

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**THE YOUTH'S PERCEPTION OF KENYAN TELEVISION WOMEN  
NEWS ANCHORS: THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

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## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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### **Supervisor's Declaration**

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this research project to my late Father Dr. R. K'Okul, my mother Dr. F. K'Okul who has endlessly encouraged me and tirelessly checked how far I am with this project. Dr. J. Katu, thank you for being my study partner. I would also like to dedicate this project to my dear friend, Salome, for pushing me towards not giving up and lastly Erica; thank you for your patience through this whole project.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
ABSTRACT .....	x
CHAPTER ONE.....	11
INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.0. Overview .....	11
1.1. Background of the Study .....	11
1.1.1. Overview of the Television News Industry in Kenya .....	14
1.1.2. Youth Preferences in Media Content .....	15
1.2. Statement of the Research Problem.....	16
1.3. Objectives of the Study .....	17
1.3.1 Specific Objectives .....	17
1.4 Research Questions.....	18
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	18
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	18
1.7 OPERATIONAL TERMS .....	20
CHAPTER TWO.....	21
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	21
2 Overview .....	21
2.1 Historical Background.....	21
2.2 Contemporary Television News Broadcasts and Emerging Trends .....	23
2.3 Television News Viewership.....	28
2.3.1 Anchors' Sex Appeal, Physical Appearance, Gender and Age.....	29
2.3.2 Sex-Appeals Used In Television News Broadcasting.....	31
2.3.3 Eye Tracking Data Representation and Visualization in Television News.....	32

2.3.4	Discrimination in the Television News Industry .....	32
2.3.5	Youth Perception of Sexualized Television News Anchors .....	34
2.4	Objectification Theory.....	35
2.5	The Gaze theory .....	36
2.6	Shock Advertising or “Shockvertising”.....	38
2.7	Viewers’ Perception of Television News Anchors and Sexual Appeals .....	38
2.8	Sex-Appeal and Marketers .....	40
2.9	Moral Discussion around objectifying Women.....	41
2.10	Summary of Literature and Knowledge Gap.....	41
CHAPTER THREE .....		43
METHODOLOGY .....		43
3.0	Overview .....	43
3.1	Research Design.....	43
3.15	Study Area,Target Population and Sampling Technique.....	44
3.3	Data Analysis.....	45
2.11	Reliability and Validity .....	46
2.12	Ethical Considerations.....	47
CHAPTER FOUR .....		49
ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION .....		49
4.1	Overview .....	49
4.2	Most viewed Television News Station .....	49
4.3	Factors for viewership .....	50
4.4	Anchors’ Physical Attractiveness, Age and Gender .....	51
4.5	Female vs. Male Anchors .....	53
4.6	Targeted gender viewership.....	54
4.7	Youth Viewers’ Perception of a Sexualized Female News Anchors.....	54
4.10	Anchors appearance during presentation.....	56
4.11	Popularity attribution to sex appeal .....	57

4.12	Employer vs. Public Expectations, and most affected gender .....	57
4.13	Employers, do they consider physical attractiveness when employing Anchors.....	58
4.14	Are viewers more interested in anchors physical attractiveness or knowledge and expertise .....	58
4.15	Are Viewers distracted by presenter’s looks and do they lose concentration on content .....	59
CHAPTER FIVE .....		60
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....		60
5.1	Overview .....	60
5.2	Summary of the Findings.....	60
5.2.1	Most Popular Television News Station .....	60
5.2.2	Factors influencing viewership .....	61
5.2.3	Anchors’ Physical Attractiveness, Age and Gender .....	61
5.2.4	Female vs. Male Anchors .....	62
5.2.5	Targeted gender .....	62
5.2.6	Youth Viewers’ Perception of a Sexualized Female News Anchor.....	62
5.2.7	Anchors appearance during presentation .....	63
5.2.8	Popularity attribution to sex appeal .....	63
5.2.9	Employer vs. Public Expectations, and most affected gender .....	64
5.2.10	Employers, do they consider physical attractiveness when employing Anchors .....	64
5.2.11	Are viewers more interested in anchors physical attractiveness or knowledge and expertise .....	64
5.2.12	Are Viewers distracted by presenter’s looks and do they lose concentration on content .....	64
5.3	Conclusions .....	65
5.4	Recommendations .....	66
5.5	Need for further research.....	67
REFERENCES .....		68
APPENDIX .....		77
APPENDIX A: .....		77
GADO ILLUSTRATION OF SEXUALIZED TELEVISION NEWS ANCHORS .....		77
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF PERMISSION .....		78

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE.....	79
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NEWS ANCHORS AND FIELD REPORTERS .....	80
APPENDIX E: CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK .....	81
APPENDIX F: CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS .....	82
APPENDIX G: DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY FORM.....	83
APPENDIX H: PLAGIARISM TEST.....	84



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AMWIK</b>	-	Association of Media Women in Kenya
<b>CCK</b>	-	Communication Commission of Kenya
<b>GoK</b>	-	Government of Kenya
<b>ICT</b>	-	Information Communication Technology
<b>KBC</b>	-	Kenya Broadcasting Station
<b>KTN</b>	-	Kenya Television Network
<b>MOA</b>	-	Media Owners Association
<b>NGM</b>	-	Nation Media Group
<b>NTV</b>	-	Nation Television
<b>RMS</b>	-	Royal Media Services
<b>SGL</b>	-	Standard Group Limited
<b>TV</b>	-	Television

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out how Kenyan youth perceive female news anchors of local television stations. The study utilised a qualitative approach underpinned by the objectification theory, which attempts to explain the tendency to equate women with their bodies. The population of the study was the youth from The University of Nairobi and news anchors and field reporters from media houses. The sample was selected purposively and included thirty-two students, eight anchors and fifteen field reporters. The objectives of the study was to determine factors that influence the youth (attractiveness, gender, experience and knowledge) on perception of female news anchors and subsequently on the choice of the television stations in Kenya. Data collection was conducted using focus group discussions consisting of thirty-two respondents from the University of Nairobi, as well as structured interviews among twenty-three media news presenters. Data was analysed thematically and presented in narrative format. The study found out that both male and female respondents agreed that attractiveness influenced perception of news anchors and choice of television stations, however what each gender considered attractive varied across gender. Female respondents were attracted to female news anchors with regards to being made aware on the latest trends in fashion while among male respondents' beauty and physical attributes were more influential. The conclusion was that the perception of female news anchors and choice of television stations is influenced by attractiveness of the news anchors and this may play a role in competition among media stations. Despite scarcity of studies conducted locally on the influence of attractive female anchors, this study sensitizes media stations on the role played by attractive female anchors as opposed to experience and knowledge in popularizing television stations. This study recommends that policy makers as well national governments should identify loopholes in the present media guidelines so as to have standards in the code of dressing for the female anchors who are going at lengths to try all modes of popularizing their respective television stations, also the researcher recommends that media houses should give an equal playing field when it comes to employing attractive female newscasters as opposed to anchors with experience and knowledge.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0. Overview

This section gives an insight to the study regarding the use of female anchors in television news broadcasts and how it influences the perception of the youth at The University of Nairobi. It presents background of the study, the statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, the research questions, scope and significance of the study, as well as the limitations of the study.

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Over the past twenty years, Kenyan television industry has seen a great transformation in the manner in which news is presented to viewers (Oriare, Orlale and Ugangu, 2010). Because of competition, television stations have been forced to adopt new strategies to attract more viewers to their channels. Advertising has also become the major money maker source for local television stations; prime time (right before and after a news bulleting is presented) is considered very lucrative (<http://www.nairobibusinessmonthly.com/cover-story/an-insightful-look-at-the-revolution-in-kenyas-mainstream-media/>). As a result there is intense competition among broadcasters to have the most viewership in order to get advertisers intending to promote their products, services or events to the desired market. As a result, almost all television stations have moved from the traditional conservative way of broadcasting news to the public. They have chosen to get rid of the dull broadcasts, presented by conservatively-dressed news anchors. Conversely, trendy, youthful ideas have been adapted to make news presentation more entertaining, bold, and still aim at maintaining its informative aspect.

In an attempt to stand out in the flooded and highly competitive environment, television stations have identified and adapted trendy and effective strategies to enhance their viewers' experience. Some of these strategies include the use of modes such as sign language anchors, text crawls at the bottom of the screen, soundtracks, public participants, live interviews, celebrity news co-anchors, lighting and colour effects (Gillmor, 2004). These strategies are cleverly being crafted so as to project the desired effect, which will ultimately serve the best interests of the stations.

However, with these advancements, it is continuously becoming more challenging to maintain the informative aspect of television news broadcasts. This is because it is no longer an easy task to position information in the minds of the targeted audience. While some of these strategies might have impacted positively on news presentation and viewership, several others have also negatively affected the presenters and viewers. A few of the negative effects presented by some of these strategies are stereotyping and discrimination of news anchors, particularly female presenters, and distraction of viewers' comprehension of the message being broadcasted (Goldberg, 2001).

More than 50% percent of the Kenyan population is comprised of people between 18 and 40 years, making youths the majority in the Country (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2009). In an attempt to reach the desired news effect and attract more youth viewers, anchors have willingly or unwillingly adopted a variety of tactics to engage their audiences' attention. One of the strategies identified, adapted and commonly applied by local television stations is the use of sex-appeal to increase viewership during news presentation. This has majorly been based on the knowledge that 'sex sells' (Streitmatter, 2004). Sex was first used in advertising by an advertisement for Pearl Tobacco brand in 1871; this advert had a naked young lady on the package cover (Porter and Livesay, 1971). In 1885, W. Duke & Sons

advertised by inserting trading cards into cigarette boxes that had sexually a provocative starlet in the 1890s (Porter and Livesay, 1971). The core function of television news broadcasts, which is its informative aspect, seems to have been eroded and replaced by the emphasis on financial gains from sexualised anchors; sex-appeals are increasingly becoming a strategy used to lure more viewers.

As competition in the television industry stiffens, stations have resorted to such aggressive attention grabbing approaches while others have to date maintained the conservative way of news presentation. It seems that a number of television stations have arrived to the conclusion that more exposure of cleavage and more inches above the knee should be used. In this respect, 'sexy' appears to have replaced 'smart' with more television stations encouraging popular anchors of prime time news to embrace sex-appeals. Surveys have been done to assess the presence of sex-appeal in advertisements. However focus has not been placed on explaining how their use affects the way youth viewers perceive news anchors.

This study sought to find out whether youths view news anchors as sex objects or information conveyers. Furthermore, the study addressed whether appearance, gender and age influenced new viewership among the youth. The study was particularly driven by a particular cartoon drawn by *Gadoin* in the Daily Nation on May 2013, illustrating 'a sexualised female anchor' presenting television news (See Appendix A). Consequently, this study intends to help the general public, media students, learning institutions, news anchors and news broadcasters unravel the mystery behind the usage or against usage of anchors' sex-appeal to beat the competition by knowing what youth viewers prefer. It will focus on finding out if anchors' sex-appeal affects perception among youth viewers, and if increased focus on high viewership and popularity distorts the intended purpose of news presentation which is to convey information.

