

**THE VIABILITY OF A FREE NEWSPAPER IN THE NAIROBI
METROPOLITAN AREA IN KENYA: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY**

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has never been published or presented for examination by any other person in any other university or institution.

Signature  _____

Date: December 3, 2013

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Declaration by the supervisor

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as supervisor at the University of Nairobi

Signature  _____

Date: 2/11/2013

DR. JACINTA MWENDE MAWEU

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to (in alphabetical order) Esther Murugi Wahome, John Kiarie Koigi, Lucy Wanjira Njenga and Peter Thamu Ngugi, for their years of true friendship and genuine concern.

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May God bless you all.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UoN.....	University of Nairobi
SOJ&MC	School of Journalism & Mass Communication
NMG.....	Nation Media Group
SG.....	Standard Group
WAN.....	World Association of Newspapers
KSH.....	Kenya Shilling
KNBS.....	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
NCLR.....	National Council of Law Reporting
NCC.....	Nairobi City County
MCK.....	Media Council of Kenya
ICC.....	International Criminal Court
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
R.....	Respondent

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to explore the viability of establishing a free newspaper in Kenya, and in particular in the Nairobi City County, which forms the Nairobi metropolitan area, to fill the gap left by mainstream paid-for newspapers. Specifically, the study sought to establish the level of daily newspaper readership and accessibility in the Nairobi metropolitan area; to establish the range of issues covered in the *Daily Nation*, the leading mainstream paid-for newspaper in Kenya; and, to explore the viability of establishing a free newspaper (free sheet) in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

The research was informed by three theories: Uses and Gratifications Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, and Political-Economic Theory.

To achieve the study objectives, the researcher used a qualitative research methodology which helped get in-depth details from respondents. Data was collected through qualitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews.

The findings of the study indicate that the *Daily Nation*, as the leading mainstream national newspaper, focuses more on the powerful, the affluent and the elite than on the common man at the grassroots. As such, there is a huge gap left by mainstream newspapers as far as the coverage of grassroots or common man's issues is concerned. The findings also revealed that a free newspaper focusing on issues of concern to the common man — such as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), entertainment, education, human interest, as well as problems associated with water, transport, crime and security — is viable in Kenya, and in particular in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Newspapers have, for decades, been a common form of print media communication around the world. Apart from bringing us news and information longer than any other media form, newspapers have always been one of the most inexpensive ways for people to get news and advertising information. Most newspapers have been paid-for, meaning they have a cost. This study focuses on an emerging trend in print media: free newspapers, also known as free sheets.

As Croteau and Hoynes (2003) observe, the media surround us, with our everyday lives being saturated by communications tools, including the radio, television, newspapers, books, the Internet, movies, recorded music, and magazines. If the media were eliminated, nothing else would be the same. For instance, our understanding of politics and the world around us would be different because we would not have newspapers, television, magazines and books to explain what is happening in our communities and beyond (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003: 6). The presence of a newspaper, as Sawisky (2010) observes, is a key component of maintaining quality of life in an isolated city, town, or village by promoting and increasing civic engagement in the community, in addition to presenting readers with information on decisions affecting their community.

According to Raymond (1999), early newspapers are believed to have evolved from newsletters, handbills and pamphlets in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The newsletters, then circulating via the rudimentary postal services, were concerned especially with transmitting news of events relevant to international trade and commerce (Raymond, 1999 cited in McQuail, 2005: 28). McQuail (2005) writes that the early newspaper was marked by its regular appearance, commercial basis (openly for sale), public character and

multiple purposes. Thus, it was for information, record, advertising, diversion and gossip. As Fang (1997: 32) observes, a news tool of communication may replace something useful or pleasurable. Newspapers, the new tool of communication, replaced some measure of oral communication. Given the opportunity, people preferred to read their information than to hear about it.

In Africa, newspapers can be traced back to the era most countries on the continent were under colonial governments (Makali, 2003). Frank Barton argues that throughout Africa, “the Adam and Eve of Africa’s newspapers were the government gazettes,” (Makali, 2003: 57). Such gazettes were introduced by the government as vehicles for transmitting state information to citizens. The earliest private press served the socio-political interests of the immigrant races in settled colonies, such as Kenya, where Whites had a stake in the continued subjugation of indigenous people. The press became an important tool in ensuring the settler, rather than the African voice, was heard by the metropolitan state. The emergence of the press in Kenya, therefore, followed the same trend as was the case in most colonies in Africa.

Ochilo (1993) traces the modern print media in Kenya to the missionaries and the British settlers in the 1890s, with the early examples including the *Taveta Chronicle*, which was published by Rev. Robert Stegal of the Church Missionary Society in 1895. The *Taveta Chronicle* was circulated among Europeans and interested persons in England. It was later followed in 1899 by the *Leader* of the British East Africa Company and *Uganda Mail* which was published in Mombasa between 1899 and 1904, before it was moved to Nairobi in 1908 and became a daily in 1911. The basic objective of these papers was to provide information for the missionaries and settlers of news that came from home — England (Ochilo, 1993: 5). The Asians later ventured into the business of ownership of some sections of the media, with their main reason being to use the media to legitimise their second place to the whites in

Kenya. In 1902, Asian trader Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee started *The Standard* — which remains Kenya's first privately-owned mainstream newspaper. Years later, Jeevanjee sold the newspaper to people keen to use it to serve the settler community's interests (Hivos, 2011). Its new owners renamed it *The East African Standard* in 1905.

Then there was *The Nairobi News* (launched in February 1905 but folding soon thereafter) and the weekly *Times of East Africa*. The Church of Scotland Mission in Kikuyu had *The Kikuyu News*, a monthly English journal published between 1908 and 1957.

Publications meant to cater for the Asian community, included *The Hindi Prakash*, a weekly founded in Mombasa in 1915, and a bi-lingual weekly, the *East African News*, which published in English and Gujarati and was started in Nairobi in 1915 (Makali 2003: 67). Africans later ventured into media ownership, basically to use the media as tools for putting across their demands for freedom, justice and equality. One of the newspapers targeting the African audience was *Wathiomo Mukinyu*, a monthly published in the Gikuyu language by the Catholic Diocese of Nyeri in today's Nyeri County.

The *Daily Nation*, which is the largest circulation newspaper, was founded in 1960, and after independence in 1963, similar patterns of media ownership and development continued as they had been under colonial rule — serving different interests (Ochilo, 1993).

Although there is no single definition of a newspaper, Sawisky (2010) observes that a newspaper reports on the issues of the community it represents as well as provides birth and death notifications and information on what has *happened* at the community, provincial, national and international levels, in addition to what *is happening*. Sawisky (2010), observes that newspapers make an important element of dialogue possible in a community through commentaries and opinions on current affairs as well as letters to the editor. The World Association of Newspapers (WAN) categorises newspapers into dailies, non-dailies and free

papers (World Press Trends, 2000). Sawisky (2010), adds that newspapers could be local, focusing on local news, or national, which focus on local content in addition to national and international stories.

In Kenya, there are currently five mainstream English newspapers, one weekly business newspaper, as well as a Kiswahili daily publication. They are the *Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, *The Star*, *The People*, the *Business Daily*, (which specialises in business-related stories), *Taifa Leo* (the only mainstream national Swahili daily newspaper in Kenya), as well as *The EastAfrican*, which is the leading English business weekly newspaper in East and Central Africa (Mbeke & Mshindi, 2008). The *Daily Nation*, whose sister weekly editions are the *Sunday Nation* and the *Saturday Nation*, remains the largest circulation newspaper in the country followed by the *Standard* (Mbeke & Mshindi, 2008), whose sister weekend editions are the *Saturday Standard*, *Standard on Sunday*, and *The Counties* — which seeks to focus and cover news in Kenya's 47 counties (see Figure 1.1). There is also *The Nairobiian* (which is more of a tabloid publication of the Standard Media Group (SMG) launched in early 2013 to serve young readers — mainly with light news, gossip and entertainment — within the Nairobi City County (NCC) and the Nairobi metropolitan area. The latest entry is the *Nairobi News*, which hit the streets in November 2013 and focuses on Nairobi City County, which is part of the larger Nairobi Metropolitan Region comprising Nairobi, Kiambu, Kajiado and Machakos counties (see Figure 1.2). The *Nairobi News*, which rivals *The Nairobiian*, is a publication of the Nation Media Group (NMG). The paper seems to have borrowed the title from the defunct *The Nairobi News*. Weekly newspapers include *Coast Week* and the *Financial Post*.

However, none of Kenya's newspapers is a free newspaper or free sheet. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the viability of establishing a free newspaper in Kenya, and in particular the Nairobi City County, which forms the Nairobi metropolitan area.

According to Correia-da-Silva and Resende (2013), a free daily newspaper distributes news to readers and sells ad-space to advertisers, having private information about its audience. For a given number of distributed copies, depending on the type of audience (favourable or unfavourable), the newspaper may have either a large or small readership. A large readership provides a greater return to advertisers, because ads are visualized by more people. A favourable audience has also the advantage of requiring a lower distribution cost (for a given number of distributed copies), because readers are willing to exert more effort to obtain a copy of the free newspaper and are less likely to reject a copy that is handed to them.

The world's first free newspaper is the *Metro*, which was founded by three journalists in Sweden in 1995 to serve the Stockholm metropolitan area, and it has since become the world's leading free newspaper. (Wadbring cited in Bergstrom and Wadbring, 2008). Apart from shoppers, or advertisers, which are given free of charge targeting mainly shoppers at malls, there is no true free newspaper in Kenya, and in particular the Nairobi metropolitan area, which has a population of 3.1 million, with 97.7 per cent being able to read and write (KNBS, 2009).

This study, therefore, seeks to establish the viability of such a free newspaper in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

