

Lenses on Governance Reforms

A Professional and Ethical Assessment of Role of Media in Reporting Governance Reform Agenda in Kenya

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Abstract: *The study examines the professional and ethical performance of media as guardian of governance reforms in Kenya. The study is premised on the fact that for the media to contribute effectively to the development and sustenance of good governance in Kenya, it must apply the basic principles of patriotism, accountability, transparency and objectivity in the discharge of duties and uphold truth and fairness at all times. Findings of the paper indicate that journalists feel that the increasing number of radio stations in Kenya have enhanced the voice of the public in interrogating issues of governance although reporting is often biased in favour of government. There is also fear that intimidation, censorship and attacks on media and journalists, may have hindered pursuit of stories on bad governance. However, there is commitment to public interest and the public's right to know. Media owners influence editorial decisions, story angles, and prominence of stories on governance. The paper recommends that media owners should desist from influencing any editorial decisions which may affect ethical and professional reporting on governance. In addition, media organizations should be more transparent about their ownership, their editorial decision making processes and the pressures and restraints on reporting on governance. Providing better pay and job conditions for watchdog journalists can help on objective reporting on issues of bad governance.*

Keywords: *Accountability, Communication, Governance, Media, professional*

1. INTRODUCTION

The media can be a powerful force for change in both developed and developing countries. In developing countries, it can have an important role in advancing a pro-poor development agenda, as well as supporting economic growth by stimulating consumer markets (Sparks, 2007). Where it is able to effectively fulfil the roles of watchdog, gatekeeper and agenda-setter, it can improve governance by raising citizen awareness of social issues, enabling citizens to hold their governments to account, curbing corruption, and creating a civic forum for debate. It can also amplify the voice of marginalised and excluded groups. Recent research has shown that the media is serving a growing population of young, rural, and non-literate demographic groups in Africa.

Norris and Odugbemi (2010) argue that the correlation between free press and democratic governance appears quite robust. However, researchers still understand little about how this relationship works in practice, and thus what needs reforming in order to strengthen good governance.

Good Governance is critical in the social, economic and political development of any state (World Bank, 1989; UNESCO, 2005). And the media plays a fundamentally important role in good governance in any democratic state by giving information through which people can hold it to account. What's more, good governance demands citizen participation. This is realised when the media offers a platform for the exchange and interrogation of ideas and issues important to society.

Good governance is characterised by predictable, open and enlightened policies which are facilitated, to a great extent, by the media. Good governance also ensures that there exists effective mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which individual citizens and groups can articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences within existing legal frameworks. The media plays a very important role in facilitating this (Strömberg, 2001).

Ideally, communication provides the foundation necessary for the facilitation of good governance, through promotion of effective government, accountability and the active engagement of participants in civil society.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Journalism is essentially about account giving. It deals with information collection, verification and dissemination. Traditionally and constitutionally, the media has no defined role in governance. It does

not have the power to change any decisions made by various arms of a state, be it the legislature, executive or judiciary. Yet, the media plays a fundamentally important role in the functioning of any society. It plays a watchdog role, keeping the public informed particularly about the operations of the state, defend society from corruption, deal with issues that the public cares about and provide information necessary for democratic decision-making. The media also amplifies the voice of citizens and communicates their opinions to the lawmakers.

However, for the media to contribute effectively to the development and sustenance of good governance they must apply the basic principles of patriotism, accountability, transparency and objectivity in the discharge of their duties and uphold truth and fairness at all times (Dunu, 2013).

It is however clear that political independence from the government is a decisive factor in reporting balance or imbalance in governance news coverage. News media outlets thought to be aligned with the government in one way or another are largely positive or neutral about the government actors in their governance news coverage. In contrast, those generally perceived to be independent from the government are more often neutral or critical of the government actors (Norris, Pippa, and Zinnbauer, 2002).

According to Norris and Zinnbauer (2002), good governance is the basic building block for development. It is the most effective investment that Australia can make in promoting sustained growth, improving living standards and reducing poverty. Support for good governance is not restricted to central governments, but must be adopted by service delivery areas of partner governments, local administrations, civil society and the private sector.

An analysis of media coverage and reflection of governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in both the formulation and execution of decisions. The focus of analysis was on processes and structures within the three arms of government in Kenyan framework.

