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Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

The Relevance of News Agencies in a Proliferated Media Space:
The Case of Kenya News Agency

By

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ADM. No. K/50/82576/2012

**A Research Project Submitted for Examination to the School of
Journalism and Mass Communication in Partial Fulfillment for the
Award of Master of Arts in Communication Studies, University of
Nairobi.**

NOVEMBER, 2021

DECLARATION

Declaration by Candidate

This research project is my original work and has not been presented in this form or any other, for an award in any other University.

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This research Project has been submitted with my approval as the supervisor on behalf of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I take this opportunity, first to thank the Almighty God for giving me life and providence within the process of carrying out this Study. I would not have come this far without His sufficient grace, wisdom and knowledge. I am indebted to my family members for their prayers and enduring spirit during the time I was away from them. Your prayers invoked a miracle for this to happen.

I also acknowledge the support of my supervisor Dr. Elias Mokuia for his unequalled and unwavering support throughout the process of the thesis. The effort he put in guiding me to have this study succeed is innumerable and commendable. My most sincere gratitude goes to him.

I am also grateful to my Boss the Government Spokesperson Col. (Rtd) Cyrus Oguna my colleagues, Eunice Muthamia, Eva Ewagata, Lucy Njeri, Sylvia Gakenia, Victor Nyaga, Mary Nyoike Vivian Simwa, Irene Agum, Charles Mukora, Joseph Kipkoech, Francis Hwaga and Bernard Ngugi for their critical roles in the achievement of this study. Their material and moral support to have this study completed was encouraging and humbling experience that gives me the push to go on. And despite the intrusive nature of the study I am really moved by the willingness and sincerity of my colleagues in the media houses; NTV, KTN, TV47, CITIZEN and KNA newsrooms, in their participation in the research as my key informants.

To my friends, college mates and lecturers at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication you are my inspiration. Special thanks goes to Dr. James Oranga for his efforts in ensuring that the study was kick started and taken course in spite of the challenges posed by the Corona Virus. My acknowledgements to Prof. George Nyabuga, Prof. Hezron Mogambi, Dr. George Gathigi, Dr. Samuel Siringi and Messrs. Simon Mwangi and Chris Kituto. Your support is tangible and fundamental.

To the entire Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs headship your role in this study is highly acknowledged. Last but not the least, I appreciate the support of Mr. Bernard Okello for ensuring my safe late stay in the office in pursuit of this goal.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my family for their unwavering support as I undertake this study.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to analyze the relevance of news agencies in a proliferated media space with reference to the Kenya News Agency (KNA). The specific objectives of the study sought to examine the uptake of news stories from Kenya News Agency (KNA) by the private media; investigate the factors influencing the type of the Kenya News Agency's news stories that the private media seek for; investigate whether Kenya News Agency complements or rivals the work of private media and; assess the challenges faced by the Kenya News Agency in delivering news. The study was founded on two theoretical foundations namely: Kurt Lewin's Gatekeeping Theory and the Cultivation Theory. Explanatory design was adopted in this study. The research used a qualitative method technique. The study was conducted in private broadcast media houses and the KNA's Department of Information headquarters and its Nairobi City County's Information Office. Data was collected using interview schedules with key informants. It was collected and systematically organised in an orderly manner that facilitated analysis. The qualitative data was subjected to content analysis. The findings show that various media houses were using stories from the KNA. Close to half (50%) of the stories received by the sampled stations were aired, demonstrating the importance of KNA in a crowded media environment. In most cases, private media houses aired stories from KNA especially those they found to be big during their dry days. Most of the media houses that largely relied on KNA for news content were upcoming TV stations. The type of the KNA's news stories that the private media sought was determined by the fact that KNA provided balanced and in-depth stories. The appeal of stories, credibility, and quality as well as their focus on various topics was another important factor. The credibility of news was another important factor enhancing the uptake of news items from KNA by private media. KNA could also reach government officials and events even where private media were limited. Some of the challenges faced by KNA in delivering news included staff shortage, poor-quality footage, overreliance on government projects and bureaucracy among others. The study thus recommends the need for KNA to make their news appealing to all private media houses through creative recording, spicing of news items and ensuring responsive and prompt dissemination of video clips. The challenges facing KNA could be solved through increased funding, staff capacity building, procurement of modern filming equipment, provision of reliable transport and proper staff performance monitoring.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONMYS

AFP	Agence France-Presse
AP	Associated Press
GNS	General News Service
IRCs	Information Resource Centres
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KIS	Kenyan Information Service
KNA	Kenya News Agency
KTN	Kenya Television Network
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MCDAs	Ministries, Counties, Departments and Agencies
NTV	Nation Television
OAU	Organization of African Unity's
GOK	Government of Kenya
VOK	Voice of Kenya
KALRO	Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter entails the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, justification, and significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, assumption and operational definitions of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Private media are described as companies owned and operated by private companies or individuals for financial gain and are registered in a country. Private media, according to Mercille (2014), are clearly for profit and are supported by commercial money. They are in form of electronic (broadcast), Print and of late the new media which encompasses on-line platforms via the internet. Private broadcasters range from giant multinational corporations ran by some of the richest and most politically influential people in the world, to small local FM stations (Mercille, 2014). In most circumstances, broadcasting is governed by the terms of a license granted by a governmental authority on a periodic basis. The terms of such a license also vary depending on how prescriptive or restrictive they are, often setting certain terms under which news or current affairs can be broadcast. According to Singh (2016), there might also be an explicit public service component to the license, for example, obliging the licensee to carry out voter education programmes or public announcements in case of an emergency.

Private print media, according to Wirtz (2020), is likewise tremendously diversified, ranging from daily to weekly newspapers and magazines, as well as special-interest periodicals and journals, all of which compete for advertising and sales revenue. Even though the government owns a substantial portion of broadcasting, the print media is frequently controlled by private interests. According to Callanan and Rosenberger (2011), even under authoritarian situations, at least some newspapers in any country are likely to perform serious news investigations and comment on political developments in a reasonably informed manner. Private media relies heavily on news agencies for most news and stories concerning various issues affecting the society. As a result,

news agencies play an important role in bringing news and videos from areas that private media may be unable to cover (Callanan, & Rosenberger, 2011).

A news agency, according to Britannica Editors of Encyclopedia (2015), is an entity that gathers news and reports and sells them to news organizations that subscribe to them, such as newspapers, magazines, and radio or television broadcasters. Despite the fact that there are several news organizations around the world, only four global news organizations, Agence France-Presse (AFP), Associated Press (AP), Reuters, and United Press International (UPI), have offices in nearly every country and cover all aspects of the news. These are the sources of the majority of international news in the world's newspapers (Esperidião, 2011). All four began with the core principle of delivering a single objective news feed to all customers, and they continue to do so today. They do not provide separate feeds for conservative and liberal publications (Alleyne & Wagner, 1993).

According to Callanan and Rosenberger (2011), news organizations avoid overt partiality in order to attain such broad acceptance. Correct information is, unsurprisingly, their stock in trade. "Historically, they have reported at a lower level of responsibility, attributing their information to a spokesman, the press, or other sources. They avoid making snap decisions and avoid uncertainty," Callanan and Rosenberger note (2011). Objectivity was not a word used by their founders. Objectivity, on the other hand, maintains the philosophical foundation for their endeavors, whose failure is governed by universally accepted neutrality (Singh, 2016). National news agencies in Europe have been important media institutions since the 19th century, providing a primary news service to the media largely within their respective nation-states. They are one of the oldest media organisations to have survived the change of media production from the telegraph era to the platform era (Wirtz, 2020).

Today's agencies are referred to as "wholesale news providers" (Paterson, 2007), as they cover everything from politics to sports, as well as financial and entertainment news. They have a reputation for providing maximally accurate, maximally timely, and maximally factual information (Boyer, 2011), and they are "the fundamental heart of the media industry," according to the editor of the British national agency Press Association (Davies, 2008, p.74). News organizations increasingly rely on news

agencies to deal with the 24-hour news cycle and the need to be first with breaking news (Karlsson, 2011), as well as to cut expenses (Boyer, 2011). This reliance is much more pronounced in the case of online journalism (Johnston, 2009; Paterson, 2007). Unlike most other sources of information that a journalist uses to create a story, information from agencies has such unquestionable authority that the news media rarely questions its content or authenticity (Johnston & Forde, 2011). National news organizations are today confronted with a variety of important obstacles. Citizens can obtain news and information not only through traditional media, but also independently; not only within national media systems, but also across national borders, thanks to new media technologies (Forde & Johnston, 2013).

News organizations, particularly wire services, encounter difficulties. The news agencies have lost their historic monopoly on "raw" news and now face competition from a variety of sources (Boyer, 2011). It is becoming increasingly difficult to ensure content exclusivity in the digital age: once a medium publishes content online, other media can profit for free. Furthermore, as a result of media companies' cost-cutting strategies, agencies are under more pressure to supply more services at lower prices (Phillips, 2010a) and have fewer turnovers when media customers cancel agency services (Wilke, 2010). Agencies around the world are responding to these issues by reducing staff and diversifying their services to increase revenue (Boyd-Barrett, 2010). These activities frequently include photo, video, and mobile media services, as well as those that have been chastised for blurring the lines between journalism and public relations (Rutten & Slot, 2011).

Large media organizations and people are increasingly owning or controlling shares in a variety of media organizations, including newspapers, websites, television, and radio, on a global scale. Concentration creates firms with the resources and capacity to build in-house operations that mimic news agency duties, significantly changing the marketplaces in which news agencies presently operate (Rantanen, Jääskeläinen, Stupart, & Kelly, 2019). Furthermore, while rising populism, nationalism, and propaganda necessitate a wide availability of reliable news, the current national and global news landscape makes it difficult to know which sources to trust. National news organizations could play a critical role in addressing some of these issues by delivering verified, fact-based information. However, in order to respond to a variety of financial,

political, and cultural crises on a national, transnational, and global scale, new techniques are required (Palmer, 2019).

News agencies, which are primarily responsible for circulation in the information economy, typically play a leading role in the process of developing national and international communication systems. Between the 1940s and 1970s, they were prioritized foundations in building the institutional framework of decolonized nations, particularly in the then newly-emancipated countries of South Asia and the Caribbean, as well as countries in Latin America and former socialist countries in Central-Eastern Europe and Central Asia. According to Hansen, Shneiderman, and Smith (2010), among the dozens of countries that gained independence during the period of decolonization (during the Cold War), several of them took the initiative to establish news agencies soon after establishing their respective sovereign states. In general, these companies remained under state control, frequently with a legally guaranteed monopoly on both domestic and international distribution of international news items (Hansen, Shneiderman, & Smith, 2010).

According to Aguiar (2016), news agencies have the potential to multiply content for spreading information and discourses that may respond to national development planning by feeding the private media, domestic and foreign, public or corporate. As distributors of mass information to the media, these corporations have always had a quantitatively insurmountable power to disseminate information and opinions (including propaganda), all of which are strategic elements for states in the early stages of nation building (Aguiar, 2016). According to Hansen, Shneiderman, and Smith (2010), the permanent distribution of news services by state-owned agencies was also the antithesis of the free-market in the field of communication, manifested in the 'free-flow doctrine,' particularly when they had a monopoly on this type of service to the press (something usual in several developing countries, in the context of Cold War).

National news agencies were established in Africa as part of the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) strategy to decolonize information disseminated within and beyond the continent's borders. They were also expected to actively promote the generation and dissemination of information aimed at promoting development-related activities (Nwaolikpe, 2018). According to Dash (2009), national news agencies are

strategically placed to serve as the core of a country's news gathering and distribution machinery because they are the primary collectors and distributors of information at both the national and international levels. Their utility, however, is dependent on the environment in which they operate. Some notable factors influencing news agencies' effectiveness include their capacity in terms of manpower, equipment, and the reach of their news gathering networks, as well as the extent to which they use participatory approaches to communication (Dash, 2009).

Government news agencies continue to play a vital role in enlightening and educating the public. The media does help the public participate in governance by advocating for issues and transferring knowledge, skills, and technologies to the public. The media can also be used to spread awareness about various rural development programs, such as family planning propagation (Singh, 2016). In addition, the media is also viewed as a change agent, instilling new values and behaviors in society. The mass media can be thought of as a mechanism for communicating symbols and messages to the general public. The public and policy makers at all levels consistently receive messages about what is really important in the world of public affairs. The result of this has been that public affairs issues that are prominent in the press frequently gain importance among the public and government officials (Mwangi, 2018).

Asodik and Udoh (2014) investigated the effects of private and government-owned broadcast media on Nigerian public opinion and discovered that private broadcasting has a higher regard for individual opinion and, as a result, will not suppress such opinion to favor anyone, unlike government-owned broadcast media. Again, private broadcast media raises awareness through which more and more feedback on issues is analyzed, thereby assisting in projecting public stand on any issue of public interest, regardless of political inclination. This demonstrates that private broadcasting lives up to the expectations of what every media outlet would be "a marketplace of ideas," as they operate under the auspices of social responsibility theory, which allows for divergent viewpoints while remaining socially responsible.

Kenya has a diverse and sophisticated media sector that enjoys significant freedom of expression. There are approximately 90 radio stations broadcasting across the country, as well as a dozen television channels and several daily newspapers (Keane, 2013).

Kenya News Agency is one of the media outlets. Kenya News Agency (KNA) was founded in 1963 as a means of building the fledgling nation. Its primary goal at the time was to forge a common Kenyan identity through a consistent and cohesive voice (Mwangi, 2015). It gathered, processed, and disseminated local print and electronic news using the Kenyan narrative, supplementing the then-Voice of Kenya (VOK), now Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), in order to promote the Government's development agenda. Its forerunner, the Kenyan Information Service (KIS), was established in 1939 to disseminate information about World War II and was decommissioned in 1945 (GOK, 2010). The Kenya News Agency, as a state-owned entity, was expected to project a positive image of Kenya and promote the work of the government. The Agency was initially the primary source of news reports from outside the capital Nairobi, but as road networks expanded and internet infrastructure improved; access to rural areas became easier and more affordable for private sector news organizations to send their own reporters to cover news outside Nairobi.

Kenya News Agency has 47 County and 27 Sub-county offices. The Agency also disseminates electronic news and information to local and international subscribers. Its 24 County Information Resource Centres (IRCs) and 11 Regional Publications are focal points for content gathering and dissemination. The countrywide network gives KNA a competitive edge over other media organizations. Because of its prominent presence at the national, county, and sub-county levels, the Agency serves as a veritable nerve center for gathering, packaging, processing and disseminating news and information to the Kenyan public about the Government's policies, projects, programs, and initiatives (Odhiambo, 2016). Kenya has the most developed economy in East Africa, as well as the region's most sophisticated media. There are numerous private radio and television stations. They primarily broadcast in English and Kiswahili. Some broadcast in tribal languages as well. The majority of media companies are owned by individuals and private companies, and they rely on Kenya News Agency in some way for news and stories. As a result, the purpose of this research is to investigate the relevance of the Kenya News Agency to the private media.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Kenya News Agency, as a government-owned news organization, continues to be a reliable source of news and stories for the private media. Its presence at the national,

county, and sub-county levels has enabled this. This guarantees that news and general information on the government's policies, projects, programs, and initiatives is collected, packaged, processed, and delivered to Kenyans (Odhiambo, 2016). This opens up the possibility of news being distributed to private media outlets, some of which do not have national reach (Jenks, 2016; Mwangi, 2018).

While the channels for news transmission have expanded and diversified as a consequence of deregulation, the number of organizations that gather the raw material of news has remained strictly limited and their power has comparatively increased in a context where the commercial logic predominates and it is no longer affordable for many news organizations to obtain their own sources. News agencies have not only spread the news values of impartiality, objectivity and neutrality across the globe, but they have also shaped news content, either indirectly through the imposition of what is considered newsworthy or directly through the provision of journalistic products to their subscribers.

Despite its importance in collection and dissemination of news and stories concerning government activities, there is limited literature addressing its relevance to private media. Some of the studies done in relation to the relevance of KNA to the private media include Boumans, Trilling, Vliegthart and Boomgaarden (2018) who examined the impact of the news agency content on print Media and Nwaolikpe (2018) who examined the mass media and national development; the case of “baby factory” activities in Nigeria, and Mwangi (2018) examined media influence on public policy in Kenya based on the case of illicit brew consumption. However, none of the studies focused on the relevance of Kenya News Agency in the dissemination of information to private media. In addition, the relevance and the link between Kenya news agency and private media have not been established. This creates an important empirical lacuna that cannot be bridged without systematic study. This study hence sought to analyze the relevance of Kenya news agency in a proliferated media space dominated by the private media firms.

1.3. Research Objectives

1.3.1. General Objective

To analyze the relevance of news agencies in a proliferated media space with reference to the Kenya News Agency.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the uptake of news stories from Kenya News Agency by the private media.
2. To investigate the factors influencing the type of the Kenya News Agency's news stories that the private media seek for.
3. To investigate whether Kenya News Agency complements or rivals the work of private media.
4. To assess the challenges faced by the Kenya News Agency in delivering news.

1.4. Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How is the uptake of news stories from Kenya News Agency by private media?
2. Which factors influence the type of Kenya News Agency news' stories that the private media go for?
3. Does Kenya News Agency rival or complement the work of private media?
4. What challenges does Kenya News Agency face in delivering news?