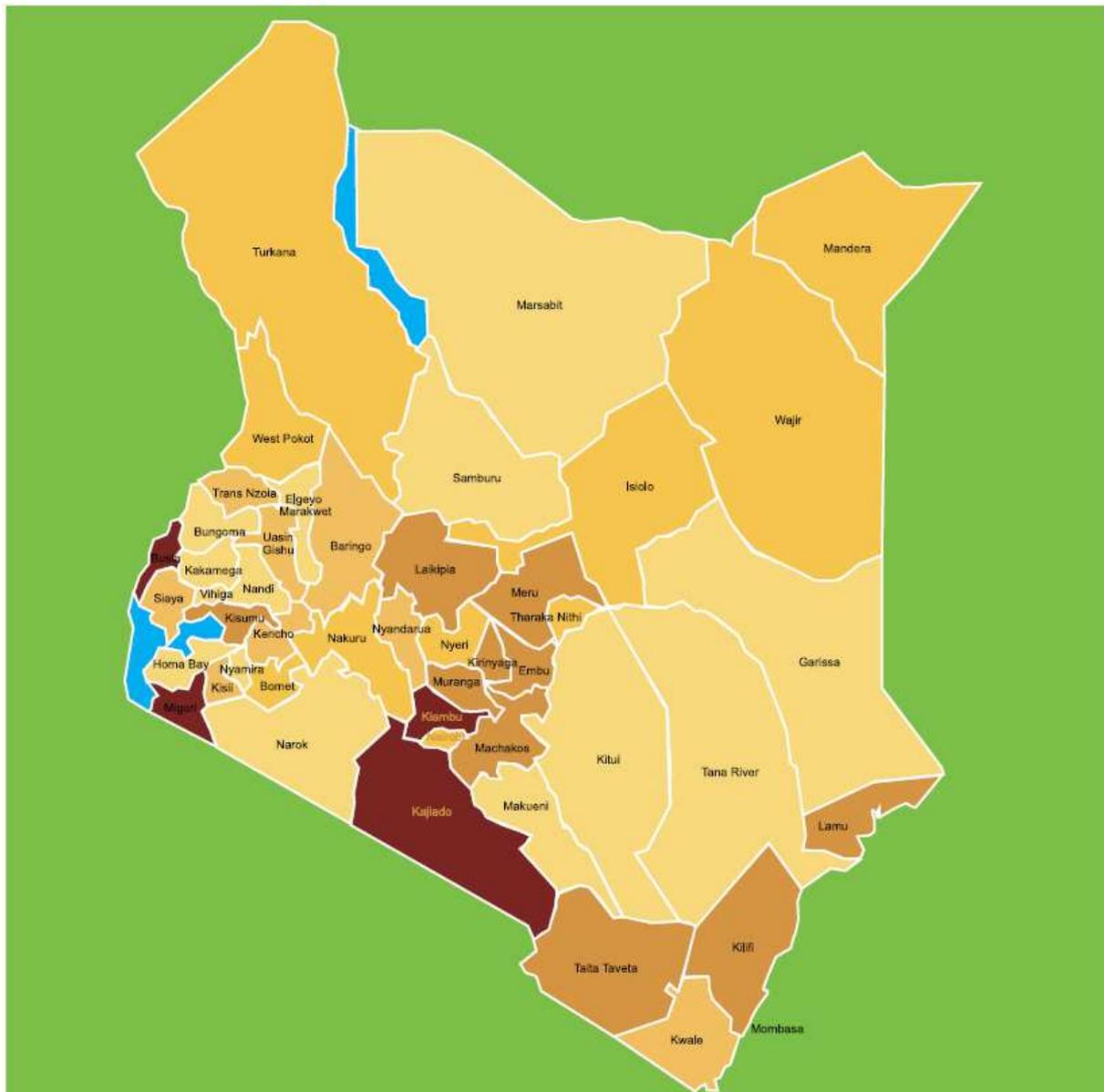
Table 1.1: Daily newspapers in Kenya

Title	Publisher	Frequency	Circulation
<i>Daily Nation</i>	Nation Media Group	daily	180 000 (PE)*
<i>The Standard</i>	Standard Group Ltd	daily	110 000 (PE)
<i>The People</i>	TV Africa Holdings	daily	65 000 (PE)
<i>Taifa leo</i>	Nation Media Group	daily	44 000 (PE)
<i>Business Daily</i>	Nation Media Group	daily	15 000 (PE)
<i>Nairobi Star</i>	Radio Africa Group	daily	10 000 (PE)
<i>The Financial Post</i>	P.G. Kariuki	weekly	60 000 (PE)
<i>Coast Week</i>	Coast Week Newspapers Ltd	weekly	12 000 (PE)
<i>The East African</i>	Nation Media Group	weekly	40 000 (PE)
<i>Sunday Nation</i>	Nation Media Group	Sundays	280 000 (ABC)**
<i>Sunday Standard</i>	Standard Group Ltd	Sundays	150 000 (PE)
<i>The People on Sunday</i>	TV Africa Holdings	Sundays	38 000 (PE)
<i>Taifa Jumapili</i>	Nation Media Group	Sundays	000 (ABC)

* Publisher's estimate ** Audited Bureau of Circulation figure

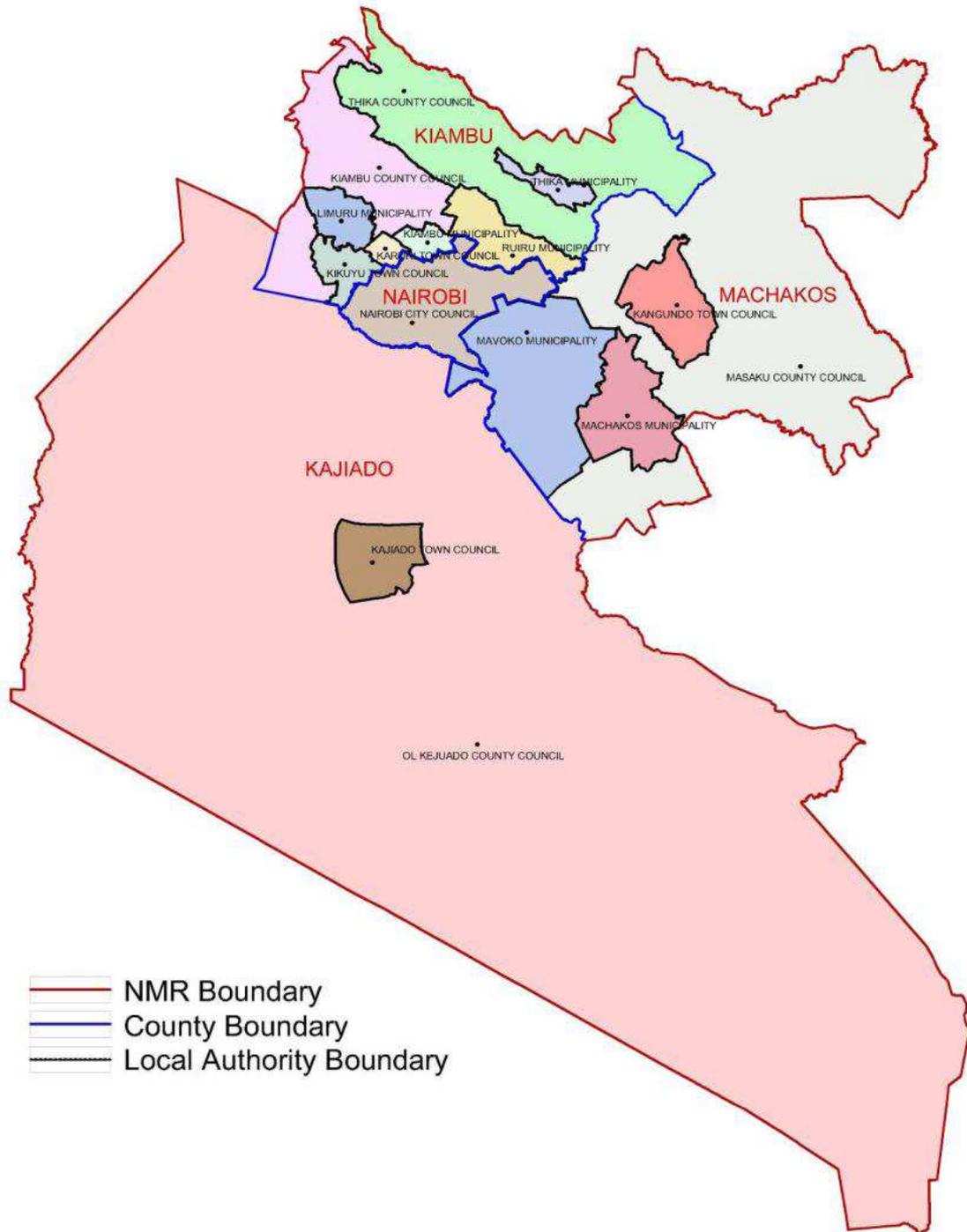
Source: *The Status of the Media in Kenya*. A report of the Media Council of Kenya, 2004/85

Figure 1.1: Map of Kenya showing the 47 counties



Source: Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA)

Figure 1.2: Map of the proposed Nairobi Metropolitan Region showing the Nairobi City County (the Nairobi metropolitan area)



Source: Project: Development of a Spatial Planning Concept for Nairobi Metropolitan Region of Kenya Page 7.1
 Document: 2010063/UPD/ Draft Plan April, 2011

1.2 Problem Statement

The cover price of the mainstream newspapers in Kenya, which is Kenya shillings sixty (KSH60, about US\$0.7 at current rates), is a barrier to many would-be newspaper readers who would want to buy their own copies. Research by Ipsos Synovate (as cited in Nyabuga & Booker, 2013), the forerunner of the Steadman Group, a Kenyan research company, revealed that slightly over 3 million Kenyans read a newspaper every day, with many not buying their own copies. The Synovate research found that one of the reasons why newspaper readership was low was the cost of the daily papers, with many arguing that they could not afford to buy a newspaper, then costing Kenya shillings forty (KSH40, about US\$0.5). Therefore, even if the “grassroots” or “common man's” issues were being covered in the mainstream newspapers, many people would still not access the paid-for newspapers due to their prohibitive prices.

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides for devolved government through the 47 county governments (see Figure 1.1). As much as such county governments would like information on development to reach people at the grassroots, the existing five mainstream newspapers cannot cover every event deemed important for the common man.

Coverage of events in such newspapers is more likely to favour the powerful, the affluent and the elite. This means the range of coverage of grassroots or common man's issues almost always published by such mainstream newspapers is narrow, mainly due to political-economic factors, which dictate that newspapers should carry content that would help them sell and in turn bring in revenue.

Apart from the mainstream newspapers, both *The Nairobiian* and the *Nairobi News* have the same cover price of Kenya shillings forty (KSH40, about US\$0.5 current rate), which, though lower than the price of the mainstream newspapers, is still relatively beyond the reach of

many readers. Between 2009 and 2010 *The Star* newspaper, which is known to carry many stories focusing on the common man at the grassroots, used to be given free every last Thursday of the month. Though there is no immediate data on circulation, the paper would disappear from the newsstands earlier than paid-for newspapers. Readers of paid-for newspapers would even ask vendors to keep for them the “free newspaper.” Those who were habitual buyers of mainstream newspapers would also pick the free newspaper. Though the price of the *Star* then was Kenya shillings thirty five (KSH35, about US\$0.4 at current rates), which was lower than the mainstream newspaper, it was evident that the distribution of the *Star on free*, then sponsored by Safaricom, a Kenyan mobile service provider, was much higher than on the days it was being sold.

Therefore, there is need for a newspaper, especially a free one, which would not only cover in depth the common man’s issues, but also reach wider audiences at the grassroots. Bigger audiences for these free newspapers would attract advertisers and, in turn, translate into increased revenues for the publishers.

This study, therefore, sought to explore the possibility of starting a free newspaper also known as free sheet to fill the gap left by mainstream paid-for newspapers in the coverage of the common man’s issues at the grassroots in Kenya and, in particular, the Nairobi metropolitan area.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to explore the viability of establishing a free newspaper (free sheet) in Kenya and, in particular, in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

1.3.1 Specific objective

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To establish the level of daily newspaper readership and accessibility in the Nairobi metropolitan area.
2. To establish the range of issues covered in the *Daily Nation*, the leading mainstream paid-for newspaper in Kenya.
3. To explore the viability of establishing a free newspaper (free sheet) in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

1.3.2 Research questions

The research questions were:

1. What is the level of daily newspaper readership and accessibility in the Nairobi metropolitan area?
2. What is the range of issues covered in the Daily Nation as the leading mainstream paid-for newspaper in Kenya?
3. What is the viability of establishing a free newspaper (free sheet) in the Nairobi metropolitan area?

1.4 Assumptions of the study

1. The relatively high cost of mainstream newspapers is a major barrier towards accessing such newspapers.
2. Mainstream newspapers highlight more issues affecting the elite than those affecting the common man at the grassroots.

1.5 Scope and limitations of Study

This study focused on newspaper readership within the Nairobi City County (NCC). Interviews were carried among readers and non-readers of newspapers at public transport termini, business centres, estates, restaurants and the streets.

Despite assurances by the researcher that information respondents gave would be used only for the purposes of the study, the respondents declined to be tape recorded as they were suspicious recorded responses could be used for purposes other than those of the research and therefore get them into trouble with authorities in future. However, to overcome this, the researcher took notes in longhand during the interviews. Some respondents were reluctant to give interviews arguing that they were too busy. The respondent had to persuade them that the interviews would take only a few minutes.