### **1.1.1. Overview of the Television News Industry in Kenya**

Television has taken the centre stage as a favourite medium of entertainment in Kenya, and the rapid increase in the number of television channels has been rapid over the past two decades. Television has opened up massive opportunities for television news reporters to stay in touch with their targeted audience. The maiden Kenya television station is Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), which was originally a radio station during the colonial period of the British settlers, the station offered information to the white ranchers who lived in Kenya and needed a way to keep abreast with the latest news from Europe. By 1962, the station began to broadcast television as well (Oluoch, 2013).

From the early 1960s to the early 1990s, people used to gather around the television sets found within their neighbourhood to watch news at set times. This is because not every homestead had a television set. However, due to improved economic standards and increased employment, many households in Kenya currently own television sets. A survey conducted in 2008 showed that more than 3.2 million homes in Kenya have television sets. (CCK, 2011). Furthermore, it also showed that a majority of television news audiences are males. In addition, due to technological advances, viewers can now use smart phones, tablets and computers to watch live news broadcasts streamed through the internet (CCK, 2011).

Presently, there is intense competition in the Kenyan television industry. KBC, which was established in 1962, remained the sole television broadcaster until 1989 when Kenya Television Network was founded (Oluoch, 2013). Several other television stations have been established over the years. Some of these stations include, NTV, Citizen TV, K24, Kiss TV, GBS, and WTV (Oriare, Orlale and Ugungu, 2010). This means that youth viewers have a lot of television stations from which they can choose to tune to their preferred channel. Key players in the media industry are three privately owned television stations namely NTV

(Nation Media Group, NMG), KTN (Standard Group Limited, SGL), and Citizen TV (Royal Media Services, RMS) with the state-owned KBC ranked a distance fourth (Oluoch, 2013).

There are several sources from which television stations derive their revenues. Some of these sources of income include, advertisements, selling copyrighted coverage to other television stations and the coverage as well as broadcast of some private or public events such as university graduation ceremonies and weddings. Nonetheless, out of all these sources of income, advertising generates the highest revenues for television stations in Kenya (PWC, 2014). Since advertisers are attracted to television stations with high viewership, there is competition among media houses to record the highest viewership, especially during prime time. According to a survey conducted by Ipsos-Synovate (2011), Citizen TV was ranked first based on geographical coverage and viewership. Since the release of this survey, the television station has been airing advertisements to lure more companies to market products, services or events on their channel. Clearly, there is intense competition in the industry to have the highest viewership and one of the strategies used by television stations to achieve this is their anchors' sex-appeal.

### **1.1.2. Youth Preferences in Media Content**

Due to technological advancements, the media industry has improved tremendously over the years. Television news stations are now able to several platforms to stream their broadcasts. Some of these include the traditional Television signals, the internet and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (CCK, 2011). This was aimed at targeting a larger audience through live streams and short video clips. Notably, youths comprise the largest section of internet and social media users. Research has also show that youths and teenagers spend more time on media more than any other age group (CCK, 2011). This means that youth can gain accesses to immense media content to listen and watch.

As youths and teenagers pass through the adolescent stage, they tend to become more sexually aware and active. Thus they are attracted to media content that satisfy their desires. Television programs also acknowledge the fact that their viewers have different preference. Accordingly, they have introduced several programs tailored for the different age groups. Some of these include cartoons, music, movies, sports, fashion, news, and reality television programs. However, many youths tend to prefer media content they consider fun and entertaining (Demarest and Allen, 2000). As a result, television stations have tailored their programs, including news programs, to be meeting the preferences of large youthful audience. The use of sexualised broadcast seems to be one of the strategies used to achieve this goal.

## **1.2. Statement of the Research Problem**

Several guidelines have been proposed to maintain the core aspects of news coverage. Some of these guidelines relates to television news anchors' dress code. According to Copeland (2013), television news anchors should dress in a simple manner unless they are fashion designers. Furthermore, television news anchors' dress code should not distract viewers' attention into focusing on their physical attractiveness (Copeland, 2013).

Locally, the Kenya National Assembly in 2013 passed laws governing the media industry in the country; the Kenya Information and Communications (Amendment) Act 2013, and the Media Council Act 2013 (AMWIK, 2014). The set laws are aimed at strengthening proficiency within the media industry in the country. Communications Authority of Kenya, the Media Council of Kenya and Kenya Film and Classification Board, which are tasked with outlining the guidelines and codes of ethics governing journalism in Kenya, have made strides in ensuring that competence is maintained within the media industry. They encourage



media practitioners, particularly television news anchors and reporters to dress appropriately and conduct themselves accordingly while carrying out their duties (Copeland, 2013).

However, there is a knowledge gap on the effects of an anchors' sex-appeal, and the role of other demographic factors like gender, age, and physical attractiveness, in viewership, presentation as well as employment, and it is this gap the study seeks to fill. Employers seem to be concentrating on sex-appeal, age, gender, and physical attractiveness when recruiting television news anchors (Haper, 2002). In addition, television stations seem to be using particular sex-appeals to target specific age and gender among its viewers. Male youth viewers seem to be most affected and their ability to comprehend television news appears to have been distorted. Sexualized anchors look to have taken centre stage, thus youth viewers; appear to be concentrating on the presenters' physical attractiveness rather than the information being conveyed.

Furthermore, television news anchors seem to be willing to go to a great extent to gain viewer popularity. This study therefore aimed at determining how youths' perception of female television news anchors was affected when presenters used sexual appeals in their presentation. Moreover, it sought to determine the contribution of other demographic factors such as television news anchors' age, gender and physical attractiveness on viewership and popularity among the youth.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this study was to find out the youth's perception on Kenyan television women news anchors.

#### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives**

- i) To establish if appearance of women news anchors influences viewership among the youth

ii) To establish if male and female news anchors influence youth television viewership differently

iii) To establish if the youth grasp the news content when attractive female anchors are used

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was led by the following research questions:

i) What is the youths' perception of female television news anchors?

ii) Do male and female news anchors influence youth television viewership differently?

iv) Do the youth grasp the news content when attractive female anchors are used?

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

While television stations are established all over the country, due to proximity factors, this study will be restricted to those located within Nairobi County, Kenya. Furthermore, this is due to the fact that leading television stations in Kenya, namely, KBC, NTV, KTN, Citizen TV and K24 are all located within the city. Since this study is primarily concerned with television stations, it will be limited to matters relating to female anchors', and its effects on youth perception of the female presenters.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

To policy makers and the County Governments as well as the National Government especially the Ministry of Information Communication and Technology, the study will give insight into the effects of sex-appeal on television news perception by viewers, and thus help policy makers and regulatory bodies, such as Communications Authority of Kenya, the

Media Council of Kenya and Kenya Film and Classification Board, to identify the loopholes in the present laws and code ethics governing journalism in Kenya. Eventually, they can revise the present guidelines so as to maintain acceptable standards within the media industry or promote edutainment in all sectors of media. The Ministry of Education and higher learning institutions offering media related courses will also gain insight on the need to enforce media proficiency within the school curriculum. Thus, this study will inform the ongoing reforms in the media industry in Kenya.

To television news anchors and students inspiring to become journalists in future, this study will enable them see the need to maintain and uphold acceptable standards while executing their duties. This study will inform them of the effects of using sex-appeals, and how they affect their viewers' ability to comprehend the message they intend to relay through the broadcast. Furthermore, this study will enlighten them of their rights as journalists particularly in regards to prejudice and discrimination at work place or wrongful employment termination based on anchors age, or refusal to use sex-appeal in their presentation or physical attractiveness.

To television station owners and top level management, this study will help them see the need to introduce and maintain standards and code of ethics within their companies. It will also help them understand that by putting a lot of emphasis on sex-appeals, they are indirectly discriminating against a section of their employees who refuse to accept or cannot meet the set standards. The study will also help broadcast stations to decide whether the use of sex appeal does promote or reduce the popularity of their stations (is this a mode that they should adopt or drop). To the academic fraternity, the study will help contribute to the body of knowledge that exists on proficiency in the media industry. It will also help prospective researchers to carry out the same study in other sectors of the society.

## **1.7 OPERATIONAL TERMS**

### **Youth:**

This is a group of people that fall within the age group of 18-40

### **News Anchor:**

A person who presents news during a news program on television.

### **Sex Appeal:**

A personal appeal or physical attractiveness especially for members of the opposite sex.

### **Broadcast:**

Transmit (a program or some information) by radio or television.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2 Overview**

This section looks into the literature that already exists in regard to the relationship between sex-appeal and viewers perception. It gives an overview of other scholars work on similar topics that will provide the necessary background and literature for the purpose of this research. The chapter also introduce the relationship between youths' perception of a news anchor and the presenters' sex appeal, physical attractiveness, age and gender.

#### **2.1 Historical Background**

Various scholars have defined sex-appeal differently. According to Reichert et al (2001), sex-appeal is the amount of nudity or sexual lucidity. Sex-appeal can also be described as sexual presentation of a product or service with the sexual motives or the exploitation of the female or male body (Liu, 2014). However, the most common definition relates to the degree of nudity (Garcia and Yang, 2006). Nudity hereby describes to the amount and style of clothing worn by models in an advertisement (Jones and Reid, 2010). In respect to this definition, clothing is a primary feature of sex-appeal. Besides nudity, sex-appeal can be defined by sexual suggestiveness, in other words, using sex-appeal in any form that contains sexual stimuli, which can trigger ideas about sex in a person's mind (Reichert and Ramirez, 2000). Reichert and Ramirez (2000) further state that a 'sexual stimulus' does not necessarily involve nudity since it can also encompass sounds or gestures. For a very long time, sex-appeals have been used in advertisements with the assumption that they will always help realize the desired outcome, which is to increase sales.

"Sex-appeal is the keynote of our civilization," this is a quote by Henri Bergson (French Philosopher, 1927 Nobel Prize in Literature, 1859-1941). It describes sex-appeal as

modernization, and everything that has to be marketed is turned to sex-appeal in this age and time.

‘Sex sells’, is a common term in the advertising world. ‘Sex sells’ mostly refers to promotional advertising. The origin goes back to as far as 1870s when a tobacco company used sexual appeal strategies on the cover of their product packaging (Brandt, 2007). Another good example was the National Airlines, ‘Fly Me’ campaign, which featured a physically attractive stewardesses saying, “I’m Cheryl... Fly me”, it is further stated that after this promotional advert, the company’s passengers increased by 23 percent, which was twice more than that of any other airline (<https://mbenisz.wordpress.com/history-of-sex-in-advertising>). In most cases, the use of sex-appeal in advertisements has successfully achieved its desired effect, which is to attract customers and eventually increase sales. Seemingly, female and male customers are being lured by sexualized advertisements portraying physically attractive male and female characters respectively. Sex-appeal in promotional advertisements are generally attention getting, arousing, and its effects are inducing and memorable particularly to the targeted gender (Jammu and Kashmir, 2012).

