate. It can thus be argued that this inaccuracy is what might have contributed to the post-election violence between ethnic groups following the ECK announcement. The groups inclined towards Odinga might have been seeking for his revenge because their view was that the Infotrack Harris poll that showed he was ahead by a wide lead before Election Day had been ‘accurate’ and the actual vote was ‘inaccurate’ because it was inconsistent with the latter.

Similarly, the 2013 Kenyan general election resulted in a credibility crisis for some of Kenya’s pollsters. IHRC, IpsosSynovate and Smart Octopus Company on January 26, 2013 had predicted a second run-off in the March 4 2013 general election (*NTV*, 2013; *The Standard*, 2013). However, though IpsosSynovate had indicated that Uhuru Kenyatta would win the election in the second round with a 44.8 percent vote at a +/-1.26 margin of error, official results showed that he won with 50.07 percent vote (IEBC, 2013; Supreme Court, 2013). Smart Octopus had also predicted a Kenyatta win on January 27, 2013 with a 45 percent vote, with Odinga second at 32 percent (*The Standard*, 2013). This implies that IHRC, IpsosSynovate and Smart Octopus Company were wrong in their methodologies, which all were inaccurate in predicting the accurate vote for the winning candidate. On the basis of literature review by this study, this lack of credibility by Kenyan pollsters can thus refer to inaccurate results and margin of error and an unrepresentative sample.

An analysis of a polling report by IpsosSynovate on January 24, 2013 reveals that it did not use the official electoral list of registered 14.3 million voters by IEBC. Released a fortnight prior to the election, it relied on Kenyans living in urban and rural areas who “claimed” to be registered voters (IpsosSynovate, 2013, p.3). Could they have not lied? Why did IpsosSynovate not verify the claim made by their sample? Could this sample be accused of having non-attitudes, thus disqualifying the IpsosSynovate poll? In this case, how could the public consider IpsosSynovate results credible? As official results by IEBC showed, IpsosSynovate inaccurately predicted that 44.8 percent of respondents would vote for Kenyatta, instead of the actual 50.07 even after vote-recounting by the Supreme Court. Again, this report failed to show the demographics of the sample in terms of age, county and gender. This implies that the public could not later evaluate the shifts of opinion that may have influenced undecided voters to vote from the time pollsters legally stopped polling opinion.

In another report published 10 days before the March 3 2015 general election, IpsosSynovate appeared to use inaccurate wording of questions that could be termed as a push poll. For instance, one question asked, “If Uhuru and Ruto win the election and then have to attend trials at the International Criminal Court (ICC), do you think they will be able to run the country from there?” (IpsosSynovate, 2013). Kenyan public opinion at the time skeptical that if once Kenyatta and Ruto got elected and left for the ICC, based at The Hague, Netherlands, they would not return, thus leaving a power vacuum. Legal experts later disagreed with this statement(Kegoro, 2014). Yet, the push poll question posed by IpsosSynovate implies that it is an unfair attack on presidential and vice-presidential aspirants Kenyatta and Ruto, who the ICC prosecution alleges to be among the perpetrators of crimes against humanity in the 2007-08 post-election violence

(Thuku, 2013). This question seems to respond to a question raised by opposers of Kenyatta and Ruto, who felt that the two did not deserve to hold the offices because it affects their integrity. However, both candidates won the 2013 election, thus discrediting their opponents' views and the IpsosSynovate poll. This implies that Kenyan voters did not consider this a relevant issue for them to choose their leaders. Criminal charges against Kenyatta were dropped last year in 2014 by the ICC prosecution for lack of evidence (International Justice Monitor, 2014). This affirms that Kenyan voters were right for voting for the underdog Kenyatta, not pollsters.

Another reason could be that Kenyan pollsters stopped polling too early before the Election Day. Section 7 (1) of the 2012 Publication of Electoral Public Opinion Act allows pollsters to continue polling until Election Day and only stop publishing their results five after voting has taken place. This window offers pollsters the chance to poll the change of attitude in relation to the political environment. Studies show that American pollsters, who stopped polling two weeks before the 1948 presidential election, may have failed to consider changing attitudes of voters that influenced them to vote for Democrat Harry Truman (Rubin and Babbie, 2015, p. 205). Other studies show that attitudes can change when voters encounter political events after a polling exercise (Campbell, 1980). In, prior to the Kenyan 2013 general election, the “tyranny of numbers” and the ICC debate were issues that might have convinced voters to vote for Uhuru Kenyatta. Tyranny of number refers to a term coined by Kenyan pundits meaning the votes that would guarantee an electoral win of 50 percent plus one vote in 24 of the 47 counties for the presidential candidate in the first round (Bland, 2013).

Researchers argue that the Jubilee alliance was seen as strategic because it brought Kenya's big ethnic communities together, Kalenjin and Kikuyu (Materu, 2015). Furthermore, Kenyatta and Ruto of the Jubilee Alliance coalition had confirmed that even if they won, they would continue to co-operate with ICC (Ndong, 2013). This implies that Kenyan voters could attitude changes regarding these issues to vote. Thus pollsters failed to us failed to take into account such attitude changes of voters, which could have enabled them to make an accurate prediction of a Kenyatta win. IHRC and IpsosSynovate, for instance stopped publishing their polls, a week before the March 4 general election on February 22, 2013.

2.3. Determining the Factors Influencing Public Perception on Kenyan

Opinion Polls

Campbell et al. (1960) argue that election specific factors such as voting behaviour of the Michigan model of voter choice is the determinant of how people vote in elections and constitutional referenda. This in turn determines how Kenyan pollsters gather public opinion prior to Election Day. Party identification is an indicator of voting behavior because it influences how people vote in elections, rather than detailed political issues (Campbell et al. 1960).

Studies show that there is a positive relationship between voting behaviour, ethnicity and party identification in Kenyan general elections (Kimenyi and Ndung'u, 2005). For instance, since 1991, Kenyan from the same ethnic community will support a similar contender. Take the 2013 1992 elections where the Kalenjin supported their leader from the ruling party KANU, Daniel Moi (Kanyinga et al., 1994). This continued in the 1997, 2002 and 2007 general elections

(Londsdale, 2008; Lynch, 2011). In the process, such negative ethnicity has led to antagonism between different ethnic communities. Studies show that such antagonism is what led to 2007/08 post-election violence that resulted in the loss of 1,133 people, displacement of over 650,000 Kenyans and the destruction of property countrywide (Waki Commission, 2008). The violence led to the indictment of Jubilee candidates Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto in 2010 by the ICC. These candidates were the Jubilee presidential and vice-presidential candidates, respectively. Though party identification along ethnic lines characterized the 2013 general election, prior to and after Election Day, the outcome was peaceful (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2011). Official 2013 general election results by IEBC showed that in counties perceived to be Jubilee strongholds, such as Central and Rift Valley, supported the Kenyatta-Ruto alliance, while the Odinga-Kalonzo alliance were prevalent in the Nyanza and North Eastern region (2013). This implies that in the 2017 election, though ethnicity might influence voting behaviour, it might be peaceful.

During the March 3, 2013 general election, the results of a public opinion poll by pollster IHRC published on February 20, 2013 revealed that 46 percent of the voters would back Odinga through his party, CORD. Kenyatta, through his party, Jubilee, would trail behind with a 44.5 percent of the vote, while Mudavadi had 4.3 percent, in the first round. However, the results of the election were different: out of the 14, 337, 399 Kenyans who voted 6,173,433 decided that Kenyatta through Jubilee party had won the, while Raila's CORD party lost with 5, 340, 546 valid votes (IEBC, 2013). Even after an election petition filed by Odinga disputing the results, the Supreme Court as the arbiter, maintained that Kenyatta was validly elected with a 50.07 percent lead over Raila's 43.7 percent (Thuku, 2013). This implies that just like in the 2007

election, IHRC might have erred in the 2013 one due to a bad sample. It also implies that in the 2018 general election, the Kenyan public will be more wary of opinion polls since in 2013 and 2007 they were biased towards the wrong presidential contender. They also showed that Kenyan pollsters would not overcome the Bradley effect, that is, the tendency for minority candidates to fare worse on Election Day, than in pre-election polls.

2.4. Public Suggestions on How to Improve Opinion Polling in Kenya

The Concise Oxford dictionary defines “improve” as verb which means to make better (2014). This study has explained how the credibility of pollsters has diminished when their results contradict the official ones. Wrong predictions by pollsters result in their censure by the citizens, politicians and the media in the eyes of the citizens from Kenya and other countries. For instance, in a study on the attitude of US House Representatives towards public opinion polls, they felt that polls have a negative impact on how voters in election outcomes (Fried, 2013, p.70).This implies that public opinion polling industry ought to change its flaws. According to Hillsman (2004), pollsters who provide inaccurate results will be understandably defensive. According to For instance, Hellevik (2007) George Bush Senior denounced opinion polls in 30 speeches. This is because two polls by Gallup and *ABC/Washington Post* had constantly showed Bush behind his Democratic contender Bill Clinton and Independent Ross Perot. The fact that they cannot even predict an election makes it even worse for the industry, as happened in Kenya, both in 2013 and 2007.

Studies show that in America and Britain, government commissions have sought to investigate and regulate the polling industry. They include the American Association for Public Opinion

Research (2008), the Market Research Society in Britain and Opinion 1999 ('99) in South Africa; (Holtz-Bacha, 2012; Buhlungu et al, 2007). The 1989 Canadian Lortie Commission, for instance, recommended the banning of exit polls and publication of polls three days before voting ended on elections. It also recommended that the media publish the methodology of polls, which can be found in the Canada Elections Act, 2000. This led to the amendment of the 1985 Elections Act.

Studies show other countries whose polls cannot be published in the media days before Election Day. For instance, five days in Albania, 14 days in Bulgaria and seven days in France, failure to which a penalty is imposed on the pollster (Article 19, 2003). In Kenya, the 2012 Publication of Electoral Opinion Polls Act Number 39 urges pollsters to be disclose their methodology when publishing their results, those who commission polls, and date of the interviews. Moreover, it cautions pollster from publishing their polls “five days prior Election Day and on voting day”. There is a fine of Sh 1 million or five year imprisonment for failure to adhere to this law. This law implies that exit polls after elections in Kenya are also banned. However, exit polls apply after televised debates, as happened between January and February 2013. Though Kenyan pollsters were initially against legislation, they have however embraced it. For instance, the enactment of the law was witnessed in the 2013 general election where the final polls by pollsters were published between February 22 and 24, 2013.

Media coverage of opinion polls is another factor that requires improving, especially since the press is a consumer of opinion poll results. Studies show that organizations such as the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) and European Society for Opinion and

Marketing Research outline the requirements of media when covering opinion polls (ESOMAR/WAPOR, 2010 as cited in (Stromback, 2012) through a Code of Professional Ethics. For instance, the name of the pollster, population, sampling technique and sample size, dates of fieldwork and data collection instruments. This implies that although horse-race journalism of reporting opinion polls is accepted, media organizations should do it within the confines of the law.

Media training is another area that requires improvisation. Analysts recommend media organizations to employ journalists and editors with training in “scientific polling and analysis” to avoid misreporting poll results (Johnson and Nimmo, 1986). In a study by researcher Michael Salwen, he found that two newspapers in the American state of Michigan had reported the methodology employed by polls, as compared to publication in other states which did not (1985). This study was later replicated by Broh (1980), who studied the disclosure of methodological information about polls in newspapers. In Kenya, broadcast and print media organizations have taken great care to adhere to these improvisations. Between January and February 2013, print media wrote side bars of the methodology employed by pollsters.