Media and journalism face numerous challenges in their everyday practices especially with regards to reporting governance. Among the serious challenges facing journalism today is how to be ethical and professional especially when reporting controversial and emotive issues. This research put the ethical and professional challenges into perspective, and sought the views of practitioners to further understand how such concerns impact their work.

3. MEDIA AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance, transparency, accountability and development communication go hand in hand. Good governance and a good government are not the same. Good governance is based on the participation of all people concerned (Muller, 2001). Decentralisation of governmental institutions does not necessarily imply people's participation. Decentralization does not always mean democratization. According to Waisbord and Silvio. (2000), in reality the motives for decentralizing may hide a wish of central powers to get rid of certain responsibilities while tightening their control. This blurs the lines of accountability. For this reason, local media have a crucial role to play in facilitating a mutual understanding between those in power and the communities.

Norris and Odugbemi (2010) argue that news media are important in furthering democratic governance, provided they are set up in a way that allows them to act as effective watchdogs, agenda setters and gatekeepers. Barriers to the fulfilment of these roles include restrictions on press freedom, market failures, and lack of professional standards, weak civil society, and limitations in media literacy and public access to the media.

In theory, the news media can act as watchdogs, to provide a check on powerful sectors of society. Secondly they can be agenda setters, raising awareness of social problems; and lastly as gatekeepers, bringing together diverse interests and viewpoints to debate issues of public concern. However, to what extent and under what conditions do the media perform these roles effectively? (Norris & Odugbemi, 2010).

By playing its watchdog role, the media help bring about reforms, and in the long term assist in creating a culture of civic discourse, transparency, and government accountability. Although the media's effectiveness and power are often overblown, the media's capacity to promote good governance is enhanced if the rights of the press are guaranteed, information is made available to the media and the public, journalists are protected, and news organizations enjoy editorial independence and abide by high ethical and professional standards (Chowdhury, 2004).

According to Wolfsfeld (2004), the press is most effective and less prone to capture by vested interests if there is a plurality of media entities representing diverse views and ownership patterns operating in a competitive market as well as broad public access to the media

4. THIS STUDY EXAMINED THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN GOOD GOVERNANCE AT TWO LEVELS

a) Good Governance in the Media

Media aids good governance by carrying out its work 'objectively' and 'fairly'. Media reports events and happenings with 'professional objectivity'. It neither hides facts nor presents facts selectively. The media ought to remain impartial and report the news as is. It is therefore important to note that the development of independent, legally protected, professionally managed, and economically viable news media is essential to the attainment and sustenance of accountable, responsible and ethical media.

b) Good Governance by the Media

This is where the media enhances good governance by ensuring and supporting the rule of law, accountability and transparency, participation, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority. Through its agenda-setting and watchdog roles, the media brings to the fore salient but critical issues that capture the attention of the government and citizens alike. Through the media, interest groups like civil society, religious organisations and other non-state actors find a platform to air their issues and concerns.

5. OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the level of good governance in the media by focusing on adherence to professional and ethical standards and self-regulation in line with the Code of Conduct.
2. To examine ethical and professional challenges the media face when reporting governance in Kenya.
3. To examine how the media have covered good governance particularly in the three arms of government with special focus on various processes, structures and outcomes;

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What ethical and professional challenges do journalist and media face when reporting issues of governance?
2. What are possible solutions to any impediments journalists and media face when reporting governance?
3. Did the media offer and discuss the appropriate legal frameworks applicable to issues of good governance and the rule of law?
4. Did the media investigate and report unaccountable and irresponsible behaviour?
5. How did the media cover issues of official deceit, malpractices and misappropriations in government?
6. Are the media fair, impartial and balanced when reporting governance?
7. Did the media provide channels for feedback?
8. Did the media promote plurality and diversity of opinion to enhance citizen participation, equity and inclusiveness in issues of governance?
9. How do non-state actors like civil society organisations contribute to media's reporting of governance?

7. METHODOLOGY

The study used a survey methodology. An online questionnaire was to gather data from Internet users. Purposive sampling was used with respondents being mainly journalists (reporters, anchors, editors and correspondents). Purposive sampling was used given the fact that the research focused on the coverage of the issues discussed above, and that the journalists understood not only the factors

informing the coverage but also the context, actors and content of the stories. Moreover, due to time and logistical constraints, purposive sampling was considered the best method to collect views from expert respondents.