Interestingly, the same is being imitated in the television industry, particularly news broadcasts. Only in this case, the product or service being advertised is the prime time, the sellers are the television broadcasting stations and the customers are the companies intending to market their business to the viewers. Bruce (2013) shares the same opinion by arguing that, “it is a common saying in every news room that sex sells.” Bruce’s statement suggests that instead of news content, some viewers seem to be attracted the sex appeals used in the news broadcast.

## **2.2 Contemporary Television News Broadcasts and Emerging Trends**

Several changes have been witnessed in the television industry, particularly in regards to the way news is being broadcasted. The revolution has been necessitated by technological advancements and increased competition in the television industry. As a result, adjustments have been made to manner in which television news is presented to viewers. To compete in the flooded market, television news presenters have adopt new and effective strategies, which will lure more viewers. In view of the fact advertising is the major source of income for television stations in Kenya, news anchors are competing to have the highest viewership during prime time so as to attract more advertisers to their respective companies. Thus, a majority of the television stations and the anchors themselves have adapted more contemporary methods of television news delivery. While still aiming at maintaining the informative aspect of television news broadcasts, trendy ideas have also been incorporated in an attempt to make their presentations more entertaining.

These adjustments aim at enhancing viewers' experience, and eventually help the anchors and television stations stand out in the highly competitive and flooded environment. Some of the modern strategies used to achieve this include more female presenters, sex-appeals, soundtracks, celebrity news co-anchors, live interviews, public participants, text scrawls at the bottom of the screen, sign language anchors as well as lighting and colour effects (Medoff, Kaye, 2011). These strategies have been cleverly crafted to assist realize the desired effects that will ultimately serve the best interest of the television station (Medoff and Kaye, 2011).

Up until the nineteenth century, the patriarchal society always viewed women as housewives (Flexner, 1975). However, the Industrial Revolution, which took place between 1820 and 1870, necessitated a cultural shake up making it possible for women to compete alongside

men in all career opportunities, including journalism (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter, 2012). Unfortunately, it was long feared that viewers would not accept female television news anchors and reporters. However, a study conducted in the mid-1970s proved otherwise. Allen (2003) states that television viewers wanted women in newsrooms. This led to the first flood of women into the television news industry who proved that they could lure new and larger audience. Two decades ago, women constituted only 13% of television news workforce (Engstrom and Ferri, 2000). Presently, their number is steadily increasing with a majority of entry-level television news employees being women and two out of five employees being female newscasters (Huff, 2003).

In Kenya, studies have shown that more women than men are presently being hired as newscasters. In a survey conducted by AWC and WACC (2013), it was established that women journalists are currently more dominant as television news anchors at 74%, compared to men at 22%. It further arrived at the conclusion that most of the female television news anchors were young and attractive hence the stereotype that they are recruited and succeed in increasing viewership because their age, gender and physical attraction, rather than their stories (AWC and WACC, 2013).

With these changes, it is continuously becoming more challenging to maintain the informative aspect of television news broadcasts. This is because it is no longer an easy task to position information in the minds of the targeted audience. While some of these strategies might have impacted positively on news presentation and viewership, several others have also negatively affected the presenters and viewers. A few of the negative effects presented by some of these strategies are discrimination and stereotyping of news presenters, particularly female anchors. Viewers tend to ignore their professional skills as news anchors and instead focus of the presenters' physical attractiveness.



In an effort to reach the desired news effect and attract more viewers, anchors have willingly or unwillingly adopted a variety of tactics to engage their audiences' attention. One of the strategies identified, adapted and commonly applied by local television stations is the use of sex-appeal to increase viewership and anchors' popularity. Sex-appeal among news anchors is increasingly becoming a popular communication strategy used in mainstream reporting. Unfortunately, this has mostly been the case for female news anchors, who are increasingly being viewed as sex objects (Reichert and Ramirez, 2000) According to Reichert and Ramirez (2000), female models with good physical appearances are frequently considered as good communicators or endorsers in anchoring or reporting for the sole purpose of drawing attention.

Sex-appeal can be defined as messages, whether as brand information in broadcasting contexts or in persuasive contexts, which are integrated with sexual information, in particular, this appeal can be defined as the degree of nudity or sexual explicitness by an anchor. It can be found in the visual, audio, and verbal elements in broadcasts(Campbell, Martin and Fabos, 2014). Three main types of sex-appeal are being used extensively while presenting news. Even though sometimes they are combined with others, most of the time they are strong enough when used solely. These sex-appeal strategies include the use of sexual gestures, and suggestive dress codes as well as emotional connection to viewers during news presentation. The use of these sex-appeal strategies in presentations is aimed at manipulating viewers' feelings, in an attempt to generate and link positive feelings to the product being viewed (Fam and Grohs, 2007).

Since viewers do not receive news passively, sexualized anchors are becoming popular tools to increase viewership and as a result trounce other competitors in the television industry. Owners and managers of several television companies have come to the conclusion that more

cleavage and the shorter the outfit by a few centimetres above the knee could do the trick. As it appears, 'sexy' has replaced 'smart' with the managers encouraging anchors of prime time news to adopt and use sex-appeals in their presentations. According to Ipsos-Synovate (2011), television news anchors using sex-appeals in their presentations are becoming highly appreciated and respected by their viewers. As a major strategy in succeeding in the television industry, sex-appeal has been widely adopted in mainstream news broadcasting and notably by female news anchors, who have shifted towards the direction of using these strategies in their modes of presentation.

In his an article, *Kenyan Anchors Long Walk to the Light: Short and Sexy*, Mureithi (2013) of Nation Media Group states that the presentation style in Kenya was for a very long time somewhat stiff and straightforward. A newscast was divided into news, sports and weather, with the news block being divided into national, international, and local stories, but all this is different now. News presentation, at least with most local stations in Kenya has become less formal. Anchors not only tell the news but also engage with each other in light-hearted talk or jokes. In this article, Larry Madowo, who is a television news anchor and also the technology editor at NTV, states that "For too long in Kenya, anchors were like robots that seemed perfect. We're happy now to have a newscast with laughter, life and personality. It makes the viewer's relate better with us and feel as part of the family." Madowo, credits himself and his colleagues (SmritiVidyarthi and Wallace Kantai) for leading the way in this transition.

They led the shift from boring, impersonal news to interactive, engaging presentation with our "Decision 2013" graveyard shift," he says in relation to NTV's coverage of the recent General Election (Mureithi, 2013). But this doesn't mean the anchors treat news with a lower standard than in the past, Madowo says, arguing they just take the sadness and lifelessness out of it. Ms Robi Koki, a journalism lecturer at the United States International University,

views the semi-formal type of news presentation, which she terms “edutainment”, as being related to the need for higher ratings.

From NTV to KTN, Citizen TV to K24, female news anchors now wear clothes that fail to cover their full body, as was the case in traditional broadcasts (Ipsos-Synovate, 2011). However, some television stations, notably KBC, have opted to maintain the traditional techniques of broadcasting news, particularly in regards to dress code and anchors’ conduct. These conservative television stations have to date resisted societal pressure and opted to maintain the seriousness of the news presentation in a descent and reserved manner.

One of the leading private television stations in Kenya, KTN, has not hidden the fact that it is laying more emphasis on presentation as opposed to content. In its Kiswahili bulletin, the station has not shied away from stating that it is not ‘what’ but ‘how’ we present it that matters (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200802201007.html>). It is as though Kenyan television is now trying to deal with a new reality. In this respect, news quality in Kenya seems to have been reduced to competition of beauty pageants on our screens having replaced traditional propose, which is to convey information to viewers.

Another emerging issue regarding the use of sex-appeals to increase viewership is that they target specific market segments but not all. This in relation to taboos and African cultures, where conservative is the more preferred among the elderly. Apart from age, some news presenters also look at other demographics such as viewers’ gender and level of education to target particular market segments, as well as the intended effect when considering anchoring with the aid of sexual appeal strategies. Conclusively, this means that different sex-appeals strategies target particular groups, hence they only work in some circumstances. Since many teenagers and youths are going through adolescents and sexual awareness is one of the developments, the age group tend to be most affected by the sexualized broadcasts.

Some foreign television anchors, particularly in the United States, have publicly acknowledged that their success in the media industry and high popularity as well as viewership is attributed to their physical attractiveness. Some television viewers have also publicly cited an anchor's sex-appeal as a factor that influences the station they tune to during news broadcasts (Dominguez, 2004). There is a huge possibility that some of these viewers are distracted by beauty and do not concentrate on the information being relayed. This exploratory study will look into the use of anchors' sex-appeal as an emerging trend in the Kenyan television news industry and how it influence the youths' perception of the presenters. It will seek to establish whether this emerging trend will lead the country's television industry towards the same direction.

### **2.3 Television News Viewership**

In Hollywood, by the early 2000's the transformation of television broadcasting had taken itself from news reporter, to newsmakers. Journalists quickly learned that they had to make reporting the news more visually attractive, often creating news rather than reporting it. Gone were the days of quality, content-based reporting done by Edward Murrow, Chet Huntley and David Brinkley and their conservative style of reporting television news. Huntley and Brinkley have been replaced by Ken and Barbie. Locally, Raphael Tuju and Catherine Kasavuli have been replaced by Larry Madowo and KameneGoro. News has also become more agenda driven than raw, content-based broadcasts (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, Films Media Group and Octapixx Worldwide, 2009). Whenever one tunes to some television stations; sex-appeal dominates news broadcasting. Television stations seem to be looking at sex-appeal, age, gender and physical attractiveness when hiring news anchors.

### **2.3.1 Anchors' Sex Appeal, Physical Appearance, Gender and Age**

Ramirez and Reichert (2012) in their studies sought to find out what people consider sexy in any form of advertising. The most common referent was physical features at 66%, followed by a model's movements and verbal and non-verbal communication at 39%, contextual features at 26%, and proxemics at 15% (Ramirez and Reichert, 2012). They further found out that what people referred to as sexy differed from gender to gender. Ramirez and Reichert's (2012) study showed that females responded more to context than males did at 35% to 20% respectively. It also showed that 28% of the females responded to proxemics or references to physical distance or relative interaction between models compared to 6% of the males (Ramirez and Reichert, 2012).

In an elaborate account of television news anchor sexualisation research, Nitz et al. (2007) found that in 64% of segments, female anchors were wearing suggestive clothing with another 8% 'partially clad'. Eighty-eight percent of female reporters were rated as 'high' on physical attractiveness while only 12% of their male counterparts were coded as such (Nitz et al., 2007). Nitz et al. (2007) further established that even behaviourally, women anchors at 25% outscored men at 5% on sexual innuendo. By focusing on facilitation factors, defined as camera techniques that enhance sexuality, the authors report that 98.5% of news stories coded as high on sexualisation were reported by female anchors (Nitz et al., 2007).