Take the results of a poll by IHRC published on January 12, 2013 in the *Daily Nation* newspaper. Methodology involved: a sample size of 1,500 respondents using a margin error of -/+2.53 percent, 25 out 47 counties had been sampled, telephone were used to collect data. Though the *Daily Nation* discussed the horse-race aspect of the poll as well its political context, its confidence interval was not. This implies that the reader had to guess whether it was 99 percent or 95 percent. Neither did the *Daily Nation* discuss what the margin of error meant in the

context of the results. All these implications support the view that Kenyan media require training in reporting of polls.

2.5. Theories

A theory refers to an organized set of concepts, explanations and principles of some aspect of human experience (Baran and Davis, 2012). It contains theories, their hypotheses and operationally defined variables and concepts through a research methodology. Some analysts claim that a theory thus provides a clear concept of the areas in which relationships between variables exist (Cargan, 2013). For this study, a theory may refer to a statement that a researcher makes after observing two or more things having things in common. For instance, if people vote for a presidential candidate touted as leading by opinion polls published in the Kenya's mainstream media, then it can be theorized that these surveys published in the press were framed and primed in a way that makes them memorable to the audiences. Media framing and priming theories are applicable to this study as they are useful when answering questions regarding the critical analysis of public opinion polling in Kenya. This is because poll results reach the public through the media.

2.5.1. Media Priming Theory

The media priming theory postulates that an audience will make a decision based on information that they immediately have in hand (Goidel et al., 1997). This is consistent with information processing research, which opines that people organize their perceptions of the environment into easily accessible cognitive knowledge structures called schemas (Graber 1988; Fiske and Taylor, 1991). It is these schemas, once activated, that help people to form evaluations and understand their environment. This explains why it is easy for people to make decisions about familiar

objects. For instance, in an American study by Markus and Converse (1979) on information processing during elections, they found that the word “Democrat” is a political party schema associated with a candidate who cares more about public policy issues affecting the common persons. Other studies on political schemes have identified information which voters use during election (Lodge and Hamill, 1986; Rahn et al., 1990 and Funk, 1999. In Kenya, the Jubilee coalition political slogan during the 2013 general election was “digital not analogue” acts as schemas that encourage voters to associate the coalition government is associated with youth and progression.

What if things are unfamiliar? Studies show that heuristics or contextual cues, such as media priming of issues, are applicable to activate schemas to guide how information should be processed (Zaller, 1992). Studies on political communication emphasize that when mass media lay an emphasis on certain political issues, such as opinion poll results, they increase the rate at which citizens are able to evaluate the stand of public officials, say presidential candidates and their performance (Iyengar et al., 1982; Mendelsohn, 1996).

In another study on the priming effect, Krosnick and Kinder (1990) interviewed 1,086 citizens by asking them how they evaluated President Ronald Reagan in relation to his performance on foreign and national issues publicized by the media in 1986. The second part of the findings was done after the government had confirmed that it sold arms to a terrorist organisation referred to as Iran Contras, to secure seven American hostages (Krosnick and Kinder, 1990). This was despite the fact that it was illegal for the government to do so. Findings showed that respondents who had watched the media coverage of the Iran-Contra scandal negatively evaluated Reagan

based on foreign issues, as opposed to those who had earlier responded before media coverage. The latter had positively evaluated Reagan based on domestic issues.

Media priming therefore refers to the power of the media to “create, strengthen or eliminate standards of political judgement by calling public attention to some issues or problems, while ignoring others” (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987, p.63). In Kenya, for instance, framing refers to the way the Kenyan media covers which candidate is ahead of the other in results by different pollsters and the issues that public opinion deems important in relations to the presidential aspirants. Prior to the 2013 general election, these issues are education, health and national security. The NMG devoted a website called *Kenya Elections*, where election and opinion polls coverage was posted (Business Daily, 2013). Conversely, Standard Media Group (SMG) had a digital platform called “Choice 2013”, a reference that it was the source of information for Kenyans who needed it so that they could know whom to vote for.

Research shows that the fast-paced nature of news therefore influences what the media primes to be both recent and frequent. For instance, in a study investigating the effect of opinion poll published in the broadcast media, viewers were found to respond to the message because it had been frequently exposed to the media (Carsey, 2000). However, the frequency is tied to the new and timely events occurring in the election campaign period as covered by the media on a daily basis (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991). What this implies that recency and frequency of opinion poll coverage as factors media priming can only be judged after some time due to fast-paced natured of journalism. Thus, in Kenya, media organizations publish opinion polls results when they were released to the media. For instance, on January 11 2013, *The Standard*and

DailyNation newspapers and Capital FM published opinion polls by IHRC, which showed that CORD was the most famous political coalition, followed by Jubilee. The poll had been conducted between December 28, 2012 and January 2, 2013. The frequency and currency with which these polls were published in these media organizations could imply that the media frames on them might have influenced the voters to vote strategically, that is for the underdog Jubilee candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta.

2.5.2. Media Framing Theory

Framing refers to how the news story emphasizes certain values, or themes, through selection and thereafter giving them salience, by either making them noticeable or memorable to audiences (Entman, 1993, p.52). This is by defining concepts, analyzing them and recommending proper solutions for them. In elections, the uses opinion polls media portray candidates as either winning or losing, instead of complex political issues (Patterson, 2003; Zaller, 2001; Fallows, 1997). This referred to as a game or strategic frame and has been observed in how American television covers elections. However, Akuto (1996) in content analysis of 1979 gubernatorial elections in Tokyo, he found that newspapers focused less on game frames but more on public policy issues or substance frame reporting.

In Kenya, game frames are not rare. Take the following headline by *The Standard* newspaper published on January 11, 2013. Titled “Kenyan opinion poll shows Raila’s CORD alliance in front”, it serves as a heuristic to Kenyan voters who might use it as a basis to vote for the candidate, yet they have not evaluated the candidate based on the issue he supports. A Kenyan example of substance frame reporting is in a poll by IHRC published in the all Kenyan media

newspaper on January 12, 2013, where facts such as number of respondents in the survey, data collection and analysis methods were published (Saturday Nation, 2013).

Media framing has psychological and sociological roots, for instance in the works of John Locke and Sigmund Freud (Bateson, 1954; Pan and Kosicki, 1993; Goffman, 1974). These researchers argue that people cannot understand the world and hence require “interpretative schemas” to classify information and interpret it meaningfully. These schemas comprise different presentations of information through the media, thus leading to different choices for how people can make sense of their world. Scholars argue that media framing thus occurs when journalists present information to their audiences in a way that relates to existing schemas (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). Frames, in the form of amount of media exposure, placement, juxtaposition, headlines and photos thus reduce the complexity for audiences who are not experts in a particular matters, say opinion polls and terrorism. Take the coverage of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in Western media all over the world, which elicited various responses: grief, suffering and consequences of the attack (Norris et al., 2003). In Kenya, an example of a banner headline as a media frames by The *Daily Nation* newspaper on January 26, 2013 read ‘Raila, Uhuru headed for run-off, say poll’ (Daily Nation, 2013), which placed on page one.” Raila still leads in opinion poll” which was placed on top of page 2 on January 16, (DN, 2013). Kenyan opinion poll showed Raila’s CORD alliance taking the lead on January 11, 2013 (The Standard, 2013).

Media frames thus serve as a peg that links the world to the audiences. In a study on election campaigns, McCarty (2013) found that media framing explains why voters may reject information that may not fit into their existing cognitive schema because as they will ignore what

is ignored by the press. There are critics of the media framing theory, who argue that it undermines objectivity (Paletz and Vinson, 1996). For instance, in a study on coverage of Africa on the *Washington Post* newspaper, Osunder (1996) found that news about the continent is given space on Western media, more than European news, thus calling for Western media to learn more about African politics and training their journalists to avoid stereotyping.

In Kenya, the NTV television segment, *#theTrend* hosted by Larry Madowo featured IHRC Chief Executive Officer Angela Ambitho and IpsosSynovate Consultant Tom Wolf on January 25, 2013, a month before the election. The two pollsters explained methodological aspects of opinion polls that elicit controversy among the public. For instance, the sample size, the impact of changing political trends on public opinion, sponsors and horse-race journalism coverage and legislation of opinion polls. The show was posted on video-sharing website, *YouTube*, to reach internet audiences. This implies that such television magazine could be used to dispel the myths surrounding the polling industry for audiences.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed related literature by various researchers on the evaluation of public attitudes on opinion polls in Kenya. These literature will hopefully provide insight on other objectives for the study, such as: the levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls, identifying the pollsters which are regarded as more credible or less credible by the public, determining what factors influence public perception on Kenyan opinion polls and gathering public suggestions on how to improve the practice of opinion polling in Kenya. The study has also reviewed two theories: media framing and priming.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was adopted to achieve the objectives stated in chapter one of this study. It has covers the location of the study, research design, research instrument, target population and sample, data analysis procedure and conclusion.

3.1. Research Design

Kothari (2004) defines a research design as one that describes the characteristics of a particular situation with the aim of obtaining complete and accurate information about the situation at hand. Descriptive research design refers to a method of describing prevailing attitudes (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The research design used for this study was a descriptive research design. This is because it was the appropriate one to use to describe and critically analyse public perceptions on public opinion polling.

3.2. Study Location

This study was carried out in all the 47 counties of Kenya. This is where the target population of 14, 337, 399 million registered voters in the 2013 last general election were found. The focus on these counties was because they were where all the registered Kenyan voters live. See a list of the 47 counties in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: A list of the 47 Kenyan counties

Code	County	Population of registered Kenyan voters per county
001.	Mombasa	408,747
002.	Kwale	174,443
003	Kilifi	336,132
004.	Tana River	79,454
005	Lamu	52,346
006	TaitaTaveta	113,862
007	Garissa	115,202
008	Wajir	118,091
009	Mandera	120,768
010.	Marsabit	104,615
011.	Isiolo	54,462
012.	Meru	487,265
013.	Tharaka-Nithi	155,487
014.	Embu	227,286
015.	Kitui	324,673
016.	Machakos	445, 096
017.	Makueni	298, 221
018.	Nyandarua	255, 984
019.	Nyeri	356, 380
020.	Kirinyaga	265, 290
021	Murang'a	452, 841

022	Kiambu	861, 828
023	Turkana	132, 885
024	West Pokot	124, 986
025	Samburu	61, 114
026	Trans Nzoia	244, 640
027	UasinGishu	330, 618
028	ElgeyoMarakwet	134, 568
029	Nandi	263, 254
030	Baringo	173, 653
031	Laikipia	173, 905
032	Nakuru	695, 319
033	Narok	262,739
034	Kajiado	304, 346
035	Kericho	290, 458
036	Bomet	252, 358
037	Kakamega	576, 460
038	Vihiga	202,822
039	Bungoma	410, 462
040	Busia	251, 305
041	Siaya	311, 919
042	Kisumu	385, 820
043	Homa Bay	325, 826
044	Migori	283, 862

045	Kisii	412,945
046	Nyamira	219,358
047	Nairobi	1,728,801
Total		14,349,896

Source: IEBC, 2013

3.3. Target Population and Sample Size

A target population for a study can be defined as a group of people from whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions from (Babbie, 2008). The population of this study comprised registered voters aged 18 years and above, who participated in the 2013 general election. Based on the IEBC list, these voters were 14,337,399 million.

When the size of the population of interest is in a million-digit range, it becomes a large population (Barendrecht, 2010). Since the population for this study was 14.3 million registered voters, the researcher would require more time and money to collect data from them as they are spread over a large geographical location spanning 47 counties. It therefore would have been impossible for the researcherto collect insights from the entire target population due to a lack of time and resources. Thus, the researcher preferred using a sample of the target population.

Researchers argue that there is no formula that should determine the correct sample size of a study (Best and Kahn, 1998). However, to ensure that the results of the sample of this study were generalized to the wider population, the researcher had to consider three factors (Barendrecht,

2010): size and structure of the target population, whether the sample had met the required level of precision or margin of error and if the researcher had the resources required to undertake a census of the target population. Salant and Dillman (1994) argue that for a large population that is between one million and 100 million, a sample of 1,500 with a small margin of error, say three percent, will provide a precise estimation that can be generalized to the wider population. This is because there will be little change in the results, even if the sample size increased. Thus, for the target population of 14.3 million, this study used a sample size of 1,500 people with a margin of error of three percent. The confidence level was 95 percent.