The sampling frame was obtained from the list of journalists accredited by the Media Council of Kenya. Based on their accreditations status, the respondents were still active journalists at the time of the study. A total of 149 journalists were sampled and administered with the questionnaire. The study was carried out in a period of six months and focused on the five principles of governance as stated and recognised by UNESCO.

8. PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

1. Transparency and Accountability

The traditional role of the media as conveyors of truthful and accurate information is the cornerstone of Transparency and accountability. As noted above, a key function of the media is to give the public the information necessary for good decision-making. The media can seek to confirm official accounts, reveal official deceit, and correct errors of omission or even unearth malpractices and misappropriation of funds which are against good governance (UNESCO, 2005).

Access to information by the media and subsequently the public is guaranteed by a free and independent media. The media can play a key role in ensuring and enhancing government accountability to the general public by explaining government policies and actions. It can identify and explain government actions, how and why an action has to take place, who is involved and by what standards decisions are made. This then undoubtedly ensures public understanding of government actions and policies while exposing inactions and failures (UNESCO, 2005).

2. Participation

Wide and effective public participation and inclusion are vital to good governance. A free, independent and open media facilitates participation by providing a platform and channel for expression of public views. By providing the information, and platform and channel for the expression of different viewpoints, the media fosters democratic dialogues and attendant development. Democratic engagements are characterised by unrestricted expression of public feelings and assent and dissent on disparate issues (UNESCO, 2005).

3. Rule of Law

In their primary function of information dissemination and education, the media provides the knowledge that citizens need to understand the rule of law as a critical instrument in their protection. Besides informing, educating and explaining to the people the importance of democracy and its core values, the media helps keep state and government officials within expected (constitutional) bounds and the rule of law (UNESCO, 2005).

4. Equity and Inclusion

The media's role in this regard is very simple – providing balanced and fair coverage to all issues in a manner that diverse voices and opinions will be represented. Equity and inclusiveness ensures that people, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, station in society and other factors, are well covered in the media and without discrimination. Article 16 of the Code of Conduct talks about gender non-discrimination with regards to news sources and news subjects and supports the principles of equity and inclusiveness in good governance (UNESCO, 2005).

5. Effectiveness and Efficiency

The media has the ability to investigate and unearth malpractices in society shine the spotlight on institutions that are inefficient and unproductive. This can include an audit of the processes and structures meant to promote efficient provision of public service (UNESCO, 2005).

9. THE MEDIA AS PUBLIC SENTINELS OF GOVERNANCE REFORMS

The role of the media is critical in promoting good governance through institutional monitoring. The media are critical elements on a country's institutional accountability and anticorruption efforts. They have a dual role to play: they not only raise public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies, they also investigate and report incidences of corruption. The

effectiveness of the media, in turn, depends on access to information and freedom of expression, a professional and ethical cadre of investigative journalists, and the availability of regular updates via short- or long-term training and education (Berger & Matras 2007).

According to Servaes (2009), when the media are working well, they prevent corruption via their monitoring activities. Investigative journalism may reveal inequities and violations and, by doing so, reinforce social values. In a very practical sense, they may also reduce incidences of corruption in both the public and private sectors. By the same token, in an environment of free speech and a free press, the media perform a watchdog function and expose social injustices wherever they occur. In an open, pluralistic, and developed society, the media are a particularly effective tool for exposing and preventing corruption; they are successful at this, because corruption cases usually make the news (Servaes, 2009).

The communication media as relates to governance are critical in creating awareness, generating public interest and demand, and placing the issue on the public agenda and building social support. They can play two kinds of advocacy roles: (a) they can support development initiatives by the dissemination of messages that encourage the public to support development-oriented projects; and (b) they can provide decision makers with the information and feedback needed to reach a decision (Servaes, 2009).

According to Servaes (2009), policymakers usually respond to popular appeal, to pressure groups, and to their own social network of policy- and decision makers. Therefore, advocacy, political commitment and supportive policies are often themselves a product of social support systems and empowerment of people.

10. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AS AN ANCHOR OF GOVERNANCE REFORMS

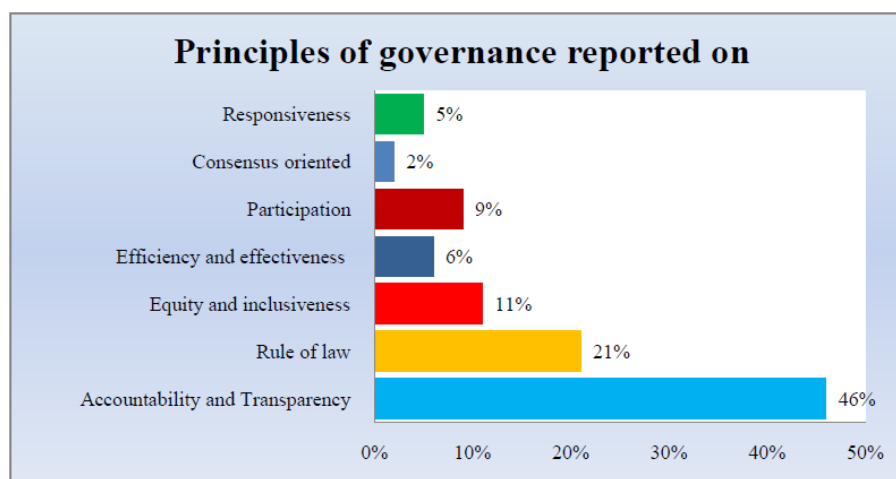
Norris and Zinnbauer (2002) argue that independent journalism, as a potential check on the abuse of power, is a necessary but not sufficient means of strengthening good governance and promoting human development. They suggest that these goals are achieved most effectively under two further conditions. First, in societies where channels of mass communications are free and independent of established interests; and second, where there is widespread access to these media.

Communication also enhances public participation. Participation and monitoring mechanisms may be situated in national efforts to improve public sector performance, increase transparency and reduce corruption. A system of checks and balances, in which communication is one of the key elements, is designed to achieve accountability among and within various agencies of government, manage conflicts of interest in the public sector, effectively disperse power through increasing public participation, and limit situations conducive to corrupt behavior. The effective management within the public sector relies upon these systems of accountability (World Bank 2006a).

Communication enhances the potential for civil society to hold governmental authorities accountable as well as to engage in political decision making. Empowering citizens to demand accountability and participation in decision making is critical to good governance. Participatory communication can only foster in an environment of freedom from political, economic, and social pressures (Servaes, 2009).

11. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Stories on Principles of Good Governance



As shown in the figure above, 46% of the respondents indicated that they had reported on issues of transparency and accountability. This makes it the most reported principle of good governance by the media. 21% indicated that they had examined the issue of the adherence to the rule of law in their stories. There are various ways in which the media can help combat and prevent corruption. A news story can have a direct and “tangible” effect, such as resulting in the launch of an investigation, impeachment, and forced resignation of corrupt political leaders as it helps in enforcing Transparency and accountability by various institutions (Nogara, 2009).

The Pursuit of Profit and its Impact on Reporting on Governance

Question	Response
Has the media adequately embraced its role in enhancing good governance in Kenya?	Yes - 52%
	No - 41%
	No response - 7%
Has the pursuit for profit hindered the media from proper reporting of issues on good governance?	Yes - 60%
	No - 29%
	No response - 11%

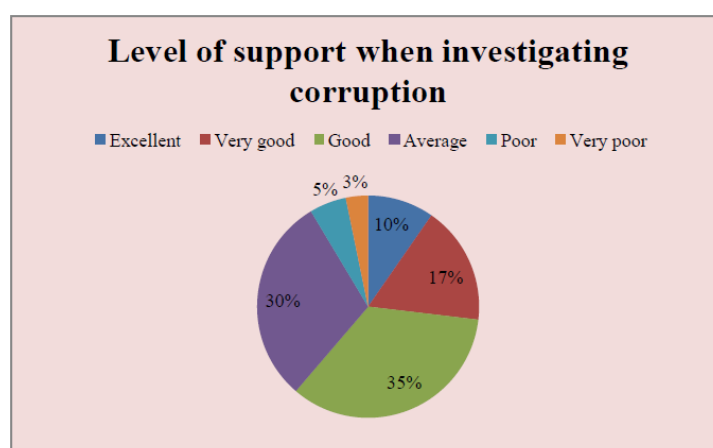
As the table above shows, 60% of respondents believe focus on entrepreneurial profitability affects the quality of reporting on issues of good governance. This may be due to the fact that investigating good governance stories requires significant resources, including time and money which some media enterprises are not willing to commit. The Governance Social Development Resource Centre (2010) report points out that private media can also be influenced by business interests or even government, especially through government advertising or tax cuts. These are profit-oriented strategies which can affect media reporting on governance issues. The concentration of private media in the hand of a few private owners and the pursuit for profit can also restrain the media from reporting on governance issues, as experienced in many Latin American and Caribbean countries (Transparency International 2003).