1.6 Justification and significance of research project

According to a study carried out in 2008 by the Steadman Group, now known as Ipsos Synovate, Kenyan print media readership is relatively small, with approximately 37 per cent of Kenyans saying they had not read a newspaper in more than a year. The Ipsos Synovate study revealed that about 2.2 million people in Kenyan towns read newspapers daily, compared to 2.6 million rural folk (Steadman Group, 2008, cited in Mbeke & Mshindi, 2008). Picard (2011) observes that while the concept of free newspapers has been common in Europe, the Americas, and Asia, the idea seems relatively new in Africa, with free papers being available in only four countries: Morocco, Egypt, South Africa, and Botswana. As such, this researcher has identified a gap that has been left by mainstream newspapers in Kenya and will, therefore, seek to examine the viability of establishing a free newspaper (free sheet) to cater for the large population that cannot access newspapers due to their high cost. According to Bowen, as cited in Allen and Gagliardone, (2011), circulation of print media around the

world has stagnated and in some cases gone down because of “affordability, given the high production cost and heavy taxation of newsprint. Circulation and sales respond to the economy and the current situation is unfavourable” (Ongowo, 2011). A free newspaper will, therefore, not only be the voice of the voiceless at the grassroots, but also be accessible mainly to many poor people in both rural areas and urban centres, in particular in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

The concept of free newspapers is relatively new in Kenya, as evidenced by the fact that there is almost no literature on such publications. The closest Kenya came to having a free newspaper was between 2009 and 2010, when the country's leading mobile service provider, Safaricom, itself a subsidiary of Vodafone of the United Kingdom, used to sponsor *The Star* once every month. The newspaper, then costing Kenya shillings thirty five (KSH35), would be distributed free of charge, mainly around Nairobi metropolitan area, as well as parts of the country. By sponsoring *The Star* through advertising, and having it distributed free of charge so Safaricom products appearing in the advertisements could reach as many people as possible, the publisher was in effect turning the then young paper into a “free newspaper.” Though there has not been documented research, vendors reported curious interest among readers and non-readers of newspapers, who would flock to newsstands early to pick free copies. It can, therefore, be arguably observed that such interest in the pick-up newspaper is a clear indication that there existed, and still exists, a gap in the newspaper sector that could be filled by a free newspaper.

The mainstream newspapers in Kenya today, and in particular when it comes to the Nairobi metropolitan area, tend to cover and highlight the “big guy” events or agenda. Such newspapers tend to either reduce into briefs the grassroots or common man’s stories, relegate them to the inner pages, or ignore them altogether. To such mainstream newspapers, the

common man's agenda is a non-issue, unless such citizens are involved in committing crimes. My study of the *Daily Nation*, which I have purposively chosen to analyse the coverage of common man's issues in the Nairobi metropolitan area for one month, seeks to find out if the main content of the mainstream newspaper almost always favours the elite, wealthy readers and high-profile political leaders.

This study sought to advocate for a free newspaper that would be more accessible, and help highlight "small man's" issues that mainstream newspapers tend to ignore. The study will help advertisers assess if advertising their products in free newspapers will help them to reach the widest possible audiences. The results may be the basis for further studies in the area of free newspapers in Kenya. The study hoped to give an insight into the newspaper sector in the Nairobi metropolitan area, with a view of motivating the Nairobi City County leadership, media houses, newspaper publishers, as well as local and international investors into considering to venture into the publication of free newspapers and, therefore, help enhance the dissemination of news and information to the widest audience possible. This is important, as a free newspaper would help more readers get free information about what is happening in their locality and the world around them. In addition, the study could be used in future to develop a detailed business plan related to free newspaper ventures.

1.7 Operational definition of terms

Newspaper: a publication in written form on newsprint (the paper on which newspapers are printed) or a similar medium, loosely bound, published at regular intervals not exceeding seven days, and available either locally, regionally or nationally.

Paid-for newspaper: A newspaper with a cover price.

Local newspaper: A newspaper that aims at readers in a small geographical area, usually one town or a number of closely grouped towns, and the surrounding rural area, or sometimes a

district within a large urban centre.

National newspaper: A daily or Sunday newspaper addressed to readers throughout the country, concentrating on national and international news and advertising.

Free newspapers are distributed free of charge, either in central places in cities and towns, or with other newspapers. The revenues of such newspapers are based on advertising.

Advertising is a form of communication intended to persuade its viewers, readers or listeners to take some action. It usually includes the name of a product or service and how that product or service could benefit the consumer, to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume that particular brand. In certain industries, such as the mass media where a major part of the revenue comes from advertisers, it is often in the company's interest to reach as many people as possible. In this model, companies would often distribute most of their products and services free of charge, so these can reach the largest possible audience. The companies would then attempt to recoup all costs from advertising.

Shopper or advertiser: a free publication, aimed at a particular locality, which is wholly or mainly devoted to advertising, and in which any editorial content is related to the advertising carried. In some cases, these may be delivered directly to households. In others, they may be available for collection from containers located at supermarkets, shopping centres and petrol or filling stations. Some are distributed by a combination of the two methods.

Circulation: The average number of copies a paid-for newspaper sells per issue.

Distribution: The number of copies of a free newspaper distributed within a defined geographic area.

Pick up: A free newspaper available for readers to collect at newsagents, stations or other locations.

Viable: There is need and room for an alternative publication with different content to that usually carried by mainstream newspapers.

Viability: Having room and possibility of offering an alternative content and voice to the common man.

Metro: A free newspaper originating in Sweden, and is distributed for free of charge in high-traffic commuter zones or public transport networks from a combination of self-service racks and by-hand distributors on weekdays.

Metro International S.A.: A Swedish media company based in Luxembourg. It is the publisher of the Metro.

Kinyozi: Barber shop in Kiswahili. Many newspaper readers visit barber shops not for haircuts but to read newspapers.

Common *mwananchi*: Ordinary resident eking a living and staying in low-end areas in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

A literature review, according to Blaxter (1998), is a critical summary and assessment of the range of existing materials dealing with knowledge and understanding in a given field. Blaxter adds that the purpose of such review is to locate the research project, to form its context or background, and to provide insights into previous work.

The concept of free newspapers or free sheets is new in Kenya, as evidenced by the fact that there is almost no literature on such publications. As such, there is lack of prior research studies in Kenya on the topic of free newspapers. However, for the purposes of this study, this researcher went through a lot of literature, including those written by various scholars of communications who have researched and written on free newspapers. For instance, according to Mzungu (2013), the cost of paid-for mainstream newspapers has often been cited as a key barrier towards accessing a newspaper, especially among the rural population. The researcher observes that in the three traditional media platforms in Kenya, (radio, television and newspapers), newspaper readership has the lowest incidence of weekly engagement among the adult population. Mzungu (2013) adds that six million out of the twenty two million persons interviewed claimed to have read newspapers on a weekly basis, representing about 22 per cent of the adult population. According to the researcher, about three quarters of the weekly newspaper readers are male and affluent.

Apart from purchasing their own copies, Mzungu (2013) observes, newspaper readers also source for such publications from other household members and also from the office or workplace. A slightly higher proportion of the rural population who read a newspaper weekly purchase their own copy compared with the urban population, where a higher proportion of the readers access the paper from the workplace or office. Mzungu (2013) argues that print

media will, therefore, need to be dynamic to be able to maintain and also generate audiences. Key for growth will be the need to provide local news, which is a key driver of newspaper readership, more so with the redefined regional governance. There will be a need to provide content at both regional and nationwide levels, and to customize content to suit the media consumption habits of the different demographic profiles. The society, according to the researcher, has already seen major dailies introducing content-specific newspapers, particularly on sport but also for county editions. The society, he adds, should definitely expect to see a highly fragmented media audience, the emergence of sub-brands of major media houses and the demand for quality content development tailored to the various media consumers.

Such findings inspired me to find out if the cost of Kenya's leading mainstream newspapers, in particular the *Daily Nation*, at Kenya shillings sixty (KSH60) is a barrier to many towards accessing newspapers in the Nairobi metropolitan area. It also made me interested in seeking to find out how residents in poor areas in the Nairobi metropolitan area access newspapers. In addition, this study sought to find out the perception of residents towards the establishment of a free newspaper as well as what the content of such a newspaper should be.

Picard (2011), who has researched and written about the audience of free dailies, argues that one finds that the target audience differs from that of paid dailies. The potential audience of newspapers includes the literate population in a market, but there are three important subgroups of that potential audience. First, there are habitual readers. These are the core readers who regularly read newspapers and wish a regular flow of information to understand the world around them and to make decisions. Secondly, Picard (2011) adds, there are occasional readers who want information and diversion but are less committed to devoting time or money to newspapers. Finally, there are those who can read but don't. They have

never acquired the habit and believe that newspapers are not interesting enough to spend time or money on. Paid dailies have traditionally targeted habitual readers as their primary market and then sought to pick up more circulation among less committed or occasional readers. Free dailies are primarily targeting the occasional reader and some habitual and non-readers. To attract these readers, free dailies create an editorial profile based on short stories designed for quick reading. They rely on news agencies for the bulk of their content and seek only to provide an overview of national and international news. They typically place heavy emphasis on local entertainment, television, and sport. Locally produced articles are highly limited and tend not to focus on public life. (Picard, 2011:168-9).

This study, therefore, attempted to investigate if readership habits in the Nairobi metropolitan area would likely change with the establishment of a free newspaper. For instance, would non-readers of paid-for newspapers start reading if a free newspaper were introduced? Would habitual readers of paid-for newspapers diversify and start also reading free newspapers?

Correia-da-Silva & Resende (2013) have argued that like any other newspaper, free newspapers constitute a platform between readers and advertisers. On the side of readers, they argue, free newspapers supply news, editorial and advertising content, free of charge. On the side of advertisers, free newspapers, also known as free dailies if published on a daily basis, provide the “eyeballs” of their readers, in exchange for advertising fees. Since advertisers’ marginal revenue from advertising tend to increase with the readership of the newspaper, the larger the readership of the newspaper the higher the advertisers’ willingness to pay for an ad-insertion. As Bakker (2007) observes, free newspapers, just like paid-for newspapers around the world, depend more on advertising than on sales, with 80 per cent of their revenues coming from advertising. For this study, I went out to find out if the situation in the Nairobi metropolitan area would be any different with the introduction of a free

newspaper. Would residents welcome a free newspaper and, therefore, reach a wider audience?

According to Zhang (2011), the boom of freely distributed newspapers has been one of the most striking changes arising in the press industry. The emergence of free newspapers, which causes either the effectiveness of alternatives or complementary, has become one of the issues of focus by researchers. To understand the problem, the key point is to explore what kind of groups make up the readers of the free newspaper – do they change the habit of reading a charge newspaper, or never read charge newspapers before?

Such observations prompted me to go out and explore if the establishment of a free newspaper would likely affect readership trends among residents in the Nairobi metropolitan area, just as the *Metro*, which is considered as the modern freely distributed newspaper, did when it was first released in Sweden in 1995 (Bakker, 2002 and the World Association of Newspapers, 2001). The market of freely distributed papers has developed in an impressive way, with the total circulation of freely distributed newspapers close to ten million daily copies. Today, Bakker (2002) observes, *Metro* is a unique global reach – attracting a young, active, well-educated Metropolitan audience of over 18.4 million readers daily, is published in over 150 major cities in 23 countries across Europe, North & South America and Asia. Scholars such as Straw (2007), trace the history of *Metro* to 1994 when three journalists – Pelle Anderson, Robert Braunerhielm and Monica Lindstedt conceived the idea in Sweden. But it was not after countless Swedish banks, money lenders, investors and media companies had declined their proposal that they finally found somebody who agreed to finance the idea. His name was Jan Stenbeck, chairman of the Kinnevik Group. So, in 1995, *Metro*, a new newspaper, was born: The first issue of *Metro* was launched in Stockholm. It was a runaway success. *Metro* revolutionized a traditional industry to become the world's largest global daily

newspaper, and in 2006 the *Guinness Book of Records* named Metro the world's largest free newspaper (Straw, 2007). After the successful establishment of *Metro* in Stockholm beginning in 1995, publishers across the globe have begun launching such free newspapers. (Picard, 2011). According to Picard (2011), modern free dailies present opportunities to regularly reach occasional readers, to change non-readers into readers, and to create new advertising sales.

Just as *Metro* revolutionized freely distributed newspapers in Sweden, I was keen to find out if a free newspaper could shake the newspaper industry in Kenya, and in particular in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

Figure 2.1: First edition of the *Metro* **Figure 2.2: First Swedish free newspapers**



Source: Source: Metro International S.A. **Source: © AFP Sven Nackstrand**

Bakker (2002) observes that there is logic in advertising-based mass media that favours a convergence of media tastes and consumption patterns (less diversity). This, according to the author, is because homogeneous audiences are more cost-effective for advertisers than heterogeneous and dispersed markets (unless they are very large mass markets for products). The author argues that this is one reason for the viability of free newspapers, which provides complete coverage of a particular area with relatively high homogeneity. In other words, it is easier for advertisers to target a group of readers who are not only located within the same geographical region, but also share common interests.