1.5 Justification of the Study

KNA plays a pivotal role in disseminating information on government development projects to the wider media. This study was pertinent since there was need to establish how KNA fulfilled this obligation in Kenya. This was motivated by the fact that it was a tall order making empirically informed recommendations on how to best enhance the efficacy of service provision by KNA. Private media houses also needed to understand how to best relate with KNA to obtain timely and newsworthy information. The scantiness of empirical evidence on the relevance of KNA to private media houses also made this study timely.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study was significant to both the private media and KNA as it highlights how relevant KNA was to them by looking at the uptake of news stories from the agency and the factors influencing the type of news stories that the private media sought for. This was aimed at enabling both parties to come up with strategies on how to craft mutual working relationships for shared benefits.

The study was also significant to KNA in building partnerships with private media. This enables both of them to reduce cost of operations in covering wide networks for news and developmental information. These partnerships enable KNA to overcome the challenges it faces in delivering news and earning revenue for the government while the private media is assured of authoritative news items without the threats of falling into cases of defamation and other legal challenges from unauthentic news by unreliable independent news sources.

The results obtained are expected to contribute to and reinforce the already available literature and knowledge in regard to the relevance of KNA to the private media. The literature will be useful to scholars as a reference material when carrying out further research regarding the relevance of KNA to the private media.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focused on analysis of the relevance of Kenya news agency to the private media. The study was conducted by focusing on KNA and four main electronic private media - Citizen, NTV and KTN and the budding TV47. It specifically looked at the uptake of news and stories from KNA by the four TV stations, factors influencing the type of KNA news stories that the private media sought for, ways in which KNA rivaled or complemented the work of private media and the challenges faced by KNA in delivering news. The study was done in four months.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study faced several limitations. First and foremost, the study relied on qualitative data. The study focused on editors, reporters of private media houses as well as officials of KNA. This was a limitation since other stakeholders in the media industry such as government officials and print media houses as well as social media practitioners were

not included. Additionally, secondary data sources were not considered. This is also a limitation since important information could have been left out.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Terms

Kenya News Agency (KNA): This is a government-run national news agency created in 1963 for disseminating news and information at sub-county, county and national levels

News Story: This is a written or recorded (or, occasionally, live) article or interview that informs the public about current events, concerns, or ideas

Private media: These are media companies owned and operated by private companies or individuals for financial profit and are registered in the country.

Clientele: These are customers including private media houses that subscribe for news articles and items from KNA

Regional Newspapers: These are news channels in form of magazines published by KNA in 11 regions across the country for government information to citizens

National News Agency: Is an agency whose coverage of news is within a nation state without permeating international borders

Press Centre: Is the office at KNA departmental headquarters which serves as the repository of the agency's video footage for future references

Press Office: Is KNA's newsroom where stories are received and edited before, they are transmitted to the subscribers

Proliferation: Availability of multiple or large numbers of something

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on the role of news agencies in the private media. The theoretical framework, which is crucial in identifying theories that inform the study and empirical review, is also presented in this chapter.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Concept of News and its Contribution to Development

The term "news" refers to recent information about a situation or incident (Waisbord, 2018). It is the information that is published in newspapers and aired on radio and television on recent happenings in the country or world, or in a particular field of activity, according to Callanan and Rosenberger (2011). There are many different forms of news. Print media (newspapers, magazines), broadcast news (radio and television), and the Internet are all examples (online newspapers, news blogs, news videos, live news streaming). The value of news appears to be universal throughout cultures. People appear to be interested in news that has a large impact, describes conflicts, occurs near them, involves well-known people, and deviates from regular events (Dash, 2009). News that is sufficiently important will be repeated frequently and will be transmitted by word of mouth over a vast geographic area. The ability to convey information has always been related to the communication networks in existence. As a result, political, religious, and commercial interests have traditionally controlled, expanded, and monitored the avenues through which news could circulate (Hyun, & Kim, 2015).

The role of the media in national development is critical. They shape public opinion, promote democracy and good government, shape people's behavior, and support policies that benefit people (Hendy, 2013). Conveying of government information by the media transforms the general population into educated nationals as the entire society shifts towards post-advancement. It additionally urges the general population to practice their entitlement to know, which is basic when they are to settle on decisions with respect to their interest in the support of this first stage. Generally, the media plays a vital part in correspondence through dissemination of information, providing exchange programs, giving ideas, teaching skills for a better way of living and making a base of agreement for stability of the state (Lynch, 2016). The way the media reports

on the blue print project is important as it can promote good governance, which is critical for the success of the project. The government needs to be held responsible not only for the launch of these flagship projects and reforms but also accountable and transparent in their progress (Ngare, 2017). This is by relaying information through the media on the opportunities available for Kenyans to support and invest in these projects with the aim of creating employment and reducing poverty levels. The media therefore influences both the public and policy makers and shapers, through collective engagement in keeping everyone informed and providing a platform for dialogue (Mwangi, 2018).

The government uses media in enlightening and educating the people about the importance of participating in national development (Nguyen, Han, & Sahito, 2019). The government often use media as an approach for monitoring and evaluating the progress of various development projects. By campaigning for causes and disseminating knowledge, skills, and technology to the people, the news agency can enhance public participation in governance. The media could be used to raise awareness about various rural development programs, such as family planning (Singh, 2016). To satisfy the greater ideological objective of modernizing the periphery, communication had to be integrated into development. The mass media was seen as being responsible for social change, instilling new goals in communities and cultures in order to assist them in achieving mobility and stability, which were seen as important stages in the shift from old customs and behavior to new practices and social relationships (Aguiar, 2016).

2.1.2 Uptake of News Stories from a News Agency by the Private Media

A news story is a written (or, in some cases, live) piece or interview that informs the audience about current events, concerns, or views. News is merely information, and it does not reveal the majority of understanding about how a certain disease develops (Waisbord, 2018). According to Edgerly and Vraga (2020), news is the result of numerous actors, each of whom plays a critical part in determining whether an incident is newsworthy or not, as well as in determining the angle and framing of the news. As diverse sources have shown, news has taken on different forms at different times. For example, in the 17th century, news was viewed as basic reports, but it underwent a metamorphosis when the previous simple report of a particular event came to an end,

giving way to a new trend - "providing audiences a summary of a given occurrence" (Rauf, 2021).

Private media relies heavily on news agencies for most news and stories concerning various issues affecting the society. News agencies play a key role in providing news and stories from localities where private media may not be able to cover (Callanan, & Rosenberger, 2011). In the realm of journalism, news agencies have a long history. The agency was founded in the 1830s and 1840s as a collaborative venture by newspapers with the goal of lowering the costs and expanding the scope of international correspondence. However, in the last decade, their reach has grown dramatically: Today's agencies are referred to as "wholesale news providers" (Paterson, 2007), as they cover everything from politics to sports, as well as financial and entertainment news. They have a reputation for providing the most reliable, timely, and truthful information (Boyer, 2011), and Davies (2008) describes them as "the center heart of the media industry."

News organizations increasingly rely on news agencies to deal with the 24-hour news cycle and the need to be first with breaking news (scoops), as well as to cut expenses (Forde & Johnston, 2013). This reliance is much more pronounced in the case of online journalism (Johnston, 2009). Unlike most other sources of information that a journalist uses to create a story, information from agencies has such unquestionable authority that the news media rarely questions its content or authenticity (Davies, 2008; Johnston & Forde, 2011). For television news (Paterson, 2011), print news (Lewis, Williams, & Franklin, 2008), and online news (Johnston, 2009), reliance on agency material has been explored, but comparative study between media platforms is lacking. Only one comparative content analysis has been published, according to existing knowledge; the study suggests that online news sources rely more on agency copy than newspapers (Welbers, et al., 2016).

The news agency comes in a range of shapes and sizes. In certain large cities, newspapers, radio stations, and television stations have teamed together to provide regular coverage of police, courts, and government buildings (Alasuutari, Qadir, & Creutz, 2013). National agencies have expanded the scope of such coverage, according to Curran, Esser, Hallin, Hayashi, and Lee (2017), by gathering and disseminating stock

market quotations, sports results, and election results. A few news organizations have expanded their services to include international news. News interpretation, special columns, news pictures, audiotape recordings for radio broadcast, and often videotape for television broadcast have all become part of the service. Many news agencies are cooperatives, and this has been the pattern since World War II. Individual members of this type of organization contribute news from their respective circulation zones to an agency pool for broad distribution. National and international news agencies have offices in key news centers to facilitate distribution of their services, and they have their own reporters to cover big events (Curran, Esser, Hallin, Hayashi & Lee, 2017).

Despite the abundance of news services, the majority of news written and aired worldwide each day originates from only a few major news organizations, the three largest of which being the Associated Press in the United States, Reuters in the United Kingdom, and Agence France-Presse in France. Only these and a few others have the financial means to station experienced reporters in all places of the world where news occurs on a regular basis (to ensure access to well-organized transmission infrastructure) or to dispatch them wherever news occurs unexpectedly. These organizations are also capable of disseminating the service fairly instantly (Artz, 2017).

During the twentieth century, the capacity to disseminate news quickly substantially improved. All main areas have always been linked by radio tolerances that allow for swift automatic transmission of news signals. TV picture transmission and high-fidelity cables have progressed significantly. Newspapers seeking to have automated typesetting done immediately from news-service broadcasts could use the teletype setter service, which was pioneered by the Associated Press in 1951. Most news organizations had switched the majority of their operations and transmission to computers by the twenty-first century (Alasuutari, Qadir, & Creutz, 2013).

2.1.3 Factors Influencing the Type of News Agency's News Stories

Straight or hard news articles are those that provide only the most important information in a short and unbiased manner. The inverted pyramid style, which organizes material in declining order of significance or places the most important information at the top of the piece, is commonly used in this type of story (Sabao, 2016). Stories involving politics and crime are examples of hard news stories. The style is the major distinction

between soft news (a feature article) and plain news (a news report). A feature article is more in-depth than a standard hard news item, and it employs the same storytelling techniques and elements as a novel. Feature pieces are considered soft news since they do not concentrate solely on the facts. Writers have more freedom to employ a variety of styles, provide detailed descriptions, and insert scene-setting anecdotes. Picture, illustration, graphics, maps, and other visual components are frequently used to accompany features on the page (Welbers et al., 2016).

Various factors influence the types of news stories that a news organization distributes. Government, interest groups, closeness, and relevance are among them. According to Abdel (2017), the government's emphasis on social protest generates a high level of prejudice in journalists. As a result, governments try to influence the media using a variety of tactics, ranging from outright restriction and coercion to help and variation. Because they occurred recently, immediate, current information and events are newsworthy (Boumans, Trilling, Vliegthart, & Boomgaarden, 2018). Local news and events are important because they have an impact on the people in the town and region. The type of news stories produced by a news organization is also influenced by its location. Communities in a mountainous region of a developing country are cut off from social, political, and economic structures, as well as from access to resources, in part due to their isolation (Gynnild, 2017).

2.1.4 Challenges faced by the News Agencies in Delivering News

National news agencies in Europe have been important media institutions since the 19th century, providing a primary news service to the media largely within their respective nation-states. They are one of the oldest media organisations to have survived the change of media production from the telegraph era to the platform era (Keneshloo, 2019). In today's world of globalization, however, the very feasibility of a national news service is being questioned in many countries. National news organizations are today confronted with a variety of important obstacles. Citizens can obtain news and information not only through traditional media, but also independently; not only within national media systems, but also across national borders, thanks to new media technologies. As a result, the wholesale General News Service (GNS) for media clients, which was once a key news agency offering has lost its commercial significance. Media ownership concentration is also a problem (Mutugi, Nyamboga, & Matu, 2020).

Large media corporations and people are increasingly owning or controlling dominant interests in a variety of media outlets, including newspapers, websites, television, and radio. Concentration creates firms with the resources and capacity to build in-house operations that mimic news agency duties, significantly changing the markets in which news agencies now compete (Groeling, 2013). Furthermore, while rising populism, nationalism, and propaganda necessitate a wide availability of reliable news, the current national and global news landscape makes it difficult to know which sources to trust. National news organizations could play a critical role in addressing some of these issues by delivering verified, fact-based information. However, in order to respond to a variety of financial, political, and cultural crises on a national, transnational, and global scale, new techniques are required (Sabao, 2016).

According to Mutugi, et al., (2020), the challenge of false news has emerged as a new frontier for journalist credibility and confidence. There has been a global decline in faith in innovative and investigative journalism. With the development of social media in this information age, everyone has now become a journalist in the now popular citizen journalism. As a result, purveyors of false news have devised sophisticated methods for disseminating their wares. Because journalism is based on three basic values: credibility, speed, and trust, fake news has become a thorn in the side, undermining all three. Fake news spreads more quickly thanks to social bots and social media algorithms. It's presented in such a way that it obfuscates the facts, erroneously gaining popular faith (Welbers, et al., 2016).

A number of African news organizations are in trouble. The prospect of, or their own and dysfunctional economic issues, which undermine the agency's normal operation, including incapacity to pay workers, exemplifies this most dramatically (Bernstein, 2014). Rifts between agencies or owners, bureaucrats or media managers, and media agency executives, as well as conflicts of interest between agencies and their own members and clients over such matters as subscription fees and even access to new or traditional services for news clients, are some of the less dramatic signs. Increased competition from independent local agencies in developed countries, as well as other media systems that have gone wholesale in some way, adds to the challenges,

particularly in terms of raising funds for electronic or internet web services, or for supporting adequate levels of news coverage (Mercille, 2014).

The majority of agencies have an online presence, but African news organizations do not. There is increased interest in utilizing online presence to produce revenue (Kelly, Liaplina, Tan, & Winkler, 2017). The web is being used for a variety of intents and objectives, including lowering news collecting and distribution costs to subscribers, improving editorial product, promoting services, and establishing or revamping brand image. There were significant personnel and technological limits discovered. Purchasing or upgrading technology is costly. As a tool for reaching particular clients, local connectivity may be limited. Consumers anticipate free internet information, therefore internet tactics face a problem, and news organizations frequently lack such methods (Groeling, 2013). It was believed that news organizations were unable to attract suitable workers because the salaries offered were lower than those offered by newspapers or other media firms. Furthermore, there were no training facilities for journalists; therefore, agencies relied on possibilities for media training provided by other groups (Keneshloo, 2019).

2.1.5 Proliferated Media Space

The proliferated media space has brought about massive changes in the way news is generated and consumed. The new landscape has shaped modern culture, by affecting the way people behave, communicate, learn and conceive of themselves and their world. The impact of this new media landscape on society is varied in both positive and negative outlooks. According to Steensen (2011), social media and the internet, for example, have contributed by rapidly disseminating news from various sources. Previously, news was limited to a few stories, hourly broadcasts, and morning newspapers, but now it is available with a single mouse click. This level of interactivity has contributed by making it easier for both producers and audiences to access information, as well as by developing a relationship with the source where news is published.

Everyone can now be a publisher and a librarian thanks to the Internet, which allows anyone to create and retrieve an unprecedented amount of information. Traditional media establishments' gate-keeping and agenda-setting functions are being replaced by

search engines and directories (Knobloch et al., 2005). Ideally, this means that anyone with Internet access can gather information about any issue, event, or location, without the constraints of time, money, geography, or politics that used to limit such gathering. This has far-reaching implications for traditional media business models, which rely on aggregating large passive audiences and keeping them captive during advertising.

The traditional top-down communication model does not apply to readers in online spaces. By avoiding the role of journalists, information from the source is directly provided on online platforms (Vergeer, 2018). As a result, modern professional journalism has eliminated the role of journalists as intermediaries between the audience and the outside world (Meijer, & Kormelink, 2015). Newspapers can also benefit from modern communication. Readers of online newspapers can participate by providing feedback on the news, and they can interact directly through blogs, chat forums, and messaging services. The evolution of communication necessitates a shift in the journalist's perception of their role and routine. The role of a journalist, which previously included gathering information, responding to feedback, and promoting their work, has undergone significant change.

Currently, news organizations and their journalists use social media primarily for news gathering. With nearly many people using social media platforms in some form or another, this is simply a method of searching the web for new information that cannot be overlooked (Steensen, 2011). The distribution aspect is probably the most difficult right now, especially for smaller agencies with a business-to-business model. It is extremely difficult to create a model for social media that allows them to distribute news without offending their customers in the absence of a proper news website of their own (Garcia, 2012).

Although the proliferation media space has changed the way news agencies gather information and interact with their audiences, their core function remains the same: gathering and selling news to various outlets around the world (Boyd-Barrett, 2008). According to Paterson (2007), the proliferation of the media space has allowed wire agencies to play a growing role in the modern news environment because of the prevalence of instant news. As a result, the agencies are no longer mediated. Global and regional news agencies have become increasingly important as they bypass

intermediary news processors in cyberspace, allowing them to directly reach a large portion of the news audience (Forde & Johnston, 2012).

2.2 Empirical Review

Various researches on national agencies and commercial media have been undertaken. For example, Abdel 2017 examined the impact of state interests on news portrayal in a cross-sectional analysis of factors impacting news coverage. The goal of the study was to look at the factors related to journalism that have a substantial impact on news coverage. The study used both a cross-sectional and quantitative approach, focusing on a variety of news sources such as newspapers, television, and the internet. The information was received from 47 Egyptian Journalists Federation members (male and female). The government's support of bias and organizational variables ($r=0.612$) were found to be positively related and to be an influential factor in news coverage. The medium of advertisement ($r=0.715$) and organizational characteristics ($r=0.395$) were found to be related to the journalists' personal morals. The State's interest in depicting the news was a major factor in how it was covered. Because audiences are influenced by the news that journalists produce, there is a need to promote public awareness about specific occurrences.

