

**FREE NEWSPAPER AND READING CULTURE: A CASE
STUDY OF THE PEOPLE DAILY**

BY

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**A research project submitted to the School of Journalism and Mass
Communication, University of Nairobi, in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of a Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies**

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DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been submitted for award of any degree at the University of Nairobi or any other university.

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This research has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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Dedication.

To

My parents, friends and (fr)enemies for their love, encouragement and financial support.

Acknowledgement

This proposal could not have been accomplished without the tireless efforts made by my supervisor, Dr. Kamau Mwangi. Members of faculty staff of the School of Journalism, I thank you most sincerely for your contribution to this work. I also take this opportunity to thank the university librarians at the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library for your support. To my classmates, I thank you for your criticism of this study.

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God bless you all.

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Abstract.

This study seeks to develop and understating of the influence of free newspapers on reading culture. The study is motivated by recent pioneering introduction of a free daily newspaper, a business model different from the traditional paid daily newspapers that have been in existence in Kenya. The study assumes that the business model of news content distribution influences reading culture. Therefore introduction of a free daily newspaper will affect the reading culture. Furthermore it is assumed that how people access and read news content depends on news distribution strategies adopted by content creators, which in turn affects the reading culture because more content is availed to readers. But these assumptions are balanced against the fact that reading culture is dependent on more than availability of free content. Indeed reading culture is composed of a complex set of relationships such as environmental factors, as well as qualities and activities of an individual and therefore reading culture is not static but rather a socialization process just like other cultures. Therefore reading culture needs cultivation for it to become a routine leisure time activity. This means reading culture develops over time, with deep roots in the traditions of a given society, as a system, a highly complex cultural system that involves a great many considerations beyond a free daily newspaper, even though the influence of such free daily newspapers on reading culture cannot be ignored. Additionally this study is wary of the traditional overemphasis of readership and inattention to reading culture by many media scholars. Consequently the purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the effect of free newspapers on reading culture of residents of Nairobi. Specifically the study attempted to find out how introduction of a free daily newspaper, the *People Daily*, is influencing reading culture and describe public perception of free newspapers in Kenya. The study also found out how free newspaper can be used as a channel for distribution of information. The study was guided by three theories, a grand sociological theory — socialization —, information processing theory and a specific mass media theory — uses and gratification. The study used qualitative research methodologies, in particular critical literature review, policy analysis and in-depth interviews. Data was collected through open-ended questions and dialogue with newspaper readers, key informants in the media industry, specifically editors, academicians, school librarians/teachers, and parents. Such in-depth interviews are suitable for the purposes of studying the reading culture because the interviews enabled the researcher to gather data through individual comprehensive description of effect of free newspapers on reading culture, descriptions from which universal meanings can be derived. The study found out that the *People Daily* is changing the reading culture in Kenya, even though mildly. These changes are through innovative newspaper distribution strategies that have increased readership, increased human interest stories and reader loyalty. However the study found that free newspapers are negatively perceived by readers. In addition the study found out various editorial strategies used by publishers to increase readership. Nevertheless the study discovered that efforts by the *People Daily* are not enough to change the reading culture in Kenya and suggests more deliberate reading promotion activities as the best approach to developing an appropriate reading culture.

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Chapter One

Background and Introduction to the study

1.1 Background of the Study

The news media industry operates on two broad business models; the news content can be paid or be free of charge. Consequently, free newspapers are a news distribution model that runs parallel to the traditional model of charging consumers for news access. However the fact that the free newspapers business is a parallel model to paid newspapers does not mean that free newspapers substitute paid for newspapers, other factors have made these two models complementary rather than substitutes (see Vara-Miguel, Sanjurjo, & Díaz-Espina 2014)

Additionally despite the fact that these two business models cut across all news distribution channels, success of the free news model differs from channel to channel. For example in Kenya the television and radio subsectors have successfully used the free news model than the newspaper subsector. In fact all local radio and television channels have successfully run as free to air. Even though the free newspaper model has been experimented in Kenya albeit with small irregular publication like *The Weekly Advertiser* that was published for some time by the Nation Media Group, the recently re-launched *People Daily* is the first daily newspaper with ‘stable’ mass circulation. Nevertheless it is difficult to predict how long the *People Daily* as a free newspaper can maintain this ‘stable’ circulation but it remains factual that it currently has stable circulation (KARF, 2015).

1.1.1 The Free Newspaper-Reading Culture Relationship

The business model of news content distribution in turn influences reading culture. How people access and read news content depends on news distribution strategies adopted by content

creators. It can be assumed that free news business models can influence the reading culture because through this model more content is available to readers. But such a hypothesis is too simplistic since reading culture is dependent on more than availability of content.

The above simplistic hypothesis about reading culture is in contrast to definition of reading by Otike (2011:01) as “an active process, which involves the cognitive processing of information in written form... the process of constructing meaning from written text.” Therefore availability of content is just one among many other factors that can develop a reading culture. Furthermore Makenzi (2004:2) says little is known about the millions of literate adults who rarely pick up a book or open a magazine or about school children for whom reading has come to mean textbooks and little else. This is how complex reading culture is, unlike literacy and illiteracy and readership statistics that are easy to figure out.

As observed by Odingo (2002) the Kenyan Culture encourages [*even though not as much as it should be*] people to spend leisure time in sporting activities, recreational places (bars, hotels) and churches and mosques rather than spending it on reading (emphasis mine). He adds that the absence of a reading culture has hindered Kenyans from appreciating the value of books. It is against this background that this study avoids a settling for a simplistic correlation between free newspapers and reading culture, but prefers to study reading culture as a complex phenomenon with many causative agents such as community and parents.

Indeed reading culture has been defined by Stricevic (2008) as a total of reading habits and interest for reading which entails a continued development and progression from one level to the next as one continues to read and expand their knowledge, a culture that changes and develops as

influenced by numerous factors, such as environmental ones, as well as qualities and activities of an individual. The author adds that reading culture is not static and requires 'feeding' through reading for it not to disappear. Therefore reading culture needs cultivation for it to become a routine leisure time activity.

Similarly Johnson (2002:9) argues reading culture is "a social rather than an individual phenomenon, one that develops over time, with deep roots in the traditions of a given society." He clarifies that "reading is not an act, or even a process, but a system, a highly complex cultural system that involves a great many considerations beyond the decoding by the reader of the words of the (author's) text" meaning "reading culture" is wider than "literacy" and in this case newspaper readership, which has been overemphasized by media institutions, especially advertisers, as a measure of success of newspapers in Kenya. This overemphasis of readership neglects reading culture which is the foundation on which readership is based. Accordingly Johnsons (2002) agrees with Stricevic (2008) that reading involves many variables, that there are in fact many types of reading, and that reading is a complex cultural system.

Despite the fact that reading culture has many causative agents, free newspapers can be part of the contributors to a country's reading culture. As a matter of fact as Otike (2011:03) clarifies that:

The promotion of a reading culture cannot take place in a vacuum...it has to be initiated [*by*] a publishing industry, which must engage a cadre of appropriate writers and produce their work in a pleasing form. A system of distribution, which may include bookstores, libraries and newspaper deliveries are needed.

In this regard there is need for detailed research to find out how free newspapers affect the reading culture because free newspapers fall in the category of what Otike (2011:03) describes as

“work in pleasing form” and an appropriate system of “newspaper deliveries” that among other factors affect the reading culture.

1.2 Problem statement

This study aimed at understanding the relationship between free newspapers and reading culture in Kenya. There has been heightened debate following the recent re-launching of the *People Daily* as a free newspaper; bringing to Kenya a newspaper business model that is likely to affect the reading culture of Kenyans. Additionally the effect of free newspapers on reading culture in Kenya is unknown yet this newspaper business model is expected to increase newspaper readership because cost has been identified as a major barrier to newspaper readership (see Mzungu, 2013). Additionally free newspapers are likely to increase readership because it has been found that “out of every 5 weekly newspaper readers, four read multiple newspapers” (Mzungu, 2013), for this reason the *People Daily* as a free newspaper will complement rather than substitute paid for newspapers. As a consequence the *People Daily* will increase the total newspaper readership, among readers who cited “cost as a key barrier towards accessing a newspaper and readers who source for newspapers from other household members and also from the office or workplace” (Mzungu, 2013). Although it is true as explained above that the cost is not the only influence on people’s decision to buy or not to buy newspapers and therefore only one among many other reasons for sharing newspapers, it is also true that free newspapers can increase readership by reaching both readers who previously had access and those who lacked access to paid for newspapers. This complementing nature of free newspapers can increase newspaper reach and have a wider effect by changing not only readership but also the audience’s

reading culture. On account of this, the purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the effect of free newspapers on reading culture of residents of Nairobi.

1.2 Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of this research.

1.2.1 To find out how free newspaper influences reading culture in Kenya

1.2.2 To find out public perception of free newspapers in Kenya

1.2.3 To find out editorial strategies used by free newspapers in Kenya

1.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1.3.1 Can free newspapers influences reading culture?

1.3.2 How does the public perceive the *People Daily*?

1.3.3 Which editorial strategies are used by free newspapers in Kenya?

1.4 Assumption of the study

This study makes one key assumption; there is a relationship between free newspapers and reading culture. This assumption is based on the fact as articulated above that free newspapers complement rather than substitute paid for newspapers and therefore leads to increased readership which in turn affects the society's reading culture.

1.5 Scope and limitations

This study was limited to understanding the reading culture of residents of Nairobi County. The choice of Nairobi rather than the whole country is due to limited time and financial resources. However the finding of this study acts as impetus to other researchers with more time and resources to engage in study of other regions of the country.

1.6 Justification of the study

This study is important because it contributes to filling gaps and generating knowledge about the relations of free newspapers to reading culture. Even though free newspapers is a working business model research has not been done to find out the effect of this model on readership culture.

Additionally this study contributes to generating knowledge that can be used by media institutions to expand the newspaper subsector. As it will be explained later in details, this study was done at a time when newspaper circulation is on a downward trend. Understanding the relationship of free newspapers and reading culture is part of efforts to revitalize the newspaper industry.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study is important because it lays a foundation for research on influence of news media on reading culture. Literature indicates a shortage of similar studies, even though news media are highly expected to affect reading culture. Based on limited studies in news and reading culture, this research establishes new knowledge and strengthens research in reading culture.