Nitz et al. (2007) conducted a study to justify their statements. A test was given to viewers in which a female broadcast journalist was dressed in a tight-fitting dark blue jacket and skirt that portrayed her waist-to-hip ratio, for one of two versions of a taped newscast (Nitz et al., 2007). She also wore bright red lipstick and a necklace (Nitz et al., 2007). Nitz et al. (2007) state that for the second version, the same female broadcast journalist wore a shapeless and loose-fitting dark blue jacket and skirt, and did not apply any makeup. Test subjects were

quizzed on their impression of the reporter and their retention of the newscast (Nitz et al., 2007). The results were that while attractive anchors may boost ratings based on their sex-appeals, they may also keep male viewers from actually retaining the information presenters so perkily present (Nitz et al., 2007). Forbes (2011) share similar views by stating that such distractions affect viewers' concentration.

Studies show that women portray some awareness of the male propensity to experience sexual attraction in response to visual strategies (Jackson, Sullivan and Rostker, 1988). Thus news directors who showcase attractive female anchors have goals beyond simply relaying information. Many television viewers do not receive news passively. Hence, they are actively involved in the reading and understanding of news content, which leads them into making personal interpretations. The decision of interpreting the content has been placed on the viewers. The stations assume that the modes of presentation are applied appropriately and this should lead to a positive feedback from the viewers, who are to continue viewing their station.

The use of sex-appeal in television is generally used to attract attention of the viewers. The pervasiveness of this approach is evidence of the fact that the television stations believe it works well when they see their ratings go up. Lately, the use of sex-appeal in television news broadcasting is increasingly becoming more popular and blatant as anchors attempt to find ways to raise their popularity and viewership. Liu (2014) argues that sex-appeals have become one of the most popular and effective tactics in news broadcasting. Sexualized anchors are used to add sexual stimuli to news broadcasts despite the irrelevance of the content. It has become a form of some emotional attachment to the viewers using the shock technique.

The present study intends to uncover the motive behind the use of sex-appeal in television news presentation, and to find out whether the manner in which news is presented by using

sex-appeal as strategies affects the way a youthful audience perceive news anchors, especially female presenters. It will seek to find out whether the viewers are more fixated on the anchors' sex-appeals as opposed to getting the information being passed on by them at that point.

### **2.3.2 Sex-Appeals Used In Television News Broadcasting**

To have an effective news broadcast one needs to create an environment that will appeal to people's emotions. There are seven appeals used in any advertising that can be categorized as; fear, sex, humour, music, rationality, emotions and scarcity. These are emotions that are experienced by everyone universally, regardless of race, financial stance or intelligence. Any advertisement that one watches will spark some kind of emotion in us and chances are that it fit into one of the seven appeals, sometimes even using a mixture of the appeals.

In regards to sex appeal, some of the tactics used to create viewers' emotional attachment include a sexy voice tone, makeup such as brightly coloured lipsticks and eye shadows, and suggestive dress codes such tight clothes, short skirts as well as dresses or blouses that show more cleavage. Some news anchors have succeeded in using these sex-appeal tactics to create a bond with their viewers. Generally, feminine stereotypes in the media industry have undervalued and diminished women as passive human beings and sexual objects.

There is constant pressure on of female television news anchors to display high level of sexuality in order to be featured as television news anchors. A research on cable news programs in the United States showed that 62% of segments explored portrayed predominately female newscasters with high sex appeal (Nitz, Reichert, Aune and Velde, 2007). They further state that, "specifically, these journalists were physically attractive, suggestively dressed (e.g., open blouses, tight-fitting skirts), and filmed in ways that accentuated these features" (p. 14). The fact that news broadcasters use these appeals to lure

viewers suggests that television stations are more interested in marketing and entertainment than news content (Nitz et al., 2007).

### **2.3.3 Eye Tracking Data Representation and Visualization in Television News**

There are several changes in content, language and manner in which television news are presented. Some of these changes have been attributed to constant technological advancements in the recent years. However, these developments also affected the way television viewers receive and process news as well as perceive the anchors (Horsley, 2014). Rodrigues (2010) went further to use eye tracking techniques to assess viewers' attention. His research aimed studying three issues. First was identifying the graphics present in television that have greater visual concentration and recollection of information. Second was to assess the effectiveness of information recollection considering video and audio redundancy in standard versions and clean feeds. Third, was to identify the differences in viewers' ability to recall messages considering anchors' gender. The researcher found out that viewers allocated different level of attention to different section of the screen with the anchors being given the highest concentration during any broadcast at prime time news.

### **2.3.4 Discrimination in the Television News Industry**

For a very long time, journalists have reported several cases of gender, age, and appearance discrimination from their employers and the general public. Notably, women have recorded the highest number complaints. Women television news reporters and anchors have expressed their worries over the prominence of physical appearance in influencing employment, years of service and contract termination. According to Lavin and Cash (2001), women pursuing careers in broadcasting cite weight, complexion, age and beauty as issues that frequently get more attention than their journalistic abilities and integrity.



One of the reasons that prompted the employment of women in newsrooms were a series of surveys that showed that women not only met the set newscaster standards, but also feminine standards (Stone, 2000). Allen (2003) supports this statement by stating that consultants and employers were aware that viewers would rate and value their feminine traits such as cosmetics, delivery and appearance. Women unlike men face appearance barriers in their careers, which plays a major role on how their worth is assessed (Lafky, 1995; Melamed, 1996; Engstrom and Ferri, 2000).

Feri and Keller (1986) in their study found out that career barriers for women centred on gender-based issues such as over-emphasis on physical appearance, differential treatment in the hiring process and overcoming gender stereotypes. While viewers prefer attractive feminine attributes to accompany the journalistic qualifications of women newscasters, part of the problem of too much emphasis on appearance can be attributed to the management of television stations, positions predominantly held by men (Haper, 2002).

While feminine attributes influence a women employment and years of experience as a newscaster, they also contribute towards contract termination and demotion or resignations. After only six years, New York's first woman anchor, Rose Ann Scamardella resigned from WABC in 1984 citing that even though she enjoyed the celebrity status, it was not worth it since she was constantly under too much scrutiny (Allen, 2003). Christine Craft, who was employed by Metromedia Inc. and given a two-year contract, was demoted aged 38 after only eight months on air from a news anchor to reporter, with her boss saying she was too unattractive, old and not differential enough for male viewers (Shoonmaker, 1987). She resigned and sued the company for breach of contract and was awarded \$500,000 by the court. However, Metromedia Inc. won the appeal, and the Supreme Court refused to her case.

In another case, StainerMidkiff, aged 42, filed a legal lawsuit against The Weather Channel in 2005 claiming that she was fired in 2003 after working for 16 years because the station wanted a younger sexy anchors wearing low-cut blouses (Venezia, 2005). In her case, she argues that her boss would describe female news casters as dowdy, nun-like and matronly, and that he wanted them to wear more revealing clothes like V-neck shirts. The case ended with an out of court settlement. Examples of other cases include Agela Black vs. CBS in 2002 (Ballard, 2002), Susan Hutchison vs. KIRO-TV in 2002 (Sitt, 2003). Presently, the Kenyan media industry has not faced similar challenges. However, with the increasingly emerging trend, the present study will seek to find out if Kenyan television anchors also face similar injustices.

Engstrom and Ferri (1986) in their research found out that women anchors have to, on a daily basis, content with satisfying both management's and viewers' expectations of how a female anchor should look like. Some reporters have been pressured into going for cosmetic surgeries while others have been suspended for weeks for cutting their shoulder-length hair without the consent of her boss (Anonymous, 2002). They also found out that attractive, sexy and young newscasters are still the ideals, thus affecting the overall news quality. Furthermore, it sought to find out if employers concentrate on an anchors sexual-appeal when hiring or firing news broadcasters.

### **2.3.5 Youth Perception of Sexualized Television News Anchors**

News viewership is not very popular among the youths since it is not considered fun and entertaining. In a move aimed at luring youths into watching news broadcast and in turn increase viewership, television stations have modified news programs to make them more fun and entertaining (Downs and Harrison, 1985). This includes introducing specific programs tailored for youths, and are aired during news broadcast. This development can also be

witnessed locally particularly among the leading television stations. Some of the programs that have been introduced and aired during news hours include *Fashion Cop* (Citizen TV), *The Trend* (NTV), and *10/10* (Citizen TV). In addition, physically attractive new anchors have been hired to host these programs and often some of the issues discussed revolve around sexual awareness including fashion, dress code, and applying makeup.

Studies have shown that youths are attracted to these programs. For instance, Mitra, Webb and Wolfe (2014) found out that youths wanted news and these complementary programs to be hosted by physically attractive news anchors. Mitra, Webb and Wolfe (2014) stated that, “Some of the male respondents aged 18-39 years did think that female newsreaders should be attractive, offering comments such as: Nice to look at and makes news more enjoyable.” Based on this citation and the case study among other references that support similar arguments, it seems that television news viewers, particularly the youth, are more interested on the anchors sex appeal rather than the information being conveyed. Most of them appear to be more interested on the news presenters’ physical attractiveness, age, gender and to some extent topics that revolve around sexuality. Thus, this study seeks to find out if youths view sexualized female presenters as serious news anchors or sex objects.

#### **2.4 Objectification Theory**

In 1997, Fredrickson and Roberts discovered the objectification theory, this theory was a framework for trying to understand how women were viewed as mere objects as opposed the right value that they should be accorded. To objectify hereby was described as to treat something that is not an object as a mere object, which can be used, manipulated, controlled, and recognized only through its physical properties, RM Calogero (2012), for example through an anchors physical attributes. This theory therefore attempts to explain the tendency to equate women with their bodies.

Sexual objectification can usually be seen through two areas namely: Personal encounters and Media encounters. Interpersonal encounters of sexual objectification can include direct interactions with familiar persons like family, friends, colleagues, and employers or with strangers. Women usually report more explicit sexual objectification from men than men do from women, some of these are hearing sexually degrading jokes, sexually harassment, being called sexual names, having body parts stared at or ogled, and being the victim of unwanted sexual advances.

Media encounters of sexual objectification can occur in many different forms from prime-time television programs, commercials, cartoons, Internet and through music videos.

Objectification Theory can explain how television news anchors influence their viewers and followers into tuning to a particular station just with the main object of seeing this anchors physical beauty, they have no particular relationship with these anchors but because of their high popularity and sex appeal viewers are glued to them, they may switch across television stations to persuade their followers into watching the new channel. Since a youthful audience may be fixated to a particular sexualized female anchor, they will tune to whatever channel she presents news at.