Boumans, Trilling, Vliegthart, and Boomgaarden (2018) investigated the impact of news agency content on print and online news. While it is widely acknowledged that news agencies play an important role in today's news environment, actual data on the extent to which news organizations rely on agency content is sparse. This study used an innovative automated approach to trace agency copy in the major print and online news media stories ($n = 247,161$) of the Dutch news landscape for an entire year ($n = 119,452$). The findings revealed that agency content was heavily reliant on internet news, with the agency responsible for up to 75% of all online news items. Furthermore, much of the web news was composed of verbatim agency content with little or no editing. The findings provided compelling evidence for experts of news creation to prioritize news agencies. As a result, in the context of news variety, the shown agency dominance of internet news is concerning.

Agbi (2016) examined the challenges facing Nigerian news agencies in the era of globalization. The study was meant to determine the backdrop and challenges facing African news agencies in the era of civilization and increase in technology, this paper will work towards identifying some of the challenges as telecommunication barrier, ownership and management, diversification of services, implementing internet strategies and lack of professional personnel. The study did a review on the nature of African news agencies, it examined the function of news agencies, and it also highlighted the challenges facing news agencies in Africa and proffered solutions to it. Analytical method was used for the study. The study was anchored on the uses and gratifications and dependency theory. The findings for the study were that all the challenges facing African news agencies is as a result of civilization and increase in technological competition. However, the work recommends that all agencies should embrace internet strategies to reduce communications costs of news collection and news delivery to subscribers.

Pavelka (2014) looked into the factors that influence how events are presented and how subjects are covered in the media. The study found that news agencies apply to digital networks and digital media, which are rapidly becoming the dominant communication systems and instruments in today's world, as well as the promoters of change and the arena for excessive commercialization. These environments are also influenced by media coverage of social concerns. Media coverage is becoming into a force that has a significant impact on the evolution of human culture. The identification and classification of components and elements influencing the development and selection of events, themes, and news is a precondition and beginning point for a successful practical application of these discoveries in a new communication domain.

Bosire (2006) studied the factors that impact news and editorial content selection in Kenya, focusing on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, the Nation Media Group, and the Standard Group. The purpose of this research was to look into the selection of news and editorial content in Kenya. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), the Nation Media Group, and the Standard Group, Kenya's leading mainstream media firms, are the subject of the report. The study discovered that news is often produced in stages, including informants and sources, press agents, reporters, news agencies, journalists, and editors. Many media outlets cite other media or opinion leaders, resulting in a long

chain of information flow. Every link in this chain of information transmission may be subject to selection and distortion. And all of the players including media owners, media managers, editorial policies, marketers, audiences, and information sources are vying for a piece of the news and editorial pie.

Belachew (2016) looked at the elements that influence news reporting in East Africa, focusing on the Ethiopian Herald and the Kenyan Daily Nation. A mixed-methods approach was used. In-depth interviews, questionnaires, and content analysis were all incorporated. The data was then examined and narrated at the same time using a basic descriptive method. As a result of the findings, it is clear that there are both internal and external issues that impede news reporting. Government influences, NGOs, and other private profit-making organizations are highlighted as key internal variables that generate detraction, whereas news value, journalist perspective, and editorial interests are identified as major external ones. To address these negative aspects, newsrooms must work in accordance with their editorial policies and maintain editorial independence. African journalism schools and newsrooms in general need to collaborate more closely to properly define what African journalism should look like. Press freedom is also essential for the development of a long-term nation-state.

Mutugi, Nyamboga, and Matu (2020) investigated the difficulties faced by Kenyan television journalists in detecting fake news. The study used a qualitative approach and multiple case study methodology, as well as a relativist-constructivist/interpretivist ontology and epistemology. In-depth interviews, direct observation, and document inspection were used to gather data. Purposive sampling was employed to collect data from 16 journalists for the study. The information was then organized into topics and presented in a narrative format. Journalists faced challenges such as loss of viewers, lack of authoritative contacts, sources who gave fake news for personal, business, political, and economic gain, ability of fake news to camouflage real news, speed of fake news, typologies of fake news, live reporting, inexperienced correspondents and interns, and social media in spotting fake news, according to the study. The study concluded that the difficulties journalists face in recognizing fake news are largely due to sources, technology, education, skills and training, and the type of fake news.

Some of studies done in relation to the relevance of Kenya news agency to the private media include Boumans, Trilling, Vliegthart, and Boomgaarden (2018) who examined the impact of news agency content on print and online news, Nwaolikpe (2018) who examined the mass media and national development: the case of 'baby factory' activities in Nigeria, and Mwangi (2018) examined media influence on public policy in Kenya based on the case of illicit brew consumption.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The basis for this research was Kurt Lewin's Gatekeeping Theory (1947). The gatekeeping idea is the intersection of two unarguable facts: events happen everywhere, all the time, and the news media can't cover them all. As a result, when an occurrence occurs, someone must determine whether and how to alert a friend, an authority, or even a journalist. The importance of journalists, management, and regulators in defining what news is and what isn't was further highlighted by the gatekeeping theory. Kurt Lewin invented the term "gatekeeping" to describe the process of blocking and/or rejecting irrelevant or unwanted information using a gate or filter (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

The gatekeeper, according to Lewin, is the individual who decides what gets in and what gets out. As a result, the concept of gatekeeping entails gatekeepers (persons or groups) making decisions about what information should be made available to specific individuals or groups and what should not. The gatekeepers make decisions on behalf of the greater group of people who rely on them for information. Personal, regulatory, cultural, and social variables influence gatekeepers' decisions on what goes into the system and what stays out (DeJuliis, 2015). The gatekeeper can control information flow by preventing sensational, controversial, or undesired information from reaching the audience or entering a system through such gates (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Balachew (2019) highlights news values, journalist perceptions, and editorial interests as key internal elements that influence news selection, while government influences, NGOs, and other commercial profit-making enterprises are identified as external ones. His research discovered that when it came to news selection, newsrooms required to work according to their editorial policies in order to maintain their editorial independence. This specifies the news source, as well as which news organizations are

involved. Most of the time, the gatekeeping theory prevents news from being publicized, particularly from government-owned agencies, in order to maintain editorial independence, which is the essence of the theory in the analysis of the uptake of KNA articles by the private media.

Not only does the gatekeeping process determine which information will be chosen, but it also dictates how the content and character of messages, such as news, will be used in the "surveillance" function. Reporters, wire services, and a variety of other sources bring a vast number of items to the attention of every news media on a daily basis (Schwalbe, Silcock, & Candello, 2015). There is a new perspective, a subculture within any news organization that includes a complex set of criteria for judging a particular news story – criteria based on the medium's economic needs, organizational policy, definitions of newsworthiness, conceptions of the nature of the relevant audience, and beliefs about journalists' fourth estate obligations.

Editors, news directors, and other employees who select a small number of news stories for public dissemination use this news viewpoint and its complex criteria. They then encode them in such a way that they meet the medium's standards as well as the tastes of the audience (Vos, & Russell, 2019). As a government-owned news organization, KNA focuses mostly on development news, excluding juicy political and anti-government topics, a factor that may limit dissemination of the agency's news in private media outlets or its complementation of news service.

According to the Gatekeeping theory, editors in the news media pick what news to publish and what to dismiss based on house regulations, ethics, and book reviews (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). On the ground, editors and news reporters receive a large number of news items and must select what to let through to the public and what not to. This means that well-informed and trained journalists will be able to recognize and dismiss bogus news with ease. In a similar line, the Gatekeeping hypothesis aids in understanding how false news purveyors filter content and choose items that circulate on social media (DeJuliis, 2015). Government news organizations employ well qualified reporters and editors to manage the news processing chain. This makes the agencies reliable in news gathering and processing practising the gate keeping theory. The current study, picks from the fact that news agencies are taken as gatekeepers that

link private media through provision of trustworthy news stories particularly about the government and provides media coverage in remote areas where some of private media companies cannot cover. Hence, this theory is relevant to this study as it seeks to assess the factors that influence the choice of KNA stories by the private media in terms of genre.

2.4 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory, developed by Gerbner, is one of the most widely accepted views about the media's overall impact on viewers. Gerbner and his colleagues argued that television 'cultivates' a specific perspective of the world in the minds of viewers, based on empirical study spanning 20 years. People's opinions and behavior might be influenced by watching television on a regular basis for a long time. According to Gerbner (1992), television viewing fosters a shared understanding of overarching themes and patterns found in many shows across otherwise disparate populations.

Over time, it was discovered that watching a lot of television brought people's worldviews closer together. They internalize the political and social picture of the world given on television as a result of their exposure. Television, according to Gerbner, serves a 'homogeneous' role by eroding traditional divisions among disparate social groupings. This 'muffling' of distinctions was dubbed 'mainstreaming' by Gerbner and his colleagues.

Gerbner's first projects were in the field of violence. Those who watched a lot of television were found to be more concerned about crime and violence, as the media tended to report and depict it far more frequently than it occurred in real life. The cultivation analysis theory's strength is its emphasis on long-term exposure to television material rather than selective exposure to individual programs or films. Gerbner and his colleagues emphasize the importance of media messages in the long-term sustainability of social systems. The formation of specific beliefs about the real world is critical. It is interested in the media's ideological influence and is working to create empirical methods for assessing them.

This theory is relevant in this study because it examines the elements that influence the private media's adoption of KNA news. Critics contend that cultivation analysis theory

fails to advance beyond the direct effects paradigm's "common wisdom." The spectator is still regarded as a passive dupe, powerless to resist media messages. They dispute the cultivation analysis premise that individuals watch television in the same way and respond in the same way to the worldview it promotes. This combined with the fact that news values are thought to be important in the selection of news by local television networks, jeopardizes KNA's status as a private media news source and adoption of its news.

Economic constraints, such as sales and advertisements, are some of the elements that help to define and establish which news values will influence news selection and dissemination. "Presumptions of influential news actors or media sources, as well as predefined objectives of the news public and a news corporation's ideological bent, are all reflected or "implied" by story selection and presentation" (Van Dijk 1988, p. 120). Furthermore, news firms prefer "story and news actors with coordinated links with the press" in order to have rapid access to news (ibid). This factor is crucial in determining the importance of KNA, which is a government-funded organization to the profit-oriented private media.

2.4.1 News Values

According to Abdel (2017), news is presented in the form of stories in the media. As a result, the worth of these tales determines whether or not they are considered news by news producers. According to Bell (1991), a study of news discourse should investigate whether news values affect the structure of the discourse. The values have a role in a variety of news-related activities, including selection, attention, comprehension, representation, and recall (Van Dijk, 1988).

The way news items are presented is important to any organization. In this regard, the way a story is presented will affect the salience placed on it by readers. The stories covered and those omitted will affect the value attributed to the news. Editors are thus required to make complex decision on what to cover or not. The term 'newsworthiness' has been coined by researchers to show how news producers or gatekeepers (editors and sub-editors) select events which they present to the public (Surette, 1998).

The intrinsic characteristics of a news items could also influence the value attached to it. A story is considered newsworthy when they are unusual or contain elements that are out of the ordinary (Gruenewald et al., 2009). In this regard, it is important to package a story in such a way that the aspect of unusualness in a story is engrained in the story. This emanates from the fact that extant literature shows that newsworthiness is greater for cases that have more unique elements (Johnstone et al., 1994).

Vicente and López (2009) underline the importance of ensuring that news has to be regarded as newsworthy by readers. In this is important since a media house is motivated by consumption. If news is not savory, its appeal to readers could be reduced. This ought not to be so since media houses are motivated by profit. In this regard, news should underline the importance of an event being covered while also being interesting to readers (Tankard et al., 1991).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

In this chapter, the study presents; the general research methodology, specifics on the research design, study population and sample size, sampling techniques, data gathering methods, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis and presentations.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is defined by Franfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:98) as a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences about causal relationships among the variables under consideration. It acts as a compass, guiding the researcher through the process of gathering, evaluating, and interpreting data. A research design is a technique that employs a structured method in a study and is effectively employed by a researcher to address the research problem by responding to specific research questions (Dannels, 2018). A research design, according to Tobi and Kampen (2018), is "a plan for performing a study with maximum control over aspects that can interfere with the validity of the findings."

Explanatory design was adopted in this study. Purposeful sampling approaches were used in the selection of units of analysis, so as to ensure trustworthiness of the findings. This entailed gathering information from a sample of a population. This research design was the most appropriate because it sought to understand a phenomenon by polling individuals, in this case editors, camerapersons and reporters, about their opinions, perceptions, and associated news values in the selection of television news items to be broadcast at a specific time and from a specific source.

3.2 Research Approach

The research used qualitative method technique. This necessitated integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The method relied on in-depth interviews to gather information. The researcher was able to gain an informative perspective of the overall research challenge by using the method technique.

3.3 Research Site

The study was conducted in private broadcast media houses and the KNA's Department of Information headquarters and its Nairobi City County's Information Office. Private media included Standard Media Group's Kenya Television Network (KTN), Nation Media Group's National Television (NTV), Royal Media Services' (Citizen TV) and Mt. Kenya University's TV47, media houses in Nairobi County. The focus was in Nairobi being the location of the media houses' newsrooms where news is received and processed for airing. The major decisions on news coverage otherwise known as gatekeeping is mainly done at the newsrooms with little of it being done by reporters in the field stations.

3.4. The Newsroom

“A newsroom is the place where journalists - reporters, editors and producers along with other staffers, work to gather news to be published in a newspapers or magazine or broadcast on television, cable or radio. Some journalism organizations refer to newsroom as the city room. Newsroom is the powerhouse of all media institutions, some prefer to call it the main controlling unit, and others seek to understand it as the main commanding area of the press. They like to compare it to human brain box. Simply defined; the newsroom is the place where reporters and editors along with their technical and management staffs work for bringing out a media product.” (Aryale, 2011).

The main function of newsroom varies in different ways though the concept of division of labor and technological revolution have in recent times occasioned changes in the function of the newsroom over time. In almost all newsrooms either in print or electronic media, editors customarily meet daily with the chief editor to discuss which stories will be placed on the front, middle or back page sections in print or prime time, off-peak time, first or middle or last items in TV bulletins and programmes among other criteria. According to Aryale (2011), such meetings are commonly called a "budget meeting" due to the fact that the main topic of the meeting is the budgeting or allocation of space or airtime in the next issue, bulletin or programme. Newsroom management is an important part of media organizations. In order to perform smoothly, competitively and in a more professional manner certain structures are drawn in newsroom management with Horizontal and vertical Structures being the main types of

newsrooms. The horizontal explains the authority and power distributed equally to the chiefs of every section or beats of news. The newsroom consists from the chief editor to reporters like in commonly understood newsroom but their position or the structure of newsroom varies.

Mostly chief editor remains at the top and other editors or chiefs of sections or beats remain parallel to each other. Sub editors or reporters assigned to work for the related field or beat work under the supervision of those chiefs. This structure causes more interactions between chief and reporters of the same beat or sections as they have direct access to each other. The gate-keeping process does not necessarily pass through all the members of the newsroom; rather it is limited to the staffs of the related field or beat only (Aryale, 2011). The goal of this study was to categorize the participants in terms of their respective linked sectors or beat works. Investigating the activities of a newsroom led to a better understanding of the factors that influence the selection of news articles and items for coverage. It also influenced how news articles are classified for coverage, as well as the criteria used to determine which stories should be broadcast, at what time, and which should be spiked or killed.

3.5 The Research Population

Population is “the aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specifications” (Franfort-Nachmias, & Nachmias, 1996). They view population as consisting, for instance, all households in a given community, all the registered voters in a particular precinct or all books in a public library. A population is a group of people occupying the same geographical area with at least one thing in common from which samples are taken from for measurement in a study (Majid, 2018). Population is defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) as a complete group of individuals, events, or objects that share a common observable attribute, indicating a research population as the entire set of relevant units of analysis or data.

This study focused on reporters and editors at KNA and private media houses as research participants and the number of story items produced by KNA and covered in the select media houses’ television channels. The study population from which the researcher investigated constituted 20 news stories from KNA offices across the country, aired in two main television stations (NTV and TV47) in two years between

January 2019 and December 2020. This was in consideration that the commercial TV stations rarely carried KNA stories because they were mainly developmental in nature and largely produced in the print media formats. It was also informed by the existing reasons on why the private media go for KNA stories which include; dryness in their copy desks, lack of reporters in some regions and KNA's ease of access to authoritative news sources. Lack of proper records of KNA stories by private media houses was another reason that led to the number selected as explained later in Chapter 4.

3.6 Sample Design and Sampling Techniques

Sampling has been defined as the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in a manner that the individuals selected represent the larger group from which they are selected. Sampling design and techniques involve all the methods and procedures of selecting the subjects or cases. Thus, it refers to the research devises for carrying out sampling after determining; the sample size, the which, who or what should be included in the sample. The aim of sampling in this study was to determine the precise inferences in all the units or set based on a relatively small number of units or a subset. The basic objective of sampling theory as outlined by Franfort Nachmias and Nachmias, (1996) is to provide accurate estimates of unknown values of the parameters from sample statistics that can be easily calculated. The accuracy of a sample is dependent on either a criteria or sampling frame or more over, on every aspect of the sample design – the population covered, the stages undertaken in sampling, and the actual selection process.