Media Freedom and Independence in Relation to Coverage and Promotion of Good Governance

Question	Response
Has the media given adequate space for public discourses on issues of good governance?	Yes - 41%
	No - 56%
	No response - 3% gave
Is the media in Kenya adequately free and independent to discuss and report issues that promote good governance?	Yes - 54%
	No - 42%
	No response - 4%

As seen above, 42% of the respondents felt that the media in Kenya was not adequately free to investigate, discuss and report on issues of bad governance. However, 54% indicated that the media was free and independent in that respect. Freedom of expression is one of the most important preconditions for free, unbiased and independent media coverage, from which the freedoms of press and media derive. This right has been defined in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in Article 19 of the UN *Covenanton* Civil and Political rights, the two pillars of the freedom of expression.

Level of Support Received by Journalist When Investigating Corruption



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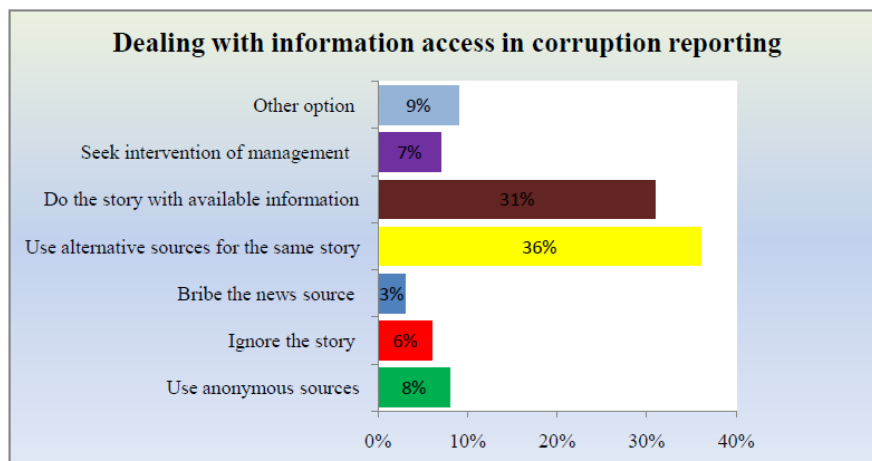
As the chart above shows, 35% of the respondents indicated that level of support that they received from their media houses was good. 3% felt that they received very low (poor ratings) support. Whether private or state owned, there is a need for media freedom organisations or professional organisations for journalist to lobby media owners to recognise the principles and importance of editorial independence. When the media owners are able to recognise the editorial independence of their reporters, and then are they able to offer sufficient support in their pursuance of proper reporting on good governance.

KBC's Coverage of Accountability and Transparency in Government

Question	Response
Has KBC improved its questioning and quest for accountability and transparency in government?	Yes - 38%
	No - 57%
	No response - 5%
Has the proliferation/increase of radio stations enhanced the voice of the public in interrogating issues of good governance	Yes - 64%
	No - 29%
	No response - 7%

As indicated above, most of the respondents (57%) doubt KBC has improved its coverage of issues of good governance, seeking accountability and transparency even in government. However, 64% felt the increasing number of radio stations had enhanced the voice of the public in interrogating issues of governance. State-owned media often have the broadest outreach in developing countries. However, their reporting is often biased in favour of government. A World Bank report on media ownership structures in 97 countries indicates that state-owned media tend to be less effective than private media in monitoring governments (Transparency International, 2003). In addition, media ownership, and the companies and powers behind it are often not transparent and can affect the operations and integrity of the media. This is particularly worse in countries where media control and political power are concentrated in the hands of a single individual.