## **2.5 The Gaze theory**

The gaze deals with how an audience views the people presented.” The types of gaze are primarily categorized by who is doing the looking at the particular time. Maggie Wykes and Barrie Gunter (2005).

Mulvey believed that women were used as 'the bearer of meaning and not the maker of meaning. She suggested that women were not just randomly given roles that role that had control of a scene but rather, they're were objects in a scene that were looked at from a

very specific point of view. She argued that this perspective has never been reversed so that men were the ones being viewed. Her study showed that inequality has enforced a common notion that, 'men often do the looking, and women are there only to be looked at.' (Laura Mulvey (1975)). In the past the theory was only applied in Film, however now it is used in a number of different media studies that look at how women are commonly objectified in media.

### **The Male gaze**

The gaze concept has been present for a while, though in earlier uses of the gaze, the introduction of the term "the male gaze" can be attributed to Laura Mulvey in her essay "*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*" which was published in 1975. Mulvey argued that in film women were used as the objects, rather than the possessors, of gaze because the control of the camera came from factors such as the assumption of the fact that the heterosexual men were the default target audience for most films. This was true in the time it was written, during this time the Hollywood audience consisted mostly of men, the concept of men being watchers and women as watched still applies to present day, despite the growing number of movies targeted toward women and that feature female protagonists.

Though it was introduced as part of film theory, the term can and is often applied to other kinds of media. It is often used in critiques of advertisements on television. For instance, John Berger (1972) studied the European nude (both past and present) and found that the female model is often put on display directly to the spectator or indirectly through a mirror, thus viewing herself as the painter would view her.

For Berger these images recorded the amount of inequality in gender relations and a sexualisation of the female image. They reassure men of their sexual power and at the same

moment deny any sexuality of women other than the male construction. They are evidence of gendered difference because any effort to replace the woman in these images with a man

## **2.6 Shock Advertising or “Shockvertising”**

This is a type of advertising that "deliberately, rather than inadvertently, startles and offends its audience by violating the norms of social values and personal ideals" ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock\\_advertising](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock_advertising)). It is the employment in advertising or public relations of "graphic imagery and blunt slogans to highlight" a public policy issue, goods, or services. Shock advertising is designed principally to break through the advertising “clutter” to capture attention and create buzz, and ultimately attract an audience to a certain brand or bring awareness to a certain public service issue, health issue, or cause. Some of these issues include discouraging driving under the influence of alcohol, encouraging drivers and passengers to use their safety seatbelts, promoting safe sex, racism and other societal injustice awareness, or discouraging drug abuse among others. This form of advertising is often controversial, disturbing, explicit and crass, and may entail bold and provocative political messages that challenge the public’s conventional understanding of the social order. Just as in promotion, a few anchors may also apply some of the concepts of shock advertising to gain popularity and attract more youth viewers during news broadcasts. This could involve suggestive dress codes, airing stories, adverts or interviews that revolve around sexuality.

## **2.7 Viewers’ Perception of Television News Anchors and Sexual Appeals**

(Katz and Liebes, 1984)in their study of *Ethnic Israeli Audiences of Dallas* found that: During and after a program, people discuss what they have seen, and come to collective understandings. Viewers selectively perceive, interpret and evaluate the programme in terms of local cultures and personal experiences, selectively incorporating it into their minds and

lives. Thus it is quite common to find viewers discussing the way a certain anchor was dressed or was acting while presenting. This increases the curiosity of the rest of the population who missed out and may want to witness what the masses are talking about.

Nonetheless, there is a predominant opinion among viewers, particularly among females, that there is an undue use of sex-appeal by anchors in news broadcasts (Wise, King and Merenski 1974). Reichert and Ramirez (2000) found out that women seem to find interaction between couples as sexual but physical description of the model was sexual for males. Asian countries seem to be more conservative than American with respect to nudity in news broadcasts (Frith and Mueller, 2010). But contrary to this, Liu (2009) reported that Chinese viewers hold similar perception towards sex-appeal broadcast as viewers in the United States, and even more favourable perception than Australian viewers. In regards to age, Mitra, Webb and Wolfe (2014) state that viewers between 18-39 years think that newscasters should be physically attractive to make the broadcast more enjoyable. Contrary, those above 39 years think that professional presentation skills are more important (Mitra, Webb and Wolfe, 2014). Marketers often emphasize on sexual-appeal and physical attractiveness in an attempt to sell products. According to Shimp (2003) sex-appeal has found more patronage from the advertisers because sex-appeal acts as an initial attention to lure the advertisement, which is referred to as the stopping power of sex. It also heightens the ability of the viewer to recall the message advertised as sex is arousing, easy to relate, emotionally inducing, and most of all memorable. All these in turn can create stimulation and desire for the product. In this case, this would mean having a youthful audience fixated on a particular female news presenter. Even though sex sells if carefully incorporated in advertisements, it does so at the consequence of the controversy.

Looking at high viewership during prime time news as a product and advertisers as the customer, the present study seeks to identify the role played by sexualized news anchors. This study sought to single out the attributes of a television news anchor, which were perceived as sexually arousing. It also sought to establish if viewers tuned to a particular television station to be informed as should be the case, or as a source of entertainment, with sexualized anchors the main attraction.

## **2.8 Sex-Appeal and Marketers**

Researchers have found out that suggestive behaviour, interaction and nudity as forms of sexual appeal. According to Wise and Merenski (1974), marketers respond exorbitantly well to the increasing receptiveness to the sexual contents in mainstream advertising. Thus, the previous decade paved way for an increase in sexual stimuli marketing in regards to frequency and content (Wise, King and Merenski, 1974). Reichert (2001) defines sex-appeal as the amount of nudity or sexual lucidity. Sex-appeal has also been defined as sexual presentation of a product or service with the sexual motives or the exploitation of the female or male body (Liu, 2014). According to a study by Shimp (2003), using sexual components to increase attention, interest, involvement, or recall of the message can be qualified as sexual appeal. Sexiness of clothing, amount of sexual imagery, body language, wording, and amount of nudity, were perceived sexiness (Goodrich, 1999).

In this study, the advertisers were the female anchors and television stations. The news anchors were the models while the customers were the prospective companies intending to air a television advert during prime time news. Prime time news broadcasts with the highest viewership was the product being sold. This is because female news anchors attracted a large youthful audience, which lured advertisers with products and services targeted for youths.



Basically, these news anchors seem to be selling their popularity among the youth, which is to a great extent attributed to their sexualized news presentation.

## **2.9 Moral Discussion around objectifying Women**

Since the stiffening of competition within media stations the new developing culture has been to overglamorize sexualized anchors from Lilian Muli (Citizen TV) to Linda Ogutu (KTN), we have made them to be our role models and put them high on a pedestal though they barely represent the majority of real women in our society. It is almost like women should be rated by how media portrays them.

The media portrays women as being strong or sexy. We are surrounded by a culture that is over sexualized and often objectifies women.

In television, we will often see a strong woman portrayed as the main character, such as the heroine in *Papa Shirandula– ‘Wilbroda’*. However, this portrayal of the ordinary rural woman is often not acceptable in male-driven genres.

## **2.10 Summary of Literature and Knowledge Gap**

There existed a real gap in literature since few researchers have contributed towards television news broadcasts, female anchors and youth’s perception of the presenters. In addition, with what is documented, little agreement has been reached concerning the appropriateness, effectiveness and use of sex-appeal by newscasters. Enormous studies have interrogated the effect of sex-appeal on advertising rather than zeroing in on particular advertising platforms where sex-appeal was used. Furthermore, based on the literature reviews, it was evident that extensive studies have been done mostly in China and the United

States. However, data and literature on sexualized anchors in Kenyan television news broadcast is limited, with very little evidence of any studies evaluating the use of sex appeal in news broadcasts and the youths' perception of a sexualized news anchor.

There was also a knowledge gap on the role of female anchors' sex-appeal and other demographic factors (age, gender, and education level) in television news viewership among the youth. The study aimed at determining whether the television news viewership among the youth and their perception of female anchors varied depending on the frequency and content of sexual stimuli applied by presenters. Since this was an exploratory study, the researcher collected views from Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs) participants to arrive at a conclusion.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This section outlined how the study was conducted to find out the youths' perception of female news anchors. It discussed the methodology that was used to accomplish the already established research objectives and questions. It gave direction to follow so as to get answers to issues of concern. It briefly explored the research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis, reliability & validity and ethical consideration.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The present study sought to find out the youths' perception of a female news anchor. It therefore noted that the study was rather exploratory and not a definite report on the subject. This study took a qualitative approach. Being generally subjective the study involved an interpretive and naturalistic approach where data was gathered using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews to generate data (Babbie and Rubin, 2010). Naturalistic research is characterised by: natural context –to keep reality in its context - qualitative methods, inductive analysis, purposive sampling, Justification for qualitative research is that it will allow the researcher to obtain thicker and richer information about the effects of sex-appeal on viewers' perception. The disadvantage of qualitative design is that it is often prone to biasness by the researcher (Tavakoli, 2013). The interview questions and FGD topics that will be used to conduct and gather information are presented in the appendix section of this document.

### **3.15 Study Area, Target Population and Sampling Technique**

The researcher focused this study in The University Nairobi, Kenya at the main Campus among students between the ages 18-40, of different religions and the same similar socio-characteristics.

#### **Focus Group Discussion**

Four FDGs were conducted during the study and each had 8 participants. All participants who contributed in the FDGs remained anonymous. The participants were informed of the study objectives prior to commencing the discussions. The researcher used snowball sampling method, the participants were selected on the criteria that they would have something to say on the topic, were within the Age-range, similar socio-characteristics and were comfortable talking to the interviewer and each other (Richardson & Rabiee, 2001).

Snowball sampling (or chain sampling, chain-referral sampling, referral sampling) is a technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Thus the sample group is said to grow like a rolling snowball. As the sample builds up, enough data is gathered to be useful for research.

Apart from providing rich and illuminating data (Cameron and Price, 2009), FDGs also offered the researcher a degree of adaptability and flexibility since it was possible to rephrase the questions if it was not well understood by the participants (Bougie and Sekaran, 2010). The second primary data collection tool that was used was observations. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006), observation was effective since it allowed the use of visual aids. Videos and pictures were shown to the participants to gather their opinion (Bougie and Sekaran, 2010). The researcher and some of the FDGs participants observed and expressed

their opinion in regards to the manner in which anchors conducted themselves while broadcasting television news.

The objective of the semi-structured topics tackled during FGDs was aimed at establishing the relationship between anchors' sex-appeals and youths' perception of television news presenters. With the consent of the participants, the discussions were voice recorded and transcribed afterwards.

### **Interviews**

The targeted population for interviews were anchors and field reporters of television stations. News anchors and field reporters were purposively sampled. There are numerous television media stations in Nairobi, and each has several news anchors and field reporters. Thus it was difficult to find out their exact number in the county. In this regard, purposive sampling was used to select the sample population. The researcher contacted potential respondents through e-mails and telephone calls. This process involved 8 willing anchors and 15 field reporters.