The researcher in this study used sampling criteria that included an elaborate sample design in order to obtain data that were as representative as feasible. The research used deliberate sampling to determine editors' experience in story selection, frequency of involvement with KNA articles in the newsroom, length of time in handling KNA stories, and the number of stories aired or deleted. It included 15 males and 6 females (among them 11 editors, 4 camera persons and 6 reporters) as study participants, from which the data collection process was undertaken. The 11 editors were chosen from TV47, Citizen, KTN, NTV and KNA, two from each private media house and 3 from KNA. They were chosen based on their areas of specialization, with Agriculture, Health, Education, and Business being the key news specialties of KNA. Reporters were subjected to the same criterion.

3.7 Sampling Criteria

The sampling criteria utilized in the study were based on qualitative assessments. The variables were quantitatively measured to determine the numbers and other elements of each KNA story type.

3.7.1 Quantitative Criterion

Specifically, the following variables were measured;

Table 3.1 Quantitative Criterion

S/ No	Criteria Item	Number of stories received from KNA 2019				Number of stories received from KNA 2020			
		NTV	Citizen	TV47	KTN	NTV	Citizen	TV47	KTN
i.	No. of stories received from KNA	245	0	0	0	120	0	641	0
ii.	Number of stories aired	25	0	0	0	12	0	306	0
iii.	Number of stories spiked or killed	220	0	0	0	108	N/A	335	N/A
iv.	Frequency of coverage	once	N/A	N/A	N/A	Once	N/A	once	N/A
v.	Placement in the bulletin or programmes	bulletins	N/A	N/A	N/A	Bulletins/other time	N/A	Bulletins	N/A
vi.	Variations in the positioning of the stories (normal or peak times)	9 peak time	N/A	N/A	N/A	5 peak time	N/A	106 peak time	N/A
		14 off-peak time	N/A	N/A	N/A	7 off-peak time	N/A	200 off-peak	N/A
vii.	Time length of the stories aired	2-5	N/A	N/A	N/A	2-5 minutes	N/A	2-5 minutes	N/A

3.7.2 Qualitative Criterion

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were used in the sample technique. The study also aimed to qualitatively assess the views of editors and reporters from the private media and KNA on the elements that influence KNA news coverage. This was accomplished by examining the kind of news that the KNA disseminated to the private media. According to the Agency's house policy, the items were mostly developmental news promoting government projects, initiatives, and programs.

3.8. Purposive selection of Key Informants

Key informant interviews, according to Taylor and Blake (2015) are in-depth interviews undertaken with people who have specialized knowledge on what is going on in a particular society or forum. The purpose of using key informant interviews in the study was to collect information from senior management staff at Kenya News Agency, Standard Media Group, Nation Media Group, Royal Media Services (RMS) and Mt. Kenya University's media houses' newsrooms. These key informants were purposively selected. The interviews were conducted through face-to-face interviews and through mobile telephone interviews for further clarifications with the respondents who were not exhaustively interviewed over duty interruptions.

Data was collected using interview schedules with key informants. These involved two editors (3 from KNA) and two reporters/camera persons from every newsroom including KNA's Press Office to allow for corroboration across the various sections of specialization in the news coverage. This was clustered according to the nature of stories majorly gathered, processed and transmitted to subscribers by KNA. Stories on Agriculture, Health, Business and Education formed the main genres of news by KNA. The researcher held in-depth key informant interviews with the private media Business, Education, Agriculture and Health reporters and editors. The interviews were in form of open-ended question discussions that allowed for unlimited responses and delivered new unexpected insights and deeper qualitative data with more details. The questions also allowed for expression of sentiment and opinions by the selected informants.

The interview schedules were designed to form the basic data collection instruments on the study. They were carefully formulated in accordance with the objectives of the

study. The answers so attained provided fundamental tools that standardized and organized the collection and analysis of data. For reliability, the researcher requested to be granted permission to record the discussions and was accompanied by a research assistant to allow for comparisons in data collection. All these, editors and reporters were within Nairobi County – this was because the study TV stations’ newsrooms were based in Nairobi and the reporters interacted with the news sources from the region and the editors on a daily basis unlike reporters in the field who lacked experience about the newsroom operations.

3.9 Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data was collected and systematically organised in an orderly manner that facilitated analysis. Responses so attained from the open-ended question interviews and discussions were categorized and coded or assigned numbers to conceal identity of the respondents. The coded raw mass data was then, analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The attained data was presented descriptively in a summarized fashion using descriptive and inferential statistics to appear in the format of displays (tables) which helped in data description and drawing of conclusions. Comprehensively, the data provided a baseline information fundamental in ascertaining the relevance of the Kenya News Agency to the private media in regard to news coverage competition and complementation.

The qualitative data generated from open ended questions and key informant interviews was categorized in themes in accordance with research objectives and reported in narrative form. Open-ended questions were analyzed using conceptual content analysis. The analysis involved the production and interpretation of frequency counts and tables that described and summarized the data. The findings were presented in prose. Data was generated through in-depth interviews, direct observation and documents review. The study used purposive sampling to generate data from 10 reporters/camerapersons and 11 editors. Data was then analyzed in themes and presented in narrative form.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

3.10.1 Validity

Validity refers to the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results (Fitz Patrick, 2019). This study used validity and reliability tests to explain and ensure meaningfulness and consistency of the results. Pilot instruments were used such as instant demonstration by analyzing a story to ensure validity.

3.10.2 Reliability

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) defined reliability as a measure of degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Reliability enables the researcher to identify the ambiguities and inadequate items in the research instrument. Reliability was attained in this study through data triangulation, data tabulation and attainment of verifiable statistics. The researcher was very careful in triangulation for comparison of data from the respondents across the media houses' newsrooms.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that research ethics were adhered to during the entire research study. The researcher presented a research proposal to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi for approval. Once approved, a letter of introduction from the university being Certificate of Fieldwork was awarded. The researcher then first sought the interviewees' consent as he guaranteed confidentiality for all respondents verbally. The respondents' identities were concealed by coding their names, like interviewee 1 being coded as respondent A, etc. Explanation was made to the effect that the research was purely for academic purpose and that the findings were to be shared with respondents through feedback sessions and through publications in journals for wider academic sharing. Finally, the research was subjected to a test of plagiarism according to the University's guidelines and anti-plagiarism certificate issued indicating the originality of the work.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the analysis and results of the study are presented. The purpose of the study was to determine the value of Kenya News Agency to the private media. The study's goals were to look into the private media's uptake of Kenya News Agency news stories, to look into the factors that influence the type of Kenya News Agency news stories that private media look for, to look into whether Kenya News Agency complements or competes with private media's work, and to assess the challenges that Kenya News Agency faces in delivering news. Key informant interviews were used to gather information, which was then submitted to content analysis. The results are reported in the section below.

4.2 Presentation of the Study Findings.

This section presents an analysis of the data collected from editors/heads, reporters, and cameraperson from KNA, TV47, NTV, Citizen and KTN TV stations. These findings are presented in line with the study objectives.

4.2.1 Uptake of News Stories from Kenya News Agency by the Private Media

The first objective of the study was to examine the uptake of news stories from Kenya News Agency by the private media. The respondents were asked to respond to selected questions on this study objective.

Number of stories Received from KNA from January 2019 to December 2020

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of stories they had received from KNA in the last two previous years (January 2019 and December 2020). The findings show that KNA had video Cameras in 24 Counties namely: Isiolo, Mombasa, Kirinyaga, Embu, Lamu, Marsabit, Kakamega, Nakuru, Baringo, Garissa, Kilifi, Kisumu, Migori, Nyahururu, Kisii, Uasin Gishu, Turkana, Nairobi, Kitui, Narok, Nyeri, Taita Taveta, Kiambu and Siaya. Because the agency had cameras in a third of its 72 offices (33.3%), it was collecting a lot of video footage that was shared with commercial media companies. As a result, KNA was in a strong position to provide comprehensive coverage of national news. This position allows KNA to make decisions about what

information should be made available to specific individuals or groups, according to the gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

A total of 245 pieces of video footage were received from KNA by private media in 2019. This number rose to 761 in 2020. Only two media houses; NTV and TV47 received footage from KNA. In 2019, TV47 had not subscribed and only NTV received video footage. The KTN and CITIZEN gathered their news from their correspondents and reporters and did not subscribe to KNA. In most cases, the media houses had their correspondents and often ended up using only a few of the news items received from KNA (Respondent I, NTV, 08/10/2021, Nairobi). However, evidence from the respondents show that in some cases, KTN and Citizen TVs used news items from KNA though indirectly. In this regard, one of the respondents pointed out,

“Most of the footage received in the field through private arrangement among us camerapersons were aired but we did not disclose to our editors that the footages were by KNA,” (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi).

These findings reveal that private media companies in Kenya, like other media companies and news organizations throughout the world, obtained news from KNA. This backs up a study by Lejakane (1997), which indicated that news agencies are crucial in giving information to private media. As a result, the importance of KNA in giving news to private media grows in today's crowded media environment, where the spread of fake news and misinformation in vital areas like political communication and the promotion of ethnic feelings has taken root, as Mutugi et al. point out (2020).

One of the respondents shows that other media houses received videos on daily basis. To this end, the respondent said that 15 TV stations received the videos on daily basis, among them KBC, NTV, K24, Kiss TV, Ebru, TV47, Kenyatta University and Fort Hall University TV among others and that the Press Centre section of KNA kept a record of the videos produced and sent to the media houses (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

“Most of these private media houses aired stories from KNA especially those they found to be big during their dry days. Evidently, the media houses that largely relied on KNA for news content were upcoming TVs such as TV47 and Ebru among others.” (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

The findings echo the observations made by Jenks (2016) that the KNA reports were accessed by subscribers who were Kenyan news media companies. As a result, KNA

appears to have played a significant role in spreading information to private media businesses.

Number of Stories Aired from KNA in 2019 and 2020

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of stories from KNA that were aired in 2019 and 2020. The respondents were also asked to point out the number of stories that were killed or spiked. The findings show that from the 245 stories received in 2019, 25 were aired while out of the 761 received in 2020, 318 were aired.

“All this news was aired on NTV and TV47. KNA Press Centre monitoring team tracked the stories aired in the electronic and those published in the print media.” (Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

Overall, these findings indicate that about half of the items received were aired by the selected TVs, indicating that KNA stories are adequately aired by private media. These findings back up Jenks (2016) and Mwangi (2018) study, which claims that KNA has access to news from all across the country, allowing news to be distributed to private media, some of which do not have national reach.

Although it was possible to identify the number of video footage sent to media houses from KNA, the respondents did not have these numbers at their fingertips. For example one of the editors said,

“I cannot tell the number of stories. They are usually filed at the Press Center” (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

It was also hard to tell the exact number of stories from KNA that were aired by private media. This emanates from the fact that some of the media houses did not give credit to KNA on all the news they received. This is affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“I cannot tell the number of the stories because they are not usually credited to KNA though I can tell you our story when I view it on air. We have no formula for tracking the stories aired – No system of tracking but records are kept for the ones sent to media houses.” (Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi).

The findings from Respondent E were also affirmed by another respondent who said that it was hard to track down the number of stories they aired from KNA. To this, the respondent said:

“I cannot precisely tell those aired but going through our email in a very random and non-scientific estimate, we used say, 10% of the 365 stories received between 2019 and 2020. It is hard to keep the records on KNA stories unlike with those of our correspondents. With us having correspondents in many areas,

we end up not using a lot of the KNA material (Respondent I, NTV, 08/10/2021, Nairobi).

It can be deduced that KNA was a significant source of news for private media, supporting the findings of Boumans et al. (2018), Nwaolikpe (2018), and Mwangi (2018), who show that news agencies were crucial in gathering and disseminating information across the country. These findings also indicate that KNA was effective in communicating information to the private press. This is consistent with Gerbner's (1992) cultivation theory, which emphasizes the importance of exchanging media messages as part of the process of developing media houses' and audiences' goals.

Genre of News by KNA

The respondents were asked to describe the main genres of news by KNA. The findings show that KNA produced news of various genres but mostly focused on the government.

“They did TV news clips, features, and special reports mainly on agriculture facilitated by Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), government, ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) focusing mainly on Education, Agriculture, Devolution, Health, Security, and the Presidency.” (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

In most cases, KNA focused on development news that was thought to have a significant impact on society. These findings corroborate those of Nguyen et al. (2019), who discovered that KNA stories were utilized to educate the public about the effects of development programs on society. As a result, KNA became relevant in the media industry. KNA, on the other hand, covered news that showed the government favorably, whereas private media businesses' policies were more commercial in character (Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi). This could be a restraint if the news is not seen as commercially beneficial to private media, as Mercille (2014) indicates, because private media is openly for profit and is sponsored by commercial money.

International news was also generated by KNA, particularly from border towns. This is because they had reporters in every county, making it easier for them to gather information from other countries. According to Mwangi (2015), KNA had 72 offices around the country, covering 47 counties and 25 sub-counties, giving them access to a variety of news sources. This was affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“KNA strives to get unique stories because we are in every corner of this country including the marginal areas where private media lacks representation and at border towns enabling our reporters to get stories for international news... KNA has 72 offices across the country covering the 47 counties and 25 sub-counties.” (Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

For the news to be aired, it had to have a national appeal. Regrettably, some of the news items received from KNA were focused on certain localities. This reduced their national appeal and limited their propensity to be aired by the media houses. To this end, it is evident that news items should tell stories that can appeal to all citizens. Furthermore, some of the news from KNA was merely government public relations. According to Mwangi (2015), the main focus of KNA is government development programs and activities. As a result, this could reduce the uptake of news from KNA by private media which are much interested on the salience of news within the context of their profit-based orientation as pointed out by Gruenewald et al. (2009). This again reduced their uptake by private media. These findings were affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“Most of the clips were not aired because they were shot focusing on news from certain localities thus missing the national appeal especially those from the offices outside Nairobi Others appeared to be mere Public relations for the government and such clips cannot be aired (Respondent H, NTV, 10/10/2021, Nairobi).

According to the data, the majority of news collected by private media from KNA was on government initiatives and activities. KALRO facilitates agriculture news, as well as other MDA initiatives focusing on Agriculture, Education, Devolution, Health, Security, and the Presidency. These findings support the study by Mwangi (2015) that shows KNA was founded in order to create a unified Kenyan identity through a unified voice. As a result, the agency played a critical role in spreading official information.

Time and Placement of Stories from KNA by Private Media

The respondents were asked to point out the length of time stories from KNA were given by media houses. They were also to point out how the stories were placed i.e. during news bulletins, documentaries, or other programs, and at what time the stories were mainly covered, whether at the peak or normal hours. One of the respondents stated that most of the news was broadcast in 2- to 5-minute bulletins at 1 p.m., 7 p.m., and 9 p.m. (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi), which is prime time, potentially

increasing its importance. According to Surette (1998), the time news is broadcast is critical in emphasizing the importance put on such news. This is also indicative of the fact that some of the news aired had a high level of importance, showing the relevance of KNA to private media in the face of other news sources such as social media, which, according to Mutugi, et al. (2020), greatly increases the number of news options available to media houses.

Some media houses aired news items from KNA many times a week, especially during news time. Often the news items were received in clips that were reviewed and formatted into news stories and presented them in line with their house policy and style. To this, Respondent G said:

“I cannot tell the specific number aired but in a week I am usually given one or two clips to review and format into news stories ... KNA officers send raw footage with a script and a draft print story copy to newsrooms. They do not package the news. TV stations improve on the scripts, packages and voice the stories in line with house policy and style.” (Respondent G, TV47, 07/10/2021, Nairobi).

In addition, the findings show that KNA news items were regularly used by the media houses during news hours. Shots were sourced from KNA footages especially when they were missed by their camera persons. For example, dramatic cutaways for cover shots and dramatic shots for use during prime news as well as for newsbytes were often mined from KNA footage. To this end, one of the respondents said:

“I cannot tell with precision but we received some clips from KNA through our cooperation as camera people... When late for an event, we took clips to fill the gaps when the cameraperson had a variety of shots including cutaways for cover shots, dramatic shots, and radio news bytes which were missed by KTN camerapersons.” (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi).

According to the findings, some KNA news was shown during prime time, and some of it was used to spice up or fill in gaps in other stories. There was a substantial amount of KNA news of many genres used in private media. This is in line with the findings of Curran et al. (2017), who claim that KNA provided private media with a wide range of news. As a result, its significance may be elevated.

4.2.2 Factors Influencing the Type of the Kenya News Agency’s News Stories That the Private Media Sought for.

The second objective of the study was to investigate the factors influencing the type of the Kenya News Agency’s news stories that the private media sought. This section presents the findings from the study respondents. The study identified various factors that motivated the uptake of a particular type of news from KNA by private media.

Balance and In-Depth Stories

One of the factors affecting the uptake of a particular kind of news from KNA by private media was the fact that KNA provided balanced and in-depth stories which are devoid of defamation. This is often in line with the editorial policies of these media houses.

To support this, one of the respondents said:

“We provide well-balanced and in-depth stories devoid of defamation hence acceptable to the private media editors. We carry different angles covering special government programmes, for example in agriculture we cover Human/wildlife conflicts, drought, and aspects of the Big4 Agenda among others.... (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/202, Nairobi).