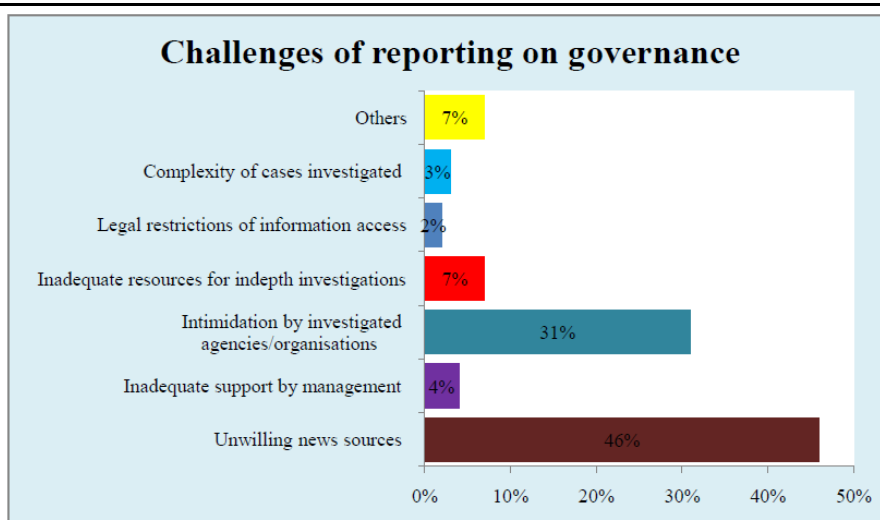
Challenges of Accessing Information When Investigating Corruption



As the graph above indicates, many journalists (31%) would do a story with the information available. 36% indicated that they would use alternative sources for the same story. The respondents indicated that they seek information from different sources that may hold the same information they need. Some said it was better to use the information they had as seeking further information was impossible. Others said it was better to use anonymous sources when impossible to get official information.

Challenges Journalists Face When Reporting Good Governance

Unwilling news sources and intimidation are greatest challenges faced by journalist when reporting on good governance. From the graph above, the biggest impediment to reporting on governance is unwillingness of news sources to provide information and this was 46% of the respondents. 31% indicated that intimidation from investigated agencies/organisations was their greatest challenge. Other challenges included inadequate resources and time for in-depth investigative journalism and the complexity of cases investigated. Some of the respondents reported that they had had their lives threatened because of investigating corruption.

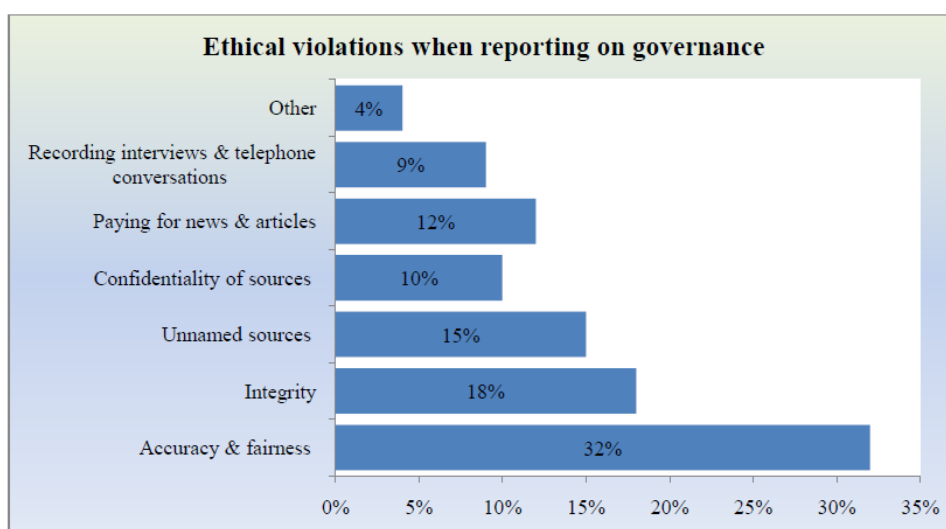


Effects of Reporting Corruption and Governance

Question	Response
Have you or your media house ever been warned or reprimanded for investigating and reporting corruption or any other issue related to bad governance?	Yes - 58%
	No - 37%
	No response - 5%
Have political disincentives, including intimidation, censorship and attacks on the media and journalists, hindered the pursuit of stories on bad governance?	Yes - 58%
	No - 29%
	No response - 13%

As the figures above show, many journalists (58% of the respondents) fear political disincentives, including intimidation, censorship and attacks on media and journalists, may have hindered their pursuit of stories on bad governance. 58% of the respondents stated that their media houses had at one time or another been warned or reprimanded for publishing corruption stories or any other issue on bad governance touching on particular individuals or organisations.