Though there was an IEBC list of registered voters, the researcher anticipated that there would be difficulty in identifying members of the population in all the 47 counties. Thus the researcher resorted to use purposive non-probability sampling to select elements of the sample. Purposive sampling refers to a non-probability technique where a researcher uses a group of people with a capacity to purposively give answers to the questions sought (Adler and Clark, 2007). This study selected a sample of 1,500 from all the 47 counties through purposive sampling. The researcher therefore purposively sampled adults aged 18 years and above, which is the legal voting age, sample so that they could purposively answer the research questions for this study. The advantage of this method was that it was cost-effective and allowed the researcher to approach people who participated in the study. Consequently, 1,011 people participated in the study.

3.4. Research Instrument

Data collection is gathering specific information aimed at either proving or refuting a fact (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). This study used primary and secondary data collection methods.

Primary data was generated from the field from the sample of 1500 respondents through a closed and open-ended questionnaire as a data collection instrument. The advantages were that a close-ended questions provided answers which the respondent was expected to choose from (Plateck et al., 1985), while open-ended questions allowed respondents to explain their responses in detail as s/he understood them.

The researcher also relied on secondary data to support the research findings. The data was from journals, newspapers, books and previous studies on public opinion polling.

Both closed and open-ended questionnaire were relevant in this study. In the case of closed-ended questions, they allowed the respondent to fit their responses within a given set of answers (Frascara et al, 1997). This ensured that there was no bias. Conversely, open ended questions were also useful. Frascara et al., (1997) argue that they invite bias through spontaneity of responses. However, they allowed respondents to be free, thus more detailed than closed-ended questions.

The researcher initially tested a pilot closed and open-ended questionnaire among a sample of the target population to test its validity. The areas tested were: whether the questionnaire addressed research objectives and questions, had questions that would prompt the desired responses and had covered the main topics. The results from this pilot enabled the researcher to draft and revise the final 1,500 questionnaires distributed to the chosen sample by the researcher and her five assistants.

To increase the response rate of the self-administered questionnaire, the researcher had attached a cover letter to the questionnaire. It had briefly explained the rationale and importance of carrying out the research. Furthermore, the design and layout was enhanced to appear enticing and a thank you note was attached to it. Zikmund and Babin (2012) argue that a cover letter accompanied with a questionnaire is likely to increase the response rate because it explains the importance of the study being carried out.

The researcher hired eight trained assistants to administer the questionnaires to the 1,500 respondents in all the 47 counties. The researcher and her assistants each handled five counties. To achieve a high response rate, the researcher and her assistants paid three visits to the respondents. If the respondent had not responded to the questionnaires by the third visit, the researcher or her assistants moved on to another respondent who fit the same demographic profile of a voter and was willing to participate in the study. Consequently, the study achieved a 67.4 percent response rate after four weeks.

3.5. Data Analysis and Presentation

The response rate was recorded through cross-tabulation. This monitoring is important because it helps the researcher to see how data collection is successful (Babbie, 2008). On a piece of clear paper, the researcher drew a line with a black pen every time a questionnaire was returned by a respondent. Tabulation started from the day that the 1,500 questionnaires were sent out. Therefore, the researcher was able to tabulate the rate and date at which respondents replied, that is four weeks.

The resultant data was analyzed through the Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) computer softwares. These software would be able to generate frequency and percentage distributions and cross-tabulations. These would in turn in data presentation and analysis, through bar charts and table. These descriptive statistics would be used in chapter four to present and show the relationship between the variables.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was adopted to achieve the objectives stated in chapter one of this study. It covered the following areas: location of the study, research design, target population,samplesize and technique, data analysis and interpretation using computer software Microsoft Excel.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the critical analysis of public perceptions on opinion polls, with a focus on the 2013 Kenyan general election. To begin with, the chapter first reviews the research objectives and questions used in this study. It then gives a backgrounder on the research methodology used, followed by findings during the election period, that is between December 2012 and February, 2013.

Data was gathered from a sample of 1,500 respondents. These comprised the voting members of the Kenyans aged 18 years and above. The focus on this sample is because it was representative of the 14,337,399 million Kenyan public who voted in the March 2013 general election from all the 47 counties in the country. Moreover, the study would allow the researcher to critically evaluate the attitude of the Kenyan public toward the practice of opinion polls. 1,011 Kenyan voters responded out of the 1, 500 respondents sampled for the study, thus achieving a response rate of 67.4 percent. The sampling error was + three percentage points, with a 95 percent level of confidence. Data collected was analyzed using Microsoft Excel software. It was then presented using graphs and tables to present the findings and show the relationship between the variables.

4.2. Study Findings on Demographics

4.2.1: Age

The respondents were asked to state their age. The objective was to analyze the attitudes of this demographic towards opinion polling. From the findings, 50.93 percent of the respondents were

aged 36 and 50 years. Respondents aged between 18 to 35 years, were 19.4 percent while those aged 51 years and above were 29.67 percent. See table 4.1. below.

Table 4.1: Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
51 years and above	300	29.67
36 - 50 years	515	50.93
18 - 35 years	196	19.4
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Table 4.1 above shows the responses of the Kenyan voting public when asked to state their age. 50.93 percent of the respondents were aged 36 and 50 years. Respondents aged between 18 to 35 years, were 19.4 percent. Those respondents aged 51 years and above were 29.67 percent. The responses above are consistent with the argument that there is a relationship between age and public opinion polling. This is because the older one is, the more they are likely to vote (Blaise et al, 2004). This information is important Kenyan pollsters, as they can know which public they can seek out when undertaking public opinion polling prior to the next election.

4.2.2. Educational Levels

The respondents were asked to state their levels of education. 43 percent of the respondents had reached fourth-form level. 24 percent of the respondents had post-secondary certificates. 19 percent of the respondents had a diploma, followed by seven percent who had an undergraduate degree. Four percent of the respondents had a Master's degree, while the minority, 3 percent, had doctorate degrees. See table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Education Levels

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage %
Doctorate	23	3
Master's	40	4
Undergraduate	69	7
Diploma	196	19
Post-secondary Certificate	244	24
Others (such as, form four leavers)	439	43
Total	1011	100

Source:Field survey, 2015

Table 4.2 above shows the responses of the Kenyan voting public when asked to state their level of education. 43 percent of the respondents had reached fourth-form level of education. The minority, 3 percent, of respondents had doctorate degrees. This findings has two implications that can be related to the literature review. First, that the more educated Kenyans are, the less likely they are to offer random opinions, thus more cautious. Secondly, those with low levels of

education are more likely to voice an opinion when prompted by a pollster, even when they genuinely do not have one(Saavedra, 1967; Gallup and Rae, 1940).

4.2.3. County of Origin

The respondents were asked to state their counties. The reason was aligned to the overall objective of evaluating the public attitudes of Kenyans in all the 47 counties through primary research. 31 questionnaires were each distributed to a sample of 1, 500 respondents in the 47 counties, chosen through purposive sampling technique. The response rate was 67.4 percent. Majority of the respondents were from Kiambu and Nairobi counties, which each, returned 30 questionnaires. Conversely, respondents in Samburu county had the lowest response rate of 10 questionnaires. A summary of the respondents in all the counties can be seen in table 4.3. below.

Table 4.3: County of Origin

Code	County	Population of registered Kenyan voters per county	Sample n=1500/47 = 31.9 questionnaires distributed to each county	Response rate per county
001.	Mombasa	408,747	31	26
002.	Kwale	174,443	31	19
003	Kilifi	336,132	31	29
004.	Tana River	79,454	31	23
005	Lamu	52,346	31	25

006	TaitaTaveta	113,862	31	20
007	Garissa	115,202	31	21
008	Wajir	118,091	31	21
009	Mandera	120,768	31	23
010.	Marsabit	104,615	31	20
011.	Isiolo	54,462	31	20
012.	Meru	487,265	31	30
013.	Tharaka-Nithi	155,487	31	24
014.	Embu	227,286	31	27
015.	Kitui	324,673	31	28
016.	Machakos	445, 096	31	31
017.	Makueni	298, 221	31	23
018.	Nyandarua	255, 984	31	20
019.	Nyeri	356, 380	31	25
020.	Kirinyaga	265, 290	31	28
021	Murang'a	452, 841	31	29
022	Kiambu	861, 828	31	30
023	Turkana	132, 885	31	13
024	West Pokot	124, 986	31	15
025	Samburu	61, 114	31	10
026	Trans Nzoia	244, 640	31	26
027	UasinGishu	330, 618	31	26

028	Elgeyo Marakwet	134, 568	31	26
029	Nandi	263, 254	31	29
030	Baringo	173, 653	31	24
031	Laikipia	173, 905	31	17
032	Nakuru	695, 319	31	30
033	Narok	262, 739	31	18
034	Kajiado	304, 346	31	29
035	Kericho	290, 458	31	29
036	Bomet	252, 358	31	28
037	Kakamega	576, 460	31	29
038	Vihiga	202, 822	31	20
039	Bungoma	410, 462	31	28
040	Busia	251, 305	31	29
041	Siaya	311, 919	31	20
042	Kisumu	385, 820	31	28
043	Homa Bay	325, 826	31	26
044	Migori	283, 862	31	29
045	Kisii	412, 945	31	25
046	Nyamira	219, 358	31	28
047	Nairobi	1, 728, 801	31	30
Total		14, 349, 896	1500	1011

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.3 above shows the responses of Kenyans in the 47 counties where the voting public cast their ballot. Nairobi and Kiambu each had 30 questionnaires returned. These were areas that IEBC recorded the highest number of voters in the 2013 general election. For instance, Nairobi had 1.7 million voters while Kiambu had 861,828. Conversely, counties with a lower number of voters recorded a similarly low response rate in this study. For instance, Samburu which had 61,114 voters, returned 10 questionnaires. This map of the 47 Kenyan counties is necessary as it confirms the perception that pollsters collected public opinion polls from people dispersed in the 47 counties (Daily Nation, 2013).

4.2.4. Political party affiliation

The respondents were asked to state their political party affiliation. The objective was to test the credibility that the Kenyan public have in opinion polls. 49 percent of the respondents indicated that they were affiliated to the Jubilee Coalition, while 28 percent of the respondents said CORD. 10 percent of the respondents said that they were affiliated to Amani Coalition. 6 percent of the respondents said Narc-K. 3 percent of the respondents said that they were affiliated to Alliance for Real Change, while two percent of the respondents said Eagle Alliance. See table 4.4. below.

Table 4.4: Political Party Affiliation

	Political Party	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD)	280	28
2.	Jubilee Coalition	496	49

3.	Amani Coalition	104	10
4.	National Rainbow Coalition of Kenya(Narc-K)	57	6
5.	Alliance for Real Change	27	3
6.	Safina	12	1
7.	Eagle Alliance	22	2
8.	Restore and Build Kenya	13	1
	Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.4 above shows the responses of the voting public when asked to state the political parties that they voted for in the March 2013 general election. The findings reveal that 49 percent of respondents were affiliated to the Jubilee Coalition. This is consistent with a study done by IpsosSynovate, three weeks before the March 3, 2013 general election in February, 2013 (Daily Nation, 2013). The IpsosSynovate opinion poll had predicted that the Jubilee Coalition would win the election with a 40 percent vote. In reality, the Coalition won the election with a 50.07 percent vote. However, an opinion poll by IHRC showed that CORD would win the election with a 44.5 percent vote. What these results imply is that not all Kenyan pollsters are flawed in their methodology, hence some might be credible.