The second implication of this study is to newspaper publishers. The findings of this study go a long way in giving publishers information which they can use to develop working business models for newspapers. These findings are even more important because they can be used to rectify the worldwide failing rate of circulation rate.

The third implication of this study is that it provides an understanding of reading culture in Kenya. As will be explained later, reading culture is not only important to newspaper publishers, it is even more important to the educational system. The strength of the reading culture influences educational performance of a nation because educational communication is mainly through reading.

The fourth source of significance of this study is the importance it has in describing the state of reading culture as desirable use of leisure time. Reading as will be described later is a positive leisure time activity, but little is known about influence of newspapers on reading culture in Kenya.

1.8 Definitions of terms

Reading Culture: Reading culture was defined as a culture where out of school reading is a valued habit among members of the society. In such a culture, reading is part of everyday life, not merely part of one aspect of a person's life such as school or work, but reading is a routine leisure time both at home and outside home. Where people read at school, we perceive this reading as school culture, while where people read at work—we perceive it as workplace culture. Therefore a society with a reading culture has reading as people's social life, where reading is not purposive like academic reading but a daily routine.

Free Newspapers: Collins dictionary defines a free newspaper as one that is distributed free, paid for by its advertisers.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.0 The Free Newspaper Business Models

According to various studies conducted on the subject, emergence of free newspapers in the mainstream media is a fairly recent concept. Correia-da-Silva and Resende (2013) identify the first modern freely distributed newspaper as the *Metro Stockholm* released in Sweden in 1995. In Kenya this business model is even more recent because the newspaper industry has traditionally relied on cover prices as a source of income, unlike free newspapers whose income only comes from advertisers.

Correia-da-Silva and Resende (2013) observe that since the launch of the first free newspaper, the business model has seen tremendous growth worldwide. According to the World Association of Newspapers, in 2001, the total circulation of freely distributed newspapers was already close to ten million daily copies. Six years later, in 2007, the total circulation of free dailies was substantially higher, with more than forty million copies of free dailies being printed every day (Bakker 2007).

Correia-da-Silva and Resende (2013) say the market of free dailies is starting to stabilize as it starts to reach its maturity in some regions like Europe:

Like any other newspaper, free dailies constitute a platform between readers and advertisers. To the side of readers, free dailies supply news, editorial content and advertising content, free of any charge. To the side of advertisers, free dailies provide the “eyeballs” of their readers, in exchange for advertising fees. Since advertisers’ marginal revenue from advertising tends to increase with the

readership of the newspaper, the larger the readership of the newspaper, the higher the advertisers' willingness to pay for an ad-insertion.

However, very often, advertisers are uncertain about the characteristics (including the size) of the newspapers' audiences, either because a single copy may be read by more than one person (multi-reading), or because a person with access to the newspaper does not necessarily have to read it. These uncertainty issues arise both in the context of paid press and free press. However, they tend to be more severe in the case of free press (Bakker 2007). Based on this observation, it is clear that very few audience studies have been conducted to give a clear perspective of the readership culture and habits of free newspaper readers compared to the traditional newspapers based on the paid model. Again, advertisers have adopted a wait-and-see attitude towards Kenya's free dailies – the *People Daily* and *X-news* given the scanty information on circulation figures and readership of the publications as research is undertaken. This is evident in the frequency of advertising by major spenders that appears to be lower than in the paid for newspapers.

In his study of the rise of free newspapers in Latin America, Piet Bakker, a professor of cross media content and quality journalism at the Hogeschool Utrecht, cited in the journal *Revista de Comunicación 11* (2012), South America is one of the few regions where newspaper circulation has been on the rise as other parts experience a decline, especially with the advent of new media technologies led by the Internet. He contends that the key reason for the rising circulation is introduction of free newspapers in a number of countries in the continent. From this observation, it could be assumed that free newspaper spur readership and by extension attract new audiences who previous did not read. This study seeks to find out whether there is any relationship between

the introduction of free newspapers in the mainstream media and reading culture among the Kenyan audiences.

According to Bakker (2012) contrary to Western Europa and Northern America, newspaper circulation is growing in Latin America, growing with 15 per cent from 23 to 27 million between 2005 and 2010. Almost half of this growth, argues Bakker (2012), is the result of the rise of free daily newspapers on the continent, rising from 1.2 million in 2005 to 2.8 million in 2010 and 3.5 million in 2011. In 2000 only Chile, Brazil and Argentina had a free daily, five years later this grew to eight countries while there are free dailies in eleven countries in 2011.

In a separate study, Bakker (2008) observes that circulation of paid for newspapers in Europe declined by 14 million between 1995 and 2006. He adds that during the same period circulation of free daily newspapers has grown by more than 28 million. As to whether the development was due to free newspaper edging out paid ones, Bakker (2008) sees minimal impact given that the rise of free newspaper was spurred by economic factors while the drop in paid circulation was related to availability of new media alternatives. However, this and other similar studies seem to focus on circulation of the two types of newspapers with little emphasis on the influence of the free dailies on readership habits. For example, has the introduction of free newspaper had any significant effect on reading culture? If so, to what extent – either positively or negatively. This study expects to play a role in bridging the existing research gaps on the pertinent issues related to paid for and free newspaper business models.

Bakker (2008) focused on the rise of free daily newspaper circulation and the possible effects on the decline in paid circulation in Europe in his article. He recognizes that other factors come into play in cases where readers substitute paid for newspapers for free dailies.

It would mean that readers have moved to “lighter” products in terms of news coverage in a number of ways. Free newspapers offer less news than paid papers. Free dailies, moreover, are published as tabloids or even smaller formats; the vast majority is only published from Monday till Friday and offer lower pagination than paid papers. If, on the other hand, there is no relation between the rise in free and the decline in paid circulation, it would mean that free dailies find an audience that is not reached by paid papers, and although they provide these readers with less news than paid papers, without free dailies these readers would not read newspapers at all.

The scholar further contends that free daily newspapers have been very successful since their introduction in the mid-nineties with almost 10 million copies distributed daily. Bakker (2002) points out that research so far has focused on the introduction, reactions of established publishers and the rapidly changing markets. He mentioned some general research at the time including studies by Picard, 2001; Vogel, 2001; Wilkinson, 2001; Arnoud and Peyregne, 2002 as well as Bakker, 2002). There were studies devoted to specific markets, like Sweden (Wadbring & Weibull, 2000), the Netherlands (Schaap, 2000; Van der Veer, 2000), Switzerland (Bachman, Brander & Lenz, 2001) and Germany (Vogel, 2001). However, Bakker (2002) says there are research reports from the industry itself, mainly from free papers to prove their value to potential advertisers. In Kenya, research on audience studies is available for industrial consumptions rather than academic purposes.

Bakker (2002) proposes that given that free dailies have been around for a while, research questions should shift to long-term developments, like the ones that this research seeks to address. Many free newspapers for instance were introduced just to counter a new competitor or to prevent a new firm entering a market, he says and terms it typical short-term strategies that most media houses, especially in Kenya, are known to implement.

2.10 Reading culture

Reading culture is where reading becomes part of daily routines shared by members of the society. Therefore a society with a reading culture has reading as people's social life, where reading is not purposive like academic reading but a daily routine. Behrman (2004) defines a culture of reading as an integrated pattern of reading behaviours, practices, beliefs, perceptions and knowledge. While Magara and Batambuze (2005) uses reading culture to mean a culture where reading is part of the people's living and constitutes a habit that is shared by members of the society.

It has been acknowledged that in Africa reading culture is weak because African societies are predominately oral (Magara & Batambuze 2005:36). This orality of African societies that differentiates them from literate traditions is discussed by Machet (2002) who stated that reading is seen by black communities in South Africa as an abnormal and anti-social activity as well as connected to educational purposes. The author further claims that "the social nature of the oral tradition is in contradiction to the requirements of a literate tradition, as reading is a private and solitary activity" (Machet 2002: 80).

Machet's description of South Africa's reading culture is true to many other African countries (see Dike, 1995, Magara and Batambuze, 2005). It can be argued that Africa and Kenya in particular has a poor reading culture because reading is only part of the school context and not all aspects of life.

The above definition of reading culture means efforts to change reading culture should target children and young adults whose behaviour has not sedimented. The straightforward strategy to changing reading culture should be learned at an early age. As Okundu (2005) points out, inculcating a reading culture should be introduced at an early age among children.

The proposal to introduce reading to children is based on the fact that reading and reading culture develop over a prolonged period of time and an early promotion can mould young readers into lifelong readers. The challenge is therefore to ingrain the habit of reading in children so that it is as important as sports and any other hobbies (Otike, 2011:03).

This approach of promoting the reading culture has been tried in Kenya. For instance "publishers, book industries, international bodies, such as United Nations, have since as early as the 1980's been agitating for the development of a reading culture in Kenya and the world at large" (Otike, 2011:04). The author points out initiatives such as The Kenya National Library Service Board Act (Chapter 225 of 1986) that empowers it to stimulate public interest in books and promote reading for knowledge, information and enjoyment. This is in addition to other bodies like the National Book Development Council of Kenya, the National Archive, McMillan Library, the Culture and Social Services departments in various county governments among others.

A unique and significant initiative promoting the reading culture is the reading tent initiative. According to Makenzi (2004) the reading tent is an old concept but new approach for promoting reading and enhancing literacy in both the rural and urban poor communities in most parts of the world. The reading tent approach focuses mainly on promoting reading for leisure and making books and other reading materials accessible to children in areas that lack adequate library services. Various organizations and institutions are using this approach to promote reading, among them are Egerton University Reading Tent Project (EUTRP), Kenya National Library Services (KNLS), Kenya Library Association (KLA), Reading Association of Kenya (RAK), and Kenyatta University Basic Education Resources Center (KUBERC) (Otike, 2011:04). Most of these organizations run the children's reading tents (CRT) activities under the umbrella of the National Book Development Council of Kenya (NBDCK). NBDCK has been running children's Reading Tent activities since 1997 under the banner of the annual National Book Week celebrations.

Free newspapers can be viewed as involuntary reading promotions which can affect literary socialization and strengthen reading cultures. Although many scholars celebrate reading promotion projects, activities and policies (see Kraaykamp, 2003:236; Otike, 2011:03), such views neglect the important role played by involuntary reading promotion ventures such as the free newspaper business models. I call free newspapers involuntary reading promotions because even though the publisher does not aim at promoting reading, the fact that the newspapers are free encourages the unreached to start reading newspapers.