Such findings inspired me to investigate if a free newspaper could be the answer to the neglected common man's events at the grassroots. As Picard (2011) observes, the concept of free newspapers has been common in Europe, the Americas, and Asia, but the idea is relatively new in Africa. The author's findings inspired this researcher to conduct research to find out whether there exists an opportunity for the establishment of a free newspaper not only in Africa, but in Kenya and in particular the Nairobi metropolitan area.

Table 2.I: Global distribution of the *Metro*

	WORLD	AMERICAS	ASIA	EUROPE
Countries	23	10	2	11
Editions	71	33	3	35
Circulation	8,301,000	2,785,000	849,000	4,667,000
Readership	18,271,000	6,342,000	1,043,000	10,886,000

Source: Metro International SA

A study by Wadbring (2007) of newspaper readership trends in Sweden revealed that newspaper readership had been found to have increased substantially in recent years among residents of poor areas having high rates of unemployment, low income and low levels of formal education. The most remarkable feature, however, is that the frequency of newspaper reading in resource-poor districts, thanks to *Metro*, is today almost as high as newspaper reading in wealthy districts (Wadbring 2007: 140). Such research made me seek to know if readership trends among residents of poor areas of Nairobi metropolitan area would increase with the introduction of free newspapers.

2.1 Theoretical framework

For this study, the researcher used three key theories — Uses and Gratifications Theory; Agenda-Setting Theory; and Political-Economic Theory — in an attempt to explain the reading habits among the residents, key factors that determine publishing of certain stories, as well as the range of issues covered in mainstream newspapers.

2.1.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory, proposed by Jay Blumer, attempts to explain the uses and functions of the media for individuals, groups, and society in general. A medium will be used more when the existing motives to use the medium leads to more satisfaction. In this study, I used this theory in an attempt to find out why people read newspapers and what they look for in newspapers they choose to read. This helped in mapping out the range of newspaper readership and the basis for starting a free newspaper. As McQuail (2005) observes, the uses and gratifications approach seeks to explain the uses of media and the satisfactions derived from them in terms of the motives and self-perceived needs of audience members. Audiences are often formed on the basis of similarities of individual need, interest and taste. Typical of such ‘needs’ are those for information, relaxation, companionship, diversion or ‘escape’. (McQuail, 2005:423). Media use, as Tan (1985) argues, is goal directed and people use the mass media to satisfy specific needs that develop out of a people’s social environment. Receivers select the types of media and media content to fulfil their needs. Thus, the audience initiates the mass communication process. And we are able to “bend the media” to our needs more readily than the media can overpower us (Tan, 1985:233). A study by the Media Council of Kenya (2012) revealed that media liking in Kenya is based on information, education and liberalism as the audience gets to discover events they would generally not know about and gain the opportunity to choose which media to receive this information from. Since the audience is aware of its needs and can report them when asked,

and they are also aware of their reasons for using the mass media, in particular newspapers (Tan 1985), I therefore, used this theory to explain why readers choose the *Daily Nation*, the main paid-for circulation newspaper in East and Central Africa.

2.1.2 Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting Theory, which was proposed by Donald Shaw and Maxwell Combs, is, as Cohen (1963) observes, the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. The media brings to people's attention a set agenda of topics and issues to respond to and think about (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). The material presented by the press is selective, and that selectivity stems from its limited capacity to provide surveillance, from factors imposed on those who do the gate-keeping, and the financial limitations placed on media that must survive as a profit-making business enterprise.

The researcher used this theory to help find out what people think about the range of coverage of grassroots or common man's issues in the *Daily Nation* in the Nairobi metropolitan area. As paid-for newspapers mainly depend on advertising for revenue, such newspapers almost always cover and highlight events with the agenda of the wealthy readers, as well as to please the advertisers. The researcher, therefore, employed this theory to explain the impact of the mainstream media, in this case the *Daily Nation*, on the common man's agenda. The agenda-setting theory also helped the researcher attempt to explain why free newspapers could fill the gap left by the mainstream paid-for newspapers, and highlight the agenda of the common man and make it a worthy issue.

2.1.3 Political-Economic Theory

Political-Economic Theory identifies a socially-critical approach that focuses primarily on the relation between the economic structure and dynamics of media industries, and the ideological content of media (Murdock & Golding, 1977 in McQuail, 1983). According to

Baldasty (1992, in Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 70), while “early nineteenth-century newspaper editors were unabashed *advocates for political parties*, late nineteenth-century newspaper editors were advocates as well, *advocates for business*, for their advertisers.” Class, the two researchers observe, permeates media content and makes some people “more valuable than others.” They add that the for-profit, advertiser-driven nature of all commercial media means that advertisers are keenly interested in the economic status of media consumers. They want to reach people with enough disposal income to buy their products (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 134). Schroeder (2001, as cited in McQuail, 2003), argues that early newspapers did not seek to offend authorities. Instead, they were sometimes produced on behalf of such authorities. The researcher, therefore, used the Political-Economic Theory to explain how the cost of mainstream newspapers, as well as political and economic factors, determined coverage of events by the *Daily Nation* in the Nairobi metropolitan area. Political-Economic Theory helped to explain how political elites influence the coverage of events by the statements they issue, as well as activities they engage in. In other words, mainstream newspapers such as the *Daily Nation* tend to highlight issues touching on high-profile political and diplomatic leaders, the wealthy and the elite, and either reduces into briefs common man’s issues or even relegates them to the inner pages.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section gives the data collection methods, design and procedures used. It also provides sampling techniques, sample and sampling methods, data analysis and presentation technique, and pre-testing. The study employed qualitative analysis.

3.1 Research design

Research design or research method, as Tan (1984) observes, refers to the procedure used by investigators to gather information for hypothesis testing. This being an exploratory research, the researcher used the qualitative research method as it helped to get in-depth data about the usage of stories such as content, allocation of space and their placement on pages. This is unlike quantitative research design, which would have enabled the researcher to only count and measure the stories. That is, the researcher would not have gone beyond mere figures on how many stories were published and where. Quantitative content analysis also would have required that the data be selected using random sampling. Qualitative design enabled the researcher get in-depth information from respondents as he was guided by the interview schedule. In contrast, quantitative design would not have given the researcher such latitude as respondents would only have answered structured questions on the questionnaire.

The concept of free newspapers being relatively new in Kenya, an exploratory approach is, as Baxter (2003) argues, the best when a researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of study itself is relatively new. In addition, exploratory studies, according to Baxter (2003) are typically done for three purposes: to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding; to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study; and to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study. Exploratory studies are also quite valuable in communication research as they are essential when a researcher is breaking new

ground. Such studies can almost always yield new insights into a topic for research (Baxter, 2003: 30-31). This researcher, therefore, carried out the study in a bid to break new ground regarding free newspapers. The researcher was not only curious to understand the issue of free newspapers, but also to test the feasibility of starting a free newspaper in the Nairobi metropolitan area. In addition, the researcher sought to break new ground in free newspaper publishing as well as get insights into the topic.

Qualitative design also offered respondents the opportunity to describe in their own words their experiences of newspaper readership. The design allowed the respondents to express their views, giving words to experiences and describing situations on newspaper readership. Qualitative approach allowed the respondents to explain why they either read or did not read newspapers.

The design was the most suitable as it helped yield findings that reflected the respondents' perspective. This meant that the findings were relevant and could easily be transformed into interventions for potential media practitioners.

Besides, a qualitative approach helped the researcher examine the respondents' experiences and emotions. The design, as Boeije (2010) argues, is described as the most appropriate when exploring topics that are strange, uncommon or deviate from the "normal". The topic of a free newspaper is still uncommon, strange and a deviate from the norm in the Kenyan market, hence the appropriateness of this approach. As Boeije (2010), observes, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. Qualitative design also helped produce rich, descriptive data that needed to be interpreted through the identification and coding of themes and categories, leading to findings that contributed to theoretical knowledge and practical use.

3.2 Data collection methods

3.2.1 In-depth personal interviews

This researcher used semi-structured interviews rather than questionnaires, as the latter would not have given the researcher in-depth details about the phenomenon of establishing the viability of a free newspaper in Kenya. A questionnaire would not have given the researcher the opportunity to probe readers and non-readers of newspapers further on their responses. Interviews were more flexible and interactive than would have been questionnaires, which would have been structured and, therefore, not subject to alteration. The researcher, therefore, used semi-structured interviews to seek answers for the research questions: “What is the level of daily newspaper readership and accessibility in the Nairobi metropolitan area?” and, “What is the viability of establishing a free newspaper (free sheet) in the Nairobi metropolitan area?”

One of the special strengths of qualitative research is its flexibility, or what is called elasticity. Qualitative interviews enabled the researcher gather data on people’s perception of free newspapers. The method not only helped the researcher gather data on people’s perception of free newspapers, but also offered the opportunity to gain insights into what the respondents perceived or knew about free newspapers. Qualitative interviewing is used as a way of learning about a phenomenon that cannot be directly observed. In this study, the aim was to understand the issue of starting a free newspaper from the perspective of the audiences. The qualitative interviews approach was also the most appropriate as it helped the researcher understand in a richly detailed manner what respondents thought and felt about newspaper coverage and readership.

For this study, the researcher did not make appointments with the interviewees, but purposively picked them on the streets, at business and shopping centres, in estates, bus

termini, in hotels and eateries, as well as at low-end barber shops, and social gatherings. The researcher purposively picked the respondents he believed could give necessary data. The researcher mainly took notes during the face-to-face interviews as it was not practically possible to tape record the respondents.

As Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (2007) observes, the most flexible form of interviewing is the non-structured or non-directive interview. Because of the open nature of unstructured interviews, probing was employed to get deeper information. Qualitative interviewing, according to Baxter (2003), is appropriate to learn about a phenomenon that cannot be directly observed, and data are gathered in an open-ended manner. In this study, the concept of free newspapers was such a phenomenon that could not be directly observed, and thus calling for open-ended interviewing.

Qualitative interviewing has been described as a conversation with a purpose (Bingham and Moore, 1959 cited in Baxter 2003: 325). The approach employs semi-structured questioning. Qualitative interviewing design is flexible, interactive, and continuous, rather than prepared in advance and locked in stone (Herbert and Rubin (1995: 43 cited in Baxter 2003). Although thoughts and feelings can be assessed through structured questionnaires and surveys, survey research limits individuals' responses to a selection of a manner or phrase as defined by the researcher (Baxter, 2003: 326).

3.2.2 Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis is an approach to the analysis of documents and text (which may be printed or visual) that sees to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner (Bryman, 2004: 182). According to Babbie (2001), content analysis is the study of recorded human communications. Content analysis is essentially a coding operation, with coding being the process of transforming raw data into a

standardized form. Content analysis is the process of objective coding scheme applied to the qualitative data or notes. Quantitative content analysis would not have been appropriate as it involves only counting and mere measurement of the length of the stories.

As Baxter & Babbie (2003) observe, qualitative content analysis is interested in understanding the meanings and uses of such social texts; the analysis is an interpretive rather than numerical one. In contrast, quantitative content analysis is interested in enumerating the frequencies with which coded variables appear in a sample of social texts and their statistical relationships with other variables.

In this study, the researcher employed the qualitative content analysis method to analyse the *Daily Nation* as the approach enabled the researcher get in-depth data about the way stories were treated in terms of their placement on pages and usage in terms of length. A qualitative content analysis was done on how the *Daily Nation treated* stories focusing on the powerful, the affluent and the elite vis-a-vis those focusing on the common man at the grassroots. The focus was on how the *Daily Nation* heavily focused on the agenda of the elite and downplayed the agenda of the common man at the grassroots. Emphasis was on the placement of stories on the pages, and their usage in terms of depth.