4.3. Findings on the Levels of Public Confidence on the Authenticity of Opinion Polls

4.3.1. What Public Opinion Polling Is

The respondents were asked to state if they know what public opinion polling is. 12.8 percent of the respondents said they do, while. 87.2 percent said that they do not what public opinion polling is. See table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Knowledge of public opinion polls by Kenyans

Knowledge of public opinion polling	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	129	12.8
No	882	87.2
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

The responses in Table 4.5 above shows that 12.8 percent of the public know what public opinion polling is, while 87.2 percent do not. This confirms the view that though the public take part in public opinion surveys, few understand what it means (Zaller, 1994). It is also consistent with studies on non-attitudes, which define this as a situation where people lack knowledge on an issue, yet respond to a survey question as if they do (Fishkin, 2012). This implies that the results of public opinion polls are suspect because they are based on a weak ground.

4.3.2. Explanation on What Public Opinion Polling Is

As a follow-up to 4.3.1 above, the respondents were asked to explain what they understood public opinion polling to mean. The objective was to establish the confidence that the Kenyan

public have in pollsters. 43 percent of the respondents said that public opinion polling comprises what politicians think, but pay pollsters to publish. 27 percent said that it what pollsters publish in regard to what the public think. 17 percent of the respondents said that public opinion is the expression of a targeted public with regard to a pressing public issue. 13 percent of the respondents said that is anything that the public have to say. See table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Explanation on what is public opinion polling

Explanation on what is public opinion polling	Frequency	Percentage %
Expressions of a targeted public by pollsters with regard to a pressing public issue	170	17
It is what pollsters publish based on what the public think	271	27
What politicians think but pay pollsters to publish	440	43
Anything that the public have to say	130	13
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Table 4.6 above shows the varied responses of what the Kenyan public think so as to establish their confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan opinion polls. Majority of the respondents, at 43 percent, explained that polling is what politicians think, but pay pollsters to publish. This implies that pollsters will ask the public questions chosen by politicians and then present the findings as opinion polls. This supports the view that polls are essentially the voices of politicians who pay pollsters to collect aggregated opinions of the public that support their views (Jacobs and Shapiro, 2000). Only 27 percent of the respondents said that opinion polls are a reflection of the

public think. This contradicts the pluralist position of Gallup and Rae (1940), who argue that opinion polls are rational and informed decisions by the public, which then influence politicians to formulate coherent policies. This implies that in Kenya, polls are not a true reflection of what the public, which is wrong.

4.3.3. Whether public opinion is objective

The respondents were asked to state whether public opinion polling is objective. The objective was to find out confidence levels of the public with regard to authenticity of public opinion polls. Objectivity in this study refers to the believability or fairness in public opinion poll results. 65 percent of the respondents said public opinion polls were objective, while 27 percent disagreed. 8 percent of the respondents said sometimes opinion polls are objective. See table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Whether public opinion polling in Kenyan is objective

Objectivity of Kenyan public opinion polls	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	661	65
No	270	27
Sometimes	80	8
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.7 above shows the responses of the Kenyan public when asked to whether public opinion polls are objective. Majority or 65 percent of the respondents said that public opinion polls are

objective. This finding is consistent with the pluralist position of public opinion polling literature, which argues that the public use polls as a device for conveying their true sentiments about issues that concern them (Key, 1967; Albig, 1956). 27 percent of the respondents said that public opinion polls are not objective. Though this percentage is small, it implies that there is a section of the public that doubts the authenticity of opinion polls. This finding is consistent with the argument that survey research methods are understandably subject to a substantial range of error worldwide, hence viewed with skepticism (Bogart, 1972). 8 percent of the respondents said that public opinion polls are sometimes objective. This means that though a few of the respondents are skeptical of opinion polls, majority consider them objective, perhaps because of their democratic role.

4.3.4. An Explanation of Why Public Opinion Polls are Objective

As a follow-up to point 4.3.3 above, respondents were asked to explain why public opinion polling in Kenya is objective. 41 percent of the respondents said that Kenyan pollsters are loyal to those who pay them. 23 percent of the respondents explained that opinion polls appear to be believable when the public is able to simultaneously compare results by different pollsters. 13 percent of the respondents explained that pollsters are objective because they use facts and figures in their results. Another 13 percent of the respondents explained that public opinion poll results are objective if they can accurately predict an election outcome. 10 percent of the respondents said they are objective if pollsters record correct views from the public. See table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Explanation on what is objective about public opinion polls

Whether public opinion polling is objective	Frequency	Percentage %
Kenyan pollsters are loyal to those who pay them	415	41
Pollsters are objective because they use facts and figures in their results	135	13
Opinion polls from different pollsters publicized at the same time are more believable because they allow the public to do comparisons	236	23
They are fair if pollsters record correct views from the public.	98	10
Public opinion results are objective if they can accurately predict an election outcome	127	13
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

The responses in table 4.8 above demonstrates several factors regarding the confidence of Kenyans in opinion polls. For instance, though 13 percent of the respondents consider polls to be objective because they contain statistical data, 41 percent of the respondents are not confident about the integrity of pollsters as they consider them to be biased to those who commission them. This is consistent with the argument that majority of the public view public opinion polls with skepticism (McNair, 2003). However, it is a relief to see that the public does a comparative

analysis of opinion poll results, which helps them to distinguish between results that are true from false.

4.3.5. Whether Public Opinion Polling in Kenya is Subjective

The respondents were asked to state whether public opinion polling in Kenya is subjective. Subjectivity is the state of being influenced by personal taste or opinion, thus not objective (Chambers Dictionary, 2002). Subjectivity is key to understanding the confidence level of the Kenyan public with regards to the authenticity of opinion polls. 87 percent of the respondents said yes, nine percent said sometimes public opinion polls are subjective while four percent said no, while See table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Whether public opinion polling in Kenya is subjective

Whether public opinion polls are subjective	Frequency	Percentage %
No	40	4
Yes	880	87
Sometimes	91	9
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.9 above shows that responses of the Kenyan voting public when asked to state whether public opinion polling in Kenya is subjective. Majority, or 87 percent of the respondents, said that public opinion polls are subjective, nine percent said they sometimes are, while four cent

said that they are not. This finding contradicts the pluralist position that argues that scientific opinion polls are not subjective (Gallup and Rae, 1940).

4.3.6. An explanation on whether public opinion polling in Kenya

As a follow-up to point 4.3.5 above, respondents were asked to explain their answer regarding whether public opinion polling in Kenya is subjective. 21 percent of the respondents said that public opinion polls are subjective if they reflect the opinions of a political leader in a particular community. 18 percent of the respondents explained that they may feel inclined to express an opinion when prompted by pollsters without having in-depth knowledge on the subject. 61 percent of the respondents explained that polls are not subjective if a pollster asks the public to state their tribe. This is because the pollster might have asked so as to create a demographic profile of the respondents. See table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10: An explanation of whether public opinion polling in Kenyan is subjective

How public opinion polling is subjective or not	Frequency	Percentage %
Polls are subjective if they reflect opinions of a political leader in a particular ethnic community.	208	21
People may feel inclined to express their opinions when prompted by pollsters, without having an in-depth knowledge of political issues being asked	187	18

It is not subjective if pollsters, ask questions such as what is your tribe, as this may be done to create a demographic profile of the respondent	616	61
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.10 above shows the responses of the Kenyan voting public when they were asked to explain how public opinion is subjective. 61 percent of the respondents feel that polls are not subjective when pollsters ask them to state their tribe, as they do so as part of creating a demographic profile. 18 percent of the respondents explained that subjectivity occurs when they reflect opinions of a political leader from a particular ethnic community. This finding implies that negative ethnicity leads to subjectivity in public opinion polling in Kenya. It thus confirms the view that there is a relationship between Kenyan public opinion polling and negative ethnicity. 18 percent of the respondents explained that subjectivity arises when a pollster may ask respondents to provide an answer for a subject that the public is not familiar with. Hence, respondents may feel inclined to provide personal opinions rather than facts to the question posed. This confirms the view that polls may have a validity problem (Bourdieu, 1979; Brady et al., 1992).

4.3.7. Whether public opinion polling in Kenyan is biased

Respondents were asked to state whether public opinion polling in Kenya is biased. The aim was to test the level of public confidence of Kenyans regarding the authenticity of opinion polls. Bias refers to a one-sided mental inclination, thus leading to an imbalance (Chambers Dictionary, 2014). 71.2 percent of the respondents said that Kenyan opinion polls are biased,

25.8 percent said they are not, while 3 percent said that public opinion polls are sometimes biased. See table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Whether the practice of public opinion polling in Kenya is biased

Whether the practice of public opinion polling in Kenya is biased	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	720	71.2
No	261	25.8
Sometimes	30	3
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.11 above shows the responses of the public when asked to state whether or not public opinion polling in Kenya is biased. The majority, or 71.2 percent, of respondents believe public opinion polling is biased, thus implying that those who accuse local pollsters to be biased might be right. It is thus consistent with (Mutiga, 2013) who argues that Kenyan polls in 2007 were biased towards politicians who commissioned them. Furthermore, researchers have argued that opinion poll results are often biased towards the elites than the normal individual (Rogers, 1949a; Jacobs and Shapiro, 2000). This bias is what might cause the Kenyan public to have low levels of confidence in the authenticity of public opinion polls, as the latter favour the elite over the public.

4.4. Findings on public opinion firms that Kenyans consider credible

4.4.1. Public opinion polling firms which conduct the most accurate surveys

The respondents were asked to state the public opinion polling firm in Kenya that conducts the most accurate surveys. The objective was to find out which public opinion firms that the Kenyan voting public consider credible. Credibility refers to the quality of being believed based on knowledge or proven abilities (Chamber's Dictionary, 2000). 35 percent of the respondents said that IpsosSynovate conducts the most accurate surveys. 33 percent stated that it is Infotruk Harris Research and Consulting. 23 percent of the respondents indicated that it is Consumer Insight, followed by seven percent stated that it is Strategic Research and Public Relations. 1.8 percent of the respondents said that it is TNS-RMS while 0.4 percent of the respondents said that is Smart Octopus Polling Company. 1.8 percent of the respondents explained that TNS-RMS appears to be elitist. See table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: Kenyan public opinion polling firms which conduct the most accurate surveys

Kenyan public opinion polling firms	Accuracy (Least - High)	Percentage %
Consumer Insight	236	23
Smart Octopus Polling Company	4	0.4
Strategic Research and Public Relations	68	7
Taylor Nelson Sofres-Research and Marketing Services (TNS-RMS)	18	1.8

IpsosSynovate (formerly Steadman)	355	35
Infotrik Harris Research and Consulting	330	33
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

The details in Table 4.12 above shows responses of the Kenyan voting public when asked to state which public opinion polling firm conducts the most accurate surveys. 35 percent of respondents consider the polling results from IpsosSynovate more accurate than others, followed by 33 percent who prefer those of Infotrik Harris Research and Consulting, then 23 percent Consumer Insight. This implies that due to its proven ability of conducting accurate surveys, IpsosSynovate is considered to be a credible pollster. This is consistent with the view that pollsters gain their credibility by accurately measuring and analyzing public opinion (Camp, 1996).