As noted above, the reading tent is an old concept of promoting reading to both the rural and urban poor communities in most parts of the world. Consequently the free newspaper can complement efforts like reading tents that aim at reaching poor communities and promote reading for leisure. Advocates of reading promotion initiatives should therefore view the *People Daily*, as a newspaper that promotes the reading culture daily.

As observed by Kraaykamp (2003:236) “if we assume that reading promotion aims to foster people’s cultural literacy, it is vital to assess its long-term effects” for this reason, involuntary reading promotion initiatives like free newspapers are a key route to improving reading culture because they provide “intensive and lasting activation of available competencies in a respected social environment” (Kraaykamp, 2003:236). The author further argues that the best reading culture is cultivated under recurrent instruction and experience “that occur primarily in three institutions: the home environment, the library, and the secondary school.” In these three institutions “meaningful people aim to transfer cultural resources to young people by recurrently exposing them to cultural products or knowledge”. For this reason free newspapers read under supervision at “home environment, the library, and the secondary school” contributes more to enhancing reading culture than free newspapers read in other environments (see Purves and Beach, 1976; Duijx and Verdaasdonk, 1989; Kraaykamp, 2001; Kraaykamp, 2002).

The three reading spaces identified above are positive environments because within this spaces supervisors provide “cultural encouragement” in addition to the fact that it is in this spaces that reading promotion initiatives get readers “in the so-called formative years (between ages 5 and 20) in a relevant social context” (Kraaykamp, 2003:236). It is these reading promotion activities either voluntary or involuntary that latter on affect adult reading preferences. For if reading

promotion improves cultural competence, this should pay off in later life. The author further argues;

Cultural competence is a life-long effort, but childhood in particular offers opportunities to stimulate cultural competence through reading socialization. Adult reading achievement, therefore, is generally expected to benefit from attention paid to childhood reading by parents, library, and school. If instruction helps to boost the cultural development of young people, this will make high-quality reading more attractive (Kraaykamp, 2003:236).

Therefore this study explains the influence of free newspapers on reading culture by finding out the extent to which free newspapers are read at home, library, and school in early years; use of free newspapers to promote reading by parents, librarians, and school teachers. It is these activities that develop children's reading culture and on a person's subsequent reading preferences in adulthood.

2.10.1 Literary socialization at home

There is a considerable body of sociological literature on the effects of cultural socialization in the home (Bourdieu, 1984; Mohr and DiMaggio, 1995). In fact Kraaykamp (2003:237) argue that children of culturally active parents often prove to be cultural devotees themselves in their later lives, while in the specific field of reading, there are also studies showing that a positive reading environment in the parental home affects reading preferences (Duijx and Verdaasdonk, 1989; Cobb-Walgren, 1990; Kraaykamp and Dijkstra, 1999; Kraaykamp, 2001). Therefore a free newspaper read at home has a different effect from a free newspaper read on the street. But the key question here is if the freeness of newspapers contributes more or less in readers using the newspaper at home and thereby encouraging reading culture.

Kraaykamp (2003:237) suggests that parents can stimulate their children's cultural development either by setting a good example through their own reading habits or by specifically encouraging their children to venture into the world of culture. In the educational literature, these two ways of parental socialization are known as 'imitation' and 'instruction' (Bandura and Walters, 1963). In imitation, the parental promotion of cultural development takes place more or less unconsciously through recurrent example setting, whereas in instruction, children's cultural development is purposefully encouraged (Kraaykamp, 2003:237).

To take a case in point, imitation of reading enables children to learn a reading culture from parents. If parents read free newspapers they present a 'good' example to their children who will in turn copy the reading behavior, a process of informal learning. For example "because children are around when their parents read, because there are books in the home, or because parents are library members, children are informally introduced to books and acquire the joy of reading" (Kraaykamp, 2003:238). Transfer of taste from parents to children is common, not only for literary reading but also for romantic light reading, as Kraaykamp (2001) has demonstrated. Therefore, it may be expected that parental taste for free newspapers affects adult reading preferences or in other words leads to development of a reading culture.

Apart from imitation, instruction is also an important practice that can shape reading culture. Instruction refers to family activities that directly stimulate children's reading habits, such as reading books to children, discussing books, or presenting books as a gift (Kraaykamp, 2003:238). Through instructions, parents consciously improve their children's reading culture. In other words, parents transfer norms and values by reading books to their children, recommending

books, or talking with their children about books they have read. Such reading promotion in the parental home is expected to result in children developing considerable cultural competence that enables them learn the culture of reading as leisure.

2.10.2 Literary socialization in school and through libraries

Reading culture is learnt in schools where its development is supported by instruction within curriculum/co-curricular activities. Indeed library and reading lessons are part of the formal syllabus in Kenya. These lessons are in addition to language and literature lessons that foster literary and cultural competence. Through this form of cultural socialization, too, might lead to a keener interest in reading culture at an adult age. In this context, Janssen (1998) shows that there are substantial differences among teachers, both in terms of their goals for cultural education and the time they devote to it

Development of an appropriate reading culture requires reading facilities. It is for this reason that library services become an important tool in improving reading cultures. After all young people must have reading opportunities for them to learn an appropriate reading culture. Therefore free newspapers are an opportunity which readers can capitalize on to learn an appropriate reading culture. Moreover free newspapers can fill the gap created by lack of enough libraries. However the traditional role of libraries as institutions that propagated the notion of dissemination since the 1950s still remains and free newspapers will go a long way in providing reading facilities.

Otike (2011:03) asserts that in Kenya much of the responsibility designed to cultivate and promote a reading habit is entrusted to language teachers. This is normally done through the use of library lessons which are scheduled sessions that allow pupils to have a silent reading session in class or in the school library if available. According to the Ministry of Education Guidelines

each class from Standard One to Eight should have two library lessons per week, one for Kiswahili and another one for English. However in contrast to the noble intention by the Ministry of Education, it is difficult to instruct pupils during these lessons because majority of the schools don't have libraries. Once again free newspapers like the *People Daily* can fill this gap. Schools can use free newspapers to supplement the limited reading materials.

Nevertheless for newspapers to be used to supplement the limited reading resources, the free newspapers must not only be availed to schools, but they should also have appropriate content. Appropriateness of content should be evaluated from both a moral perspective in addition to information. Without a doubt no well-intentioned teacher can allow sensational publications like *The Nairobiian* in a classroom for instructional purposes.

2.20 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by three categories of theories; the first was be the socialization which is a sociological theory, the second one information processing theory and the third one was uses and gratification.

2.21 Socialization

Human beings are born illiterate and without any culture, leave alone reading culture. However through socialization they learn to do what other members of the society do. Socialization refers to the preparation of newcomers to become members of an existing group and to think, feel, and act in ways the group considers appropriate (Hodges, 1990).

The process of socialization is influenced by various participants among them parents and immediate family members who are the key source of learning in early life stages. The second major influences are the teachers and schools that provide formal skills, knowledge, and social values. The third group is peers: as infants mature, they have more and more contact with other children their age, called peers. The fourth major group is the community. Children are affected by the community and nation in which they are reared. Lastly socialization is influenced by the mass media system.

For the above reasons the human beings who are born illiterate and without a culture are socialized into a system; what Althusser (1971) calls Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The above mentioned influences on socialization can be categorised in Althusser's thinking as either RSAs or ISA.

The RSA includes the "institutions" of the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, and the Prisons, which function by repression (including physical repression) even though they also function via mere administrative commands and interdictions and open and tacit censorship systems. From this category of influencers, the reading culture is directed by government coercion like through stringent security laws that restrict or ban publications.

The ISA in distinction includes the "religious ISA (the system of the different Churches)" the "educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'Schools')" the "family ISA", the "legal ISA", the "political ISA", the "trade union ISA", the "communication ISA (press, radio and television, etc.)", and the "cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.)" which function massively and predominately *by ideology*". Free newspapers are part of the ISA because

they are not owned by the government. The *People Daily* newspaper falls in the category of ISAs because it is owned by a “private” person and its “shielded” mission are not achieved through repression but rather through ideological strategies. The People Daily can therefore influence the Kenya’s reading culture albeit implicit as an ideological apparatus.

2.22 Information Processing Theory

The primary focus of the information processing theory is memory, the storage and retrieval of information. The theory explains how information is stored in memory, proposing that information is processed and stored in three stages. In this theory, information is thought to be processed in a serial, discontinuous manner as it moves from one stage to the next. This theory is discussed in more detail below (Huitt, 2003).

As stated by Huitt (2003), the theory is guided by the following principles. The first is the assumption of a limited capacity of the mental system. This means that the amount of information that can be processed by the system is constrained in some very important ways. Bottlenecks, or restrictions in the flow and processing of information, occur at very specific points.

The second principle is that a control mechanism is required to oversee the encoding, transformation, processing, storage, retrieval and utilization of information. That is, not all of the processing capacity of the system is available; an executive function that oversees this process will use up some of this capability. From this principle when one is learning a new task or is confronted with a new environment, like using free newspapers one’s executive function requires more processing power than when one is doing a routine task like reading paid-for newspapers.

The third principle is that there is a two-way flow of information as we try to make sense of the world around us. We constantly use information that we gather through the senses (often referred to as bottom-up processing) and information we have stored in memory (often called top-down processing) in a dynamic process as we construct meaning about our environment and our relations to it. This is somewhat analogous to the difference between inductive reasoning (going from specific instances to a general conclusion) and deductive reasoning (going from a general principle to specific examples.) A similar distinction can be made between using information we derive from the senses and that generated by our imaginations (Huitt, 2003).

The fourth principle from a cognitive psychology perspective is that the human organism has been genetically prepared to process and organize information in specific ways. This explains human infant behavior, language development in all human infants regardless of language spoken by adults or the area in which they live, that is all human infants with normal hearing babble and coo, generate first words, begin the use of telegraphic speech (e.g., ball gone), and overgeneralize (e.g., using "goed to the store" when they had previously used "went to the store") at approximately the same ages (Huitt, 2003).

The information processing model proposes that information is processed and stored in three stages. That is the sensory memory, short term memory and long term memory. The Sensory memory (STSS) memory is affiliated with the transduction of energy, that is to say change from one energy to another. As stated by Huitt (2003), the environment makes available a variety of sources of information (light, sound, smell, heat, cold, etc.), but the brain only understands electrical energy through the body's special sensory receptor cells that transduce (change from

one form of energy to another) this external energy to something the brain can understand. In the process of transduction, a memory is created. This memory is very short (less than 1/2 second for vision; about 3 seconds for hearing).