The response from Respondent B was corroborated by that from Respondent A, who said:

“We also emphasize on in-depth stories in form of features though the private media majorly go for controversial stories filled with conflicts so that they can sell to their audiences. They also capitalize on political stories which are rarely covered by KNA.” Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021 – Nairobi

The importance of balanced news was further affirmed by another respondent who said:

“Content from interviews with news sources should be balanced bringing out both sides, but KNA usually hides some aspects in the videos particularly that which portray government negatively, applying self-censorship.” (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi).

The data show that KNA covers balanced news, as contrast to social media, which is less regulated, as the gatekeeping theory predicts (Welbers, et al., 2016). Fake news and misinformation have spread as a result of the proliferation of media. As a result, Kenya's news agency is more relevant in terms of providing accurate information across the media spectrum.

Editorial policy, according to Bosire (2006), has a significant impact on the selection of news and editorial content. KNA's news was also related to the commercial media's editorial policies, which increased its consumption. The fact that the news was balanced could promote their consumption, as predicted by the cultivation theory, due to the depth and engaging feature of the news (Gerbner, 1992). This also highlights the value of KNA news in terms of information transmission.

Relevant, Appealing and Responsive News to Consumer Needs

The attraction of KNA news was another important factor in its consumption. The news stories should be adapted to the needs of the audience. They should be well-known as well (current and appealing). This is in line with Gerbner's (1992) cultivation theory, which emphasizes the consumption aspect of news appeal. KNA also provides news that is distinctive and tailored to the needs of the private media. Their news is frequently appealing to the private media as a result of this.

These findings were affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“... The media also goes for what is trending as it forms developing stories for follow-up until it is covered exhaustively. KNA avoids sensational, personalized, and controversial stories which form the bulk of the commercial media content.” (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

KNA also provides news that is distinctive and tailored to the needs of the private media. As a result, their news is frequently appealing to the private media. This is consistent with the gatekeeping approach proposed by Shoemaker and Vos (2009), which asserts that news should be responsive to client needs. In the framework of this study, it can be concluded that KNA was relevant in news delivery and that it could compete with other types of media such as social media, which, as DeJuliis (2015) points out, is difficult to regulate.

This was affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“We hunt for unique stories written on unique angles and taking into consideration the private media's expectations. This uniqueness finds our stories aired at times instead of those sent by their correspondents from the same events and locations in the case of documentaries. This forms the point of departure between KNA and the Private media correspondents and reporters.” (Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

The appeal of the stories from KNA to private media was also affirmed by another respondent who said:

“KNA writes balanced topical stories making it hard for the private media to ignore them. Quite a number of stories are publicized from KNA both in Print and broadcast media.” (Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi).

Furthermore, Respondent K agreed with Respondents D and E, stating that news from KNA could only be sought if it had a large perceived influence on the audience, in line with the gate keeping hypothesis proposed by Shoemaker and Vos (2009), which looks at news that is appealing to consumers. KNA, on the other hand, frequently published stories that fell short of the criteria set by commercial media outlets. To this end, the respondent said:

“For a KNA story to be covered it must be big in terms of the impact it is perceived to create on the audience. Such a story could even go for prime-time news if quite important. KNA stories go mostly off-peak hours as they rarely meet NTV standards for prime time. It must be a story that compels the interest of the viewers i.e. creating a human interest.” (Respondent K, NTV, 05/10/2021, Nairobi).

Another respondent acknowledged the newsworthiness of the news items generated by KNA, saying, "The story must be noteworthy even as it compels human interest" (Respondent L, KTN, Nairobi, 12/10/2021). One of the most important elements influencing the type of news that private media acquired from KNA was their appeal, relevancy, and responsiveness to client needs, according to the research. These findings are similar with Sabao's (2016) study, which found that article newsworthiness was one of the most critical factors determining news media acceptability. In terms of relevance, Abdel (2017) discovered that, among other factors, relevance influences the kind of news items distributed by a news agency.

Quality, Credibility, and Diversity of News

Another factor that influences the type of news that people seek from KNA is their quality and attention to diverse themes. This supports Surette's (1998) findings, according to which the quality and newsworthiness of news items was a decisive factor in news consumption. In a media-saturated environment, this increased the reliance on KNA news. These findings were affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“We go for stories with the content of high-quality and development in nature touching on agriculture, social issues, business and human interest stories that are interesting and tailored to the dictates of the commercial media audience taste and thus attractive to the editors as the gate keepers.” Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021 – Nairobi.

One of the respondents echoed the sentiments of Respondent A by stating that the quality of news articles could not be questioned. If the news is of poor quality, private media's pursuit of it may be substantially restricted (Respondent M, KTN, Nairobi, 09/10/2021). This can be explained by the fact that, according to Tankard et al. (1991), private media houses are motivated by profit and require high-quality news to increase audience. As a result, the news from KNA is of higher quality, making it more relevant in the media.

Another crucial factor boosting the acceptance of news from KNA by commercial media is news reliability. According to Mutugi, et al., (2020), news organizations have a responsibility to broadcast news from verifiable sources. These findings were emphasized by one of the respondents who said:

“KNA stories are more credible and genuine news sources trust KNA stories than those by correspondents who may sensationalize them to earn credit.” Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi.

The study also revealed that for private media to be interested in an issue, it must be appealing to the audience. These findings support Gerbner's (1992) cultivation theory, which emphasizes the importance of news appeal to consumers.

In this light, one of the respondents said:

“One must consider whether the topic being covered is local or national for it to be used by NTV. These should be issues that touch the national audience even if it is out of a certain locality such as drought, disease outbreak, disaster, etc. The story must have the currency and prominence of the speaker. It should take into account the “so what factor” regarding those outside the shooting or event locality.” (Respondent H, NTV, 10/10/2021, Nairobi).

For private media to rely on KNA for news, the news must be of good quality. Surette (1998) emphasizes the importance of news framing and worthiness and suggests that it should be able to tell the entire narrative and nicely packaged. Private media could not

effectively use the news when the video clips were unclear or restricted. To support this, one of the respondents said:

“The content should clearly be able to immediately tell the story behind the footage and KNA usually gives us good footage for both TV and radio newsbytes.... However, some clips lack some bits of information especially when it is about government officials meaning it is in a way censored.... Lacking relevant cutaways generated from after-event interviews meaning the reporters rarely engaged the news sources for deeper information.” (Respondent I, NTV, 08/10/2021, Nairobi).

If the content generated is not diversified enough, the appeal and consumption of news offered by private media is significantly lowered. This backs Wirtz's (2020) findings, which claim that growing news consumption requires news diversity. News from KNA was relevant to private media houses, according to the cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1992), which highlights the importance of news appeal to their adoption by the target audience. This was supported by one of the respondents who said:

“KNA should diversify its news content by going for other human interest news without relying on statements made by government officials only..... By being a government mouthpiece, KNA discourages the private media from using its stories.... Even as they report on developmental matters they should focus on the aspect of human interest. What value does a certain project add to the people? What value does it create? Is the story informative?” (Respondent L, KTN, 12/10/2021, Nairobi).

The findings show that one of the most important factors influencing the sort of news sought is the quality, credibility, and diversity of news given by KNA. These findings back up Mutugi et al. (2020) who hypothesized that one of the factors impacting media houses' adoption of news is credibility. These findings were consistent with those of Abdel (2017), who stressed the relevance of news in news consumption.

Logistical Considerations and Cost Saving

Collecting news is frequently a costly endeavor. As a result of KNA's vast reach across the country, private media frequently prefer to acquire news from it. Because KNA has access to all parts of the country, private media houses can save money by relying on KNA for news. This is consistent with Phillips (2010a), who claims that news agencies can help media companies cut costs. As a result, it can be concluded that KNA's capacity to minimize the cost of collecting news; increased the popularity of its news. To this end one of the respondents said:

“KNA is relevant to private media as it supplements the newsroom’s logistical issues in the remote areas where private media have no access to news events and sources. Its officers on the ground aid the private media correspondents in reaching news sources and locations.... The agency helps commercial media houses in saving costs, for instance, where the organization does not need to involve a driver and the crew in the coverage of news happening in the far-flung areas as the clip is sent by KNA right to the newsroom.” (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi).

KNA provided news coverage equipment and employees, allowing news media outlets to receive high-quality news that they would not have been able to obtain at their own expense. This is especially true because, according to Phillips (2010a), cost was a factor in producing high-quality news. To support this, Respondents N said:

Small media houses lack adequate equipment and personnel for news coverage, hence KNA comes in handy to supplement them in quality news gathering and dissemination which they cannot manage if left on our own.” (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi).

According to the data, KNA plays a critical role in lowering the cost of accessing news from media outlets. This increases media outlets' interest in their news. Odhiambo (2016) asserts that KNA has a strong presence at the national, county, and sub-county levels, which these findings support. As noted by Callanan and Rosenberger (2011), who emphasizes the importance of cost in news collecting, this could reduce the cost of gathering news by media houses that acquire news from the agency.

Access to News from Government Officials and Events

The data also suggest that KNA had an advantage in that it was able to reach out to government officials and events even when private media was limited. According to Vos and Russell (2019), who believe that KNA was heavily involved in the dissemination of government news, KNA focused primarily on development news as a government-owned news outlet. This was a major motivator for private media to seek out stories from KNA that they couldn't get anywhere else.

“KNA is an agent of informing the private media where the news is especially on events involving government officials. Correspondents in rural areas mostly call on KNA offices to get daily story docket.” (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi).

The upper hand KNA had in access to government news was also affirmed by Respondent O who said:

“Other times we are not aware of events whereas KNA has all the information about such events because of its officers having connections with the wide government networks. This is common in crime news, human interest, business events, and general government events.” (Respondent O, TV47, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

Still, on the provision of valuable information about the government by KNA to private media houses, another respondent said:

“KNA is relevant in coverage of government affairs which are mainly ignored or not given priority focus by the commercial media but eventually turn out to be big news.... Its network across the country is useful to the private media as it enables the latter, access to news and current affairs in remote areas.” (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi).

The findings as shown in the preceding discourse show that KNA played pivotal roles in the provision of pertinent information about government projects and activities that often were inaccessible to private media. According to Vos and Russell (2019), the availability and uptake of news by private media has benefited the KNA news agency. This was a significant driving factor in the determination by private media to seek such news from KNA. Odhiambo (2016) asserts that "KNA's prominent presence at the national, county, and sub-county levels makes the Agency a veritable nerve center for gathering, packaging, processing, and disseminating news and information on Government's policies, projects, programs, and initiatives to the Kenyan public." As a result, numerous parameters improving the relevance in a crowded media area can be derived.

4.2.3 Ways in Which Kenya News Agency Complements or Rivals the Work of Private Media

The third objective of the study was to investigate how Kenya News Agency complements or rivals the work of private media. This section presents the findings from key informant interviews.

Whether KNA Complemented or Rivalled the Work of Private Media

To begin with, the respondents were posed with the question, “is there a way in which Kenya News Agency complement the work of private media?” The respondents were also asked whether KNA posed any competition against the media houses. The findings

obtained show that KNA played tangible complementary roles to private media houses as posited by Vos and Russell (2019). To this end, one of the respondents says;

“KNA complemented the private media since it could not compete with its subscribers and lacked an outlet for its news content,” (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

According to the respondents, KNA plays an important complementary function to private media by providing transportation to private media journalists in various parts of the country. The agency has a lot of resources and can borrow transport means from other government agencies, which is useful for private media on occasion. These findings are consistent with Dash's (2009) study, which found that news organizations have more resources. Because most rival news organizations did not have these resources, KNA's significance could be enhanced.

The media sector demands a significant investment in equipment and human resources, which is often out of reach for private media. KNA thus puts emerging media at par with established media organizations by delivering news in regions where they lack manpower. These findings are consistent with those of Dash (2009), who claims that, among other things, news organizations' capability in terms of staff, equipment, and the extent of their news gathering networks influence their effectiveness. In this light, Respondent N said:

“Investments in the media industry require huge equipment and human capital which an organization cannot acquire at ago. KNA therefore, aids the private media organizations to grow gradually... KNA puts small and upcoming media houses at the same competition pedestal as the established media houses as it provides news from areas that such stations have no personnel.” (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi).

In support of the findings by Respondent N, KNA had an extensive network which enabled it to have access to a lot of news. This created an opportunity for private media to access information from areas where they do not have correspondents or where their correspondents do not capture all the news (Respondent H, NTV, 10/10/2021, Nairobi). This was an important complementary role as pointed out by another respondent who said:

“KNA complements the private media because it has offices in all counties and some sub-counties. “We rely on them where we do not have correspondents to

report for us for example in Garissa, Kajiado, Marsabit, Wajir, Kilifi, and many others.” The agency helps small and upcoming media houses get the news from the grassroots where they have little or no coverage by correspondents.Even where we have correspondents, we usually compare the clips presented by our correspondents with those from KNA for better and detailed stories to our viewers. But we give our correspondents’ stories priority and thus when comparing KNA only helps to beef up the story or to authenticate the sensitive ones.” (Respondent F, TV47, 23/9/2021, Nairobi).

Other respondents backed the KNA's assertion that it complemented rather than competed with private media. KNA produced a large number of stories in this regard, but it only had a few channels of communication, such as social media, regional publications, and public barazas, through various government spokespersons, particularly the National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs), Cabinet and principal secretaries, and county governors. This is in accordance with a research by Mwangi (2018), which found that KNA had access to government information. This increased KNA's appeal to private media. As a result, private media played a critical role in providing other venues for KNA news. In this light, one of the respondents said:

“Apart from KBC, the private media are the other outlets KNA uses to pass information to the public because it has only a few channels of communication, mainly social media, regional publications, and public barazas through the various government spokespersons especially National Government Administrative Officers, Cabinet and principal secretaries and governors at the County level... KNA complements the private media by helping them to get news stories from the government officials and areas where they do not have correspondents because it has reporters across the country.” (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

The fact that private media provided an avenue for airing KNA news items was also pointed out by another respondent who said:

“KNA is more complementary because it has no outlets for its content and relies mainly on KBC and private media to reach its audience. KNA goes for events some not quite newsworthy and helps private media with footage where they were not able to attend especially, stories on security because its reporters have easy access to information from the government which private media cannot access. KNA helps to interpret government policies via the media.” (Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi).

The findings reveal that KNA served as a supplement to private media companies rather than competing with them. These findings support Vos and Russell's (2019) conclusions that KNA, as a government-owned news agency, complements commercial

media in news distribution. In this aspect, KNA was clearly relevant in a crowded media landscape.

Differences in Policy, Focus, and Kind of News

KNA did not compete or rival private media, according to the findings, because they had different house rules and styles. While the KNA was more concerned with ensuring access to information as required in sections 32-35 of the constitution, the private media was more concerned with making money. This agrees with Mercille (2014), who claims that media companies were driven by profit. Because of this mismatch in concentration, KNA was able to fill a void that was not being filled by other profit-driven sources of information. In this regard, one of the respondents said:

“They do not compete because they have different house policies and styles for news coverage where the private is commercial oriented and KNA is more information-oriented in pursuit of guaranteeing access to information as outlined in articles 32-35 of the constitution... The competition is rather between the different private media houses as they run for scoops for high audience viewership ratings... There is minimal competition between KNA and the private media mainly in the field where reporters compete to get their stories received first in the newsrooms for broadcast.” (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

The fact that private media was business-oriented as pointed out by Mercille (2014) while KNA was not and that this removed competition between the two was also affirmed by another respondent. The two had a more complementary role. To this end, the respondent said:

“I view KNA as complementing the private media rather than competing. This is because KNA is not in the business of selling news but only providing news to the citizenry for them to make informed decisions and participate in government initiatives for national development.” (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

There were significant disparities in focus and the type of news that KNA produced. KNA accomplishes this by producing news from unique perspectives that complement news stories in the private media. This is in line with Vos and Russell's (2019) study, which found that new agencies were critical in complementing other media companies. Regarding this aspect, one of the respondents said:

“TV47 uses stories with unique angles... Private media requires angles that complement news stories by their reporters and correspondents. KNA can attain this by going for different stories from the field where private media lack the reach.” (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi).

The findings show that KNA plays an important role in training new reporters as part of the government’s obligation to train young people to make them employable after school. This creates a rich pool of reporters from which private media can recruit correspondents from all over the country. To support this, one of the respondents said:

“KNA reporters are friendly especially to cub reporters in the field which emanates from the government’s obligation to train the young people to make them employable after school.” (Respondent O, TV47, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

“KNA also has well-trained and professional journalists unlike in the private media where a reporter is hired by studying a certain language or having some necessary talents. This helps KNA to go for credible news content in adherence to media ethics and regulations.” (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi). As a result, it is clear that KNA was able to gather high-quality, well-analyzed news that other private media outlets were unable to do. According to Surette (1998), who emphasizes the importance of excellent news, this could improve KNA's relevance. This contributed significantly to the improvement of the quality of news published in the country.

The outcomes of the study reveal that KNA differs from commercial media in terms of policy, focus, and type of news. The former was primarily concerned with "building a common Kenyan identity through a consistent and unified voice, while the latter was mostly concerned with business” as pointed out by Mwangi (2015). As a result, KNA, rather than competing with private media, served as a complement. This is in line with Vos and Russell's (2019) study, which highlights the relevance of news agencies' complementary role to private media. This could help KNA become more relevant in terms of news distribution.