4.4.2. Explanation on why public opinion firms conduct accurate surveys

As a follow-up to point 4.4.1 above, respondents were asked to explain why they stated that the public opinion firms conduct accurate surveys. 35 percent of the respondents explained that IpsosSynovate uses the right methodology most of the time hence its results can be generalized to the voting population. 33 percent of the respondents explained that though Infotrik Harris Research and Consulting its results have sometimes been inconsistent with the election outcome, most of the time, it has proven ability of undertaking many surveys. 23 percent of the respondents explained that the opinion polls results by Consumer Insight have twice proven to be consistent with the election outcome. Seven percent of the respondents said that Strategic

Research and Public Relations is in recent time keen on abiding with the opinion polling law, though previously it did not. 1.8 percent of the respondents said that though TNS-RMS conducts surveys, it is not well-known. 0.4 percent of the respondents said that Smart Octopus was the first pollster to accurately predict the 2013 general election outcome. See table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Explanation on why public opinion polling firms conduct accurate surveys

Pollster	Why a pollster's results are more accurate than others	Frequency	Percentage %
Consumer Insight	Its opinion poll results in 2007 and 2012 have proved to be consistent with official ones.	236	23
Smart Octopus Limited	It was the first pollster to predict that Uhuru Kenyatta would win the 2013 general election.	4	0.4
Strategic Research and Public Relations	Recently it has been following the law in terms of reporting methodology. Previously, it was not very keen.	68	7
Taylor Nelson Sofres-Research and Marketing Services (TNS-RMS)	Not very much known but follows the law by stating methodology used.	18	2

IpsosSynovate (formerly Steadman)	The pollster uses the right methodology most of the time hence its results can be generalized to the voting population	355	35
Infotrik Harris Research and Consulting	Its results have twice wrongly predicted that the winner but regularly conduct surveys	330	33
Total		1011	100

Source:Field survey, 2015.

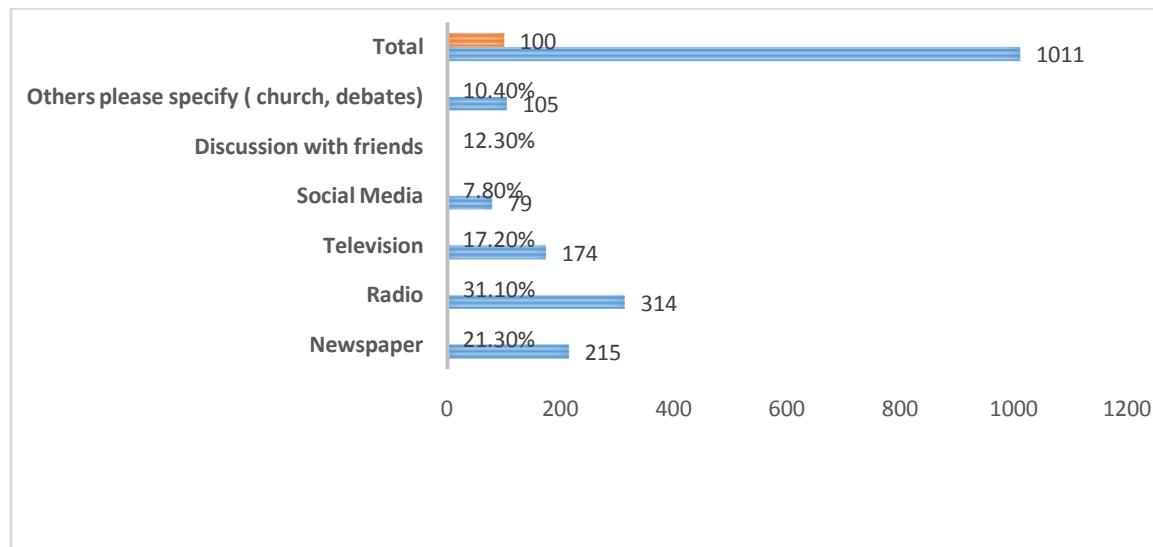
The details of table 4.13 above shows the responses of Kenyans when asked to explain whether Kenyan pollsters are accurate. 35 percent of the respondent said that IpsosSynovate uses scientific methods to arrive at its accurate results, as was the case in the 2013 general election. This confirms the view that errors in opinion polls can be reduced if the scientific methodology used is accurate (McNair, 2013). For this study, accuracy of surveys conducted by public opinion firms refers to scientific methodology whose results are consistent with official results of an election outcome. It also refers to how the firms disclose methodological information in accordance with the 2012 Publication of Electoral Public Opinion Act.

4.4.3. The media through which the public learn about opinion polls

The respondents were asked to state they medium through which they learn about public opinion polls. 31.1 percent of the respondents said that they learn through radio, while 21.3 percent of the respondents said newspapers. 17.2 percent said that television is the medium through which they learn about public opinion polls. 12.3 percent said they learn of polls through discussion with

friends. 10.4 percent of the respondents said that their source of information on opinion polls is the church and public debates. 7.8 of the respondents that they learn about public opinion polls through social media. See figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: The Medium through which the Public Learn of Opinion Polls



Source: Field survey, 2015

The details in figure 4.1 above show the responses of majority of the Kenyan public, who said that their main source of opinion poll results is through the mainstream media of radio (31.1 percent), newspaper (21.3 percent) and television (17.2 percent). This finding is consistent with the argument that public opinion polling and the media are related (Mann and Orenn, 1992; Rogers 1949a). It is also consistent with theories such as framing, which defines it as the way the media leaves a memorable impression on audiences by emphasizing certain concepts while ignoring others (Paletz and Vinson, 1996). This implies that during the election period, the traditional media might have framed opinion polls in a way that emphasized opinion polls, through salience and frequency, thus making them memorable to audiences.

4.4.4. Whether the public pays attention to media analyses of opinion polls

The respondents were asked to state whether they pay attention to media analyses of public opinion

polls. 53.7 percent of the respondents said that they do, while 46.3 percent said that they do not.

See table 4.14 below.

Table 4.14: Attention to Media Analyses of Public Opinion Polls

Media analysis of opinion polls	Frequency	Percentage %
No	468	46.3
Yes	543	53.7
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.14 above shows the responses of the voting Kenyan public when they were asked if they paid attention to media analysis of opinion polls. 53.7 percent said they did, while 46.3 percent said they did not. The response to this question justifies the claim why governments are afraid of the publication of polls in the media, as they do influence voting behavior (Converse, 1964). Conversely, the response also shows how the media can be positive because it stimulates the public conscience in politics during elections (Genovese and Straub, 2004). Conversely, the negative response also implies that the media are not trustworthy as sources of public opinion results. This is worrying in light of the place of the media in society, which Habermas (1989) describes as a public sphere that citizens use to correct the ills by the state.

4.4.5: Key issues highlighted in media analyses of public opinion polls

As a follow-up to point 4.4.2 above, respondents were asked to state the key issues captured in media analyses of public opinion polls. 66 percent of the respondents said that it is the media analyses opinion polls as a competition or horse-race between political candidates. 31 percent of the respondents said that the media uses public opinion polls to analyse profiles of political candidates. Three percent of respondents said that the media will use opinion polls to analyse the mandate of political candidates. See table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Explanation on key issues highlighted by media analyses on opinion polls

Issues in Media Analysis of Opinion Polls	Frequency	Percentage %
Politics (horse-race between candidates)	670	66
Profiles of political candidates	315	31
Mandate of political candidates	26	3
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

The details in table 4.15 above shows responses of the Kenyan public when asked to state the key issues that the media highlight when analyzing opinion polls. 66 percent of the respondents believe the analyses of public opinion poll results published in the media focus on the horse-race aspect. 3 percent of the respondents said that it focuses on the mandate of office holders. These responses imply that the media has the ability to prime certain issues, such as the horse-race aspect of opinion polls in a way that is easily memorable to their audiences. At the same time, the media can ignore issues, such as the mandate of politicians, thus making them seem

unimportant to audiences. This finding is consistent with the media framing and priming theories (Iyengar and Kinder, 1897; Graber, 1998). Thus, during the December 2012- February 2013 election period, the Kenyan media succeeded in using public opinion polls to prime certain political issues thus leaving them memorable to audiences, while at the same they ignored others.

4.4.6.: Accuracy of media analyses of public opinion polls

The respondents were asked to state whether media analyses of public opinion are accurate. 56.5 percent of the respondents said that they are, while 43.5 percent said that the analyses are not. See table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: Accuracy of opinion polls results published in the media

Accuracy of media analyses of opinion polls results published in the media	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	571	56.5
No	440	43.5
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

The details of table 4.16 above show the responses of the voting Kenyan public when asked if they consider media analyses of opinion polls accurate. 56.5 percent of the respondents said that they are, while 43.5 percent said that they are not. This implies that the Kenyan public is comfortable with how the Kenyan media interprets opinion poll results, though they need to

improve. This confirms the theory that the media can play a key role in the democratic process by reporting opinion polls in an analytical and unbiased manner (Camp, 1996).

4.4.7. Explanation on whether media analyses of public opinion polls are accurate

The respondents were asked to explain whether media analyses of public opinion polls are accurate. The objective is to assess Kenyan pollsters that the public consider credible. 51 percent of the respondents said that the analyses are accurate, as the Kenya media is a more credible source of information than friends and family. 23 percent said that the media owned by politicians will only analyse opinion polls favouring their owner, but marginalize those with opposing results. 14 percent of the respondents said that the public opinion polls analyzed in the media are accurate as they exist as a watchdog for the general public. 12 percent of the respondents said that the media only reports, but does not analyse public opinion polls. See table 4.17 below.

Table 4.17: Explanation on whether media analyses of public opinion polls are accurate

Whether media analyses of public opinion polls results are accurate	Frequency	Percentage %
They are correct as the media is a more accurate source of credible information than friends and family	511	51
The media exist as a watchdog for the general public, thus their analyses of public opinion polls appear objective	142	14

The Kenyan media just report but do not analyse the methodology of opinion polls: questions asked by pollsters, design, population, sample, margin of error or critique the meaning behind poll results	123	12
It appears that some media, which are owned by certain politicians, will only analyse the opinion polls that favour the owner, thus marginalizing or leaving out polls those who have opposing results	235	23
Total	1011	100

Source:Field survey, 2015

Table 4.17 above shows explanations of the respondents when asked to explain whether media analyses of public opinion polls are accurate. 51 percent, of the respondents said that the results are accurate as the media is an objective platform for channelingpublic opinion polls. However, 12 percent of the respondents explained that the media only report but do not analyse public opinion polls. 23 percent of the respondents said that the media shuts out those polls which do not reflect their editorial policy. What these results imply is that in Kenya, the public will have a preference for a media house that reflects opinion of the masses, rather than those of the elite. This reinforces the view that scientific polls are more accurate assessments of public opinion than the media and interest groups (Gallup and Rae, 1940, p.25).Moreover, this finding also implies that the public are interested in knowing the methodology of polls, which some of the media ignores.