Short-term memory (STM) is also called working memory and relates to what we are thinking about at any given moment in time. It is created by our paying attention to an external stimulus, an internal thought, or both. It will initially last somewhere around 15 to 20 seconds unless it is repeated (called maintenance rehearsal) at which point it may be available for up to 20 minutes. Long-term memory (LTM), also called preconscious and unconscious memory in Freudian terms, means that the information is relatively easily recalled (although it may take several minutes or even hours) while unconscious refers to data that is not available during normal consciousness. It is preconscious memory that is the focus of cognitive psychology as it relates to long-term memory. The levels-of-processing theory, however, has provided some research that attests to the fact that we "know" more than we can easily recall.

The three stages in information processing are illustrated in the figure below.

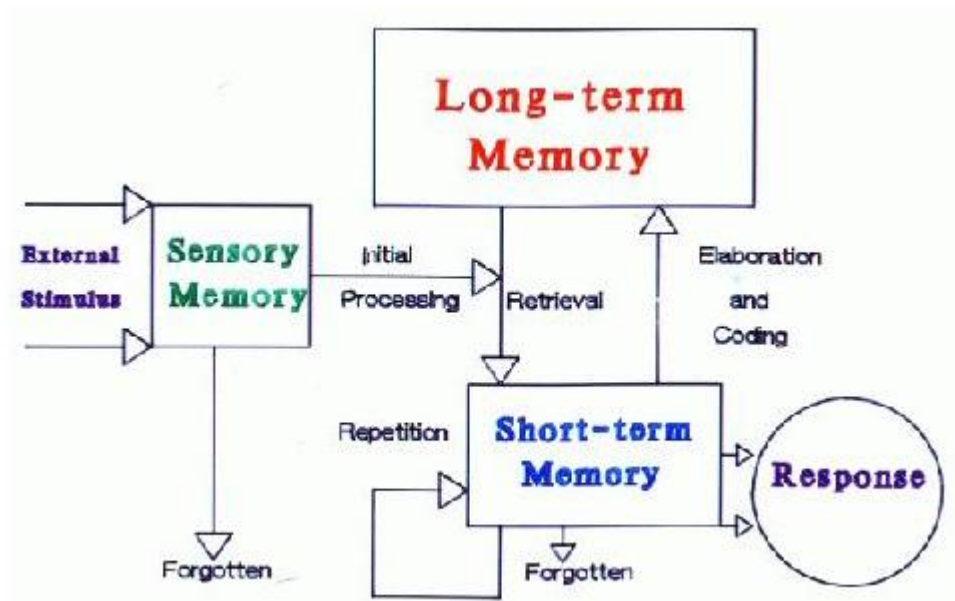


Figure 1. Stage model of information Processing (Source: Atkinson & Shiffrin (1968)).

The information processing theory can be used to explain how people change newspaper reading routines after introduction of free newspapers in a market that was previously served by only paid-for newspapers. After introduction, free newspapers can go through the three stages of information processing; the sensory memory, short term memory and long term memory. It is only after the free newspapers go through all the three stages that new newspaper reading routines can be developed by readers leading to a change in reading culture.

2.23 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Blumler and Katz's uses and gratification theory suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media they use. Users take an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use. The theorist suggests that a media user seeks

out a media source that best fulfills the needs of the user. Uses and gratifications assume that the user has alternate choices to satisfy their need.

According to Dunkels et al (2010: 114) "The uses and gratifications theory is about what people do with the media rather than what the media does to people. In essence, the audience or receiver uses the media to gratify needs and desires such as entertainment, relaxation, information and many more" which can lead to creation of reading culture. The authors further cite Uses and Gratifications theorists Dennis McQuail and Jay Blumer (1974) whom they reckon that see the audience as an active participant in media communication and use the media to gratify their own needs.

Watson (2003) concluded that audience fulfilment of needs can be categorised in four broad desires: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance. Dunkels et al adopt the four desires to mean:

Flight: A voyage from routine pressures of life, release from physical, emotional and intellectual nervousness.

Friendship: It grants audiences the liberty and capacity to analyze their lives vis-a-vis their preferred character and privilege to make invisible friends.

Fix identity: This gratifies the audience's need situate his/her identity in the light of the characters, individual experiences in life such as fear, joblessness, loneliness, illness disappointments, pleasures and success.

Focus: The media with overwhelming force influence and create in the audience the ability to focus on important issues of life through the means of appealing to their desires and needs.

Dunkers et al (2010:114) emphasize that:

An individual makes the choice (of media) and the selection that is made will merely underpin the views and influences they already have."

Uses and gratifications theory takes a more humanistic approach to looking at media use. Blumler and Katz believe that there is not merely one way that the populace uses media. Instead, they believe there are as many reasons for using the media, as there are media users. According to the theory, media consumers have a free will to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them. Blumler and Katz values are clearly seen by the fact that they believe that media consumers can choose the influence media has on them as well as the idea that users choose media alternatives merely as a means to an end. Uses and gratification is the optimist's view of the media. The theory takes out the possibility that the media can have an unconscious influence over our lives and how we view the world. The idea that we simply use the media to satisfy a given need does not seem to fully recognise the power of the media in today's society. Kenya's newspaper industry is vibrant and readers are spoilt for choice, especially with emergence of alternative and regional publications in the advent of devolution after the 2013 General Election. However, readers in the mainstream media relied on major newspapers for information, education and entertainment at a cost. The existence of free publications has been around for some time, but mainly confined to advertisers marketing their products or institutions advocating pertinent issues of public interest or newsletters for various stakeholders they serve. Last year investors in free mainstream newspapers began to emerge starting with evening

newspaper *X-News* and later the *People Daily* joining the fray. The study seeks to find out whether free newspaper phenomenon is likely to affect readership culture and habits.

Dunkers et al (2010: 114) says that people may read newspapers or magazines for a number of reasons such as entertainment, escapism, relaxation as well as source of information. Therefore, it is safe to contend that people may not necessarily dump a newspaper based on cover price and embrace a free publication simply to avoid costs because both kinds of newspapers have a role to play in the reader's life, that is, gratifying one's needs.

However, it would be important to find out through an empirical study whether there are other factors that come into play in newspaper readership other than uses and gratifications. Furthermore, content is likely to play a key role in an audience's choice of media than the cost of publication.

"They make further choices about when, where, how and how long they will engage with the media. They consume the media because they like what they are getting. In a way the audience determines the media content."

The theory, said Dunkers et al (2010), challenged the idea that masses are 'passive' or 'careless' 'sheep' who will read media texts or messages and that the audience does not necessarily buy into the message of the media product. The audience controls the media and not vice versa, they add.

The researcher selected this theory as a basis for the study given that audiences play an active role in selection and usage of media. Therefore, it would be crucial to find out the impact of the free newspapers on readership culture and habits. The consumers of media products are

motivated to choose appropriate medium based on the uses and gratifications they derive from it. Consequently, the research would be interested in finding out whether the uses and gratifications provided by the free newspaper have an effect on readers' media consumption culture and habits as well as to what extent they affect those that cost them.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.10. Research design

The research methodology for this study was a case study. As explained by Creswell (2013:73) a case study approach “involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system”, the case here being a free newspaper, the *People Daily*, and bounded system being newspaper readership in Kenya.

As is common with case studies, this study used qualitative techniques, which according to Wimmer & Dominick (2006:49), can “increase researchers understanding of the phenomenon under study” especially when the phenomenon has not been investigated before. This justifies selection of qualitative approaches because the study expanded current understanding of the influence of free newspapers on reading culture in Kenya. This qualitative approach further reduced overreliance on measurement of observable aspects which often happens at the expense of understanding the meaning of events and experiences of people (Bazeley, 2013:19).

3.11 Data Collection Process

The data collection process for this study involved a series of activities that culminated in gathering information that can answer the research questions. .In fact Creswell (2007:118) advises researchers to consider multiple phases that extend beyond conducting interviews or making observations. According to the author, finding people or places to study, gaining access

and establishing rapport with participants so that they “provide good data” is an important step in the data collection process.

3.12 Data Collection instruments

As suggested by Best & Krueger (2004:37) researchers need to construct and disseminate data collection instruments capable of measuring the attitudes and behaviors of subjects by (a) selecting a communication mode, (b) controlling access to the instruments, (c) formatting the instrument, (d) incorporate stimuli being researched in the instrument, (e) limiting item nonresponse, and (f) providing instructions on how the instrument shall be used. To meet this concerns this study used semi-structured interviews.

3.12.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used because this tool is an appropriate form of interview that can make informants to feel free to express their views. Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured Interviews are less formal, allowing the interviewer freely modifies the sequence of questions, changes the wording and sometimes explains them or adds to them during the interaction.

To collect data through semi-structured interviews, a set of open-ended questions were used. The open-ended questions encouraged maximum flexibility and put the interviewees at ease. The Semi-structured interview guides for teachers, parents, editors and experts are attached at the end of this report as appendix 1 to 3 respectively.

Items in the Semi-structured interview guides (appendix 1-3) were developed based on the literature review (see chapter two) that found out possible influences on reading culture in Kenya.

The literature review indicates that various forms of socialization are the greatest influences on reading culture. The literature also critically analyzed free newspaper business models and how they can affect the reading culture.

The key findings in the literature review guided the categories of items included in the semi-structured interview guide. Thereafter the questionnaire was discussed and approved by the project supervisor.

The introduction section of the semi-structured interview guide was used to seek permission, explain central purpose of the study and the rights of participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study in addition to reaffirming confidentiality of information given by participants. This created rapport with participants by eliminating suspicion. Additionally as argued by Corbin and Morse (2003) “qualitative interviews if unstructured, may actually provide participants considerable control over the interview process” which can guarantee access and rapport.

Notwithstanding the open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews are not totally free because questions are prepared before the interviews, even though these questions were only suggestions, “consequently the interviewer does not have to follow an interview guide slavishly and is able to ask different questions depending on how the interview progresses” (Kvale 1997:119). This ensured a natural flow of opinions from participants.

The in-depth interviews and dialogue were used to get participants' description of reading culture and how this culture can be shaped by (free) newspapers. Such in-depth interviews are suitable for the purposes this study because they enabled the researcher to gather data through individual comprehensive description of reading culture from which "general or universal meanings" was derived.