Through qualitative content analysis, the researcher was able to go beyond the mere number of stories used in the *Daily Nation*, but analysed reasons behind their usage and how they were treated in terms of prominence, which is normally indicated by the depth of the story and the page on which such a story is placed. The analysis aimed at seeking to find out the range of issues covered in the *Daily Nation* affecting the grassroots or common man in the Nairobi metropolitan area.

The study shows in the next section on data analysis that the quality of treatment of “elite” versus “common man’s” stories differed sharply. While the coverage of the elite was generous with prominence, details and depth, with most occupying the front page as well as the first five pages, stories on the common man at the grassroots were mainly reduced to briefs and pushed to page six and beyond. It is worth noting that the common man made positive news, but the *Daily Nation* just chose to highlight the agenda of the elite.

3.3 Sample size and Sampling technique

The population of the study was both the newspaper readers, who are always the targets of media houses, as well as non-readers, whom media houses work so hard to attract and convert into newspaper readers. This researcher used purposive sampling — a non-probability sampling — which is also known as judgmental sampling. Purposive sampling, as Tan (1984) observes, was appropriate for this study as the researcher would select the sample depending on the nature of the research aim, which was to explore the viability of a free newspaper.

Purposeful sample is the most common sampling technique and the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research question. According to Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (2007), with purposive samples, researchers select units subjectively to obtain a sample that appears to be representative of the population.

According to Baxter & Babbie (2003), non-probability sampling is suitable for situations where there is no list of the population or research units. In this study, there was no list (sampling frame) of all readers or non-readers of mainstream newspapers. The primary difference between probability methods of sampling and non-probability methods is that in the latter you do not know the likelihood that any element of a population will be selected for study.

In purposive sampling, a researcher samples with a *purpose* in mind. The researcher, therefore, purposively selected the *Daily Nation*, which is the largest circulation newspaper in Kenya (Mbeke & Mshindi, 2008). The *Daily Nation* normally dedicates the first six news pages to what it considers the main stories of the day. The newspaper appears to give readers a break with a full page advertisement on page seven. Perhaps, this advertisement is also placed there strategically so readers could see it before they get tired of going through the newspaper.

However, when there are major events and breaking news, the *Daily Nation* carries such special reports on the first five pages, meaning other relatively smaller stories come after the fifth page. Stories considered major and given special treatment have included disasters such as the deadly terrorist attack at the Westgate Shopping Mall in Kenya's capital of Nairobi, on September 21, 2013; presidential elections and petitions, as well as cases of crimes against humanity, facing Kenya's President Uhuru Kenya, Deputy President William Ruto and radio journalist Joshua Sang, at the International Criminal Court (ICC), over the 2007-2008 post-election violence in the country.

As Baxter & Babbie (2003) observe, purposive sampling depends on the researcher's judgment and the purpose of study. For the purpose of this study, the researcher purposively selected the month of July, 2013 for two reasons. First, there were no major stories that would have forced the *Daily Nation* to give them special treatment and allocate the first six news pages to the coverage of such events. July also marked the time the devolved system of county government in Kenya took shape following the reading of national budget in the previous month of June.

As Field (2005) observes, a sample is a smaller, but hopefully representative, collection of units from a population used to determine truths about that population. The researcher

chooses the sample based on who they think would be appropriate for the study. In purposive sampling method elements are chosen based on the purpose of the study. In this study, the elements were readers and non-readers of mainstream paid-for newspapers. Purposive sampling, according to Field (2005), does not produce a sample that is representative of a larger population, but it can be exactly what is needed in some cases — a study of newspaper readers and non-readers. In this study, the sample, too, was not representative of all newspaper readers or non-readers in Nairobi. The researcher purposively picked Nairobi City County as it is the capital city of Kenya.

As Bryman (2004) observes, it is the *absolute* size of a sample that is important, not its *relative size*. According to Baker & Edwards (2012), it is impossible to specify the number of qualitative interviews necessary to complete a project at its inception. Adler and Adler (as cited in Baker & Edwards, 2012), advise that graduate students sample between 12 and 60, with 30 being the mean; while Ragin (ibid) suggests 20 for an M.A. thesis and 50. A large sample, Bryman (2004) also observes, cannot guarantee precision, so that it is probably better to say that increasing the size of a sample increases its likely precision.

In this study, the researcher purposively sampled 20 respondents: 10 readers and 10 non-readers of newspapers. The respondents were just picked as they either relaxed or went about their businesses. The researcher picked respondents he believed would provide relevant information.

3.4 Data analysis and presentation

The analysis involved segmenting and reassembling the data, and this was done through a coding process. Coding meant categorizing segments of data with short words or summaries. Coding was aided by coding manuals and coding schedules. Coding was the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data before making analytic interpretations.

When coding, the researcher distinguished themes or categories in the research data and named them by attributing a code, which was a label that depicted the core topic of a segment. While coding, a researcher was looking for descriptions and in-depth statements that went beyond the concrete observations in the specific sample.

The researcher employed Open coding (breaking down, examining, comparing, categorizing data); axial coding, which refers to a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories; and the selecting coding, which refers to looking for connections between the categories in order to make sense of what is happening in the field.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets data from newspaper content and interviews.

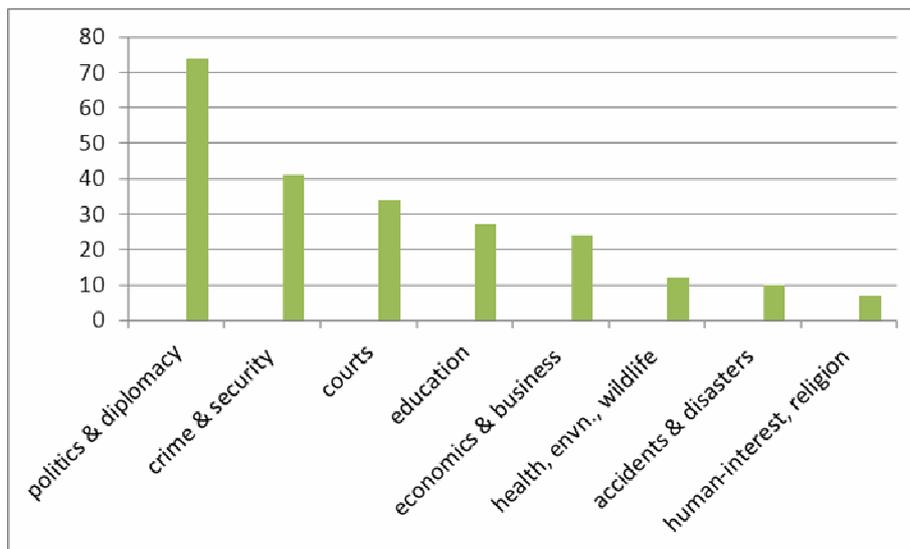
4.1: Content Analysis

The researcher purposively selected the month of July, 2013 for two reasons. First, there were no major stories that would have forced the *Daily Nation* to give them special treatment and allocate the first five news pages to the coverage of such events. The month also marked the time the devolved system of county government in Kenya took shape following the reading of the national budget in the previous month of June. In the study, the total number of stories that appeared in the first six news pages of the *Daily Nation* in the month of July, 2013 was 229.

4.1.1 Size of news coverage and themes

The results revealed that out of 229 stories, 74 were on politics and diplomacy, followed by crime and security which had 41, courts 34, education 27, economics and business 24, and health, environment and wildlife 12. Accidents and disasters had 10 stories, while human-interest and religion had the least at 7 stories.

Figure 4.1: Size of news coverage and themes



The findings revealed that the *Daily Nation* highlighted more stories on politics and diplomacy and used few stories on human-interest and religion.

From the findings one would conclude that the *Daily Nation* published more stories that were likely to make the newspaper sell and in turn bring in more revenue for the investors. That is, the selection of stories – and their content – was dictated more by which news sources seemed “more valuable” than others.

The results revealed that of the 229 stories, 119 were briefs that mainly focused on the common man at the grassroots, with majority being used in the inside pages, mainly page six. Such stories were used only as briefs since the common man is not known to make big news, and because even if stories on ordinary people were published, the elite, who are the major buyers of newspapers, would not be interested in them. Major advertisers, too, would not want to be associated with so-called petty issues affecting the common man,

It can be concluded that the stories were used mainly depending on who made news as well as which news were most likely to make the *Daily Nation* sell and in turn bring in revenue for the publishers and investors.

As argued in the Political-Economic Theory, (Murdock & Golding, 1977 in McQuail, 1983) the agenda of news is largely influenced by the elite. A brief on July 26 was a good example of how the elite and commercial interests dictate how stories were used. The brief on page 6 was headlined: “Woman on probation for killing her baby.” The story appears to have been treated as such, as the subject was little known and her predicament would not have made any big impact that would have helped the paper sell. In other words, the status of the woman was so low as to call for better treatment of her story. Were the victim a high-profile personality, her story would have almost certainly been given more length and better placement, say on page 2 or 3.

The same edition carried a page 5 lead story headlined: ‘Saitoti son: Teacher files complaint’. This story appeared to have been given preferential treatment as the subject of the case was a former vice president of Kenya, the late Prof. George Saitoti, who had been posthumously accused of being associated with the theft of a child he reportedly adopted.

However, on July 23, a story focusing on ordinary people was used as brief and pushed to page 6. It was headlined: ‘Relatives of couple killed in terror battle seek out child.’ It appears in the eyes of *Daily Nation* editors that the story, which was about a couple from Githurai area in Nairobi suburbs — an area mainly populated by the poor — would not have made a lot of commercial sense were it given more prominence. The findings indicate that since media in general and the *Daily Nation*, in particular, have to survive as profit-making business enterprises, treatment of stories is mainly dictated by the target audience and the possibility of the newspaper selling more copies among such audiences. This could be the main reason, going by the findings, that the media, and the *Daily Nation* in particular, appeared to have regarded some people as “more valuable than others.”

Were the Githurai family story regarded as “newsworthy” , perhaps their story would have been given prominence and used on earlier pages, say, on page three. It is worth noting that page three was allocated to a human-interest story on women Members of Parliament who have babies. Their article, which was the lead story, was headlined: ‘Boost for lawmakers with babies’. The story was about Kenyan women politicians who had successfully lobbied to have allowances to hire baby sitters. The prominence given to the story appears to have been influenced mainly by the fact that it would have attracted many audiences, and thus helped increase sales of the *Daily Nation*.

On the same page was another common man’s story headlined: ‘First woman canon in diocese’. The story was of the first woman to be elevated to the position of canon in the Anglican Church in Mount Kenya South. Though an interesting story, the article was reduced to a brief and placed way down on page six. There was yet another brief on the same page headlined: “Butchers protest at rise in slaughterhouse fees.” The relatively poor treatment of the two stories could have been informed by the fact that the subjects of the news were only ordinary people.

On July 15, another story focusing on an ordinary person was used as a brief on page six. It was headlined: “Woman killed as lorry ploughs into residents.” The brief was about a 53-year-old woman who died and two others seriously injured when a lorry ploughed into pedestrians in Embu town. As in the earlier two briefs, the subject of this news story was just an ordinary person and, therefore, the *Daily Nation* editors might have thought highlighting such a story would not have either been of great interest to the elite who are the majority of newspaper buyers, or would not have helped make the newspaper sell.

The findings helped the researcher answer the question: “What is the range of issues covered in the *Daily Nation* as the leading mainstream paid-for newspaper in Kenya?”