4.5.: Findings on the Factors that Influence Public Perception on Kenyan Opinion Polls

4.5.1: Whether the public voted in the 2013 general election

The respondents were asked to state if they voted in the 2013 general election. The objective of this question was to find out the factors that the voting public perceive to influence how pollsters collect public opinion. 74.3 percent of the respondents said that they voted in the 2013 general election, while 25.7 percent said that they did not. See table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18: Voters who cast their ballot in the 2013 general election

Voters who voted in the 2013 general election	Frequency	Percentage%
Yes	751	74.3
No	260	25.7
Total	1011	100

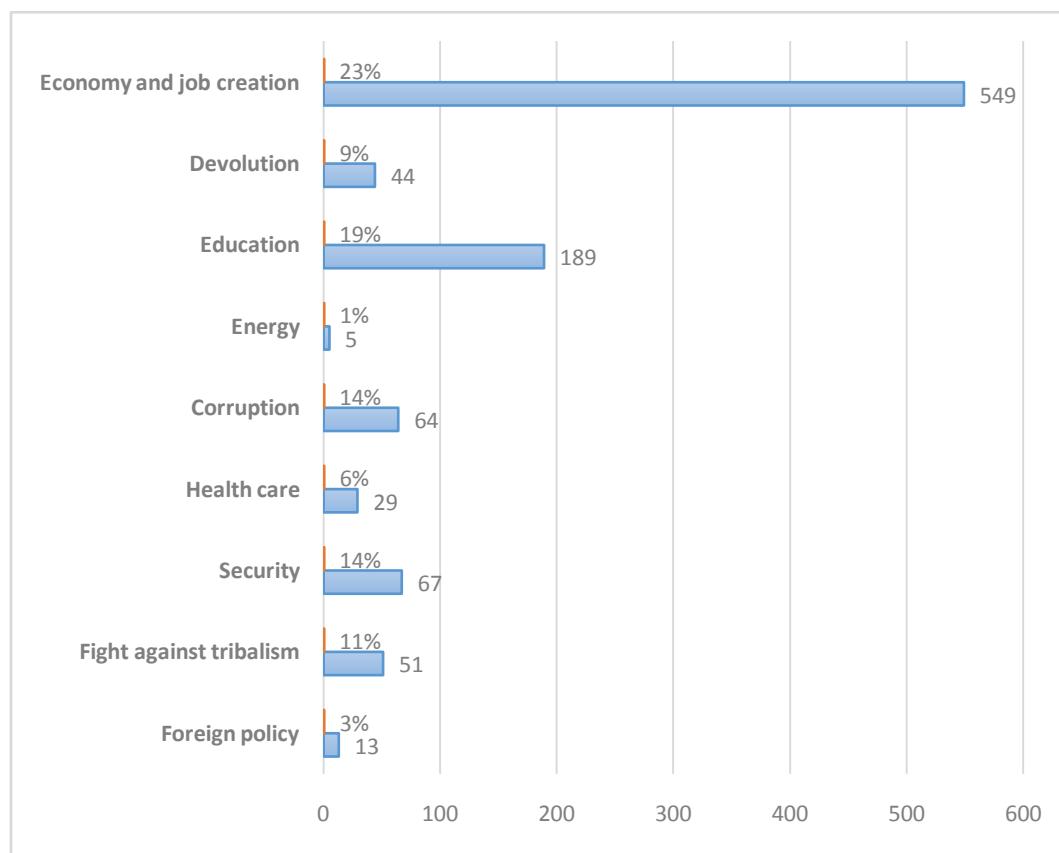
Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.18 above shows responses of the public when asked to state if they had voted in the 2013 general election. 68.3 percent of the respondents said they did, while 31.7 percent replied that they did not. This is consistent with the IEBC's results that there was a high voter turnout in the 2013 general election (IEBC, 2013). The purpose of this question was an attempt by the researcher to test the relationship between pollsters' results prior to voting in the general election, and the voting public with the aim of testing the factors that influence public perception on Kenyan opinion polls. Another reason was to test the effect of public opinion poll results, whether they result in either the bandwagon or underdog effects in the Kenyan voters.

4.5.2.Key issues prior to the 2013 general election

The respondents were asked to the key issues prior to the 2013 general election. The objective was find out the factors that the voting public perceive to influence how pollsters collect public opinion.23 percent of the respondents said that it was the economy, 19 percent said it was education while 14 percent said that was security. 14 percent of the respondents said that was corruption, 11 percent said it was the fight against tribalism, 6 percent said that it was health care. 3 percent of the respondents said that it was foreign policy while 1 percent said it was energy. See figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2.: Key issues during the 2013 general election



Source: Field survey, 2015.

The details of figure 4.2 above show the responses of the voting Kenyan public regarding the key issues prior to the 2013 general election. Findings show that there were nine key issues. Majority or 23 percent of the respondents said that employment and job creation was the key issue. This was followed by 14 percent of the respondents, who said that security was a key issue. These responses are consistent with the argument that pollsters usually poll opinions that do not reflect the public's view, instead focusing on polling questions that please those who pay them (Payne, 1951). The findings also contradict the confusion theory, which argues that the elite should not make decisions based on public opinion polls (Rogers, 1949a). In the future, there is a need to ensure that pollsters poll the public on issues that affect them directly.

4.5.3. Explanation on key issues prior to the 2013 general election

The respondents were asked to explain the political issues that were key or sources of current issues prior to the 2013 general election. 23 percent of the respondents explained that future leaders should uplift the economy and increase job opportunities for the youth. 19 percent of the respondent wanted future leaders to improve education by reducing frequent teacher strikes. 14 percent of the respondents said that was increased insecurity in the country. Nine percent of the respondents said that devolution should be well-implemented. Six percent of the respondents said that free maternity health care and affordable health care were health issues of concern prior to the 2013 general election. See table 4.19 below.

Table 4.19: An Explanation of Key Issues during the 2013 General Election

Key issues	Frequency	Percentage %
Kenyans were more concerned with how services and national resources would be equitably devolved to the county level	44	9
Kenyans wanted to be assured that the incoming leaders should be able to uplift their standards of living by lowering the costs of consumer goods and increase job opportunities for both the educated and uneducated youth	189	19
Kenyans were concerned about reducing frequent teacher strikes which paralyzed learning for their children, and hoped for better quality of education and government allocation for more spots to secondary student hopefuls	549	19
They hoped that there would be less electricity blackouts and power bills, paying less for kerosene and marketing the distribution of oil exports	5	1
Free maternity healthcare, shortage of medical centers and staff and affordable insurance for the common person in the future	29	6
Kenyans were concerned about the efforts of the government to curb the spread of illegal local gangs, drug trafficking, theft,	67	14

terrorism and cattle rusting in urban and rural areas		
There were many cases of corruption	64	14
Kenyans felt that the future leader should prioritize favourable political and economic treaties (Rome Statute, EAC and EU trade) to Kenya	13	3
There should be an increased fight against nepotism and job allocation due to ethnicity	51	11
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

The details of table 4.19 above show that the Kenyan voting public is concerned more with political issues that affect them directly. Nineteen percent of the respondents said that they were concerned with education. 14 percent of the respondents said they were concerned with security. 14 percent said implementation of devolution, while nine percent said they preferred healthcare issues. These issues are more expansive than what Kenyan pollsters found when they polled public opinion during the December 2012 to February 2013 period (Daily Nation, 2013). This reinforces the view that in polling there is a problem of non-attitudes (Gallup, 1947). However, it can be solved if pollsters design their research questions based on what affects the public. This is what is referred to as social innovation. This refers to that is, polling the public on issues that they consider beneficial (Gallup and Rae, 1940). Thus, issue-based politics is a factor that the voting public perceive to be a determinant of the type of information pollsters should collect from them.

4.5.4. Whether public opinion polls influenced voting behaviour in the 2013 general election

The respondents were asked to state whether public opinion polls influenced their voting behaviour in the 2013 general election. 11.7 percent of the respondents said yes, while 88.3 percent said no. See table 4.20 below.

Table 4.20: Influence of public opinion polls on voting behavior

Whether opinion polls influenced voting in the 2013 general election	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	118	11.7
No	893	88.3
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.20 above shows the responses of Kenyan voting public when asked to state whether opinion polls influenced their voting behaviour in the 2013 general election. From the findings, 11.7 percent of the respondents agreed, while 88.3 percent do not agree. This implies that though opinion polls determines voting behaviour of Americans, in Kenya, it does not. Thus, this finding contradicts the claim by Campbell et al. (1960) that public opinion polling in Kenya determines voting behavior. It further contradicts the bandwagon literature, which defines it is a situation where the information about majority opinion itself causes some people to adopt the majority view (Marsh, 1984).

4.5.5. How public opinion polls influenced voting behaviour in the 2013 general election

The respondents were asked to explain how public opinion polls influenced voting behaviour in the 2013 general election. 44 percent of the respondents said that they will let public opinion polls guide their vote if their favourite politician praises the surveys. 22 percent of the respondents said that people who do not have little or no clue on the issues will vote guided by public opinion polls. 20 percent of the people who participate in pollsters' surveys will be stimulated to vote. 14 percent of the respondents said that opinion polls published or broadcasted in the media influenced their voting behaviour. See table 4.21 below.

Table 4.21: How public opinion polling influences votingbehaviour

How public opinion polling influences voting	Frequency	Percentage %
People who had noclue on the prevailing political issues were guided by public opinion polls	220	22
Heavy consumers of mass media were influenced by polls either broadcasted or published prior to the 2013 election	141	14
People who heard their favourite politicians praising public opinion polls results were motivated to use them as a guide on how to vote	450	44
People who participated in pollsters' surveys were stimulated to vote	200	20
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.21 above shows the details of the respondents when asked how public opinion polling influences voting. 44.5 percent of the respondents said that this occurs because of their politicians, who might either praise polls, thus influencing their supporters to vote in the same fashion. This is consistent with the claim by Jacobs and Shapiro (2000) that politicians have an influence on their constituents, thus having the ability to sway their vote. It further reinforces the confusion theory of public opinion polling by Rogers (1949a), which argues that politicians use poll results to manipulate the public because the latter lack the knowledge to evaluate policies on their own.

4.5.6. How public opinion polling did not influence voting behaviour in the 2013 general election

The respondents were asked to explain how public opinion polling did not influence their voting behaviour in the 2013 general election. 51 percent of the respondents said that public opinion polls did not cover the entire scope of political issues that affected the common Kenyan. 30 percent of the respondents chose to vote for a political candidate whose ranking in the opinion polls was not high. 19 percent of respondents said that it was likely that educated people cast their vote for candidates with whom they shared a common platform and ignored those favoured by public opinion poll results. See table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22: How public opinion polling did not influence votingbehaviour in the 2013 general election

How public opinion polling does not influence votingbehaviour	Frequency	Percentage %
People chose to vote for a political candidate whose ranking in opinion polls was not high	307	30
Opinion polls results did not cover the entire the scope of political issues affecting the common Kenyan	514	51
Educated people most likely cast their vote for candidates with whom they shared a common platform and ignored those favoured by public opinion poll results	190	19
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4.22 above shows the responses of Kenyans when asked to explain how public opinion poll results did not influence their voting behaviour in the 2013 general election. This finding implies that Kenyan opinion polls in the 2013 general election had an underdog effect on the voters as they did not influence their ballot. This is because voters cast the vote tactically or strategically, for the underdog candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta, who most pollsters, except IpsosSynovate, had predicted would not win. This finding thus contradicts the argument that opinion polling is a device for influencing public opinion (Hitchens, 2009). However, the finding is consistent with the underdog literature, which argues that the minority will vote against the perceived majority opinion (Perse, 2001).

4.6: Public Suggestions on How to Improve Public Opinion Polls

4.6.1. Recommendations on how to make public opinion polls more credible

The respondents were asked to recommend how public opinion polls more credible in the future. 37 percent of the respondents said that pollsters should try to educate the public more about research methodology used to conduct their surveys. 25 percent of the respondents said that pollsters can educate the media on how to report and analyse opinion poll results. 17 percent of respondents said that pollsters can avoid the pressure of pleasing those who commission them to conduct surveys and instead focus on data collection to guide their results. 11 percent of respondents said that pollsters can reduce bias in data collection through better question wording. 10 percent of respondents said that pollsters should reduce bias in data collection through better question wording in their research instruments. See table 4.23 below.

Table 4.23: Recommendations on how to make opinion polling in Kenya more credible.

Recommendations on how to make public opinion polling in Kenya more credible.	Frequency	Percentage %
Pollsters should try to educate the public more about research methodology used to conduct their surveys	372	37
Pollsters can educate the media on how to report and analyze opinion poll results	255	25
Pollsters can avoid the pressure of pleasing those who commission them to conduct surveys and instead focus on data	168	17

collection to guide their results		
Pollsters should collect views on public issues from Kenyans on the ground	105	10
Pollsters should reduce bias in data collection through better question wording in their research instruments	111	11
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Table 4.23 above shows the suggestions of Kenyan voting public on how to improve the practice of public opinion polling in the future. 37 percent of the respondents said that pollsters should try to educate the public more about research methodology used to conduct their surveys. This view is consistent with the argument by Blumler (1948), who claims that opinion polls should be scientific. Furthermore, this finding is consistent with the view that opinion poll results are often viewed with much skepticism, as majority of the public are often ignorant of the fundamental principles of statistical sampling (Bogart, 1972). Public opinion poll methodologies have many errors due to such factors as inadequate sample size and question wording. This is why the 2012 Publication of Electoral Opinion Polls Act in Kenya seeks to correct this anomaly in the opinion polling industry.