Access to Government News

According to Singh (2016), news agencies were helpful in raising awareness about various rural development projects, such as family planning dissemination. Because KNA reporters are government employees with access to almost all official material,

they provide a conduit for private media to have access to this information. These findings are affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“The KNA officers being government employees have access to virtually all government information and thus helps the private media to attain such information which is normally hard for them to get on their own. This is because most government officials are usually reluctant to be quoted as having given the information an aspect caused mainly by the oath they take upon employment under the Official Secrets Act. KNA reporters attend government meetings some of which private media reporters are disallowed.” (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

KNA also enhanced access to government news, especially during COVID-19. This was through its extensive access and coverage of news about the pandemic from different parts of the country. One of the respondents said that KNA complements private media and gives footage on government events such as COVID-19 updates and other news. (Respondent Q, KTN, 08/10/2021, Nairobi).

Regarding enhanced access to government news, the findings show that KNA guided new reporters to news sources and events. KNA thus played an important gatekeeping role of government news within the context of the Gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

KNA also helped private media access archived footage for creating backgrounds for stories. These findings were highlighted by one of the reporters who had this to say:

“KNA guides new reporters to news sources and events but is quite secretive when it comes to sensitive matters touching on government due to the oath they take under the Official Secrets Act... KNA helps private media attain archived footage for stories back grounding. KNA is well equipped and informed about government diaries.” (Respondent O, TV47, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

Private media outlets were also able to rely on KNA to verify reports submitted by their reporters that dealt with sensitive government issues. This is supported by the findings of Odhiambo (2016) which illustrate the role of media agencies in obtaining and airing authentic news. This resulted from KNA's unrivaled access to government information.

In this regard, one of the respondents said:

“The Agency complements private media. KNA is not a broadcaster but a government information service provider. They complement by sending us footage about events in which we were unrepresented. The clips also help to authenticate the stories sent by our correspondents where it touches on sensitive government matters. Correspondents sometimes borrow footage from KNA

when they have many events to cover and cannot attend to all of them.” (Respondent I, NTV, 08/10/2021, Nairobi).

The fact that KNA had more access to government events than private media made it possible for the private media to obtain stories that they otherwise would not get on their own. This played a complementary role to private media houses (Vos, & Russell, 2019).

4.2.4 Challenges Faced by the Kenya News Agency in Delivering News

The last and fourth objective was to assess the challenges faced by the Kenya News Agency in delivering news. This section presents the findings obtained.

Shortage of Staff and Challenges Related to Inadequate Funding

To begin with, the respondents were presented with the question, “what challenges were encountered during selection of news articles both by KNA editors and the receiving media house editors?” Staff shortages, such as videographers, photojournalists, and reporters, were one of the issues that hampered efficient coverage of the 72 stations in operation. Inadequate resources, as Rutten and Slot (2011) point out, may hinder KNA's ability to deliver competitive news on a long-term basis. This limited the amount of news coverage from across the country. It also hampered division of labour because a reporter was obligated to fill multiple responsibilities, resulting in KNA's news being of poor quality and quantity. To this end, Respondent A said:

“We had a serious staff shortage especially in the videographers, photojournalists, and the reporters’ cadres to effectively cover the 72 stations which were in operation then... There are 2 stations in Nairobi while the rest are spread out in the 47 counties and 25 sub-counties. The agency plans to employ more staff to enable it open more stations for effective and efficient national coverage... The agency experienced staff shortage due to a freeze in government employment in 2016 until last year when 64 information officers were hired and enabled the agency to open 9 more offices across the counties from the existing 72 bringing the number to 81 presently.” The stations are currently also boosted by interns under the Public Service Internship Program (PSIP) and attachés from the tertiary colleges and universities thus increasing news production (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).”

There were also issues with insufficient finances, which Mercille (2014) noted as a problem for news organizations. This resulted in an inability to pay officers; an inability to acquire modern equipment for faster development of news content; and unreliable

transportation due to a lack of drivers and, in some cases, vehicles or fuel to ferry reporters to news events, with the majority of the vehicles being poorly maintained due to a lack of funds. This is in accordance with Dash (2009), who claims that a key difficulty for news organizations is a lack of finance. As private media expands their capabilities, this obstacle may continue to limit KNA's relevance. The insufficient funding of the field offices compromised their daily operations. (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

To reinforce the challenge of transport due to insufficient funding, another respondent said:

They [KNA reporters] mostly encounter transport challenges and unlike correspondents who use personal vehicles in some instances, KNA reporters are sometimes left stranded at venues. This is because they are apparently not refunded the fare upon use of public transport unlike private media where like NTV the reporters are refunded upon filling of the company's "yellow paper" for a refund of expenses incurred over lack of facilitation by the management (Respondent J, NTV, 05/10/2021, Nairobi).

The challenges of erratic internet connectivity and unreliable transport to take KNA officials to some areas were highlighted by another respondent who said:

"Erratic internet supply both at the headquarters and in the field making it hard to gather, process, and disseminate information in real-time Unreliable Transport making it difficult for the information officers as KNA reporters are designated officially, to the locations of news events and sources (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

These findings reveal that KNA was hampered by a lack of resources. Like Mwangi (2018) points out, in Kenya, as in other developing countries, insufficient resources on the part of media practitioners thwarts the ability of media houses to reach as many people as they should or wish to. In a media-saturated environment, this is a constraint to KNA's competitiveness and relevance.

Poor Quality Footage

Indeed, most media houses had higher quality equipment than KNA which limited the quality of video footage produced (Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi). Also, there are cases of some of the footage from KNA being incompatible with the private media software. This reduces the level of consumption of news from KNA by private media. In this regard, one of the respondents remarked:

“At times formats in which KNA sends clips are usually not compatible with the private media internet software thus taking time to download and at times failing to download at all.” (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi).

The issue of poor quality material from KNA, which lacked clear photos and sound, added to the workload of private media editors. Because private media is motivated by profit, as Tankard et al. (1991) points out, and the capacity of their stories to captivate and hold their audience as envisioned by the Cultivation theory (Gerbner,1992). This could restrict the adoption of news from KNA by private media. As a result, its relevance in news arena was diminished.

Sometimes this was due to laxity in-camera work. KNA also used old model cameras that still use tapes making it hard to disseminate video footage in real-time in some instances. There were also instances in which KNA reporters carried sophisticated equipment which turned out hard to operate. Also, failure to caption stories rightly led to a story not being aired as the editor looked at the caption to judge the weight of the story. In this regard, Respondent G said:

“The quality of KNA video clips carries not clear pictures and sound most of the time forcing newsrooms to do extra work to improve on them.... Failure to caption stories rightly leads to a story being unaired as the editor looks at the caption to judge the weight of the story. Some good and big stories go unaired because of poor captions... Laxity in camera work giving poor quality footage... Sometimes carrying sophisticated equipment which turns out hard to operate. Using old model cameras that still use tapes making it hard to disseminate video footage in real-time. They need cameras that shoot and enable uploading of the footage into the internet for quicker dissemination.... Lack of packaging footage into news makes it delayed for immediate use (Respondent G, TV47, 07/10/2021, Nairobi).

Other challenges related to the quality of footage emanating from lack of exposure to modern techniques of news gathering. Some of the officers also lacked creativity in their video recordings. To support this, Respondent R said:

“The agency lacks cameras with video output that can be connected to live coverage equipment and Outside Broadcasting (OB) vans or any other live broadcast kit.” (Respondent R, Citizen TV, 07/10/2021, Nairobi).

KNA reporters also did not ask questions during events thus failing to fill gaps in their news content. They also lacked public trust because of operating in a lukewarm manner. (Respondent K, NTV, 05/10/2021, Nairobi). This went on to affect the quality of the

news they collected. These findings support Nwaolikpe's (2018) study, which found that news organizations frequently struggle to provide high-quality, timely material. The fact that some media companies had better equipment and capacities to generate their own high-quality film meant that KNA's relevance was considerably diminished.

Unappealing News and Overreliance on Coverage of Government Projects

According to Odhiambo (2016), there were issues connected to over-reliance on coverage of government initiatives and programs, which restricted the scope of coverage for KNA, providing its content a slim likelihood of being televised. This was affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“Lack of specialized reporting making KNA reporters, jacks of many trades but masters of none resulted in low quality of news and subsequently, few stories being publicized.” (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

The lack of diversity in news coverage was also affirmed by another respondent who said that KNA mainly concentrated on national development issues that gave value to *wananchi* (citizens) while the private media mainly wanted juicy, controversial, and political news, sports and business; an aspect of news salience (Vicente and López (2009) which could enhance uptake of news. Since most of the sports news was covered during weekdays, KNA did not cover them (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi). This means that KNA news was often limited in scope, which made it hard for private media to consume most of it.

The fact that KNA mostly covered news about government projects and events limited the uptake of some news from KNA by private media. There were cases of fear that KNA could be spying on some news sources for the government hence making it hard for KNA to attain other forms of news. There was also fear that some stories could have negative repercussions on private media houses if they did not align with the government's position politically (Callanan, & Rosenberger, 2011). There were also challenges related to the lack of investigative and specialized reporting by KNA. In this regard, one of the respondents said:

Hostile news makers especially in the private sector and the general members of the society were suspicious of KNA reporters thinking they could be snooping on them for the government. Others were unwilling to be news sources in fear that the reports could be used by the government in case they do not toe its line particularly politically... No investigative and specialized reporting by

KNA. The stories were mainly developmental focusing on Agriculture, crime/security, courts, international relations, government events, sports, and human interest stories though areas like sports and courts the coverage was low key for lack of passion in the area by KNA reporters (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

The lack of 'appealing' news also hampered private media's adoption of news. This is because, according to the cultivation hypothesis, news must be enticing to viewers (Gerbner, 1992). According to one of the respondents, KNA news was instructional and low on entertainment, in contrast to private media's aspirations for "anything that generates a reaction from viewers, such as provocative, sensational, and hilarious video clips." (Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi).

The challenge of unappealing was further buttressed by another respondent who said that KNA aired the news that did not meet the expectations of editors from private media houses. To this end, the respondent said:

“On a scale of 10, some stories did not meet the expectations of our editors and ranged between 2 and 3 out of 10. They did not catch the audience's attention due to angles taken and how they were packaged lacking in creativity for audience attraction... The stories were well balanced but lacked consideration of the audience's needs and expectations for particular days. For example, during Friday and throughout the weekend the audience does not expect heavy-laden news that stresses them. They require something light in form of entertainment to while away their leisure time without boredom or stress. Most of KNA stories did not conform to the principle of edutainment and instead concentrated only on the informative aspect of the principle thus keeping the viewers off. On Friday and Saturday, we need to give news and programmes that help the audience enjoy their leisure time and require captivating diverse coverage not merely developmental or bad news stories (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi).

According to the findings, private media outlets have problems as a result of their over-reliance on government projects and programs for coverage. As a result, the news produced had less appeal, and KNA's programming had a lower chance of being broadcast due to its low newsworthiness and appeal. Sabao (2016) claims that news should appeal to the audience, based on Cultivation Theory. Otherwise, KNA is no longer relevant due to the reduction in appeal.

Bureaucracy and Lack of Prompt Reporting

KNA is a late sender of information. This diminishes the timeliness of news, which is something that news organizations are not supposed to do. According to Boyer (2011), news should be broadcast at the appropriate moment to increase its credibility. Other media houses overtake media houses that wait for KNA news items in this circumstance. The news from KNA becomes less relevant as a result of this. This means that stories from KNA risk being excluded from prime time. There is also the challenge of being overtaken by social media. As such, media houses may not rely on KNA for timely news. This is shown by Respondent F who said:

KNA in many instances sends stale clips as they delay with them before sending especially when outside their offices. The clips are mostly sent a day later while “our competitors have already aired the same story and thus we cannot use the stories.” The stories thus face a challenge of being aired at prime time as such only used at the other times (11 am, 1 pm, and 4 pm bulletins only) and that is when the clips carry big or interesting stories. In this era of citizen journalism, any delay in releasing a story compromises its usage as it is overtaken by reports of social media users.... Otherwise, KNA content is usually fair in substance but very few of its stories go for prime time because the reporters do not go for unique stories in their areas of coverage thus most of it is aired during which means very few viewers see them... Relevance of the story is a factor to consider when airing a story, big stories in terms of the impact it is perceived will have on the audience (Respondent F, TV47, 23/9/2021, Nairobi).

Another issue is that most KNA articles are not told from a human perspective due to a lack of debriefing, which is common in newsrooms. According to Gruenewald et al. (2009), news should be packaged in such a way that the element of unusualness is embedded in the tale. However, KNA made the majority of its money from press conferences rather than human interest tales, which could reduce their importance.

Also, KNA most of the time misses the juicy part of the story as they conform to government regulations leaving the stories very flat. There is also a failure to go for informative details attained through post-event interviews with the news sources (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi). Over-reliance on officialdom form of news coverage also reduced the quality of news produced (Respondent L, KTN, 12/10/2021, Nairobi).

KNA also did not share the phone numbers of their cameramen and reporters for easier coordination of news coverage. The reporters also did not brief the newsrooms of the

stories they were following on thus missing in the allocation of airspace (Respondent H, NTV, 10/10/2021, Nairobi). KNA also edited off various parts of the footage to cover the source of the news, lowering the quality of the news (Respondent I, NTV, 08/10/2021, Nairobi). This could have an impact on private media's absorption of news because, as Surette (1998) pointed out, quality was an important concern for news from private media. This could have an impact on KNA's relevance in a crowded media landscape.

There were also challenges in the way KNA management related to field staff. Whereas private media houses put pressure on their news processors to deliver, KNA appeared to have a disconnect between the management and their juniors both in the field and at the agency headquarters in Nairobi. Lack of proper supervision resulting laxity, lack of professionalism, and low productivity (Respondent P, KTN, 10/10/2021, Nairobi).

The findings reveal that KNA encountered bureaucratic hurdles, which could impair working relationships with private media, which are vital in news transmission, according to Bernstein (2014). This would therefore have an impact on private media's absorption of KNA news owing to late news and inability to follow up on news topics, resulting in low-quality news. These problems may have an impact on KNA's relevance, as rival media outlets continue to improve their capabilities.

4.2.4.1 Recommendations for KNA to improve on its news coverage

Lastly, the respondents were asked to point out ways in which they thought KNA could do to improve its news coverage. Various suggestions were made as presented below.

Provision of Sufficient Resources

One way to improve KNA's news coverage is to provide appropriate resources, as Rantanen et al. (2019) point out, because this would allow them to cover news more effectively and efficiently (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi). According to Kelly et al. (2017), KNA should also hire enough personnel to improve the quality of news produced. This would enhance manpower in all technical and support cadres (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). It would also enable division of labour to have a reporter and a cameraperson instead of one officer doubling as both for quality work. There was also a need to boost staff morale through promotions and provision of

the necessary allowance to motivate them and boost performance (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). The findings also show that the government should provide adequate funding through the National Treasury (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi & Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). Mwangi (2015) addressed the relevance of finances, emphasizing the function of adequate funds in the quality of news generated by media organizations.

Training and Hiring Skilled Personnel

There was a need for regular refresher courses to cope with the ever-changing media technology (Respondent G, TV47, 07/10/2021, Nairobi & Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). Training interventions whose pertinence were underlined by Keneshloo (2019) were also suggested by one of the respondents who said;

“KNA TV crews need to be trained on how to package news items in an easier downloadable and sharable manner.” (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi).

In the same accord, another respondent said that the Media council should incorporate KNA reporters in its refresher courses training of journalists on content development (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). Training officers regularly would keep up with the global developments especially on matters of technology (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). According to Keneshloo (2019), who draws a link between training and the quality of news produced, this would improve their potential to provide high-quality news.

It was also pointed out that KNA needs to be exposed to other professionals for interaction on-camera work and news coverage. They need to interact with other experts to gain expertise in creative news recording procedures. Such exposure would also enable them to learn from others for creativity and recording experience (Respondent R, Citizen TV, 07/10/2021, Nairobi).

The respondents also pointed out that when recruiting, KNA should hire personnel with all relevant skills in camera shooting and footage processing (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021 – Nairobi). According to Artz (2017), who ties personnel capacity to news quality, it was able to improve the quality of news items created by recruiting talented and experienced employees. KNA should also have specialized reporters who can go

to post news events and give the private media follow-ups on prolonged developing stories (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi). The personnel so hired should also be provided with the necessary resources for work output (Respondent L, KTN, 12/10/2021, Nairobi).

Keneshloo (2019) emphasizes the importance of training, claiming that most media houses lack training facilities for journalists and that agencies rely on opportunities provided by other organizations to train media personnel. As a result, it's critical to put in place systems to improve journalist training so that they can continue to deliver high-quality news.

Promptness and Quality Service Delivery

There was a need to emphasis on proper packaging the stories right from the field stations (Respondent G, TV47, 07/10/2021, Nairobi). There was also a need to produce quality pictures and scripts complete with the right captions for better consumption by private media houses (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). The quality of service delivery could also be enhanced through the support of the citizenry. In this regard, Kenyans should be sensitized through the office of the Government Spokesperson and the Ombudsman on the importance of disclosing information for national development (Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

The respondents also posited that there was a need to improve the news dissemination time by releasing clips in real-time. The camera work should also be improved for quality pictures. This could be achieved through the acquisition of better video cameras (the agency in some counties uses still cameras with the inbuilt video camera) Improving the skill of the camerapersons for quality work to be attained was also recommended (Respondent F, TV47, 23/9/2021, Nairobi).