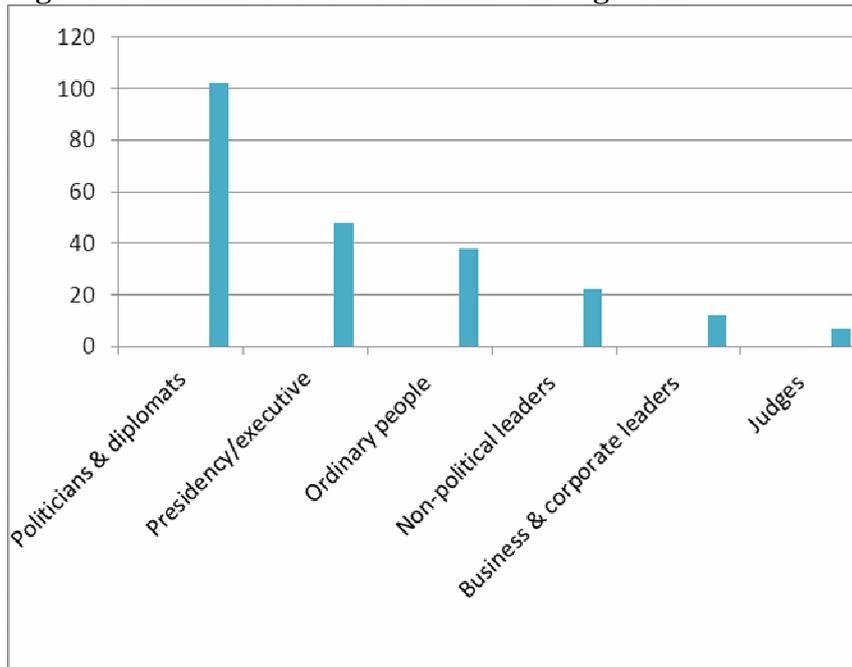
The results revealed that stories on politics or those involving the powerful, affluent and the elite enjoyed wider coverage in the *Daily Nation*, while those on ordinary people were allocated less space and used in the inside pages. The findings are a clear indication that there exists a huge gap in the coverage of common man's issues at the grassroots, hence the need for a newspaper that could cover such issues well.

4.1.2 Status of the individual making news

The total number of stories that appeared in the first six pages of the newspaper for the entire period of study was 229. There were also six themes on the status of the individual making news. These were: Business and Corporate Leaders; Judges; Ordinary People; Politicians Diplomats and Public Officers; Presidency/Executive; Religious, Academic, Civil Society and Union Leaders.

Out of 229 stories, 102 were mainly on politicians and diplomats, while stories on presidency or executive were 48 stories. Those on ordinary people came a distance fourth with 38 stories. Others were on Religious, academic, civil society and union leaders which were 22, business and corporate leaders 12, judges 7 (**See Figure 4.2**). However, it is worth to note that in total stories on individuals who cannot be regarded as ordinary people in the true sense of the word, were 191 against 38 on ordinary people (**See Figure 4.3**).

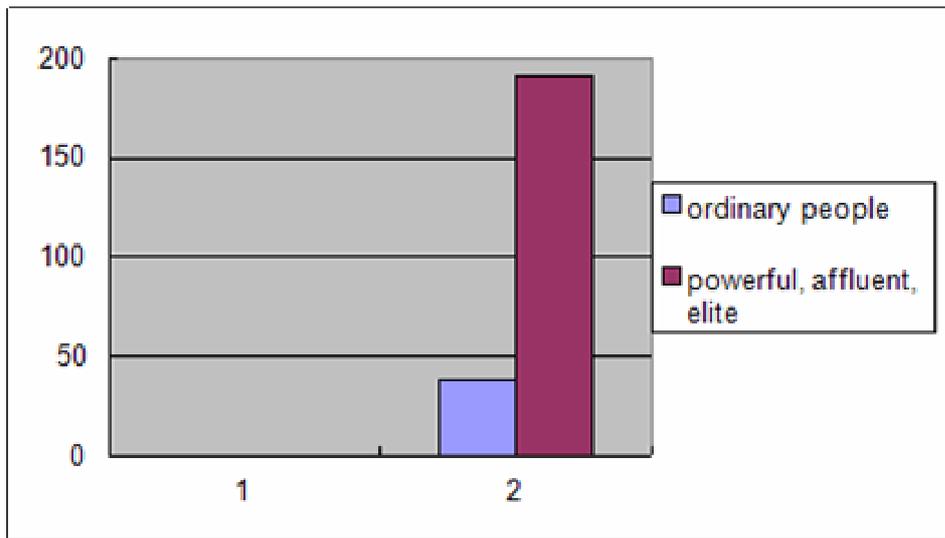
Figure 4.2: Status of the individuals making news



The findings show that the *Daily Nation* focused more on stories focusing on the elite, who included politicians from the presidency downwards, non-political leaders, business and corporate leaders as well as judges than on ordinary people. These are the people who help media get news at little cost. They do so as the elite are not only readily available to be covered, but also almost always issue press statements or address rallies, which would not involve media houses spending a lot of money in obtaining such stories. In addition, the elite make newspapers sell as many people would want to know what they are saying or what could be happening to them.

The findings indicate that the *Daily Nation* highlighted more issues affecting high-profile personalities such as politicians; diplomats; public officers; and religious, academic, civil society and union leaders. One can, therefore, conclude that stories on the powerful, the affluent and the elite were given more prominence and space than those affecting the ordinary or common man mainly because unlike stories on the common man, those on the elite make newspapers sell. In addition, media houses would want to be seen to be associating themselves with the mighty.

Figure 4.3: Elite and Ordinary people



The results indicate that there is a huge gap left by mainstream newspapers in the coverage of ordinary people's issues as well as in highlighting their agenda. The *Daily Nation* selectively highlighted the agenda of the elite at the expense of the ordinary people. Within the month under study, the *Daily Nation* brought to people's attention a set agenda of topics and issues focusing on the elite, perhaps to make the people respond to and think about such issues. The media do not want to offend the elite as they are the main source of revenue in the media business unlike the ordinary people, who, due to their limited financial resources, would not be in a position to advertise or buy newspapers. The elite, who include investors and advertisers, are therefore more likely to set the agenda the media, including the *Daily Nation*, are likely to pick and propagate.

4.2: Analysis of interview responses

4.2.1 Introduction

In the study, the researcher interviewed 20 respondents: 10 readers and 10 non-readers of newspapers. The researcher used the interview schedule and took notes during the interviews.

4.2.2: Newspaper readership and accessibility

The researcher sought to find out how people read newspapers, why they read the newspapers, their favourite newspapers, how they accessed the newspaper, the frequency with which they read the newspapers, as well as people's buying habits of the newspapers.

On newspaper readership, it was observed that the *Daily Nation* was the most popular newspaper as all the respondents reported reading it. One respondent said the *Daily Nation* had detailed news, especially business stories, which he looks for in the newspaper. The paper was also attractive as it was well-designed.

It was observed that people read newspapers for varied reasons. The study found that readers access newspapers differently and all the respondents stated they did not read it daily for varied reasons.

Many of those who read newspapers stated that they did so to get news on current affairs, especially politics. Others sought business stories, while a few read for relaxation. Some readers explained that they went for newspapers to read advertisements, including property and vehicles for sale, as well as job vacancies.

There were those who stated that they read newspapers for relaxation. Others sought newspapers to read advertisements.

R1: *"I read to be informed. I read current news, in particular political affairs. I also read when I am idle, to keep me busy."*

Another, an engineer, reported reading newspapers for politics, opinions, and science news. He stated that he did not buy newspapers on a daily basis as his busy schedule made him fly a lot within East Africa, which meant he only reads the newspaper online on his mobile phone.

R2: *“I read online because most of the time I am travelling. I buy when I am at home on weekends, and when relaxed. If in the house on weekdays, I buy.”*

Another respondent reported reading newspapers mainly to get sports news.

R3: *“I read sports. I like football news, but I don’t read in detail. I look for job opportunities for my children. I also read advertisements on vehicles and obituaries to know if a relative or someone I know has died.”*

Yet another respondent reported reading newspapers only to get stories on human interest as well as advertisements.

R4: *“I don’t read politics. I read human-interest stories and advertisements, mainly on plots and cars.”*

An employee in a small business engaged in stationery stated that he reads the *Daily Nation* in particular as it was rich in business news.

R5: *“Nation has a lot of business news which I like reading. It is also attractive in layout and design and fonts. It carries in-depth stories, mostly on business.”*

A college student stated that she read newspapers, mainly the *Daily Nation*, to *“Get information on what is going on in the country: stories on youth, fashion, and entertainment.”*

From the findings, one can conclude that audiences chose newspapers seeking to gratify themselves on various issues.

The researcher sought to know if those who read newspapers bought them and how often.

This question was meant to assess people’s access to newspapers.

Most of the respondents stated that they accessed the *Daily Nation* in offices, at work places, at kiosks, barber shops (*kinyozi*) or borrowed from friends and neighbours.

When the readers were asked if they bought the newspaper, a majority of the respondents stated that they did not buy because they could not afford. The cover price of Kenya shillings sixty (KSH60, about US\$0.7) was said to be prohibitive.

R1: *"I like having my own but I cannot afford it. KSh60 is a lot and I better use it on something else."*

Another respondent stated:

R2: *" I used to buy every day until 2010, at a time when my children had not joined school. Now I cannot afford. The price is too high for a common mwananchi."*

Yet another respondent said the high price had forced him to stop buying the newspaper.

R3: *"There was a time I used to buy. But now I don't. The price has affected me."*

R4: *"I read at the kiosk when I am having lunch or taking tea."*

R5: *"At KSh60, the newspaper is costly. That's why I read at the office."*

R6: *"Sometimes I don't buy because it is costly. I borrow from a friend, or go to a kiosk to read. I buy tea that I take as I read the newspaper, although my main purpose is not tea. At the kiosk, we dismantle the paper and many people read different pages at the same time."*

The findings indicate that due to economic reasons many people would prefer meeting other financial obligations such as buying food to buying a mainstream newspaper, in this case the *Daily Nation*. The findings revealed that such readers would be more than willing to accept and read a free newspaper if such a publication was made available to them.

It was clear from the findings that the cost of mainstream newspapers was a great barrier in terms of newspaper accessibility among newspaper readers.

Those who did not read newspapers had varied reasons, with many, especially businesses people, explaining that they were too busy working at their businesses and chasing money to get time to read newspapers. Some said they were not interested in newspapers because they did not get stories they preferred such as human interest, education, business and sport. Many respondents explained they did not like reading politics.

One respondent stated:

R1: *“Not that I don’t have funds, but I don’t see benefits of a newspaper. They are always full of politics.”*

R2, a roadside kiosk operator, stated:

“Reading is like relaxation and life is hard. I have to be working all the time to look for money.”

Still others said they did not read newspapers because they got news through radio, on TV, Facebook, mobile phone, and *“gossip.”* There was one who said she did not read newspapers because she just did not like them.

R3: *“I just don’t like newspapers.”*

One respondent admitted not being interested in reading newspapers save for the times she heard people talking about an interesting human-interest story, mainly on relationships. Even then, the respondent – a graphic designer – reported only borrowing a copy from friends.

R4: *“I read very rarely, when there are dramatic stories, such as relationships and killings.”*

The findings revealed that people selectively go for the media or newspaper expecting to gratify themselves with certain stories.

4.2.3: Main issues covered by mainstream newspapers and coverage of grassroots or common man's issues

The researcher sought views from respondents on how they viewed the coverage of common man's issues in the mainstream newspapers, especially in Nairobi. The researcher probed them further to give reasons for such trends. All those who reported reading newspapers, as well as those who did not read but explained they always heard people discussing contents of newspapers, reported that politics was the main issue covered by the mainstream newspaper surveyed. On why they thought so, the majority said that politicians, the elites, and the wealthy made news and that such news made the papers sell.

R1, a respondent, said one respondent from the Eastlands area, whose residents are mainly the common man stated:

“Politicians are powerful and they (publishers) think if they put politics first the rest will follow. They (publishers) put common man's issues inside. You cannot find them (common man's issues) on the front page. Positive stories are rarely covered. They highlight only crime. I rarely read positive stories from Dando (Dandora) area in the Nation. I can't remember the last time I read a positive story from Eastlands. Local news is pushed to the edge. This is because such people do not buy newspapers and even if their stories were covered, they would not buy the newspaper.”

Another argued that newspapers highlight politics more as the topics would help sell the publications.

A respondent, who reported reading newspapers to follow current affairs, mainly politics, stated that: *“Raila makes newspapers sell.”* The respondent was referring to his favourite political leader Raila Odinga, who was until Kenya’s presidential elections on March 4, 2013, the country’s Prime Minister. Raila is now the leader of the opposition Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD).