The interviewees selected cut across several factors such as popularity, age, gender, employer, religion and years of experience. All participants who contributed towards this study remained anonymous. They were also informed of the study objective prior to commencing of the interviews and discussions.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The analysis focused on understanding the meaning of the opinions and viewpoints shared by the participants. Therefore, qualitative content analysis was used in this study. This allowed the researcher to identify and conceptualize categories, codes, sub-themes and themes. According to Schneider, Whitehead and Elliot (2007) it involved fracturing, grouping and gluing research data systematic process of transcribing, collating, editing, coding and

reporting research data in a way that made it accessible and sensible to other people for the purpose of discussion and interpretation (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011).

After the responses were obtained from the participants, transcription was carried out to convert recorded data into transcripts (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011). Thereafter, coding was carried out to identify and label data so as to summarize the running ideas that emanated from the study (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011).

Axial coding was helpful in merging similar codes and eliminating overlapping ones. Convectional, directed and summative approached assisted identifying coding schemes to establish the origin of codes and identify possible threats to the study's trustworthiness (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). This means that no data analysis software was used in the process (Sandelowski, 2000). Afterwards, these codes were used to form themes, which answered the research questions (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011).

## **2.11 Reliability and Validity**

For an academic research to be considered accurate, the findings must be valid and reliable. This refers to the possibility of arriving at the same results if the study was to be conducted over again. A Test-Retest Reliability method was used to determine the probability of dissimilar results if the study was redone. The coefficient that was used to conduct the reliability test was determined by comparing results obtained from at least two separate FDGs and Interviews. Conversely, validity means the accuracy of the findings. To test truthfulness of the results, Construct Validity Test was used to ensure that the actual data collection conformed to the theory studied.

## **2.12 Ethical Considerations**

According to the Social Research Association (2003) ethical guidelines enable researchers to make individual ethical judgments and decisions that comply with principles of research. The basic ethical principles guiding this study were autonomy, beneficence, justice, informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and respect for persons. Singer (2008) notes that, in survey research, the breach of confidentiality, loss of privacy and the effect of such breaches are the most serious risk of harm to respondents.

The researcher undertook several steps as guided by the University of Nairobi in fulfilling the requirements for the Masters of Arts in Communication Studies. The researcher presented a proposal to this study which was defended and passed hence obtaining a certificate of Field work (see Appendix E) duly authorized by School of Journalism.

The researcher ensured that the information provided was safeguarded and not revealed to any third party unless with the informed consent of the participants, all participants were granted their verbal consent during the sampling stage whereupon limited personal information was requested by the researcher. The researcher also respected the decision by some respondents to conceal information they did not wish to share.

The researcher then presented the project report before a panel of examiners who proposed corrections. The corrections and amendments suggested by the defence panel were incorporated hence the obtainment of the Certificate of Corrections (see Appendix F) signed by the School of Journalism. Guiding principles of research such as acknowledgement of sources published information to avoid plagiarism were observed in fulfilling this study and there the study was further subjected to a plagiarism test by the School's Quality Department (see Appendix G) and found devoid of plagiarism. This led the researcher to obtain a

declaration of originality (see Appendix H) based on the plagiarism report of the School's Quality department.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

#### 4.1 Overview

This chapter covers the findings of the current study. In particular, the qualitative analysis of the data aligned with specific objectives where the investigated and interpreted patterns drew the implications. The study had 4 focus groups of 8 students each and Interviews were carried out among anchors and field reporters. The participation from the interviewees was lively and everyone took part in the compilation of the raw information.

#### 4.2 Most viewed Television News Station

The study sought to investigate which is the most viewed television news station among the youth in Kenya. Most of the participants in the different focus groups mentioned Citizen Television, K24, KTN and NTV. The participants said that these stations were available online and one could access news anytime of the day anywhere in the world. They then added that these stations had youthful news anchors that brought liveliness to the news.

A male participant in group three commented that:

“There is no news station that is better than KTN, it has the best edited news, further more they have a station which runs news all through without break or airing other programmes, it is almost like CNN”.

Participants in focus group four had a different view on the news television stations. A male participant in group four praised EBRU arguing that EBRU television covered almost everything that was connected to the youth. A female participant said that Kiss TV gave exactly what youth needed as news and gave example of news about celebrities which was a priority for the youth.

### 4.3 Factors for viewership

The study sought to investigate whether there were other factors that attributed to youth viewership besides the anchors abilities to anchor news. The participants in focus groups gave their opinions on the code of dressing, the language used in expounding on the news. A Male participant in group one said “It is the physical appearance especially the beauty of the anchor and the dressing that draws me to watch news, Lilian Muli of Citizen makes me watch news just to see how beautiful she is and what she wears is what I believe is trending in fashion for women”, though most members of focus group one said that the content of news determined the viewership. The group said that youth did differentiate between news anchoring and presentation and they said that youth followed closely the presentation more than the anchor of the news; they specified *The Trend* on NTV and *10 over 10* on Citizen TV. In explanation focus group one said that *The Trend* and *10 over 10* are basically participatory and were aimed at knowing celebs in different fields and their achievements, inspirational talks, entrepreneurs, young leaders, etc.

Political news, property news did not make so much sense to the youth according group one. In general focus group two members said that code of dressing musicians made youth watch news; one of the participants argued that Friday’s 7 pm news was anchored and presented by two female anchors dressed to impress the viewers. Also the language used was simple to and self-explanatory. Focus group three argued that physical appearance, dressing code, make-up during news were strategies aimed at targeting the youth and gave example of the inclusion of Bi Mwasafari as part of news who brought issues related to relationships which was an integral part of a youth’s life. Focus group four said that physical appearance and attraction is what drew them to watching news. A male participant in group four said that news anchoring ladies were beautiful and gave an example of K24 television station. A participant in group

four mentioned that; physical appearance, make up, dressing, language use and educating viewers were factors that influenced youth viewership.

#### **4.4 Anchors' Physical Attractiveness, Age and Gender**

The study sought to investigate whether anchors' physical attractiveness influenced the television news station youths tune to. In focus group one most participants agreed that anchors' physical attractiveness influenced the television news station youths tune to. A female participant in group one said that the physical appearance of the anchor showed the inner personality. A male participant in the same group argued that the physical attractiveness of news anchors did not influence the television news station youths tune to. He said that their business is to disseminate information not modelling. Female participants were positive on the physical appearance of the anchors one arguing that she could never watch news if the anchor was not smartly dressed with nice hair. Further the study sought to find out whether physical attractiveness, age and gender was a factor to be considered while employing or firing news anchors. Most females in group one argued that interviewees must dress to impress, in addition said that age is vital because the elderly ones were viewed as old school.

A male participant said:

‘To some extent physical attractiveness, age and gender should be a factor to be considered while employing or firing news anchors, for example Catherine Kasavuli, she has been the face of KTN news for so long and her beauty goes along with brains, even above 40 she still presents news in a classic manner and is eye catching’.

Another male participant held that men were attracted to what they see not what was perceived, he preferred that beautiful women be hired as anchors rather than hiring ladies with knowledge. Another male participant said that he watched citizen news at 9.00p.m just see Lilian Muli. In focus group two a male participant said that he couldn't watch Lulu

Hassan anchor news because of her code of dressing and a female participant explained that it's because the male viewers loved what they saw and Lulu's dressing code did not reveal her body curves. In addition a female participant in group two said that language use and fashion played a great role in news viewership by the youth because this exposed them to the current trending fashion and style. Further a male participant said that age played a role in the news viewership by the youth, the elderly anchors did not attract youth viewers because their styles and dressing were old school. Focus group three said that the physical attractiveness did not have much impact on the viewership of news by youth and held that most youth were interested in the news content. Fashion in group four was also put forward as a factor which attracted the youth to watch news.

A male participant in group three said that physical attractiveness did not play a role in viewership and it's the content that mattered and the rest of the participants in the group rose against him and said that he was old minded. Another male participant said that all the news in all stations were the same and mostly the content matched and therefore argued that the anchors attractiveness is what made youth viewers tune into specific news station. A male participant said that attractiveness of anchors was determined by age and gender and he gave an example of Kasavuli and Lilian Muli and said that Lilian was more beautiful than Kasavuli because she was younger and had a sense of fashion. Further he added that dressing well during interviews makes employers hire anchors so that they can bring with them their prowess in dressing to their station. Some held that the attractiveness should apply in the case of presenting news and experience should be considered when hiring and gave an example of Janet Mbugua of Citizen Television who was hired by Citizen Television from a South African based television station because of her vast experience in presenting and anchoring news.

A male participant argued that once the anchors age they need to be replaced by a younger physically attractive anchors and be given other departments besides news anchoring. A female participant added that physical appearance counts in the hiring of news anchors and gave an example of an interviewee who had pimples all over her face as a likely candidate to miss out the chance to get the anchoring job however much experience and education he/she could be possessing.

#### **4.5 Female vs. Male Anchors**

The study sought to investigate who between male and female anchors used frequent and more visual sex-appeals. In focus group one most argued that female anchors used frequent and more visual sex-appeals to attract more viewers. Modes of dressing such as wearing short skirts, revealing tight clothes showing their curves seemed more attractive to male youth viewers according to the participants, while the female youth viewers were attracted to the fashion used by the anchors. Some participants said that news presentation should be done by beautiful women and handsome men and that way they would complement each other. A male participant said that most male news anchors were dressed in suits but women were open to dressing the way they wanted and sometimes they exaggerated. In focus group two, a female participant said that female anchors were more sexually appealing than male anchors and she further stated that to her no male anchor was attractive to her and she loved female anchors and their dressing. A male participant in group two held that both male and female anchors were attractive but it depended on what the youth were looking for during the news anchoring process. In group three most of the participants said that female anchors used frequent and more visual sex-appeals and they specifically pointed out the dressing code, make-up, body size and posture. All female participants in group three agreed that female anchors are more followed because they have the freedom to wear anything and they are

generally used by cloth lines in publicising the latest arrivals. So most female viewers would always watch news to see what is new in the dressing of the anchor they gave an example of Betty Kyalo who always dressed in the latest trends in the fashion industry and they didn't like watching male anchors because they only wore suits.

#### **4.6 Targeted gender viewership**

The study sought to investigate whether there was a particular gender among youths targeted by sexualized anchors. In focus group one a male participant said that the male youth viewers were targeted and gave an example of magazines and newspapers where the sexiest female news anchors and presenters were ranked and nowhere where male news anchors were ranked. In group two a female participant said that news anchoring was not the same as watching programmes and that is why news did not have an age limit such that parents and children could sit together watch news and therefore no specific gender was targeted and the anchors dressed in what made them feel happy and superb. A male participant in group four said that so many male youth talked about Betty Kyalo or Linda Ogutu and how they physically looked or dressed implying that their target was male youth viewers.