The data collected through interviews was recorded through field notes and DVD recording which was transcribed. A combination of these methods is important because they complement each other and minimizes loss of data

A verbatim transcription of participants' is reliable as there is minimum loss of data. (MacLean et al., 2004; Seale & Silverman, 1997; Wengraf, 2001).

A verbatim record of the interview is beneficial in facilitating data analysis as the participants performance can be reviewed and it minimises loss of data through field notes. (Fasick, 2001).

Transcripts do not get damaged with time and backups are easily stored to ensure the integrity of the files. Thus, they provide unlimited "replayability."

Field notes are still used mainly because of their simplicity as the researchers can collect data as the interview progresses. (Kieren & Munro, 1985).

Moreover, field notes are also important because ideas and memories from interviews will most likely be lost further down in the research process. (Wengraf, 2001).

3.10.2 Purposive Sampling of Participants

Analogous to the tradition of qualitative case study research, this study used purposive sampling (see Creswell, 2007:125). Participants were selected because they can “purposefully inform an understanding” (Creswell, 2007:125) of influence of free newspapers on reading culture in Kenya. In particular, theory based sampling strategy was used to identify individual participants. Equally important is the fact that when using theoretical purposive sampling strategy, individual participant selection is “judged according to the richness of data and quality of concepts and theories generated” (Richie & Lewis, 2003:81).

In order to obtain first-hand information about editorial and content strategies of free newspapers, the author used editors of the *People Daily* as key informants. Because as a free newspaper the *People Daily* depends on non-content revenue, the author asked questions that deciphered non-content strategies adopted by the editors of this newspaper (see appendix 2). Two editors were selected as key informants because of their knowledge about the *People Daily*¹. As explained by Rieger (2015) key informants can extend the investigator's reach in situations where he or she has not, or cannot, be a direct observer, and they can illuminate the meanings of behaviour that the researcher does not understand. The two editors were selected following Rieger's advise that “if the researcher is studying an organization ... a key informant might turn out to be that person who occupies a central structural position or who may be situated strategically in the communication network within the organization”, who in this case are editors. Additionally the author states that an individual in such a position is likely to be unusually knowledgeable about the organization and its internal dynamics and may function as a

¹ The editors will hereafter be referred to as Key Informant 1 and 2 respectively.

gatekeeper (Rieger, 2015). The author advises that people who have long experience with the phenomenon being studied are good key informants.

In addition to editors, the other key informant was an expert in information and communication studies. In case studies like this one, expert views are important to assist researchers to obtain new interpretations on how free newspapers can change the reading culture². The expert key informant was Dr Tom Kwanya, the Chair and Senior Lecturer, Department of Information and Knowledge Management at the Technical University. Dr Kwanya was selected because he has relevant academic qualification and working experience suitable for this study. He holds a PhD in Library and Information Management from Western Cape University and a Master of Arts in Communication Studies from the University of Nairobi. He has also published extensively in the field of library science.

The study used interviews to collect information from the third group of participants. This group was made up of newspaper readers and parents. Parents are a major influence on children's culture. As discussed earlier, reading culture is created in homes by parents who introduce their children to reading. It is for this reason that parents were selected for study.

Selection of readers of the *People Daily* was a two stage process. The first sampling process led to selection of sites where the *People Daily* is distributed. Four major city streets (clusters) in Nairobi, namely, Moi Avenue, Jogoo Road, Uhuru High Way and Haile Selassie Avenue were selected on the basis their high volume of traffic entering the city. These four streets are the

² Tom Kwanya, the expert Key Informant will hereafter be referred to as Key Informant 3.

major traffic inlets in Nairobi along which vendors distribute newspapers. Additionally because the *People Daily* is a morning newspaper, these four streets are the best catchment areas for selecting a sample of readers, considering the fact that they are places where the newspapers are distributed in the morning.

The study will use snowball (chain referral) sampling techniques to reach the newspaper readers. According to Biernack and Waldorf (1981:141) chain referral sampling is well suited for a number of research purposes and is particularly applicable when the focus of study requires the knowledge of insiders to locate people for study. In a different context, Coleman (1958) has even argued that snowball sampling is a method uniquely designed for sociological research because it allows for the sampling of natural interactional units. Subsequently the chain referral sampling technique was used to select the readers in their “natural” environment on the above selected four streets. A total of 100 readers were selected for this study. On each street a vendor was randomly selected to start a chain referral sampling process to select twenty-five frequent readers from the street. Such a “chain referral method of sampling is a self-contained and self-propelled phenomenon, in that once it is started it somehow magically proceeds on its own” (Biernack and Waldorf (1981:141). Readers who are parents were interviewed as parents not just readers.

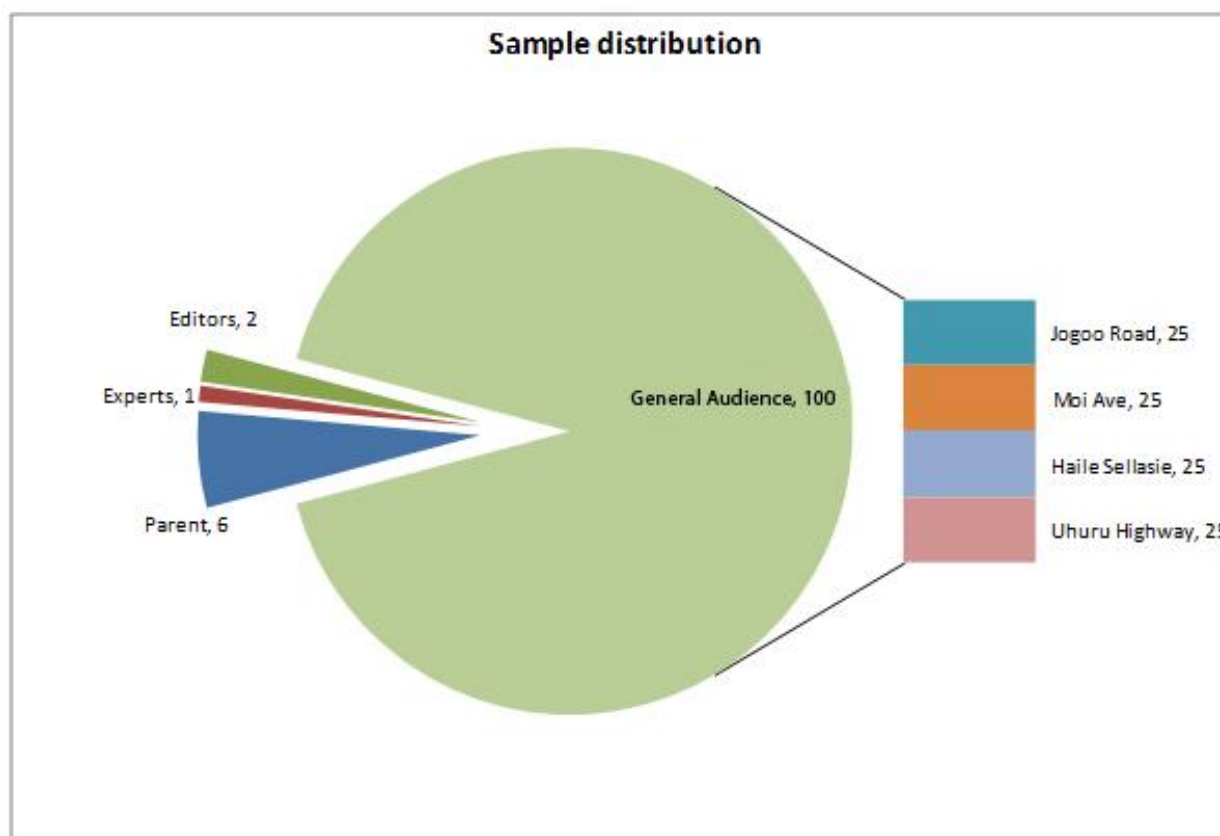
The second sampling process led to selection of parents. The total population of parents who read the *People* newspaper is six. Therefore just like in selection of vendors, chain referral sampling techniques was used to reach parents who read the newspaper. The first parent was selected among evening students at the University of Nairobi. Five other parents were selected through chain referral sampling. Use of student samples is a convenient strategy when a

researcher does not have enough time. Referral by the first parent was started what Biernack and Waldorf (1981:141) termed “a self-contained and self-propelled” sample selection process.

To measure reading socialization through free newspapers, the researcher constructed instruments to measure the extent of parent reading at home and use of free newspapers in school and library reading (see appendix 1). The suitability of free newspaper content influences acceptability of the free newspapers by parents, school and libraries which in turn influences literary socialization.

3.10.21 Sample Size

The study used a sample of 109 people. As advised by Richie and Lewis (2003:83) qualitative sample should be small because if the data is analysed properly, there is a point where very little new evidence is obtained with additional data. Moreover statistical significance is not the concern of qualitative studies because statistical inference is not the basis of analysis. Furthermore since qualitative studies are intense and yield information rich in details, there is no need of selecting many participants. Richie and Lewis (2003: 85) warn that it would be “unmanageable to conduct and analyse hundreds of [in-depth] interviews...unless the researcher intended to spend several years doing it. The author suggests that as the rule of thumb, qualitative samples often lie under 50, above which they become difficult to manage in terms of quality of the data collection and analysis that can be achieved. The sample is illustrated in the figure below.



3.10.3 Presentation and Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study includes preparing and organizing the data, analyzing and presenting information thematically. This is what Creswell (2003:150) referred to as “analysis by getting sense of the whole database... [by scanning] databases to identify major organizing ideas.” Therefore data analysis was done by understanding the data and categorizing it into various themes as a process of answering research questions. In particular data was categorized into the following themes cascaded from research questions; (i) influence of free newspapers on reading culture, (ii) public perception of free newspapers (iii) distribution strategies used by free newspapers in Kenya and any other emerging themes.

Chapter Four

Presentation and Data Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The chapter provides summarized findings of interviews with key informants, readers and librarians. Key informant in-depth interviews were used to get data about editorial and content strategies of free newspapers from two editors of the *People Daily* and a communication and library expert—a senior lecturer and Chair of the Department of Information Knowledge Management at the Technical University of Kenya. The third group was made up of newspaper readers, parents and librarians. These data was used to answer the objectives of this study.