The importance of releasing news items in time was affirmed by Respondent K who said:

They [KNA] need to check on their speed of releasing clips to newsrooms, I mean at times we request footage about an event but it takes them too long before we get it yet it is sent online... They should build on their stories to make them big by asking the sources questions ... they should also build public trust by marketing itself via content and signage in addition to quality content to its subscribers (Respondent K, NTV, 05/10/2021, Nairobi).

The findings also posit that KNA should learn to appear for events early to plan and position their cameras strategically to attain clear pictures and sound and lighting for their footage. Furthermore, taking clear pictures and sound would make media houses have confidence in some reporters and KNA should strive to cultivate the trust of the private media editors. (Respondent R, Citizen TV, 07/10/2021, Nairobi. This would improve the quality of the footage generated, resulting in a better likelihood of it being used by private media, as predicted by the cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1992), which states that high-quality news will increase its attraction and uptake by the target audience.

KNA should also enhance service delivery by regularly renewing the contracts they had with respective media houses and make a follow-up of the coverage of their news for improved relations (Respondent H, NTV, 10/10/2021, Nairobi). The study findings indicate the need for providing promptness and quality service delivery. This stems from the fact that, as Sabao (2016) points out, news organizations seek out high-quality, timely, and newsworthy content. If done correctly, this could help KNA become more relevant in a crowded media market.

Diversification

The survey also revealed that KNA should diversify its coverage to broaden its appeal, rather than focusing solely on government programs, a concern recognized by Agbi, (2016) and other news organizations. They should also help citizens get it right by venturing into documentary production, including investigative journalism, and expose government deviants drug traffickers, ivory trade, government officials who engage in corruption, and those who abuse office among others (Respondent O, TV47, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

The importance of news diversification was buttressed by another respondent who said that KNA needs to provide more features instead of coverage hard news which is available to private media newsrooms and mainly covering rural areas. To this end one of the respondents said:

The news should also focus on prominence, human interest and be attributed and verifiable from the concerned authority. Newsworthiness is another factor – what reaction will a story attract from viewers once it is aired? (Respondent G, TV47, 07/10/2021, Nairobi).

One of the respondents stated that KNA should cover a wide range of events, emphasizing the necessity of diversification. According to Agbi (2016), this was possible since they had a nationwide reach. They should cover all potential areas rather than focusing on a few to achieve diversity. In this regard, one of the respondents said:

“KNA should be diverse, by attending many events because they are spread out all over the country...They should not concentrate on a few fields say; agriculture or Health as they do but cover all possible areas to attain diversity in their coverage.” (Respondent J, NTV, 05/10/2021, Nairobi).

The words of Respondent J on the need for diversification was supported by another respondent who said;

“They [KNA] should focus more on features especially those that are of human interest... They should go for stories with national appeal and avoid local news that is covered by local TV stations before they even leave the event venues.” Respondent H, NTV, 10/10/2021, Nairobi.

To bolster the conclusions on the need for variety, respondents suggested that KNA branch out from its officialdom-based news coverage. According to Sabao (2016), who emphasizes the need of in-depth coverage of news to boost their attractiveness to media houses; a pillar of the cultivation theory; they should opt for features to deliver in-depth coverage of general occurrences and government initiatives and programs. The stories they cover should also be good and professionally done (Respondent L, KTN, 12/10/2021, Nairobi).

Diversification and production of juicy news would enable KNA to strengthen its role in proving news to TV stations. This was affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

The agency should go for news that is universal to all newsrooms so as to attain wider coverage. Small TV stations mostly adopt the cameral mode of structure in their news coverage operations as they cannot afford to do specialized reporting which requires special customized structures and logistics. KNA has a chance to go for specialized reporting to aid such stations in acquiring specific news items.... KNA should go down to the villages and get those juicy stories that touch human hearts and get the views of the affected people even as it incorporates the government’s intervention angles. People like viewing stories that relate to their communities in a bigger way... KNA officers should go the extra mile and get stories from the rural set up that spice news from the towns e.g. famine pangs in the rural Turkana villages instead of over-relying on the docket stories and monotonous news sources where the story always remains of the, “he/she said version,” (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi).

Service delivery could also be enhanced because KNA had the advantage of knowing the government calendar ahead of time. They could thus plan and produce high-quality news with a lot of appeal to newsrooms. To this end, one of the respondents said:

KNA has the potential of telling a story in advance because it has insights into all government calendars unless the private media which is only informed only a day or some hours to the event...They should move ahead and interview the targeted beneficiaries of certain projects and file the stories so that the government is able to address the issues from an informed point of view instead of guessing what the people require (Respondent I, NTV, 08/10/2021, Nairobi).

The findings also suggest that KNA needed to guarantee that it generated a diverse range of news rather than just reporting on government projects and events. KNA reports on government initiatives, according to Odhiambo (2016). Diverse news was crucial because, as Rantanen (2019) points out, media houses are continuously looking for diverse information that aligns with their editorial priorities.

Reduction of Bureaucracy

There is also a need for employee empowerment. As Welbers et al. (2016) identified, as a key attribute of a news agency is where the staff have the freedom to convey a clear image on the ground without working as government public relations agents. This would assist the media in informing and educating the people on how to get out of such circumstances, as well as the government in appropriately addressing the issues involved without guesswork (Respondent M, KTN, Nairobi, 09/10/2021). Another responder echoed this sentiment, saying that KNA is free to operate without hindrance from the government (Respondent P, KTN, 10/10/2021, Nairobi).

For simpler news coverage coordination, the agency should also provide the phone numbers of their cameramen and reporters. KNA regional news managers should also be updating newsrooms of their dockets early and daily (Respondent H, NTV, Nairobi, 10/10/2021). According to Bernstein, the findings show that KNA should implement procedures to reduce bureaucracy, which has hampered the timely delivery of news, which is critical in keeping news organizations relevant (2014). This would improve the speed with which news is disseminated to private news outlets. It will also improve the quality of KNA's relationship with private media. Following up on news items might be a good idea.

**CHAPTER FIVE:
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 Overview

In this chapter, the study summary, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in line with the study objectives.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Uptake of News Stories from Kenya News Agency by the Private Media

The first objective of the study was to examine the uptake of news stories from Kenya News Agency by the private media. The respondents were asked to specify how many stories from KNA they had received in the past two years (January 2019 and December 2020). According to the findings, KNA had video cameras in 24 counties. Because the agency had cameras in a third of its 72 offices (33.3%), it was collecting a lot of video footage that might be shared with commercial media companies. As a result, they have the choice of providing comprehensive coverage of national-interest news, as intended by the gatekeeping hypothesis (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

A total of 245 pieces of video footage were received from KNA by private media in 2019. This number rose to 761 in 2020. Only two media houses; NTV and TV47 received footage from KNA. In 2019, TV47 had not subscribed and only NTV received video footage. The KTN and CITIZEN gathered their news from their correspondents and reporters and did not subscribe to KNA. In most cases, the media houses had their correspondents and often ended up using only a few of the news items received from KNA (Respondent I, NTV, 08/10/2021, Nairobi). However, evidence from the respondents show that in some cases, KTN and Citizen TVs used news items from KNA though indirectly. In this regard, one of the respondents pointed out that, “Most of the footage received in the field through private arrangement among us camerapersons were aired but we did not disclose to our editors that the footage was by KNA,” (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi). These findings show that private media firms, like other media houses and news agencies around the world, acquired news from KNA. These findings are consistent with the findings of Artz (2017), who found that private media consumes a large amount of news from news agencies.

One of the respondents shows that other media houses received videos on daily basis. To this end, the respondent said that 15 TV stations received the videos on daily basis, among them KBC, NTV, K24, Kiss TV, Ebru, TV47, Kenyatta University and Fort Hall University among others and that the Press Centre section of KNA kept a record of the videos produced and sent to the media houses (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). Most of these private media houses aired stories from KNA especially those they found to be big during their dry days. Evidently, the media houses that largely relied on KNA for news content were upcoming TVs such as TV47 and Ebru among others (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi). These findings support Jenks' (2016) research, which reveals that the KNA reports were obtained by subscribers made up of Kenyan news media businesses, indicating its relevance in a crowded media landscape.

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of stories from KNA that were aired in 2019 and 2020. The respondents were also asked to point out the number of stories that were killed or spiked. The findings as shown in Table 4.1 show that from the 245 stories received in 2019, 25 were aired while out of the 761 received in 2020, 318 were aired. All this news was aired on NTV and TV47. KNA Press Centre monitoring team tracked the stories aired in the electronic and those published in the print media (Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). Overall, these statistics indicate that over half of the items received were aired, indicating that KNA stories are adequately aired by private media. This also suggests that KNA has a high level of news uptake, indicating its importance in news transmission. These findings support Jenks (2016) and Mwangi (2018) research, which claim that KNA has access to news from around the country, allowing for news dissemination to private media, some of which do not have national reach.

Although it was possible to identify the number of video footage sent to media houses from KNA, the respondents did not have these numbers at their fingertips. For example, one of the editors said that “I cannot tell the number of stories. They are usually filed at the Press Center” (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). It was also hard to tell the exact number of stories from KNA that were aired by private media. This emanates from the fact that some of the media houses did not credit to KNA all the news they received.

It can be deduced that KNA was a significant source of news for private media, supporting the findings of Boumans et al. (2018), Nwaolikpe (2018), and Mwangi (2018), who show that news agencies were crucial in gathering and disseminating information across the country. These findings also indicate that KNA was effective in communicating information to the private press. This is consistent with Gerbner's (1992) cultivation theory, which emphasizes the importance of exchanging media messages as part of the process of developing media houses' and audiences' goals.

The respondents were asked to describe the main genres of news by KNA. The findings show that KNA produced news of various genres but mostly focused on the government. They did TV news clips, features, and special reports mainly on agriculture facilitated by Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), government, ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) focusing mainly on Education, Agriculture, Devolution, Health, Security, and the Presidency (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). These findings support those of Nguyen et al. (2019), who found that KNA stories were used to educate the public about how development initiatives affect society. KNA became relevant in the media sector as a result of this. However, the study found that KNA also covered stories that portrayed the government in a favourable light, whereas private media companies' policies were more commercial in nature (Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi). This could be a constraint if the news is viewed as not being commercially helpful to private media, as Mercille (2014) suggests, because private media is explicitly for profit and is funded by commercial money.

For the news to be aired, it had to have a national appeal. Regrettably, some of the news items received from KNA were focused on certain localities. This reduced their national appeal and limited their propensity to be aired by the media houses. To this end, it is evident that news items should tell stories that can appeal to all citizens. Furthermore, some of the news from KNA was merely government public relations. This is in line with Mwangi's (2015) study, which found that KNA's primary focus is on government development projects and activities. As Gruenewald et al. (2009) point out, this could restrict the absorption of KNA news by private media, which are very interested in the salience of news in the context of their profit-based orientation.

The respondents were asked to point out the length of time stories from KNA were given by media houses. They were also to point out how the stories were placed i.e. during news bulletins, documentaries, or other programs, and at what time the stories were mainly covered, whether at the peak or normal hours. One of the respondents pointed out that media houses used most of the news mostly in their 1 pm, 7 pm, and 9 pm bulletins taking between 2 and 5 minutes (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi). This means that some of the news was broadcast at peak hours, potentially increasing its importance. This is especially true because, according to Surette (1998), the time news is broadcast is critical in emphasizing the importance put on such news. This is also indicative of the fact that some of the news aired had a high level of importance, indicating the relevance of KNA to private media in the face of other news sources such as social media, which, according to Mutugi, et al. (2020), greatly increases the number of news options available to media houses.

5.2.2 Factors Influencing the Type of the Kenya News Agency's News Stories That the Private Media Seek For

The second objective of the study was to investigate the factors influencing the type of the Kenya News Agency's news stories that the private media sought. This section presents the findings from the study respondents. The study identified various factors that motivated the uptake of a particular type of news from KNA by private media.

The fact that KNA delivered balanced and in-depth stories free of defamation was one of the elements influencing the acceptance of a certain type of news from KNA by private media. This is frequently in conformity with the editorial policies of these media sites. According to the data, KNA covers balanced news in contrast to social media, which is less regulated, as predicted by the gatekeeping theory (Welbers, et al., 2016). This could result in more news from KNA being picked up by private media. In a congested media landscape, KNA's value in providing news is demonstrated.

Editorial policy, according to Bosire (2006), has a significant impact on the selection of news and editorial content. KNA's news was also related to the commercial media's editorial policies, which increased its consumption. The fact that the news was balanced could promote their consumption, as predicted by the cultivation theory, due to the

depth and engaging feature of the news (Gerbner, 1992). This also highlights the value of KNA news in terms of information transmission.

Another important factor affecting the consumption of news from KNA was their appeal. The news items should be responsive to the needs of the audience. They should also be trending (current and appealing). This is consistent with Gerbner's (1992) cultivation theory, which emphasizes the role of news appeal for consumption. KNA also provides news that is unique and takes the expectations of the private media into account. Their news is frequently appealing to the private media as a result of this. This fits with Shoemaker and Vos (2009)'s gatekeeping thesis, which states that news should be responsive to customer requirements. Within the context of this study, it can be concluded that KNA was relevant in the delivery of news and that it could compete with other kinds of media such as social media, which, as DeJuliis (2015) points out, is difficult to govern.

The pertinence of the newsworthiness of the news items produced by KNA was also affirmed by another respondent who said: “The story must be newsworthy even as it compels human interest” (Respondent L, KTN, 12/10/2021, Nairobi). One of the most important elements influencing the type of news that private media acquired from KNA was their appeal, relevancy, and responsiveness to client needs, according to the research. These findings are consistent with Sabao's (2016) study, which found that the newsworthiness of articles was one of the most important elements influencing their acceptance by news media.

Another factor influencing the kind of news sought from KNA is their quality and focus on various topics. This supports Surette's (1998) findings, according to which the quality and newsworthiness of news items was a decisive factor in news consumption. One of the respondents echoed the sentiments of respondent A, stating that the quality of news articles could not be questioned. If the news is of poor quality, private media's pursuit of it may be substantially restricted (Respondent M, KTN, Nairobi, 09/10/2021). This can be explained by the fact that, according to Tankard et al. (1991), private media houses are motivated by profit and require high-quality news to increase audience. As a result, the news from KNA is of higher quality, making it more relevant in the media.

Another crucial factor boosting the acceptance of news from KNA by commercial media is news reliability. According to Mutugi, et al., (2020), news organizations have a responsibility to broadcast news from verifiable sources. The study also revealed that for private media to be interested in an issue, it must be appealing to the audience. These findings support Gerbner's (1992) cultivation theory, which emphasizes the importance of news appeal to consumers.

For private media to rely on KNA for news, the news must be of good quality. Surette (1998) emphasizes the importance of news framing and worthiness and suggests that it should be able to tell the entire narrative and be nicely packaged. Private media could not effectively use the news when the video clips were unclear or restricted. The attractiveness and consumption of news provided by private media is considerably reduced if the content produced is not diverse enough. This supports Wirtz's (2020) results, which state that news diversity is critical to increasing news consumption. According to the cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1992), which emphasizes the importance of news appeal to their adoption by the target audience, news from KNA was relevant to private media houses because diversity might boost the appeal of news.

Collecting news is frequently a costly endeavor. As a result of KNA's vast reach across the country, private media frequently prefer to acquire news from them. Because KNA has access to all sections of the country, private media houses can save money by relying on KNA for news. This is consistent with Phillips (2010a), who claims that news agencies can help media companies cut costs. As a result, it can be concluded that KNA's capacity to minimize the cost of news collecting increased the popularity of its news.

According to the findings presented in the preceding discourse, KNA played a critical role in the dissemination of important information regarding government initiatives and operations that was often unavailable to private media. As a result, the availability and uptake of news by private media has benefited KNA as a news agency (Vos and Russell, 2019). This was a significant driving factor in private media's determination to seek such news from KNA. These findings are in line with Odhiambo (2016) who posits that “the prominent presence of KNA at the National, County and Sub-county levels makes the Agency a veritable nerve center for gathering, packaging, processing and

disseminating news and information on Government's policies, projects, programs and initiatives to the Kenyan public." As a result, numerous parameters improving the relevance in a crowded media area can be derived.

5.2.3 Ways in Which Kenya News Agency Complements or Rivals the Work of Private Media

The study's third goal was to see how Kenya News Agency's work complements or competes with that of private media. According to Vos and Russell (2019), who emphasize the complimentary role of social media, the findings demonstrate that KNA played actual complementary roles to private media outlets. To this end, one of the respondents says that KNA complemented the private media since it could not compete with its subscribers and lacked an outlet for its news content (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi). The respondents also said that KNA played key complementary roles to private media since they provide private media's correspondents with transport out of various parts of the country. The agency has a lot of resources and can borrow transportation from other government agencies, which is useful for private media on occasion. These findings are consistent with Dash's (2009) study, which found that news organizations have more resources. Because most rival news organizations did not have these resources, KNA's significance could be enhanced.