#### **4.7 Youth Viewers' Perception of a Sexualized Female News Anchors**

The study had sought to investigate the youth viewers' perception of a sexualized female news anchor. In group one a male participant said that female news anchors were used as sex objects and he revisited the issue of ranking sexiest news anchors and once the word 'sexiest' is included says it all. A female participant said that the youth viewers got the news concept but most of them undressed the anchors in their imaginations and this besides being professional news anchors they were also used as sex objects. Another female participant in focus group one said:

‘Not all anchors are sexy, due to this, professionalism takes lead ahead of the anchors sexual appeal’.

Some participants in group four agreed that those sexualized female news anchors were Sex objects because they exaggerate their dressing and it affected the viewers’ perception towards them. In group three a male participant said that once the female anchors with exaggerated dressing keep walking around in the studio showing off their curves this attracts the youth viewers.

Further the study sought to investigate whether all news anchors embraced the use of sex appeal in news presentation to attract larger youthful audience and how it affected their popularity and consequently that of their station. In focus group one a male participant said that not all news anchors embraced the use of sex appeal in news presentation to attract larger youthful audience and gave the example of Lulu Hassan a news anchor at Citizen Television who always covered her body completely and her popularity is was high. He added that being sexy did not make them popular but the content of the presentation and how it’s was done.

Another male participant argued that the use of words and the voice makes anchors popular besides being sexy. He gave an example of Johnson Mwakazi. Most viewers watched him for he had the masterly of language use and had a pleasant voice. All in group one agreed unanimously that the popularity of news television stations was also based on the style and strategy of news presentation and they compared how Citizen and KBC did their presentation. They held that KBC used the old style of just sitting at the news desk without movements where citizen embraced the movements in studio and this made the anchors look sexier and livelier. Also they said that the choice of news and how the news items were arranged and the timeliness of news was vital for the popularity of the television station. A female participant in group two said that news anchors are not models they may present themselves in other ways but they are professionals in anchoring news. A male participant

argued that the sexiness of an anchor can make a viewer watch news or not because if the main interest of the person was how attractive the anchor is then they would watch news only when the anchor was on air.

A female participant in group two said that the popularity of anchors and their stations sometimes came as a result of the sex appeal that they used during news anchoring. A male participant in group four argued that using sexy female anchors in news presentation to attract larger youthful audience would raise the popularity of the station; this point of view was shared by a female participant. She argued that news anchors are dressed and are given a number of dresses to choose from; she further asked a question:

‘Why do female anchors choose the short and tight dresses instead of long ones and not tight?’

A female participant in group three said that the popularity of a news anchor is determined by their competence in the delivery of news not their physical appearance she gave an example of EBRU television where the anchors are sexy but they are not popular as well as their television station. A male participant said that culture played a role in the use of sex appeal to attract viewers and gave an example of the Muslim female news anchors that were famous though they dressed decently without exposing their bodies, he mentioned Lulu Hassan as a good example.

#### **4.10 Anchors appearance during presentation**

All anchors and field reporters agreed that they did pay extra attention to their looks right before going on air as they are meant to represent their stations and win popularity with their presentation skills and looks. The anchors particularly mentioned that they had a makeup room where the makeup artists did the makeup according to the standards of the station.



#### **4.11 Popularity attribution to sex appeal**

Most of the female anchors agreed that yes, their popularity could be attributed to their sex appeal though they did not confirm that this was their individual case, the field reports though insisted that they did not dress in any sexual manner and mentioned that their popularity could be attributed to the kind of news stories that they reported.

Respondent one said that:

‘In some stations it is obvious that some female anchors try a little too hard and this is not only reflected by the amount of make-up applied but mainly by their body language especially when interviewing celebrities, we see that they feel that they have the sexual power and they use it to their advantage to gain popularity especially among the male viewers.’

The male respondents though did not feel that they used any sex appeal in their presentations and mentioned that the female anchors were always in tabloids and gossip columns because everyone seemed to be interested in their business due to their attractiveness.

#### **4.12 Employer vs. Public Expectations, and most affected gender**

Most respondents felt that employers always wanted them to look tip top as they were the face of the station and the stations were known by their names, wherever they appear they always have to look to be representing the station so the pressure was high though the main reason for pressure to look a certain way came from the general public, the public demanded of the female anchors to have a certain body type and look sexual so as to be accepted, as for the male anchors the general public expected them to have a certain lifestyle and always be suited up, but the pressure was more on the female anchors. If the females dressed in a manner that was old school or had on unattractive make up their rating would drastically drop and they would be the talk of the public.

#### **4.13 Employers, do they consider physical attractiveness when employing Anchors**

The respondents agreed that physical attractiveness did play a major role especially when employing the news anchors; they said that the employers looked for people who were good looking and had a witty character about them. Respondent number five said that:

“When I was applying for the anchoring job I had to send a sample tape of my self-presenting and apart from the experience that I had I had to look good on camera, I had to have a face that people would like”

The respondents said that because they receive your tape before they call you for an interview, they have the time to choose who should attend the interview and this is based on how articulate you are and how you look like on camera. Some of the respondents felt that this was unfair as it would close out very good presenters only because they did not look attractive enough for the employers.

#### **4.14 Are viewers more interested in anchors physical attractiveness or knowledge and expertise**

The respondents felt that this particular question depended on the age group and gender that were viewing the news. For an older and more elite generation of viewers they were interested in the knowledge of the anchors but as for the youth their interest was more on the looks and dressing to the youth, they were always looking for latest trends thus the looks mattered more. Though the anchors and field reporters generally mentioned that they were not really sure what every individual anchor was looking for, they felt that since their physical attributes of the female anchors seemed to be pulling a greater crowd which mostly consisted of youth, and this is what they would consider as the main factor for viewer interest.

The female and anchors mainly mentioned that they would get strange calls from men or hear of requests from their friends that a certain male or female somewhere was interested in their number due to their physical attractiveness.

#### **4.15 Are Viewers distracted by presenter's looks and do they lose concentration on content**

The respondents were of different opinion when it came to this question, the anchors said that some may be distracted by their looks but they hoped that the message they sent during the news presentation is what viewers grasped. The field reporters responded that their looks did not distract their audience as their job did not allow them to look too sexualised and dress in tight clothes and that most of the time where they were dispatched did not allow them to look too feminine and they would even dress in jeans. The male anchors responded that their looks did not affect any viewer's comprehension of the viewers.

A female anchor did comment though that sometimes after a news bulleting she would hear and read on blogs about how she was presenting and how she was dressed, it is on these occasions she wonder if viewers were listening to the bulleting or concentrating on her dressing and body language.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Overview**

This chapter provides a summary of the findings; the conclusion and the recommendations of the study on assessing the youth's perception of Kenyan television women news anchors in Kenya case of University of Nairobi students. It also provides an overview of areas for future research.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The following are the summary of the research findings upon which the conclusion and recommendations of the study were made. The summary was discussed according to the research questions as shown below.

##### **5.2.1 Most Popular Television News Station**

The study found that Citizen TV, K24, KTN and NTV were the most popular news television among the youth in Kenya. In addition the study found that these stations were available online and one could access the news anytime of the day anywhere in the world and that these stations had youthful news anchors and that they brought inspirational testimonials as part of the news. Further the researcher found that EBRU television covered almost everything that was connected to the youth and that Kiss television gave exactly what youth needed as news about celebrities.

### **5.2.2 Factors influencing viewership**

The study found that besides the anchor's abilities to present news other factors influenced viewership. These factors included the code of dressing, the language used in expounding on the news and physical appearance of the anchor played a major role in viewership. In addition the study found that the content of news determined the viewership and differentiated between news anchoring and presentation, youth did not like dull news presented by old anchors. Further the study found that the youth are attracted to participatory news like *The Trend* and *10 over 10* which are basically educational while entertaining. All this factors put to place it was concluded that the youth had a liking for stations that went out of their way to include youth interests in terms of fashion, attractiveness and youthful topics while presenting news.

### **5.2.3 Anchors' Physical Attractiveness, Age and Gender**

The researcher found that anchors' physical attractiveness to some extent influenced the news station youths tune to on television and that the physical appearance showed the inner personality of an anchor. The study also found that most of youth could not watch news if the anchor was not smartly dressed, with makeup and trendy hair. In addition the researcher found that physical attractiveness, age and gender were factors to be considered while employing or hiring a news presenter according to the respondents and that interviewees would dress to impress and age was vital since the elderly ones were viewed as old school. The conclusion was youth were attracted to a more vibrant age group of anchors who dressed well and looked attractive to the youth while presenting news. The majority of respondents preferred female anchors as opposed to male as they had a vast wardrobe to choose from and preferred them to expose their physique rather than covering up.

#### **5.2.4 Female vs. Male Anchors**

The study found that female anchors used frequent and more visual sex-appeals to attract more viewers such as dressing short skirts, too revealing tight clothes showing their curves and it seemed okay and attractive to male youth viewers and the female youth viewers were attracted to the fashion used by the anchors. Further the study found that most male news anchors were dressed in suits but ladies were open to dressing the way they felt okay and sometimes they exaggerated. The study also found both male and female anchors were attractive but it dependent on what the youth were looking for or at in the news anchoring process. Generally it was concluded that female anchors were preferred as their attractiveness was enough to make youth to tune in specifically to a certain station for news.

#### **5.2.5 Targeted gender**

The study found that there was a particular gender among youths targeted by sexualized anchors. The male youth viewers were targeted for example through magazines and newspapers where the sexiest female news anchors and presenters were ranked whereas there was never a ranking for the sexiest male anchor. In conclusion it was clear that the female anchors were free to choose what to wear and yet they choose the tight and short dresses thus targeting the male youth audience as they came out to be more visually attracted to the female anchors as opposed to the females who only watched the ladies for the latest fashion.

#### **5.2.6 Youth Viewers' Perception of a Sexualized Female News Anchor**

The researcher found that the youth viewers' perception of a sexualized female news anchors was used as sex objects and that was the reason for ranking sexiest female news anchors. Also researcher found that the youth viewers got the news concepts but most could undress the anchors in their imaginations and this besides being professional news anchors they were

also used as sex objects as they used their sex appeal to attract their viewers. Further the study found that some news anchors embraced the use of sex appeal in news presentation to attract larger youthful audience, increase their popularity and consequently that of their station. In addition the researcher found that not all news anchors embraced the use of dressing sexy in news presentation to attract larger youthful audience e.g. Lulu Hassan and that being sexy does not make them popular but the anchors attractiveness and content of the presentation and how it was done. Finally the study also found that the popularity of news television stations is also based on the style and strategy of news presentation. The researcher concluded that female anchors were used to attract traffic to their stations by their modes of dressing, the researcher also found out that right from the point of employing the anchors the interviewees looked for attractive female anchors that could be used as sex symbols for their stations.