4.1 The influences of free newspapers on reading culture in Kenya

The study found out that the *People Daily* is the first free newspaper with national circulation. This newspaper has similar strategies with other free newspapers. What Correia-da-Silva and Resende (2013) say constitute a platform between readers and advertisers, where the reader gets free supply of editorial content, while advertisers get “eyeballs” of their readers, in exchange for advertising fees.

The free newspapers are attempting to change the reading culture in Kenya by improving distribution strategies. According to Key informant 1, an editor with the *People Daily*, free random circulation of a newspaper can increase circulation and in the long run increase readership. Key Informant 1 notes that:

Random circulation of the newspaper gives an opportunity to readers who don't have cash to buy a newspaper. We have tried to serve those readers who used to depend on newspapers bought by others. These are in addition to peculiar stories with human interest aspects which attract readers.

Key Informant 2 argues that by giving readers more human interest stories, the *People Daily* has impacted on reading culture of Kenyans. She explains how the *People Daily* publish "real stories" based on current issues that aim at educating and informing without sounding boring to people. Through such approaches the newspaper hopes to get more readers.

Similarly the likelihood of free newspapers increasing circulation as stated by Key Informant 1 and 2 was identified by Bakker (2012) who studies free newspapers in South America. The author found out that that the key reason for the rising circulation of newspapers was introduction of free newspapers, which in turn can spur readership and by extension attract new audiences who previous did not read. Indeed the increased circulation of newspapers in Kenya is a reflection of changing reading culture. Such observations have been made by Bakker (2012) who explains that contrary to Europe and Northern America, newspaper circulation is growing in Latin America, mainly due to the rise of free daily newspapers on the continent.

Reading culture can be changed if readers increase loyalty to newspapers. Key Informant 1 and 2 explain how the *People Daily* is increasing readers' loyalty by ensuring there are enough newspapers in circulation and taking action whenever complains or suggestions are made by the readers. Key Informant 1 adds:

To encourage loyalty we ensure readers receive our newspaper on a daily basis and on time. The newspaper is delivered at the readers place of work or at home, making it easy to encourage loyal readership.

If the *People Daily* achieves loyalty among readers, it will be able to change the readers' reading culture as the newspapers' are reaching previously unreached readers. Bakker (2012) explains the importance of well distributed free newspapers in reaching the unreached readers:

If, on the other hand, there is no relation between the rise in free and the decline in paid circulation, it would mean that free dailies find an audience that is not reached by paid papers, and although they provide these readers with less news than paid papers, without free dailies these readers would not read newspapers at all.

However the efforts by the *People Daily* might not be able to change the reading culture in Kenya, which has been found to have a poor reading culture, mainly linked to school context (see Magara & Batambuze 2005:36, Machet, 2002:80, Otike, 2011:03). Indeed more deliberate efforts than those initiated by the *People Daily* have failed to drastically change the reading culture. To this regard Otike (2011:03) argues that reading culture can be changed by drastic measures like ingraining the habit of reading in children so that reading is as important as sports and any other hobbies (Otike, 2011:03).

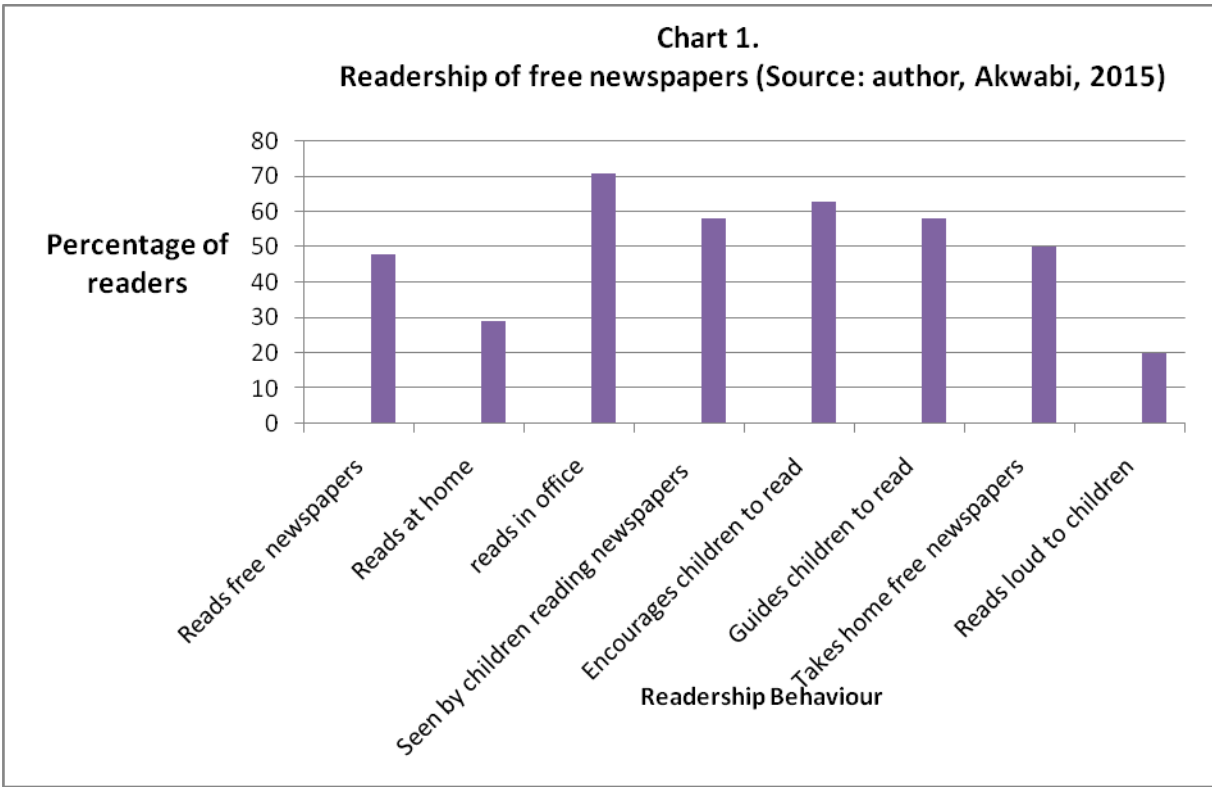
In addition previous efforts to improve the reading culture in Kenya did not yield much. For example as noted earlier "publishers, book industries, international bodies, such as United Nations, have since as early as the 1980's been agitating for the development of a reading culture in Kenya and the world at large" (Otike, 2011:04). These are in addition to initiatives such as The Kenya National Library Service Board Act (Chapter 225 of 1986) that empowers KNLS to stimulate public interest in books and promote reading for knowledge, information and enjoyment, the National Book Development Council of Kenya, the National Archive, McMillan Library, the Department of Culture and Social Services, and the reading tent initiative.

Key Informant 3 argues that the free newspapers like the *People Daily*, will not influence the reading culture of Kenyans, who are oral society and depend on information from opinion leaders and interaction with peers. Similar argument about orality of African cultures has been made by Magara and Batambuze (2005:36) and Machet (2002:80)

It was reasoned out that it is the economics aspects in terms of purchasing power for reading material not the hindrance access that has created a poor reading culture in Kenya (Key Informant 3). The Key informant maintains that most Kenyans simply don't read and the free paper will not change this situation.

Most Kenyans, Key Informant 3 argues, are not socialized to read from a young age and mostly engaged in other leisurely social activities like swimming, going to restaurants, and even sharing of gifts does not include books. Similar views were expressed by Otike (2011:03) who identified leisure time as the best time for reading, arguing that reading culture can only be changed if reading is ingrained as a habit for “children so that it is as important as sports and any other hobbies.”

Indeed through interviews as illustrated in Chart 1 below, the author found out that parents and teachers are not socialising children to develop a reading culture. Only thirty percent of free newspaper readers take newspapers home, majority read newspapers in offices and other workplace environment. This means that even though the *People Daily* is a free newspaper, it is not socialising children into a reading culture.



These findings are similar to the argument made by Key Informant 3 who opines that the problem of reading culture in Kenya is social and psychological and requires socialization from a very young age. He says Kenyans are only socialized to read academic material to pass exams and the culture of reading for leisure has failed to take root.

As noted earlier socialization at home influences reading culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Mohr & DiMaggio, 1995) and a positive reading environment in the parental home affects reading preferences (see Duijx & Verdaasdonk, 1989; Cobb-Walgren, 1990; Kraaykamp & Dijkstra, 1999; Kraaykamp, 2001). Therefore a free newspaper read at home has a different effect from a free newspaper read on the street. However this study found out that only thirty percent of

readers read the *People Daily* at home. Such reading behaviour does not therefore encourage reading culture. Indeed the importance of socialization in improving reading culture is due to the fact that human beings are born without any culture (reading culture). It is through socialization that they learn to do what other members of the society do, like reading.

Socialization refers to the preparation of newcomers to become members of an existing group and to think, feel, and act in ways the group considers appropriate (Hodges, 1990). The process of socialization is influenced by various participants among them parents and immediate family members who are the key source of learning in early life stages. Therefore how parents use newspapers plays an important role in socialising children to develop a reading culture. Therefore the arguments made by Key informant 3 that the *People Daily* is not strong enough to socialise Kenyans into new reading habits are supported by opinions of interviewee as illustrated in Chart 1 above showing that parents rarely take newspapers home.

Additionally Kraaykamp (2003:237) suggests that parents can stimulate their children's cultural development either by setting a good example through their own reading habits or by specifically encouraging their children to venture in the world of culture. In the educational literature, these two ways of parental socialization are known as 'imitation' and 'instruction' (Bandura and Walters, 1963). In imitation, the parental promotion of cultural development takes place more or less unconsciously through recurrent example setting, whereas in instruction, children's cultural development is purposefully encouraged (Kraaykamp, 2003:237). This study found out that slightly over fifty percent of the readers guide children at home. This means that even though only thirty percent of parents take newspapers home, majority of them guide children in reading these newspapers. This is a good way of socialising children to develop read culture.

Key Informant 3 explains that most people only concentrate for a few minutes and hence cannot pay attention to text which makes them prefer social media where they glance through information. He says most Kenyans are not socialised to appreciate information, a factor that affects the reading culture.

As explained earlier, the process of socialization is influenced by various participants among them parents and immediate family members, teachers and schools, peers, the community, the mass media system, and the institutions of government. Althusser (1971) called these socialising agents Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA).

