

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

**AN EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF KENYAN PRINT
MEDIA IN CURBING ROAD CARNAGE
A CASE STUDY OF THE *DAILY NATION* NEWSPAPER
(JAN – DEC 2004) //**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in order to assess the role of the media in curbing road carnage in Kenya. The deaths on Kenyan roads had reached an alarming rate of seven people daily making them one of the worst death traps in the world.

The role of the media in solving social economic problems of the society cannot be gainsaid as has been demonstrated by numerous information, Education and communication (IEC) interventions in the world over. To qualify this statement the rationale behind advertising goods and consumer products which can be classified as an (IEC) strategy, is based on the power of the media in manipulating the attitudes and the perception of the people towards a certain idea or issue.

The major objective of the study was therefore, to determine the effect of the print media's coverage of road safety in curbing road carnage. To carry the study, copies of the *Daily Nation* newspaper for the entire year 2004 were perused and all stories on road safety were classified into genres as will be observed in the study. For purposes of quantifying the content the texts were measured in inches. This is what, in a nutshell is referred to as content analysis. The study was based on the *Daily Nation* newspaper as it is one of the major mainstream print medium in Kenya with a circulation of about 3.2 million copies daily. It is therefore, one of the dominant sources of print information in the country.

Road carnage was determined by collecting the data about the road accidents from the traffic Police records during the same period. A comparison of the media coverage and the accident statistics was made in order to find out the relationship of the two variables. After a thorough examination of the two variables, it was found out that media coverage of road safety information had an inverse relationship with road carnage when the analysis was done using the Spearman's Rank Correlation Co-efficiency formula. The correlation between the two variables was found to be -0.545.

Hence the conclusion that the print media coverage of road safety in our study had a reducing effect on road carnage. The study therefore was justified in recommending for the media to carry out sustained information coverage on road safety whose effect was going to put a check in road carnage, which was threatening as a major predator of human lives on our roads above all known causes in Kenya.