### **5.2.7 Anchors appearance during presentation**

The researcher found out that it was a requirement for the anchors and reporters to look extra good when going on television, all the anchors had to go through the makeup artist before going on air so that they could be applied on makeup and have their hair done.

### **5.2.8 Popularity attribution to sex appeal**

The researcher discovered that the male respondents though did not feel that they used any sex appeal in their presentations, but the female anchors were always in tabloids and gossip columns because everyone seemed to be interested in their business due to their attractiveness. The study also found out that these female anchors had a following due to their sex appeal and thus it could be concluded that sex appeal played a large part in some of the female anchors popularity.

### **5.2.9 Employer vs. Public Expectations, and most affected gender**

The study concluded that the public had a higher demand for the sexualised female anchors to appear as attractive in news broadcasts and also outside the station. The public felt that since they represented these stations, they should always appear even in public as the sexy anchors we saw on TV. The public did not divide these anchors with their personal lives and the sexy anchors we saw since their business was always in tabloids. The researcher also concluded that the limelight and pressure on the male anchors to look sexy was minimal, this study concluded that the female anchors were most affected by the public's demands.

### **5.2.10 Employers, do they consider physical attractiveness when employing Anchors**

The researcher concluded that physical attractiveness played a major role in getting employed as news anchors, the study found out that employers would choose attractive looking females and males apart from other attributes for interviews, and the ones that did not have a face that matched their profile "*attractive*" would not make it for an interview.

### **5.2.11 Are viewers more interested in anchors physical attractiveness or knowledge and expertise**

The researcher found out that this particular question depended on the age group and gender that were viewing the news. The research concluded that everyone under a different age group had different desires and that the population under the youthful age were more interested in anchors physical attractiveness, while the older generation were interested in knowledge and expertise.

### **5.2.12 Are Viewers distracted by presenter's looks and do they lose concentration on content**

The researcher found out that anchors sex appeal did play a role in playing with concentration of male viewers when watching news presented by a sexualised female anchor. As for the



field reporters how one looked like did not play a major role as they always dressed in accordance with the place that they were being deployed to report from. They did not have time to apply makeup every time and their work did not demand of it from them.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The research was carried out to find out on youths' perception of female news anchors, the researcher specifically sought to find out whether the appearance of women news anchors influenced viewership among the youth, the research found out that anchors' physical attractiveness to some extent did influence the television news station youths tuned into, the study concluded that other factors apart from the physical appearance of female anchors influenced viewership among the youth for example the code of dressing, language use in expounding on the news, and the content of news.

In addition the researcher concludes that the female anchors used frequent and more visual sex-appeals to attract more viewers such as dressing in short skirts, too revealing tight clothes showing their curves and it seemed okay and attractive to male youth viewers and the female youth viewers were attracted to the fashion used by the anchors. The study concluded that the male youth viewers were targeted by use of attractive female anchors for example magazines and newspapers where the sexiest female news anchors and presenters were ranked and often interviewed.

The study concludes that the youth viewers' perception of a sexualized female news anchors is that they are used as sex objects and that was the reason for commonly ranking sexiest female news anchors. Also the study concludes that the youth viewers got the news concepts but most males could not concentrate and would find themselves undressing the female anchors in their imaginations and this besides being professional news anchors they were also

used as sex objects which in return played mind games with the male viewers who instead found themselves undressing the female anchors in their minds instead of grasping the news content.

The study concludes that female anchors influenced the stations youth watch more than male anchors but not all female news anchors embraced the use of sex appeal in news presentation to attract larger youthful audience e.g. Lulu Hassan and that being sexy did not make them popular but the content of the presentation and how it was done and that the popularity of news television stations is also based on the style and strategy of news presentation.

Finally the study concludes that employers play a major role in employing attractive young anchors and employerstogether with the general public demand of these women to be physically attractive and beautiful; there is too much pressure on the anchors to maintain the standards of the station by looking sexualized.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The researcher found out that female anchors play a big role in the popularity of the station through their attractiveness, age and dressing; this has played a big role in attracting both female and male viewers but particularly targeting the male gender.

The researcher recommends that a specific dress code by the female news anchors should be set thereby limiting their exaggeration in dressing though still managing to look presentable and this would reduce the perception that they are used as sex objects despite being professionals in news anchoring.

Further the researcher recommends that besides professionalism in journalism, anchors be hired considering their natural talents. For a News anchors to be hired they should be people

who are naturally creative in words use and this would make them popular without using sex appeals to attract viewers.

Since the study found out that the male viewers were to some extent distracted by the attractive female anchors as they found themselves sexually attracted to the anchors and their concentration distorted, it is obvious that this would reduce the amount of information recalled by male viewers. Therefore the study would recommend the over sexualised female anchors be given news articles that are more concerned with edutainment as opposed to hard news articles.

The study also found out that as female anchors aged they were immediately replaced by younger anchors and given posts in the back office, the researcher would recommend that the aging anchors who still maintained rich knowledge in the media industry be given opportunities to carry out lifestyle shows for the older public thus also engage them.

### **5.5 Need for further research**

Since the rapid growth of the Television Stations there has been a lot of competition among stations, that has made some stations to use different modes in attracting their viewers, sex appeal is a subject that is sensitive but needs more research so as to find out to what extent sex appeal can be used and not be offensive.

Given that this research has major Limitations especially due to the fact that it was only carried out within University of Nairobi, more research should be done on a larger population with different demographics and geographical locations so as to give a general feel on what Kenyans in general think about Female news anchors in Kenya.

There should be more documented literature on the effects of using of different modes of advertising to gain popularity in the media industry and how the general population is affected by this new marketing techniques, does it affect the way the product is received.

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# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A:

### GADO ILLUSTRATION OF SEXUALIZED TELEVISION NEWS ANCHORS



*Fig. 1.1 Gado, 2013 Daily Nation, May 20, 2013*

**APPENDIX B: LETTER OF PERMISSION**

University of Nairobi,  
Main Campus,  
Nairobi.

The Public Relations Manager,

.....

.....

Dear Sir/Madam,

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH  
AMONG YOUR STUDENTS**

I the undersigned, pursuing my master's degree in Mass Media in the above named institution hereby apply for your permission to conduct a research study in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the above named program within the University.

I will appreciate it if I will be granted permission to conduct this study.

Thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Letty Anyango K'Okul.

## APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

This focus group guide schedule has been developed to collect data required to study the youth's perception of Kenyan Television Women news anchors. The data is required for academic purposes only and will be treated with maximum confidentiality. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

**Location .....** **FGD N<sup>o</sup>.....**

1. Which is the most popular television news station among the youth in Kenya?
2. Is their high viewership be attributed to factors other than their abilities to anchor news?
3. Do anchors' physical attractiveness influence the television news station youths tune to?
4. Should physical attractiveness, age and gender be a factor to be considered while employing or firing a news presenter?
5. Between female and male anchors, who uses frequent and more visual sex-appeals and why?
6. Is a particular gender among youths targeted by sexualized anchors?
7. What is theyouthviewers' perception of a sexualized female news anchor? Sex object or a professional information conveyer?
8. Have all news anchors embraced the use of sex appeal in news presentation to attract larger youthful audience?

If no, why have some opted to maintain conservative news presentation, and can this be attributed to their low popularity and consequently that of their station?

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NEWS ANCHORS AND FIELD REPORTERS**

This interview schedule has been developed to collect data required to study the youth's perception of Kenyan Television Women news anchors. The data is required for academic purposes only and will be treated with maximum confidentiality. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

### **Optional: Designation..... Gender.....**

1. Do you strive to look extra attractive during news presentation?
2. If no, why?
3. Do you believe that anchors' popularity can be attributed to their sex-appeal?
4. Is there pressure or harassment from employers and the general public for anchors to use sex appeal in their presentation?
5. If yes, between female and male anchors, who are most affected and why?
6. Do you believe employers consider sexual attractiveness when hiring or firing news anchors?
7. Are viewers more interested in an anchors physical attractiveness or knowledge and expertise of the anchor?
8. Do you think that your viewers are distracted by your looks and forget to concentrate on the news content?



**APPENDIX E: CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK**



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION**

Telegram: Journalism Varsity Nairobi  
Telephone: 254-02-3318262, Ext. 28080, 28061  
Director's Office: 254-02-2314201 (Direct Line)  
Telex: 22095 Fax: 254-02-245566  
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P.O. Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi, GPO  
Kenya

**REF: CERTIFICATE OF FIELD WORK**

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners' meeting held on 26.08.16 in respect of M.A/Ph.D final Project/Thesis defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the student can be allowed to proceed for field work.

Reg. No: K50/74146/2014

Name: LETTY ANYANGO K'OKUL

Title: THE YOUTH'S PERCEPTION OF KENYAN

TELEVISION WOMEN NEWS ANCHORS.

Dr. Joseph Nyanoti  
SUPERVISOR

Dr. Sam Sirangi  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Dr. Ndlovu Ndlovu  
DIRECTOR

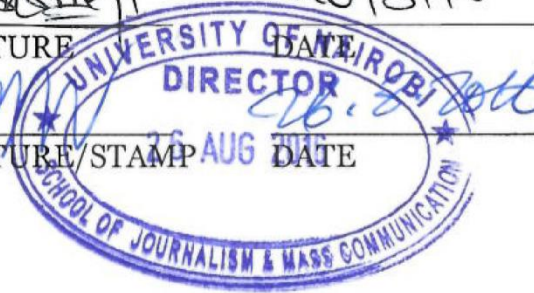
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## APPENDIX F: CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS



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REF: CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_ in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can now be prepared for binding.

Reg. No: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

---

SUPERVISOR

---

SIGNATURE

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DATE

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ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

---

SIGNATURE

---

DATE

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DIRECTOR

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DATE

# APPENDIX G: DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY FORM

## UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

### Declaration of Originality Form

This form must be completed and signed for all works submitted to the University for examination.

Name of Student LETTY ANYANGO K'OKUL  
Registration Number K50/74146/2014  
College COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Faculty/School/Institute SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM  
Department SOJ  
Course Name M.A IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
Title of the work THE YOUTH'S PERCEPTION OF KENYAN  
TELEVISION WOMEN NEWS ANCHORS -  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI CASE

#### DECLARATION

1. I understand what Plagiarism is and I am aware of the University's policy in this regard
2. I declare that this PROJECT (Thesis, project, essay, assignment, paper, report, etc) is my original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for examination, award of a degree or publication. Where other people's work, or my own work has been used, this has properly been acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the University of Nairobi's requirements.
3. I have not sought or used the services of any professional agencies to produce this work
4. I have not allowed, and shall not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his/her own work
5. I understand that any false claim in respect of this work shall result in disciplinary action, in accordance with University Plagiarism Policy.

Signature *Letty Anyango K'Okul*

Date 10/11/16



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