Among Repressive State Apparatus, Key Informant 3 identifies the negative attitude of President Uhuru Kenyatta towards newspapers when he recently declared that newspapers are for “wrapping meat served”. Key Informant 3 thinks such attitude further kills most Kenyans morale to read papers and by extension the reading culture. Mockingly, President Uhuru Kenyatta’s family is associated with the *People Daily*. Internews found out that “the connection of President Uhuru Kenyatta with MediaMax, owner of the *People Daily*, is factually true but legally untrue because the name of Uhuru Kenyatta does not appear in any legal document” on ownership (Seem <http://www.internews.org/research-publications/factually-true-legally-untrue-political-mediaownershipkenya#sthash.rGoEizAk.dpu>).

Nevertheless free newspapers can change the reading culture only that these efforts to change the reading culture, as explained in chapter two, are involuntary efforts and therefore their effects are not clear-cut. The *People Daily* is engaging in involuntary reading promotions because as explained by its editors, the publisher’s main aim is not to promote reading, but the fact that the

newspaper is free encourages the unreached to start reading thereby changing their reading culture.

4.2 Public perception of free newspapers in Kenya

The second objective of this study was to find out public perception of free newspapers in Kenya. It was found out that the perception of free newspapers by Kenyan readers is negative. These perceptions are summarised by Key Informant 3 who contends categorically that he does not read the *People Daily* and cannot pick it either because he believes free things are poor quality. These strong comments indicate how negative free newspapers are perceived.

Key Informant 3 adds the recent declaration by President Uhuru Kenyatta's that newspapers are for wrapping meat served to further kill most Kenyans morale to read papers and by extension the reading culture. But this statement by President Uhuru Kenyatta should also be interpreted as an illustration the negative perception of newspapers by Kenyan. Similar negative perception are expressed by interviewees.

Negative perception of free newspapers implies that free newspapers will not be able to change the reading culture because they are not an accepted medium for accessing news.

In this regard, Behrman (2004) defines a culture of reading as an integrated pattern of reading behaviours, practices, beliefs, perceptions and knowledge. While Magara and Batambuze (2005) uses reading culture to mean a culture where reading is part of the people's living and constitutes a habit that is shared by members of the society.

Therefore the *People Daily*, as a free newspaper is not changing the reading culture of Kenya because it has not gained legitimacy that paid for newspapers have.

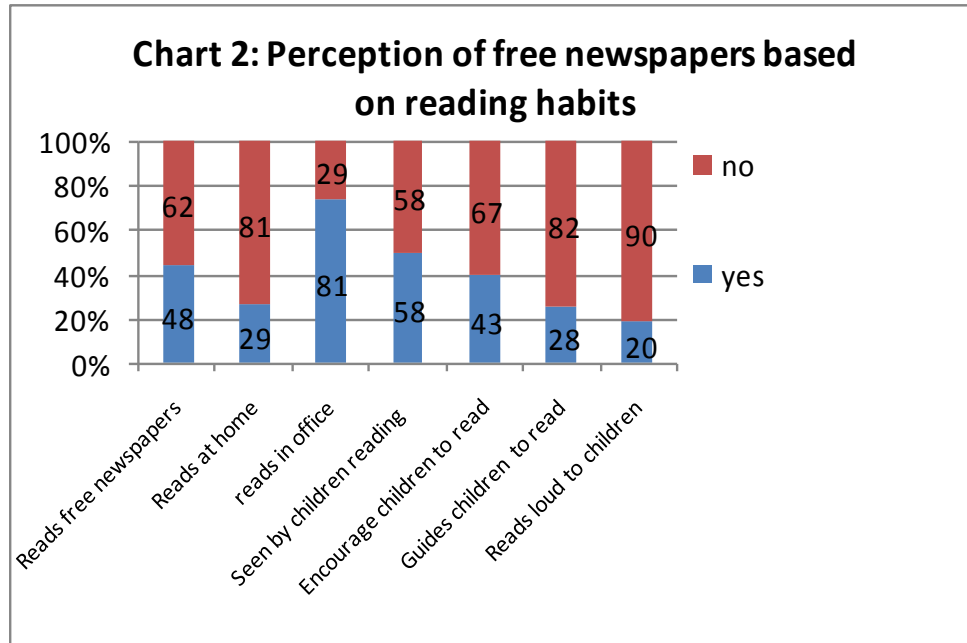
Negative perception leads to reduced circulation of free newspapers, which lead to reduced reading by parents, resulting in poor reading socialisation of children.

Additionally negative perception reduces acceptability of free newspapers in a school environment. It is schools, especially in library and reading lessons that children are introduced to the culture of reading. Libraries and reading lessons are formal for cultural socialization that influences reading culture at an adult age.

However, negative perception of free newspaper's influence on education are expressed by parents and teachers interviewed. Negative perceptions about free newspapers are summarised by the finding in chart 2 below.

The negative perceptions is illustrated by readers who don't take free newspapers (48%), the high number of readers who don't take newspapers home but only read in the office (81%), the high number of readers who take home newspapers but discourage their children from reading the papers (67%), the low number of readers who guide their children to read free newspapers (28%) and the low number of readers who read aloud to their children (20%).

This negative perception reduces possibilities that free newspapers will change the reading culture because as noted earlier, socialisation of children into reading is one of the best approaches to changing reading culture. For example among readers who take home the free newspapers, majority do not encourage their children to read the newspaper, even though children see them reading.

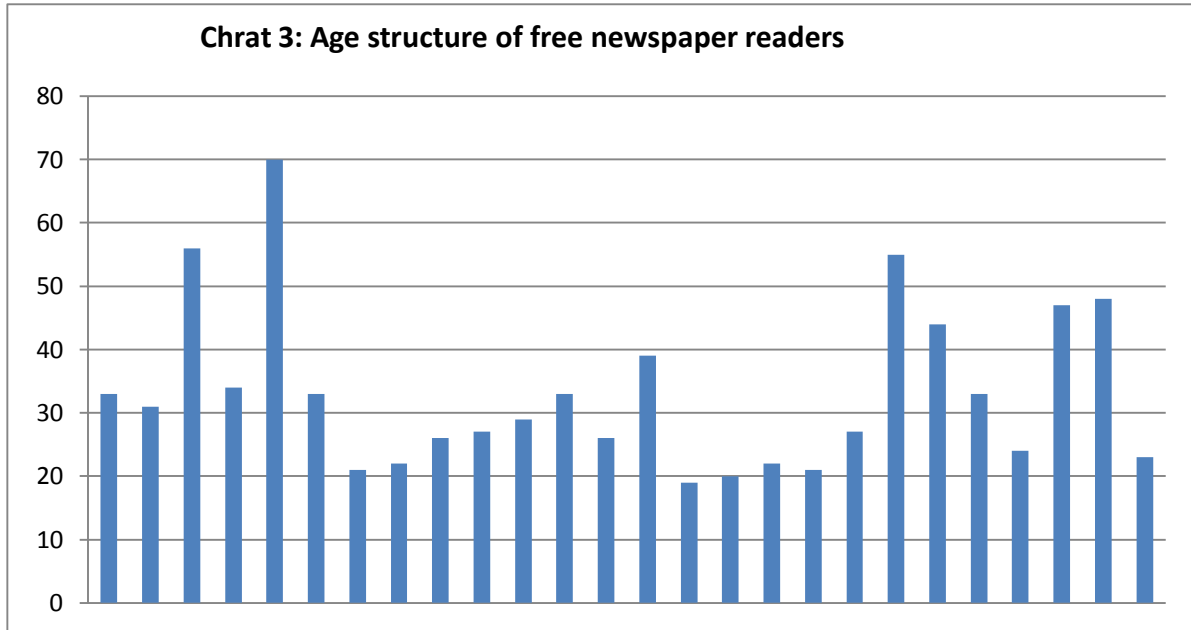


Similarly one of the parents interviewed contends that she does not encourage her children to read the *People Daily* because the magazine does not have educational information. Likewise it was opined by an interviewee that he encourages her children to read specific sections of the newspaper, especially filling the crossword puzzles and reading features that are educative.

As explained by Otike (2011:03), the responsibility to cultivate and promote a reading habit is entrusted to language teachers who use library lessons to encourage a reading culture. As illustrated by the Ministry of Education Guidelines each class from Standard One to Eight should have two library lessons per week, one for Kiswahili and another one for English. But these guidelines can only benefit from free newspapers if teachers have a positive perception about the papers.

The study found out that the age structure of free newspaper readers is between 20 and 70 years. This means children are not key readers of the *People Daily*. This in turn implies that this free

newspaper is not socialising children into reading. These findings are illustrated by chart 3 below.



As it was explained earlier that for newspapers to be used to supplement the limited reading resources, they must not only be availed to schools, but they should also have appropriate content. Without a doubt no well intentioned teacher can allow sensational, this the *People Daily* has: for it to be accepted supplementary material for school reading, it must have appropriate content.

4.3 Editorial strategies used by free newspapers in Kenya

The third objective was to find out Editorial strategies used by free newspapers in Kenya. Without a doubt it is the editorial strategies that influence readership of free newspaper. The editors of free newspapers must strategically choose content to attract readers. Otherwise what

was stated by Key Informant 3 because there is no reason for people to read poor quality free newspapers.

On editorial strategies, Key Informant 2 an editor with the *People Daily*, explains how this free newspaper uses editorial strategies to attract readers. In particular the editor identifies strategies like the brevity news content which is straight to the point. She adds that the editorial style discourages long and boring news content.

Similarly Key informant 1 argues that introduction of “special packages such as *The Magazine* section which runs throughout the week” are some of the editorial strategies used to develop reading culture.

Moreover, the editor identifies the special group sections like teenagers sections as editorial strategies used by the *People Daily* newspaper. This is in addition to packaging stories differently from other newspapers by giving the fresh angles (Key Informant 1).

Additionally Key Informant 2 explains how the *People Daily* keeps high quality news content and maintains the high standards in news presentation.

To improve the reading habits of Kenyan readers, Key Informant 2 defends strategies like giving readers human interest stories on people who impact the society, and publication of real stories based on current issues that aim at educating and informing without sounding boring to people.

On improving the reading habits of Kenyans, Key Informant 1 explains how free circulation of the *People Daily* is expected to improve reading habits. The Key Informant argues:

By having a free newspaper which is circulated at random, this gives an opportunity to readers who don't have cash to buy a newspaper. We have tried to serve those readers who used to depend on newspapers bought by others.