R2: *“Politics , all politics. The common man’s issues are placed inside and you can’t even find them easily. I think politics is always high up in Kenya. If there is a lot of politics today, many people would buy the newspaper the following day expecting to read more of those political issues.”*

Yet another stated:

R3: *“Ordinary people not known, but people like Raila are well-known and people would want to know what he is doing or happening about him,”*

R4, an engineer stated:

“Politics. Ninety per cent of Kenyan news is politics.”

One respondent reported neither buying nor reading newspapers because he was illiterate, but explained that from hearing newspaper readers discussing the main stories of the day, he could tell politics was almost always the main issue.

R5, an owner of a small business dealing in stationery, stated: *“I hear people talking about politics. You know lies and propaganda are sweet, and they make newspapers sell.”*

The findings revealed that the *Daily Nation* tends to highlight articles focusing more on politicians, the affluent and the elite.

The researcher sought the opinion of respondents over the coverage of grassroots or common man's issues, and all the respondents agreed that such issues were poorly covered by the mainstream newspaper, in this case the *Daily Nation*. Most respondents said they thought the common man's issues were often ignored either because such people did not make news or they had no buying power to enable them read newspapers.

One respondent, a resident of Eastlands and who buys the *Daily Nation* on a daily basis, said the common man's issues were almost always ignored by mainstream newspapers.

R1: *"They are not really covered at all. There are many news events happening at the grassroots but they are not covered. Newspapers just ignore them. Newspapers are interested in people who have money. They cover people whom they think can get something from them. Reporters always follow such people because they can give them something. If you have money they (reporters) come to you always. The common man does not have money. Reporters first want to know what that big issue that common man has. Poor man has no big issue!"*

When the respondents were asked what grassroots or common man's issues in the Nairobi metropolitan area they would want highlighted by the mainstream newspapers, majority of them reported that they preferred stories such as business and development issues, human-interest, and lifestyle as well as those focusing on the problems of insecurity, water and transport.

4.2.4: Concept and need for the establishment of free newspaper

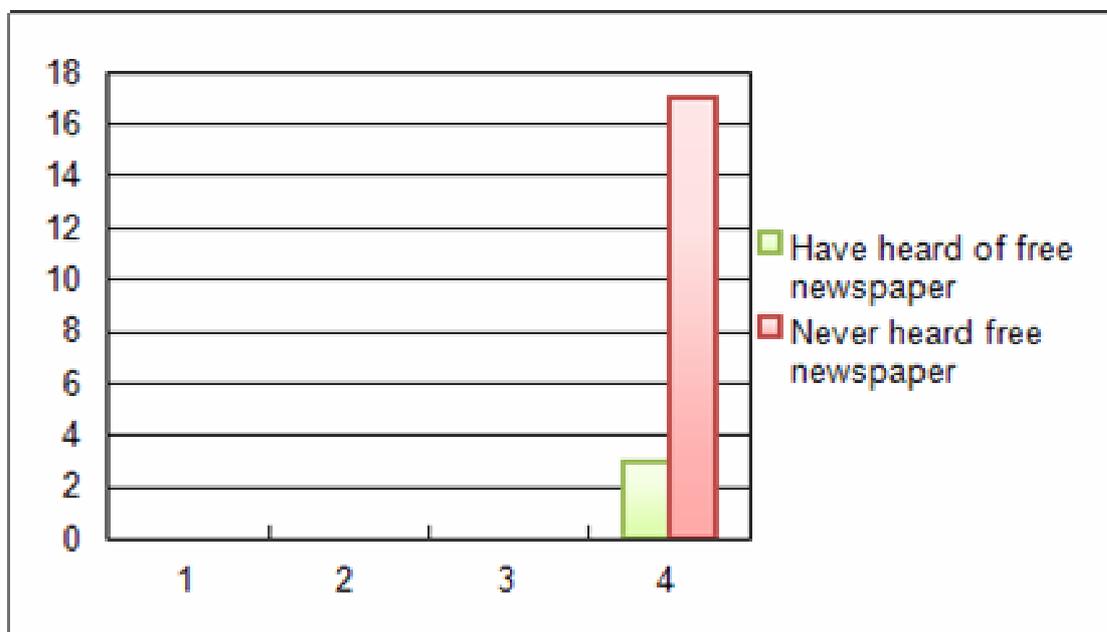
The researcher posed the question: "Have you ever heard of a free newspaper in Kenya?"

Majority of the respondents stated they had never heard of free newspapers not only in Kenya but even in the Nairobi metropolitan area (see **Figure 4.4**). However, a few, three out of 20,

attested to having come across free newspapers. They cited The Star which they explained used to be given freely on offer or promotion.

R1: "I've never heard. Even gutter press are sold for small amount like KSh10. If a newspaper is free, who is sponsoring it? Who is going to pay for printing and materials? Nothing goes for free."

Figure 4.4 Concept of free newspaper



The researcher sought the views of the respondents on whether they would support the introduction of a free newspaper in Kenya, and in particular in the Nairobi metropolitan area. The respondents were probed further as the researcher sought to know why they would support or not support such an idea.

Most of the respondents, 16 out of 20, were of the view that such a newspaper was viable (see **Figure 4.5**). Some of those for the idea were of the opinion that a free newspaper would make more people read and get informed. A free newspaper, they argued, would encourage many people to develop a reading culture. A free newspaper, others argued, would help in

highlighting the common man's issues, especially at the grassroots as well as rural areas. Some respondents said that many Kenyans would welcome a free newspaper as most people just like free things.

Many argued that a free newspaper would not only help readers get free information, but also help them save money. Others argued that a free newspaper would help them to relax and keep them busy.

R1, who described himself as a keen newspaper reader, stated: *“Free newspapers should target those poor people in rural areas or at the grassroots who cannot afford newspapers. They should educate the people to think out of the box in terms of jobs and careers – that is, to think on diverse issues and to educate the people on what they can do after college without necessarily looking up to careers they studied for at college.”*

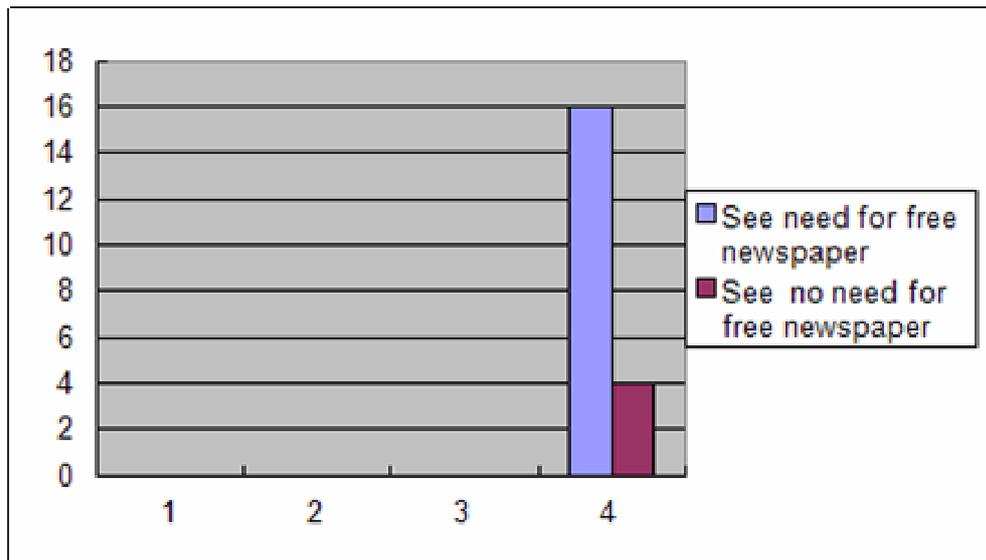
There was a respondent who argued that instead of having free newspapers, media houses *“such as Nation”* should subsidise the cost of newspapers. He argued he would not “waste” his money in buying a paid-for newspaper if a free newspaper was introduced.

R2: *“The cost is high. It should be between KSh25 and KSh30.”*

Many argued a free newspaper would help cover in depth the common man's issues at the grassroots. Such a newspaper, they argued, should highlight issues at the grassroots so other people can know what was happening.

R3, a keen newspaper reader and a buyer, stated: *“The (free) newspaper can help discover talents in sports, for instance in football. If local talents are highlighted and have been exploited, we can have people of national calibre.”*

Figure 4.5: Need for a free newspaper



The few respondents who were opposed to the idea of a free newspaper argued that such a publication should not be offered as most publishers would not make profits, and still people who did not know how to read would not read them at all, even if the papers were freely available to them. One respondent, citing the Nation Media Group, argued that instead of giving it for free, publishers should start a county newspaper and subsidize the cover price of such a newspaper by, say, KSH20-30 (about US\$0.2-0.4). Other respondents argued that some people would misuse a free newspaper, as many do with free things.

R1: *“I think free newspapers cannot give quality, well-researched information. They better cover a lot of stories and sell.”*

The few respondents who were not for the idea of a free newspaper argued that such a newspaper would either not make profits, or would not have quality content. As such, people would not read it. Others said people just do not like free things.

R2, an owner of a small stationery shop, stated: *“People do not like free things. They would misuse it. They would use it (the free newspaper) as toilet paper.”*

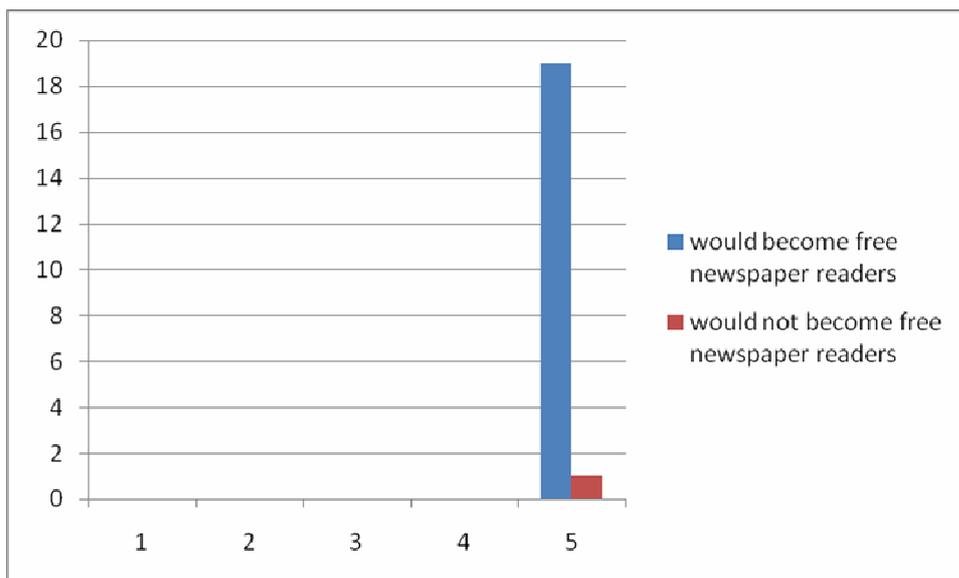
4.2.5: Content and readership of free newspaper

This researcher sought the views of respondents over the sort of issues they thought should be covered in a free newspaper. Many of the respondents were of the opinion that such a newspaper should not have a lot of politics. Instead, its contents should be rich in business and development issues, education, human-interest, as well as sport and entertainment.

R1: *“It should not have politics. A free newspaper should contain a lot of information on issues like education, lifestyle, health, and small businesses.”*

When the researcher asked, “If a free newspaper were introduced, would you become one of its readers?” a majority answered in the affirmative (see **Figure 4.6**).

Figure 4.6: Free newspaper readership



Some respondents said they would start reading such a newspaper, to get free information.

R1: *“It would not cost me anything. I would spend money on food.”*

Another argued that a free newspaper would be a welcome idea.

R2: *“Because everybody should get updated. Many people would read and have information.”*

The researcher further probed the respondents on whether they would continue to read or buy their favourite paid-for newspaper.