4.6.2. Recommendations on how the media can effectively report public opinion polls

The respondents were asked to give recommendations on how the media can effectively report public opinion polls. 25 percent of the respondents said that editors can assign journalists with research training to report and analyze opinion polls. 45 percent of the respondents the focus for journalists should be more on educating the public about methodology of polls rather than focus

on horse-racing reporting. 14 percent of the respondents said that journalists can help the public be more informed about current issue-based political issues so that voters can be more active when responding to pollsters. 14 percent of the respondents said that news producers can invite experts and stakeholders on public opinion polls to analyse them in their television programs. Two percent of the respondents said that television news programs should focus on more objective political debate that will enable voters to make informed decision when pollsters ask their questions. See table 4.24 below.

Table 4.24: Recommendations on How to Improve Media Effectiveness While Reporting on Public Opinion Polls

Recommendations on how to make the way media reports on opinion polls more effective	Frequency	Percentage %
Editors can assign journalists with research training to report and analyze opinion polls	252	25
News producers can invite experts and stakeholders on opinion polls to analyse them in their news programs	141	14
The focus for journalists should be more on educating the public about methodology of polls (design, target population, sampling error, weighting and data collection methods used by pollsters) rather than focus on horse-racing reporting	460	45
Journalists can help the public be more informed about current	140	14

issue-based political issues so that voters can be more active when responding to pollsters		
Television news programs should focused on more objective political debate that will enable voters to make informed decision when pollsters ask their questions	18	2
Total	1011	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

The details in Table 4.24 above shows the responses of the Kenyan public when asked to recommend how the media can effectively report public opinion polls in the future. 45 percent of the respondents said that the focus for journalists should be more on educating the public about methodology of polls rather than on horse-racing reporting. This finding is also consistent with studies which argue that the media should focus on analyzing the methodology behind opinion polls (Welch 2012; Salwen; 1985). It is also consistent with the view that while it is impossible for the media to be partly responsible for opinion poll results, it advised that they be sensitive to political issues affecting the public so that can positively influence public opinion (Brady et al., 1992).

4.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this chapter can be summarized in four key points. First, that the voting Kenyan public comprising of both high and low education levels have low levels of confidence in Kenyan public opinion polls. Second, that this demographic perceive a few Kenyan pollsters as credible, such as IpsosSynovate, IHRC, TNS-RMS and Consumer Insight.

Third, the Kenyan voting public think that issue-based politics and the media are the factors influencing their perception on Kenyan opinion polls. Fourth, the Kenyan voting public think that with more scientific rigour in how opinion polls are designed and conducted by pollsters, public education as well as analytical reporting of opinion polls by the media can improve public opinion polling in Kenya. The effect would be to positively change their attitudes regarding public opinion polls.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

This chapter provides the discussion and interpretation of data analyzed in the previous chapter. These in turn relate to the objectives, research questions and literature review. From this chapter, there emerges a conclusion and recommendations for future research.

This study sought to critically analyze the public perceptions of public opinion polling in Kenya by focusing on the 2013 general election. The objectives were to evaluate public attitudes on opinion polls in Kenya, to establish levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls, to test which Kenyan pollsters are regarded as more or less credible by the public, to determine what factors influence the public perceptions on Kenyan opinion polls and gather public suggestions on how to improve public opinion polling in Kenya.

5.1. Conclusions of the Study

5.1.1. Levels of Public Confidence on the Authenticity of Kenyans Public Opinion Polls

Findings of the study show that the Kenyan public is not confident about the authenticity of public opinion polls during the December 2012 to February 2013 period. For instance, despite taking part in opinion polls, 12.8 percent of the public know what public opinion polling is, while 87.2 percent do not. This confirms the view that though the public take part in public opinion surveys, few understand what it means (Zaller, 1994). It is also consistent with studies on non-attitudes, which define this as a situation where people lack knowledge on an issue, yet

respond to a survey question as if they do (Fishkin, 2012). This implies that the results of public opinion polls are suspect because they are based on a weak ground.

43 percent of the respondents explained that public opinion polling comprises what politicians think put pay pollsters to publish. This implies that they see pollsters as puppets rather than collectors of their true views and thus forms the basis of their low confidence in polls. This supports the confusion theory of public opinion polling, which argues that polls are what politicians manipulate pollsters to poll, by collecting the aggregated opinions of the public that support their views (Page and Shapiro, 1983). Thus, this implies that the Kenyan pollsters are not subjective as their results do not reflect the views of the public. However, this finding is consistent with the argument that pollsters do skew results for those who commission the opinion polls (Battersby, 2013).

Thus, most Kenyans believe that public opinion polls are subjective. This occurs when the pollsters expect the public to answers that those who commission polls expect the public to be asked, yet the latter have no knowledge on. This is also referred to as the problem of non-attitudes (Fishkin, 2012). Hence, respondents may feel inclined to provide personal opinions rather than facts to the question posed by pollsters. This confirms the view that polls may have a validity problem caused by pollsters (Bourdieu, 1979; Brady et al., 1992). Respondents felt that polls are also biased. 71.2 percent of respondents said that they believe public opinion polling is biased, thus implying that those who accuse local pollsters to be biased might be right. It is thus consistent with (Mutiga, 2013) who argues that Kenyan polls were in 2007 biased towards politicians who commissioned them.

5.1.2. Pollsters that Kenyans Consider to be Credible

Credibility refers to the condition of being reputable or believable, resulting in trustworthiness (Oxford, 2009). During the December 2012 to February 2013 period, the public considered three pollsters to be credible: IpsosSynovate, Infotrac Harris Research and Consulting and Consumer Insight. 35 percent of respondents considered the polling results from IpsosSynovate more accurate than others, followed by 33 percent who prefer those of IHRC. 23 percent of the respondents prefer Consumer Insight. Confidence in these pollsters has to do with three factors: use of scientific methodology as stipulated in the Publication of Electoral Opinion Polls Act 2012, consistently publishing polling results in the media and the ability to accurately predict an election outcome. This confirms the view that errors in opinion polls can be reduced if the scientific methodology used is accurate (McNair, 2013).

Furthermore, lack of credibility arises when public opinion poll results are published in the media, thus confirming the view of the relationship between the two industries (Mann and Orenn, 1992; Rogers 1949a). 31.1 percent of the respondents said that their main source of opinion poll results is through the mainstream media of radio, while 21.3 percent prefer newspapers. 17.2 percent prefer the medium of television. This finding is consistent with argument that public opinion polling and the media are related (Mann and Orenn, 1992; Rogers 1949a). It is also consistent with theories such as media framing, which can be defined as the way the media leaves a memorable impression on audiences by emphasizing certain concepts, while ignoring others (Paletz and Vinson, 1996). This implies that during the election period, the traditional media might have framed opinion polls in a way that emphasized opinion polls, through salience and frequency, thus making them memorable to audiences.

Findings show that though the media created schemas of public of opinion polls results, there is a for the press to frame political issues that affect the public. Respondents were asked to state the key issues captured in media analyses of public opinion polls. 66 percent of the respondents said that it is the media analyses of opinion polls as a competition or horse-race between political candidates. 31 percent of the respondents said that the media uses public opinion polls to analyse profiles of political candidates. Three percent of respondents said that the media will use opinion polls to analyse the mandate of political candidates.

These responses imply that the media has the ability to prime certain issues, such as the horse-race aspect of opinion polls in a way that become easily memorable to their audiences. At the same time, the media can ignore issues, such as the mandate of politicians, thus making them seem unimportant to audiences. This finding is consistent with the media framing and priming theories (Iyengar and Kinder, 1897; Graber, 1998). Thus, during the December 2012- February 2013 election period, the Kenyan media succeeded in using public opinion polls to prime certain political issues thus leaving them memorable to audiences, while at the same they ignored others. This worrying as the media may fail in their role as a public sphere if they do not correct the ills in the society by not scrutinize the methodology used by pollsters (Habermas, 1989). If they did, they could perhaps unravel whether results are skewed, whether the sample used was representative or whether there was a problem of non-attitudes.

Thus, are the media analyses public opinion polls accurate? 51 percent of the respondents said that the analyses are accurate, as the Kenya media is a more credible source of information than friends and family. 23 percent of the respondents said that the media owned by politicians will

only analyse opinion polls favouring their owner, but marginalize those with opposing results. 14 percent of the respondents said that the public opinion polls analyzed in the media are accurate as the press exists as a watchdog for the general public. 12 percent of the respondents said that the media only reports, but does not analyse public opinion polls. What these results imply is that in Kenya, the public will have a preference for a media house that reflects opinion of the masses, rather than those of the elite. This reinforces the view that scientific polls are more accurate assessments of public opinion than the media and interest groups (Gallup and Rae, 1940). Moreover, these findings further imply that the public are interested in knowing the methodology of polls, which some of the media ignores.

5.1.3. Factors that Influence Public Perception on Kenyan Opinion Polls

The confusion theory of public opinion polling argues that the latter should not be used by political leaders to dictate how they should rule, as public attitudes constantly change (Rogers, 1949a). This implies that opinion poll results cannot be relied on to influence public policy formulation. Yet, findings of the study show that this is the opposite in Kenya. This is because the public believe that there are two factors that should influence pollsters to collect public opinion. These are issue-based politics and how the media reports and analyses of public affairs.

The respondents were asked to the key issues prior to the 2013 general election. The objective was to find out the factors that the voting public perceive to influence how pollsters collect public opinion. Findings show that there were nine key issues. 23 percent of the respondents said that it was the economy, 19 percent said it was education while 14 percent said that was security. 14 percent of the respondents said that was corruption, 11 percent said it was the fight against

tribalism, 6 percent said that it was health care. 3 percent of the respondents said that it was foreign policy while 1 percent said it was energy. These responses are consistent with the argument that pollsters usually poll opinions that do not reflect the public's view, instead focusing on polling questions that please those who pay them (Payne, 1951). The findings also contradict the confusion theory, which argues that the elite should not make decisions based on public opinion polls (Rogers, 1949a). In the future, there is a need to ensure that pollsters poll the public on issues that affect them directly

The respondents were asked to state whether public opinion polls influenced their voting behaviour in the 2013 general election. 11.7 percent of the respondents said yes, while 88.3 percent said no. Thus, this finding contradicts the claim by Campbell et al. (1960) that public opinion polling in Kenya determines voting behavior. It further contradicts the bandwagon literature, which defines it as a situation where the information about majority opinion itself causes some people to adopt the majority view (Marsh, 1984). Respondents gave conditions under which bandwagon can occur. 44 percent of the respondents said that they will let public opinion polls guide their vote if their favourite politician praises the surveys. 22 percent of the respondents said that people who do not have little or no clue on the issues will vote guided by public opinion polls. 20 percent of the people who participate in pollsters' surveys will be stimulated to vote. 14 percent of the respondents said that opinion polls published or broadcasted in the media influenced their voting behaviour.

However, as Kenyan pollsters such as IHRC and TNS-RMS had predicted that Raila Odinga would win the 2013 general election, the surprise was when Uhuru Kenyatta won with a 50.07

percent vote. Thus, findings from the study show that in the 2013 general election, public opinion polls had an underdog effect on most voters. The underdog effect refers to a situation where the information about majority opinion itself causes some people to adopt the minority position (Perse, 2001). In Kenya, this was exemplified when most of the local pollsters failed to make an accurate prediction of the presidential candidate who would win the 2013 general election. Instead, Kenyans voted strategically for the underdog candidate, Kenyatta. The respondents were asked to explain how this underdog effect occurred.