Just like Key Informant 2, Key Informant 1 believes publishing peculiar stories with human interest aspects attracts more readers.

Key Informant 2 argues that the *People Daily* does more than just informing because the papers has content that entertains at the same time avoid covering too much politics, which she fears is boring. Through such editorial strategies, it is believed that people will enjoy reading the paper always.

Reading culture can be encouraged by reader loyalty. Key Informant 2 describes how the *People Daily* encourages loyalty among readers by ensuring that “there is enough circulation to our loyal readers.” This is in addition to acting on complains and suggestion made by the readers

On reader loyalty, Key Informant 1 explains how the *People Daily* ensures the newspaper reaches readers on time and on daily basis. The newspaper is delivered at readers places of work or at home. Additionally, the author argues that observing the publisher’s motto of “fresh and eye catching news”, has given the organisation a philosophical guidance on how to improve readership.

To leverage content for the *People Daily*, Key Informant 2 says they use of social media content like Facebook and Twitter to alert readers to ensure readers are up to date with news. These news alerts are in addition to informing readers to what to expect in the coming newspaper (the following days newspaper).

Similarly Key informant 1 argues that the *People Daily* leverages news content by looking unique based on what it gives in comparison to its competitors. In addition the newspaper gives a unique approach to news writing and packaging to help it stand out as the best before its readers.

To market content, Key Informant 2 explains how the *People Daily* occupies an advantageous position because it is a free newspaper and therefore needs minimal advertisement. Free newspapers tend to advertise themselves, argues Key Informant 2.

Equally Key Informant 1 shows how the *People Daily* advertises via its sister media outlets such as K24, Milele FM. He also notes that because the newspaper is free, it advertises itself automatically

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations.

5.0 Summary

This chapter will summarize the overall objective of this study and give recommendations. The main objectives of this study were to find out how free newspaper influences reading culture in Kenya, public perception of free newspapers in Kenya and editorial strategies used by free newspapers in Kenya.

5.10 Free newspapers influence on reading culture

The study found out that the *People Daily* is changing the reading culture in Kenya through innovative newspaper distribution strategies. Among these strategies is random free newspaper circulation that has given an opportunity to readers who otherwise would not afford to buy a newspaper. Through increased newspaper circulation, readers who previously depended on newspapers bought by others can now have their own newspapers.

Consequently readers have more time to read the newspapers and are likely to change their reading culture. These are in addition to peculiar stories with human interest aspects which attract readers.

The second strategy of changing reading culture is giving readers more human interest stories. The *People Daily* aims at increasing readership by publishing interesting news articles which in the long run can change reading culture of Kenyan readers.

The third reason for changing reading culture is likelihood that free newspapers have increased newspaper circulation. Increased circulation means more people have access to newspapers and are likely to change their reading culture.

The fourth reason for changing reading culture is loyalty by newspaper readers. The *People Daily* is increasing readers' loyalty by ensuring there are enough newspapers in circulation, enabling newspaper readership to achieve a routine status. Free newspapers are developing a reading culture in Kenyans, who expect to read a newspaper daily with or without ability to buy one.

5.12 Public perception of free newspapers in Kenya

The study found out that there is negative perception of free newspapers by Kenyan readers. Negative perception of free newspapers implies that free newspapers will not be able to change the reading culture because they are not highly valued as a medium for accessing news.

Therefore the *People Daily*, as a free newspaper is not changing the reading culture of Kenya because it has not gained legitimacy that paid for newspapers have.

Negative perception reduces acceptability of free newspapers in school environment where reading socialisation is entrenched. If free newspapers fail to gain legitimacy in school, then their socialisation on children reading will be restricted.

It is language teachers and parents who socialise children to read. These language teachers are not using free newspapers to encourage development of a good reading culture.

Schools are not using free newspapers to supplement their limited reading resources. It was found out that school teachers have a negative perception of free newspapers as instruction material because the newspapers do not have appropriate content.

5.13 Editorial strategies used by free newspapers in Kenya

The study found out that various editorial strategies are used by publishers of free newspapers to increase readership. Among these strategies is selection of content that attracts readers, the structure of news article that is more brief and straight to the point.

Furthermore free newspapers have introduced special pullouts, special group sections like teenagers sections in addition to packaging news stories differently from paid for newspapers.

5.14 Weaknesses of free newspapers as a tool for creating reading culture

Despite the fact that free newspapers can change reading culture, it was also found out that efforts by the *People Daily* might not be enough to change the reading culture in Kenya, a country with a poor reading culture.

Previous deliberate efforts to change reading culture failed; it is unlikely that the *People Daily* will singly succeed. To change reading culture requires more drastic measures like ingraining the habit of reading in children so that reading becomes as important as sports and any other leisure time activities.

It is obvious that free newspapers will not be able to achieve what previous strategies have failed to achieve. Previous efforts include publishers, book industries, and international bodies, such as United Nations, that since as early as the 1980's have tried to create a reading culture.

The second weakness of free newspapers as a tool for creating reading is socialisation of Kenyans as an oral society in which people depend on information from opinion leaders and interaction with peers. Most Kenyans are not socialised to read from young ages and therefore introduction of a free newspaper cannot change reading culture. Even with the current free newspapers, parents and teachers are not socialising children to read more.

It was also found out that the economics aspects in terms of purchasing power for reading material are not a hindrance to access to reading materials. Many readers do not read the free paper will not change this situation.

5.20 Conclusion.

The study concludes that free newspapers can create a reading culture but only if these newspapers are supported by other more deliberate strategies for creating an appropriate reading culture. It was found out that reading culture is influenced by many other variables apart from availability of reading materials.

To improve the reading culture free newspapers must first change the negative perception associated with them, strengthen their content and develop editorial strategies that can socialise you readers into adopting a better reading culture.

5.30 Recommendations

Based on the above findings the study recommends the following in relation to the objectives of this study:

i. Appropriate Socialization of young readers

Young readers should be socialized into reading because reading culture is easily created at early ages than in adulthood. In this regard reading lessons should be emphasized and if possible the appropriate institutions the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, (KICD) and Kenya National Examination Council, (KNEC) should change the syllabus for reading lessons and make the subject examinable at primary school level. In any case socialization at home and schools are the best strategies for creating a suitable reading culture.

ii. Deliberate reading promotion activities

To improve public perception of free newspapers in Kenya, publishers should promote reading activities proactively. Deliberate reading promotion activities should be used to create a suitable reading culture. Previous reading promotion activities should be invigorated. Specifically efforts by the publishing industry the United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation, KNLS, National Book Development Council of Kenya, the National Archive, McMillan Library, the Department of Culture and Social Services, and the reading tent initiative.

iii. Educational content in free newspapers

Appropriate editorial strategies should be used to increase educational content in free newspapers. Educational content will encourage school to adopt free newspapers as instructional materials. Currently teachers are discouraged from using free newspapers as instructional because the content is inappropriate for learning purposes. Additionally by targeting schools free

newspapers can drastically increase circulation and influence reading culture because schools do not have enough reading resources.

iv. Attitude change

Concerning public perception of free newspapers in Kenya, the study recommends that publishers of free newspapers initiate deliberate efforts to change the negative perception of free newspapers as poor quality publication. This will increase acceptance of free newspaper as alternative sources of news both at homes, in offices and schools.

v. Publication of Kiswahili Edition of Free Newspaper

Publishers should consider introducing free newspapers in other languages as part of editorial innovations that can increase newspaper circulation. In particular the *People Daily* Should consider introduction of a Kiswahili publication to widen its readership. Currently there is no free newspaper published in Kiswahili. If introduced the Kiswahili free daily can capture readers of low social economic status, who perhaps have low education levels and cannot effectively read the English newspapers. These readers are also likely to appreciate free publications more because they cannot afford buying newspapers daily.

vi. Need for further research

Further research should be done to find out the long term influence of free newspapers on socialisation. This study was quantitative and exploratory and therefore couldn't properly describe long term effects of free newspapers on reading culture. Besides the sample used was small because of the limited resources and time. Therefore a more comprehensive study should

follow up, particularly studies with more time and resources to engage in research in other regions of the country and other free newspaper.

Appendix 1

1.0 Semi-structured interview Guideline for school teachers/librarians and parents

My name is Linda Akwabi, a Master of Arts in Communication Studies student at the University of Nairobi. I am collecting information to study effect of free newspapers on reading culture in Kenya. I request you to answer a few questions as part of this study under the following terms:

- The information you give will be treated with confidence and will only be used for this study.
- Your name will not be mentioned, comments will only be given as aggregates.
- You have the rights to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time

If you need any clarifications please contact me on lindaakwabi@gmail.com or my supervisor at Dr Kamau Mwangi on telephone number _____

Thank you for your time.

Question Guidelines

The interviewee should ask questions about;

- 1 Do you read free newspapers (as parents, librarians, and school teachers)
- 2 Where do you read these newspapers?
- 3 Do pupils/your children see you reading newspapers?
- 4 Do you encourage pupils to read free newspapers at home/library/school?
- 5 Do you provide guided reading of free newspapers at home/library/school?
- 6 As a parent do you take home free newspapers? Do children see you read this free newspaper?
- 7 Do you read (loud) newspapers for pupils/your children?

Appendix 2

2.0 Semi-structured interview Guideline for editors

My name is Linda Akwabi, a Master of Arts in Communication Studies student at the University of Nairobi. I am collecting information to study effect of free newspapers on reading culture in Kenya. I request you to answer a few questions as part of this study under the following terms:

- The information you give will be treated with confidence and will only be used for this study.
- Your name will not be mentioned, comments will only be given as aggregate of editors comments.
- You have the rights to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time

If you need any clarifications please contact me on lindaakwabi@gmail.com or my supervisor at Dr Kamau Mwangi on telephone number _____

Thank you for your time.

Question Guidelines

The interviewee should ask questions about;

- 5 How have you branded (made unique, differentiated) news content for the *People Daily*
- 6 Have you attempted to improve reading culture of newspaper readers in Kenya?
- 7 What are your core values?
- 8 How have you encouraged loyalty among readers? (e.g. subscriptions/repeat buyers)
- 9 How do you leverage your content your content online/radio/TV content
- 10 How do you market news as content?
- 11 What are your Non-content revenues?

Appendix 3

3.0 DVD Recording of Key Informant interviews

Appendix 4

4.0 Certificate of field work

Appendix 5

5.0 Certificate of corrections

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