The media sector demands a significant investment in equipment and human resources, which is often out of reach for private media. KNA thus brings emerging media up to speed with existing media by delivering news in regions where they lack manpower. These findings are consistent with those of Dash (2009), who claims that, among other things, news organizations' capability in terms of staff, equipment, and the extent of their news gathering networks influence their effectiveness.

The findings show that KNA played more of a complementary role to private media houses as opposed to competing with them. These findings corroborate the findings by Vos and Russell (2019) which shows that being a government-owned news agency, KNA complements private media in news provision. This made them relevant to the media industry in the context of many competing sources of information. The findings also show that KNA did not compete or rival private media since they had different house policies and styles. While KNA was more information-oriented in pursuit of

guaranteeing access to information as outlined in articles 32-35 of the constitution, the private media was more commercial-oriented. This agrees with Mercille (2014), who claims that media companies were driven by profit. Because of this mismatch in concentration, KNA was able to fill a void that was not being filled by other profit-driven sources of information.

There were significant disparities in focus and the type of news that KNA produced. KNA accomplishes this by producing news from unique perspectives that complement news stories in the private media. This is supported by a study by Vos and Russell (2019), which found that new agencies were critical in complementing existing media companies. As part of the government's commitment to prepare young people to be employable after school, KNA also plays an essential role in training new reporters. This generates a large pool of reporters from which commercial media outlets can hire correspondents from across the country.

The outcomes of the study reveal that KNA differs from commercial media in terms of policy, focus, and type of news. The former was primarily concerned with "building a common Kenyan identity through a consistent and unified voice," while the latter was mostly concerned with business (Mwangi, 2015). As a result, KNA, rather than competing with private media, served as a complement." This is in line with Vos and Russell's (2019) study, which highlights the relevance of news agencies' complementary role to private media.

According to Singh (2016), news agencies were helpful in raising awareness about various rural development projects, such as family planning dissemination. As a result, KNA complemented private media in accessing government news. Indeed, because KNA reporters are government employees with access to almost all official material, they provide a conduit for private media to have access to this information. Furthermore, KNA complemented rather than competed with private media, hence boosting its significance in the crowded media landscape.

KNA also played important role in enhanced access to government news, especially during COVID-19. This was through its extensive access and coverage of news about the pandemic from different parts of the country. One of the respondents said that KNA

complements private media and gives footage on government events such as COVID-19 updates and other news. In terms of improved access to government news, the findings demonstrate that KNA is critical in directing new reports to relevant news sources and events. In the perspective of the Gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), which emphasizes the importance of gatekeepers in the media sector, KNA thus played an essential gatekeeping function in government news.

KNA also assisted private media in gaining access to old film for use in story backgrounds. Private media outlets were also able to rely on KNA to verify reports submitted by their reporters that dealt with sensitive government issues. This is supported by Odhiambo's (2016) findings, which illustrate the role of media agencies in obtaining news from media outlets. This was due to the fact that KNA had unrivaled access to government information. Because KNA had more access to government events than private media, private media were able to gather news that they would not have been able to gain otherwise. Overall, the outcomes of the study reveal that media houses performed key complementary roles, as Vos and Russell predicted (2019). As a result, it can be argued that KNA was important in a crowded media environment.

5.2.4 Challenges Faced by the Kenya News Agency in Delivering News

The last and fourth objective was to assess the challenges faced by the Kenya News Agency in delivering news. To begin with, the respondents were presented with the question, “what challenges were encountered during selection both by KNA editors and the receiving media house editors?” Staff shortages, such as videographers, photojournalists, and reporters, were one of the issues that hampered efficient coverage of the 72 stations in operation. Inadequate resources, as Rutten and Slot (2011) point out, may hinder KNA's ability to deliver competitive news on a long-term basis. This limited the amount of news coverage from throughout the country. It also hampered division of labor because a reporter was forced to fill multiple responsibilities, resulting in KNA's news being of poor quality and quantity.

There were also issues with insufficient finance, which Mercille (2014) noted as a problem for news organizations. This resulted in an inability to pay officers; an inability to acquire modern equipment for faster development of news content; and unreliable transportation due to a lack of drivers and, in some cases, vehicles or fuel to ferry

reporters to news events, with the majority of the vehicles being poorly maintained due to a lack of funds. The field offices' regular operations were hampered by a lack of financing. This is in accordance with Dash (2009), who claims that a key difficulty for news organizations is a lack of finance. As private media expands their capabilities, this obstacle may continue to limit KNA's relevance. Some media outlets, including KTN and Citizen, did not subscribe to KNA and had their own reporters and correspondents, as previously stated. Indeed, most media companies have better equipment than KNA, limiting the quality of video footage generated (Respondent E, KNA, Nairobi, September 23, 2021). This made KNA less relevant to several media outlets.

These findings reveal that KNA was hampered by a lack of resources. Like Mwangi (2018) points out, in Kenya, as in other developing countries, insufficient resources on the part of media practitioners thwarts the ability of media houses to reach as many people as they should or wish to. In a media-saturated environment, this is a constraint to KNA's competitiveness and relevance.

Also, there are cases of some of the footage from KNA being incompatible with the private media software. This reduces the level of consumption of news from KNA by private media. The issue of poor quality material from KNA, which lacked clear photos and sound, added to the workload of private media editors. Because private media is motivated by profit, as Tankard et al. (1991) points out, this could restrict the adoption of news from KNA by private media. As a result, its relevance in a shrinking media space was diminished.

This was sometimes attributed to sloppy in-camera work. In certain cases, KNA employed old model cameras that still used cassettes, making it difficult to transmit video material in real-time. KNA reporters have also brought sophisticated equipment that has proven difficult to operate in the past. In addition, failure to correctly caption stories resulted in a story not being aired because the editor judged the story's weight based on the caption.

Other challenges related to the quality of footage emanating from lack of exposure to modern techniques of news gathering. Some of the officers also lacked creativity in their video recordings. KNA reporters also did not ask questions during events thus

failing to fill gaps in their news content. They also lacked public trust due to their hesitant behavior (Respondent K, NTV, Nairobi, 05/10/2021). This had an impact on the quality of the information they gathered. These findings support Nwaolike's (2018) study, which found that news organizations frequently struggle to provide high-quality, timely material. The fact that some media companies had better equipment and capacities to generate their own high-quality film meant that KNA's relevance was considerably diminished.

There were issues with over-reliance on government initiatives and programs in coverage (Odhiambo, 2016), which limited the breadth of coverage for KNA, providing its content a little possibility of being broadcast. Another respondent confirmed the lack of diversity in news coverage, stating that KNA primarily focused on national development issues that were valuable to wananchi (citizens), whereas the private media primarily wanted juicy, controversial, and political news, sports, and business; an aspect of news salience identified by Vicente and López (2009) that could improve news uptake. KNA did not carry sports news on weekends because most of it was covered during the week (Respondent C, KNA, 17/09/2021, Nairobi). As a result, KNA news was frequently limited in breadth, making it difficult for private media to ingest the majority of it.

The fact that KNA primarily covered news regarding government programs and activities hampered commercial media adoption of several KNA stories. There have been reports that KNA is spying for the government on some news sources, making it difficult for KNA to obtain other types of information. There was also concern that some stories would have negative ramifications for private media houses if they did not align with the government's political position, as Callanan and Rosenberger (2011) pointed out, because news organizations were supposed to be aligned with the government's position in all spheres. There were other difficulties arising from KNA's lack of investigative and specialized reporting. The joint impact of these challenges could inhibit the relevance of KNA.

The lack of 'appealing' news also limited the uptake of news by private media. This is due to the fact that news has to be appealing to viewers as envisaged by the cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1992). One of the respondents noted that the news from KNA was

educational and dry on entertainment as opposed to private media's expectations for "something that elicits a reaction from viewers such as controversial, sensational and funny video clips." (Respondent E, KNA, 23/9/2021, Nairobi). The findings show that private media were faced with challenges related to over-reliance on coverage of government projects and programmes. This reduced the appeal of the news produced and lowered the propensity of the content produced by KNA from being broadcasted due to low newsworthiness and appeal (Sabao, 2016).

Lastly, the respondents were asked to point out ways in which they thought KNA could do to improve its news coverage. Various suggestions were made as presented below. One of how the coverage of news at KNA could be enhanced was through the provision of sufficient resources (Rantanen et al., 2019) to enable them to undertake news coverage effectively and efficiently (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi). KNA should also hire enough personnel as suggested by Kelly et al. (2017). This would enhance manpower in all technical and support cadres (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). It would also enable division of labour to have a reporter and a cameraperson instead of one officer doubling as both for quality work. There was also a need to boost staff morale through promotions and provision of the necessary allowance to motivate them and boost performance (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). The findings also show that the government should provide adequate funding through the National Treasury (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi & Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). The importance of finances was underlined by Mwangi (2015) who underlines the role played by sufficient funding on the quality of news produced by media houses.

There was a need for regular refresher courses to cope with the ever-changing media technology (Respondent G, TV47, 07/10/2021, Nairobi & Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). The pertinence of training interventions (Keneshloo, 2019) was also affirmed by one of the respondents who said that KNA TV crews need to be trained on how to package news items in an easier downloadable and sharable manner (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi). In the same accord, another respondent said that the Media council should incorporate KNA reporters in its refresher courses training of journalists on content development (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). Training officers regularly would keep up with the global developments

especially on matters of technology (Respondent A, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). This would enhance their capacity to produce high-quality news (Keneshloo, 2019).

It was also pointed out that KNA needs to be exposed to other professionals for interaction on-camera work and news coverage. They need to interact with other experts to gain expertise in creative news recording procedures. Such exposure would also enable them to learn from others for creativity and recording experience (Respondent R, Citizen TV, 07/10/2021, Nairobi).

The respondents also pointed out that when recruiting, KNA should hire personnel with all relevant skills in camera shooting and footage processing (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021 – Nairobi). By recruiting talented and experienced personnel, it was possible to improve the quality of news items produced as posited by Artz (2017). KNA should also have specialized reporters who can go to post news events and give the private media follow-ups on prolonged developing stories (Respondent N, TV47, 28/09/2021, Nairobi). The personnel so hired should also be provided with the necessary resources for work output (Respondent L, KTN, 12/10/2021, Nairobi).

The importance of training was highlighted by Keneshloo (2019) who posits that most media houses did not have training facilities for journalists and agencies mostly utilized opportunities offered by other organizations for training media personnel. It is thus important to put in place mechanisms for enhancing the training of journalists to prop up their capacity to produce high-quality news.

There was a need to emphasis packaging the stories right from the field stations (Respondent G, TV47, 07/10/2021, Nairobi). There was also a need to produce quality pictures and scripts complete with the right captions for better consumption by private media houses (Respondent B, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi). The quality of service delivery could also be enhanced through the support of the citizenry. In this regard, Kenyans should be sensitized through the office of the Government spokesperson and the Ombudsman on the importance of disclosing information for national development (Respondent D, KNA, 24/9/2021, Nairobi).

The findings also posit that KNA should learn to appear for events early to plan and position their cameras strategically to attain clear pictures and sound and lighting for their footage. Furthermore, taking clear pictures and sound would make media houses have confidence in some reporters and KNA should strive to cultivate the trust of the private media editors. (Respondent R, Citizen TV, 07/10/2021, Nairobi. This would enhance the quality of the footage produced hence the higher propensity of its use by private media as envisaged by the cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1992).

KNA should also enhance service delivery by regularly renewing the contracts they had with respective media houses and make a follow-up of the coverage of their news for improved relations (Respondent H, NTV, 10/10/2021, Nairobi). The study findings indicate the need for providing promptness and quality service delivery. This emanates from the fact that media houses look for quality and timely news items that are newsworthy (Sabao, 2016).

The study also showed that KNA should diversify to widen its scope by not concentrating on government programs only (Agbi, 2016). They should also help citizens get it right by venturing into documentary production, including investigative journalism, and expose government deviants drug traffickers, ivory trade, government officials who engage in corruption, and those who abuse office among others (Respondent O, TV47, 17/09/2021, Nairobi).

To strengthen the findings on the need for diversification, the respondents also pointed out that KNA should diversify from the officialdom form of news coverage. They should go for features to give in-depth coverage of general events and government initiatives and projects as posited by Sabao (2016). The stories they cover should also be good and professionally done (Respondent L, KTN, 12/10/2021, Nairobi).

Service delivery could also be enhanced because KNA had the advantage of knowing the government calendar ahead of time. They could thus plan and produce high-quality news with a lot of appeal to newsrooms. The findings also show that there was a need by KNA to ensure that it produced diversified news rather than only churn out news on government development projects and events (Odhiambo, 2016). This is particularly so

since media houses are always looking for diverse content in line with their particular editorial focuses (Rantanen, 2019).

There is also a need to empower staff. In this regard, staff should be given the liberty to give a clear picture on the ground without acting as the government's public relations agents (Welbers et al., 2016). This would help the media to inform and educate the public on their ways out of such situations and the government to address the issues involved adequately without guesswork (Respondent M, KTN, 09/10/2021, Nairobi). This was affirmed by another respondent who said that KNA is left to operate independently without the interference from government (Respondent P, KTN, 10/10/2021, Nairobi).

The agency also needed to share the phone numbers of their cameramen and reporters for easier coordination of news coverage. The news managers from KNA regional offices should also be informing the newsrooms of their docket early and daily (Respondent H, NTV, 10/10/2021, Nairobi). The findings show that KNA should thus put in place mechanisms for reducing bureaucracy (Bernstein, 2014). This would go on to enhance the speedy dissemination of news to private news media. It will also enhance the quality of the relationship between KNA and private media. Follow-up of news items would also be enhanced.

5.3 Conclusion

Regarding uptake of news stories from KNA by the private media, the findings show that various media houses were using stories from the agency. Close to half (50%) of the stories received were aired. In most cases, private media houses aired stories from KNA especially those they found to be big during their dry days. Most of the media houses that largely relied on KNA for news content were upcoming TV stations. It can thus be concluded that media houses tended to use stories from KNA especially during dry days. This made KNA relevant in a proliferated media space

The type of the KNA's news stories that the private media sought was affected by the fact that KNA provided balanced and in-depth stories. The appeal of stories, credibility, and quality as well as their focus on various topics was another important factor. The credibility of news is another important factor enhancing the uptake of news items from

KNA by private media. KNA could also reach government officials and events even where private media were limited. This made it an important repository of news. It is also evident that KNA played tangible complementary roles to private media houses. This was because it did not have its outlets. It was also able to collect information from government bodies where private media was limited. The fact that KNA had an extensive network made it possible to collect news from all over the country and border towns which further enhanced its relevance in a proliferated media space.

Some of the challenges faced by KNA in delivering news included staff shortages such as videographers, photojournalists, and the reporters' cadres to effectively cover the 81 stations currently in operation. There were also challenges related to inadequate funding which led to meagre resources and the inability to hire enough workers. KNA also produced poor-quality footage from KNA. The overreliance on government projects also limited the quality of newly produced by KNA. Bureaucracy was also another important challenge facing KNA.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made.

5.4.1 Uptake of News Stories from Kenya News Agency by the Private Media

The findings show that private media collected a lot of information from KNA. However, some media houses did not rely on KNA meaning the Agency was a sleeping giant. The study thus recommends the need for KNA to make their news appealing to all private media houses through responsive and prompt reporting and enter into official arrangements with all the media houses to enhance subscriptions and avoid pilferage of footages in the field.

5.4.2 Factors Influencing the Type of the Kenya News Agency's News Stories that the Private Media Seek for

The study found that there were factors that limited the appeal of stories from KNA. In this regard, KNA should put in place measures aimed at enhancing the appeal of their stories by sharing diverse, in-depth, balanced, newsworthy, and timely news.

5.4.3 Whether Kenya News Agency Complements or Rivals the Work of Private Media

The study also established that KNA complemented the work of private media. It is however recommended that KNA should strengthen the quality of their stories. This can be done through diversity in reporting as well as making their stories more savoury and responsive to the needs of private media to better serve the niche they had within news provision in Kenya.

5.4.4 Challenges Faced by the Kenya News Agency in Delivering News

KNA faced numerous challenges. These could be solved through increased funding, staff training, and procurement of modern equipment, provision of diverse and high-quality footage as well as reduction of bureaucracy.

5.5 Areas for Further Study

This study aimed to analyze the relevance of Kenya News Agency to the private media. Similar studies are recommended to assess the relevance of KNA in the wake of the rise and rise of social media and citizen journalism. Comparative studies based on the review of programmes aired in private media to examine how stories from KNA were aired are recommended.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide for Key Informants

1. What number of stories were received from KNA in the last two years?
2. How many stories from KNA were aired during the period?
3. How many stories were spiked or killed and why?
4. How frequently did you air KNA stories?
5. At what time were the stories mainly covered, whether at the peak or normal hours?
6. How were the stories placed i.e., during news bulletins, documentaries or other programs?
7. What length of time were the stories given?
8. What challenges were encountered during selection both by KNA editors and the receiving media house editors?
9. Do you think KNA has any relevance to your media House?
10. Does KNA pose any competition against your media house?
11. What do you think KNA should do to improve on its news coverage?
12. In which way does Kenya News Agency complement the work of private media?
13. How is the uptake of KNA news stories by the private media?
14. What is the nature of stories majorly gathered, processed and transmitted to subscribers by KNA?
15. Describe the main genres of news by KNA?
16. Which factors influence the type of the Kenya News Agency's news stories that the private media seek for?