51 percent of the respondents said that public opinion polls did not cover the entire scope of political issues that affected the common Kenyan. 30 percent of the respondents said that they chose to vote for a political candidate whose ranking in the opinion polls was not high. 19 percent of respondents said that it was likely that educated people cast their vote for candidates with whom they shared a common platform and ignored those favoured by public opinion poll results. This finding thus contradicts the argument that polling is a device for influencing public opinion (Hitchens, 2009). However, it also implies that in the 2017 general election, public opinion pollsters can try to assess which of these underdog effects can be transformed into a bandwagon effect and lead voters to vote strategically. It also implies that 50.07 percent of vote who strategically cast their vote for Kenyatta might have thought his manifesto resonated with the needs of the common Kenyan.

5.1.4. Recommendations on How to Improve Public Opinion Polling Practice in Kenya

Findings of the study shows that the public opinion polling industry is relevant to the country's democratic process (Gallup and Rae, 1940). This is despite respondents not being confident of

public opinion poll results published in the media prior to an election, as they often contradict official election results from the IEBC. Thus, respondents gave the following recommendations that can lead to its improvement. The respondents were asked to recommend how public opinion polls more credible in the future. 37 percent of the respondents said that pollsters should try to educate the public more about research methodology used to conduct their surveys. 25 percent of the respondents said that pollsters can educate the media on how to report and analyse opinion poll results. 17 percent of respondents said that pollsters can avoid the pressure of pleasing those who commission them to conduct surveys and instead focus on data collection to guide their results. 11 percent of respondents said that pollsters can reduce bias in data collection through better question wording. 10 percent of respondents said that pollsters should reduce bias in data collection through better question wording in their research instruments. These are factors that have been stipulated in the Publication of Electoral Public Opinion Poll Act (2012) and they put emphasis on the independence of pollsters to ensure credible results. This finding is important as it implies that the public feels that Kenyan pollsters might have made a mistake in their methodology prior to the 2013 general election. The Kenyan public therefore is offering pollsters advice that they can use to reclaim their credibility in the 2017 general election.

As the media is an outlet for public opinion poll results, the public recommends that it can be more effective when reporting polls in the future. 25 percent of the respondents said that editors can assign journalists with research training to report and analyze opinion polls. 45 percent of the respondents the focus for journalists should be more on educating the public about methodology of polls rather than focus on horse-racing reporting. 14 percent of the respondents said that journalists can help the public be more informed about current issue-based political issues so that

voters can be more active when responding to pollsters. 14 percent of the respondents said that news producers can invite experts and stakeholders on public opinion polls to analyse them in their television programs. Two percent of the respondents said that television news programs should focus on more objective political debate that will enable voters to make informed decision when pollsters ask their questions. These findings are consistent with literature review. For instance, studies argue that the media should focus on analyzing the methodology behind opinion polls (Welch 2012; Salwen; 1985). Other studies argue that while it is impossible for the media to be partly responsible for opinion poll results, they can instead be sensitive to the issues involved so that they can positively influence public opinion (Brady et al., 1992). Thus, prior to the 2017 general election, Kenyan pollsters and media can use these recommendations. This is because they can be used to educate and inform voters about the election using public opinion polls.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research question, *what are the levels of public confidence on the authenticity of Kenyan polls?* The study showed that though the Kenyan public is aware about the practice of public opinion, they have low confidence in it. This finding is inconsistent with the pluralist position of public opinion polling literature, which argues that the public use opinion polls as a device for conveying their true sentiments about issues that concern them (Gallup and Rae, 1940). It is also consistent with the argument that majority of the public view public opinion polls with skepticism (McNair, 2003). Thus, the study can make two recommendations that to restore public confidence in opinion polls, pollsters should focus their data collection on what is relevant to the daily lives of the voting Kenyan public, rather than those who commission

the polls. It also means that pollsters should focus on making sure that their methodology is based on scientific rigour and is well explained to the public, thus able to withstand scrutiny.

Based on the findings of the second research question, *does the Kenyan public consider opinion polls as more credible or less credible?* The study showed that they do when published in the traditional media. This comprises newspaper, radio and television. This is consistent with the agenda-setting role of the press, which argues that though the press can tell the people what to think, it can influence what they think about (McCombs, 1972). It is also consistent with the argument that the media can have a positive influence on the election process because it stimulates the public conscience in politics (Genovese and Straub, 2004). Thus, the study seeks to make two recommendations: that part of the strategy to make opinion polls credible is to have them published in the media. However, the media should convey what is accurate, newsworthy and relevant to the public. This involves going beyond the normal function of reporting and making an informed analysis such as questioning the methodology of polls.

Based on findings of the third research question, *what factors influence public perceptions on Kenyan opinion polls?* The study found that these determinants are the media and issue-based politics. This response is consistent with the claim by various researchers that pollsters usually poll opinions that are relevant to those who commission them but not the general public (Sam Gill, 1947; Payne 1951 and Converse 1964). This explains why the results of many pollsters in Kenya often contradict official results from the IEBC. It also means that the respondents of public opinion polls offer non-attitudes or responses to questions that they have little knowledge on. Fortunately, this can be solved, in a term that Gallup and Rae (1940) refers to as “social

innovation” This is what is referred to as social innovation, that is , polling the public, on issues that have defined and consider beneficial. Though the problem of non-attitudes is a reality in the industry, it can be remedied if the media were first to educate the public on what is happening during the electioneering period. The study also found that in the 2013 Kenyan general election, public opinion polls had an underdog effect. This mean that 50.1 percent of 14.3 million Kenyans voters chose to vote for a political candidate who was not favoured in the polls. It thus contradicts the argument that public opinion polling is a device for influencing opinion (Hitchens, 2009). This shows that pollsters need to offer a balanced report of all their candidates when they publish their polls. The media could further refrain from horse-race journalism, which perpetuates the bandwagon and underdog effects, which then cast a bad light on the pollster incase their results contradict official ones.

In 2007 and 2013, pollsters such as Infotruk Harris Research Consulting were accused by the public of publishing incorrect results as they contradicted official ones from IEBC based on the election outcome. Based on literature review, part of the reason that pollsters encounter harshness from the public is because the latter do not understand principles of sampling (Bogart, 1972). For instance, how can 1,500 people adequately represent 14.3 million Kenyan voters? In addition survey research methods used by pollsters are not perfect, thus bound to make their results unreliable (McNair, 2003). In the process, the media as a medium of communication, gets pulled in the blame-game. It is for these reasons that the study wishes to make the following recommendations: that polls can embark on a education campaign for the public prior to an election. This campaign can focus on what comprises the principles of sampling and the rest of methodology involving polls. The media can also be educated on the same to enhance their

coverage. This move mitigates the potential conflict that may arise if the results by pollsters contradict official ones after an election.

5.3. Proposed Areas for Further Research

This study was confined to an election period of December 2012 to February 2013. Future research could focus on the time prior to after this period. This is with the objective of establishing the state of public opinion. That is whether it remained the same or was subject to other influences.

Though there have been numerous studies on the relationship between media and public opinion polling during elections in other countries, there ought to be others to assess the agenda-setting function of the press in Kenya. Such studies would be useful from a local context as they would enable future researchers to identify agenda-setting strategies in forthcoming elections, such as the 2017 one, and referenda.

The study focused on the comparative performance of Kenyan pollsters. In the future, a pollster can serve as a case study for a researcher seeking to understand how all opinion polls are conducted from an organizational perspective.

5.4. Contributions to Future Study

The findings of this study can be used by policy makers as a basis for future research in opinion polling. This way, they will understand the context through which public opinion polling is created, such as media, government, political parties and non-government organizations.

The findings of this study will also add to the body of research on the Kenyan public opinion polling industry, which is still a grey area. Future will be able to understand the practice of public opinion from a Kenyan context of, especially with regard to local attitudes, media and politics. Thus researchers will use this study as theoretical base, either accepting or denying its findings.

The study will also form literature on how to improve the practice of public opinion polling in Kenya. It will thus make pollster to be more conscious that their methodology is accurate to avoid lowering the confidence of Kenyans. It will also serve as a guide for media practitioners who use polls as a source of news.

5.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study provided conclusions, recommendations, areas and contributions for further research. Public opinion is an important aspect of the democratic process. The pluralist position, with George Gallup as its central figure, for instance, argues that polling allows the citizenry to participate actively and regularly in the decision-making process (Gallup and Rae, 1940). This is enhanced by their scientific rigour. However, the drawback occurs when it emerges that polls are used by those who commission them to manipulate the public. Polling organizations, as businesses, adhere to the saying “the customer is always right” when conducting public opinion polls. It makes sense as to why they may collect and analyse data based on the needs of their clients. However, the question arises when their results contradict official results from the IEBC. Then the public, who serve as respondents for the pollsters, feel cheated as the results do reflect their true opinion, not those of those who commission. It is for this reason that this study recommends how the public opinion polling practice can be improved in the future.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LETTER

CAROLINE W. THEURI

P.O. BOX 29-00100

NAIROBI KENYA

CONTACT:+254 726 276 254

E-MAIL: theuriwcaroline@gmail.com

Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

As part of my Master of Arts (MA) course in Communication Studies, I am expected to undertake a research project of my choice, which is titled, "A Critical Analysis of Public Opinion Polling in Kenya: A Case of the 2013 General Election."

The aim of this letter is to kindly request for your assistance and co-operation to respond to this study. Any information provided will be exclusively used for the above purpose, and, hence be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The study will take place for two weeks.

Yours faithfully,

Caroline W. Theuri.

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please provide the following details about yourself:

1. Gender:

[A] Female

[B] Male

2. Age:

[A] 18-35 years

[B] 36 -50 years

[C] 51 years and above

3. Education level:

[A] Certificate

[B] Diploma

[C] Bachelor's Degree

[D] Master's Degree

[F] PhD

4. What is your county of origin?

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5. Please indicate the political party or coalition that you voted for in the 2013 general election:

[A] Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD)

[B] Jubilee Coalition

[C] Amani Coalition.

[D] National Rainbow Coalition of Kenya (NARC-K)

[E] Alliance for Real Change

[F] Safina.

SECTION B: PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

6. Do you know what public opinion polling is?

[A] Yes [B] No

7. If no, please explain.

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8. Do you think public opinion polling in Kenya is objective?

- [A]. Yes [B] No. [C] Sometimes.

9. Please explain your answer

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10. In your opinion, do you think public opinion polling in Kenya is subjective?

- [A] Yes [B] No [C] Sometimes

11. Please explain your answer above

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12. In your opinion, do you think public opinion polling in Kenya is biased?

- [A] Yes [B] No. [C] Sometimes

SECTION C: CREDIBILITY

13. In your opinion, which public opinion polling firm conducts the most accurate surveys?

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14. Why do you think so?

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15. How do you know about public opinion polls in Kenya?

[A] Through newspapers

[B] Through radio

[C] Through television

[D] Through social media

[E] Through discussion with friends.

[F] Others please specify.....

16. Do you pay any attention to media analyses of public opinion polls?

[A] Yes [B] No.

17. Explain any key issues that you captured from these analyses

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18. In your opinion, are these media analyses of public opinion polls accurate?

[A] Yes [B] No.

19. Give reasons for your response

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SECTION B: PERCEPTION

20. Did you vote in the 2013 general election?

[A] Yes [B] No

21. Please name the public opinion polling firms in Kenya that you know:

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22. What do you think were the key issues during the 2013 Elections?

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23. Briefly explain why you believe these were the key issues during the last elections

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24. Did public opinion polls in Kenya influence how you voted in the 2013 General Elections?

[A] Yes [B] No

25. If yes, how?

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26. If not, why?

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SECTION E: SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

27. What recommendations would you give to make opinion polling in Kenya more credible?

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28. What recommendations would you give on how the media can effectively report public opinion polls?

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Thank you.