Some respondents stated that they would continue to buy the mainstream newspaper, as they were not sure a free newspaper would have quality content or provide all what they get in a paid-for newspaper. One respondent stated that he would continue buying the *Daily Nation* as he had loyalty to the newspaper.

Some argued they would continue to buy mainstream newspapers as they believed that a free newspaper would not contain the information they needed. However, some stated they would not continue to buy mainstream newspapers as this would be a waste of money.

R3, an engineer, stated: *“If there is free newspaper that has the information I need, I don’t see the need to buy a newspaper. If education is free, why pay school fees?”*

However, another respondent stated he would still continue to buy the *Daily Nation* *“because of loyalty”*.

Some respondents thought a free newspaper would be of low quality, hence they would not read such a newspaper.

R4: *“Quality of information is high in paid-for newspapers. If a free newspaper has nothing as far as information is concerned, why read it?”*

R5: *“I would still continue to buy because I don’t think a free newspaper would cover well all the issues I look for.”*

The results revealed that audiences would select newspapers that they believe contain content that would gratify their needs.

4.2.6 Conclusion

The research findings from the interviews revealed that *Daily Nation*, which all the respondents stated as their favourite, focused more on the powerful, the affluent and the elite as most stories were mainly on politics and the presidency/executive, politicians, diplomats, and top public officers enjoying wider coverage. Results show that politicians, diplomats and public officers, and the presidency/executive enjoyed the widest coverage in the *Daily Nation*. Out of 229 stories, only 38 focused on the common man. Politicians and diplomats had 102 stories, while the presidency/executive alone had 48 stories. The *Daily Nation*, being a national newspaper, tends to highlight issues affecting high-profile personalities, such as politicians, diplomats, public officers, the wealthy and the elite. The study revealed that most newspaper readers accessed the *Daily Nation*, their favourite newspaper, either at offices and other work places, at college, eateries, *kinyozi* (barber shops) or borrowing from friends. The research revealed that people have varied reasons for reading a newspaper. The study showed that many newspaper readers look for current news, with politics taking centre-stage. While some go for business and development issues, others prefer sport, while some would look for advertisements and announcements, especially for plots and vehicles for sale.

Newspaper readers interviewed were of the view that the coverage of grassroots or common man's issues in Nairobi in the *Daily Nation*, which is the leading mainstream newspaper in East and Central Africa, was poor. Many respondents would prefer a newspaper that would carry in-depth coverage of grassroots or common man's issues, especially on business and development, crime and security, education and human-interest or lifestyle issues.

Most of the respondents, in 17 out of 20 interviews, had never heard of a free newspaper (see **figure 4.7**). Those who reported having heard of a free newspaper cited *The Star*, which they explained used to be given free of charge on offer or promotion. Most of those interviewed,

16 of the 20 respondents, thought time was ripe for establishment of a free newspaper in Kenya, and in particular in the Nairobi metropolitan area (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.7: Concept of free newspaper

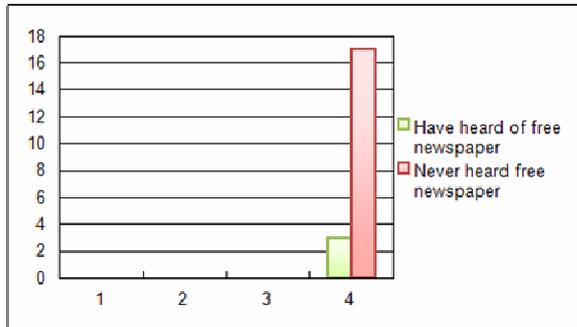
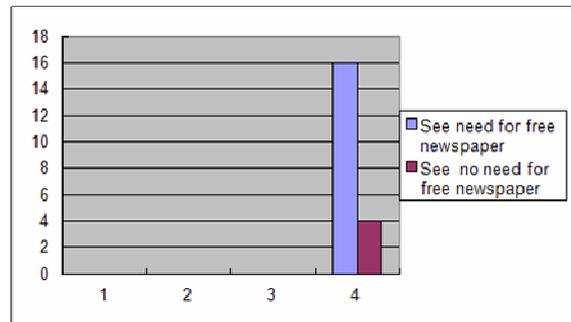


Figure 4.8: Need for free newspaper



The research revealed that most of those who thought Nairobi should have a free newspaper also preferred that such a newspaper should have little or no political content at all. Instead, it should have more of business and development, education, human-interest and lifestyle stories as well as sport.

The study revealed that should a free newspaper be established, many – 19 of the 20 respondents – would become free newspaper readers. Many were of the view that such a newspaper would not only help give people free information, but would encourage non-newspaper readers to develop a newspaper reading culture. A free newspaper, the study revealed, should contain quality content so as to attract and retain readers.

The findings are also in line with the Political-Economic Theory, which advances the argument that news will be given prominence if they affect the powerful, the affluent and the elite as such news could help make the newspaper sell.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The findings have been summarised in relation to objectives of the study.

5.1 Summary of the findings

The study sought to establish the level of daily newspaper readership and accessibility in the Nairobi metropolitan area. The research revealed that while many people read paid-for newspapers, in this case the *Daily Nation*, a majority of them reported experiencing difficulties in accessing paid-for newspapers due to their prohibitive cover price. Most stated that they either read newspapers in offices, places of work, eateries, barber shops (*kinyozi*) or through borrowing from friends and neighbours.

The research revealed that most stories focus more on the powerful, the affluent and the elite than on the ordinary people at the grassroots. The results of the study showed that the *Daily Nation*, a national newspaper, tends to highlight more issues affecting high-profile personalities such as politicians, diplomats, public officers, the wealthy and the elite.

Investigations sought to explore the viability of establishing a free newspaper (free sheet) in the Nairobi metropolitan area. The findings revealed that most of the respondents, 16 out of 20, supported the idea of a free newspaper.

5.2 Conclusion

Given the research findings, it was evident that the *Daily Nation*, a mainstream national newspaper under study, highlighted more stories on the powerful and the elite than the common man at the grassroots in its first six news pages.

The findings indicated that there was a significant number of people who accessed newspapers either by reading at offices, work place, eateries, barber shops or borrowing from friends. They did this because they could not afford the relatively high cost of newspapers. The findings indicated that there was need for a newspaper that would address the common man's issues at the grassroots. Such a newspaper should be published free so as to reach a wider target, especially those who cannot afford to buy newspapers daily due to their relatively high prices.

The findings showed that the price of mainstream newspapers, at KSH60, was a major barrier to potential newspaper readers as many reported accessing newspapers mainly by borrowing from friends and neighbours or reading at offices, place of work, eateries or barber shops.

It can be deduced that most news events affecting the common man at the grassroots of the Nairobi metropolitan area do not make their way into the *Daily Nation*, which is a national mainstream paid-for newspaper. Instead, matters of politics, diplomacy, as well as issues affecting the powerful, the wealthy and the elite, continue to dominate the major news pages of the *Daily Nation*.

As such, there is a huge gap left by mainstream newspapers as far as the coverage of grassroots or common man's issues in the mainstream newspaper is concerned. The study revealed that a free newspaper is a viable option in the Nairobi metropolitan area. A newspaper focused exclusively on the Nairobi metropolitan area could help fill the void.

Although the level of daily newspaper readership and accessibility in the Nairobi metropolitan area seems to be average, media houses or publishers should explore ways of enabling their target audiences to access more newspapers. Greater reach would attract advertisers, who would in turn bring in the much-needed revenue.

The study revealed that a free newspaper was viable in the Nairobi metropolitan area, although the publisher of such a newspaper should go for quality content to attract readers. Besides, from the study, it appears that only issues involving high-profile personalities, the elite and the wealthy as well as courts and crimes enjoy good coverage.

This brings us to the conclusion that Kenya, and in particular the Nairobi metropolitan area, is ripe for the establishment of a free newspaper to fill the huge gap left by mainstream newspapers with the view of highlighting the common man's agenda in Nairobi.

5.3 Recommendations

The fact that 16 of the 20 respondents stated that there was need for an alternative newspaper shows that there is need to establish a free newspaper with the view of filling the huge gap left by mainstream newspapers, especially the *Daily Nation*.

Based on the findings, a free newspaper should contain quality content, including business and development, education, human-interest, lifestyle, and crime and security.

One respondent argued that instead of having a free newspaper, such a publication focusing more on Nairobi should have a subsidized cover price. It is, therefore, recommended that further research be carried out on how the cover price of newspaper could be subsidized so that the reach is extended to the widest possible audiences at the grassroots. This would help as many people as possible access newspapers through buying a copy of their own instead of depending on copies in offices, at work places, eateries, in public transport vehicles such as matatus, at *kinyozi* (barber shops) or even borrowing from friends or neighbours.

It is also recommended that further research be done on the various ways in which such a free newspaper could be misused, as well as its distribution, in a bid to ensure that it reaches as many readers as possible at the grassroots.

5.3.1: Policy recommendations

Following the findings, it is recommended that national and county governments should create a conducive environment for the establishment of and distribution of free newspapers.

County governments should explore the need to start free newspapers within their areas, with a view of having the widest possible audiences accessing information on local development issues.

Local media houses, which publish mainstream paid-for newspapers, as well as local and international potential investors, should carry out further research and explore business opportunities that may be presented by free newspapers in the Nairobi metropolitan area. Such research would involve seeking the views of potential advertisers.

While establishing such a free newspaper, media houses, should consider engaging trained journalists with a view to giving readers of free newspapers quality content.

5.3.2 Suggestions for further research

Bakker (2007) observes that, free newspapers, just like paid-for newspapers around the world, depend more on advertisers than on sales, with 80 per cent of their revenues coming from advertisers. It is, therefore, recommended that further studies be carried out to explore how such free newspapers would make a profit and boost circulation. Such studies would involve talking to potential advertisers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

AN EVALUATION OF NEWSPAPER READERSHIP TRENDS AND PERCEPTION OF FREE NEWSPAPERS AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE NAIROBI METROPOLITAN AREA IN KENYA

(During the interview sessions, I shall be taking notes or tape recording the responses)

INTRODUCTION

I am Stephen Mburu, a Master of Arts student in Communication Studies at the University of Nairobi. In partial fulfilment for the award of the degree, I am supposed to carry out a research project. My research is based on newspaper readership in the Nairobi metropolitan area, and my topic is: *The Viability of a Free Newspaper in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area in Kenya: A Needs Assessment Study*. I have just picked on you because I believe you will assist me with the information I need for the study. I kindly request you to give me a few minutes to answer some questions related to my research. The information you provide is confidential and shall be used ethically and only for the purpose of this study. I will not use any names in my research so the information you give and your identity will remain anonymous.

1. Would you please give me your name, occupation, age, and residential area? However, this is optional.
2. Do you read newspapers?
 - a. If Yes, which one (s)?
 - b. If No, why not?

3. How often do you read the newspaper (s)?
4. Why do you read the newspaper (s) you have mentioned? In other words, what do you look for in a newspaper?
5. Do you buy the newspaper (s)?
 - a. If yes, how often?
 - b. If no, why?
6. In your experience, does the price of mainstream newspapers affect the frequency at which you buy such newspaper (s)? If yes, how?
7. What, in your opinion, are usually the main issues covered by mainstream newspapers? Why do you think this is so?
8. What is your opinion about the coverage of grassroots or common man's issues by mainstream newspapers in Nairobi? What could be the reason?
9. What grassroots or common man's issues in Nairobi would you want highlighted by mainstream newspapers?
10. Have you ever heard of a free newspaper in Kenya?
 - a. If yes, would you please describe it?
 - b. If no, why do you think there is none?
11. Do you think we should have a free newspaper in Kenya, and in particular in Nairobi?
 - a. If yes, why?
 - b. If no, why not?
12. What issues would you want covered in such a free newspaper?

13. If a free newspaper were introduced, would you:

i. become a free newspaper reader?

a. If yes, why?

b. If no, why not?

ii. continue to buy or read your favourite mainstream newspaper (s)?

a. If yes, why?

b. If no, why not?

Thank you very much for giving me your time.