Ethical Violations When Reporting Good Governance



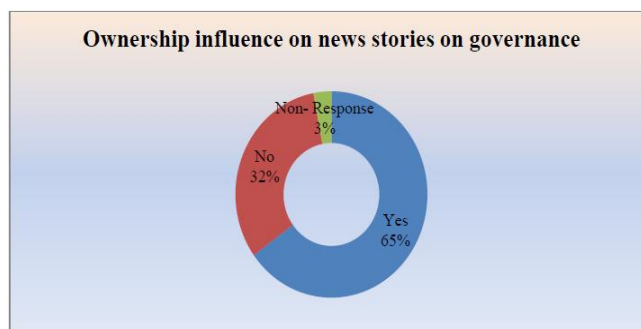
Many respondents (32%) revealed that accuracy and fairness were some of the most violated ethical principles while 18% indicated that integrity had suffered as a consequence of their reporting on governance issues. 15% used unnamed sources. Other ethical violations include inability to maintain confidentiality of sources and paying for news and articles. Some respondents, however, indicated that that their violation of the principles was justified by their commitment to public interest and the public’s right to know. Moreover, they publish the stories after consultations with their editors and legal teams. They also felt they had exercised due diligence, and adhered to the code of conduct before publishing stories on governance.

Impact of Recent Laws on Reporting on Governance

Question	Response
Have the recent media legislations, especially the Kenya Information and Communications (Amendment) Act 2013 with the clauses, fines and penalties thereon impacted investigative reporting?	Yes - 68%
	No - 26%
	No response - 6%
Does the government (including county governments) engage the public through the media to facilitate good governance?	Yes - 24%
	No - 59%
	No response - 17%

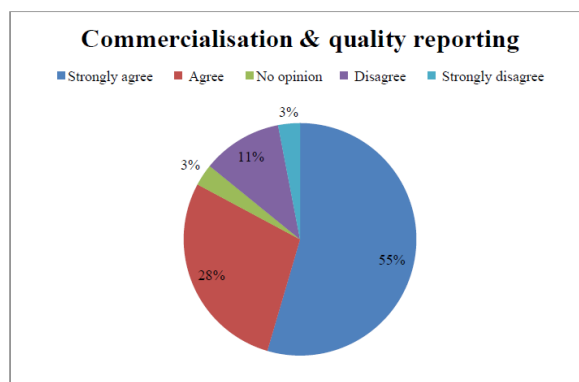
It is clear that the recently enacted legislations, specially the Kenya Information and Communications (Amendment) Act 2013, have had a significant impact on investigative reporting. 68% of the respondents said the clauses, fines and penalties therein will negatively affect investigative reporting. 24% of the respondents felt that the government (including county governments) engages the public through the media to facilitate good governance. Transparency International’s 2013 Global corruption report indicates that a country’s legal framework has a direct impact on the space available to journalists have to do their work with integrity, and their capacity to resist undue influence and report impartially. This is particularly true for developing countries where democratic structures are not well established. In such settings, the media can be prevented from playing its watchdog role by specific restrictions imposed on their operations.

Media Owners’ Influence When Reporting Corruption and Bad Governance



Most of those surveyed, 65% as indicated above, said media owners influence editorial decisions, story angles, and prominence of stories on governance. Respondents revealed that sometimes editorial managers acting on behalf of media owners re-wrote edited and cleared stories before publication. According to Callamard (2010), media ownership structures often have the potential to resist undue influence on reporting by either governments or private interests. Djankov (2001) argues that in order to promote the values of public-interest journalism and enhance the quality and integrity of journalistic reporting, special attention should be directed at raising professional standards, and principles of transparency both of ownership and political affiliation. In terms of media ownership, there is a need for governments “to enforce strict transparency rules concerning the management, funding and ownership of media”.

Impact of Extreme Commercialisation on the Interrogation of Issues of Governance



As the chart above shows, most of those surveyed or 83% of the respondents, agreed, 55% of them strongly, that media commercialisation has affected the quality of reporting in relations to good governance. A small number, 14% thought commercialism did not impact the quality of reporting on

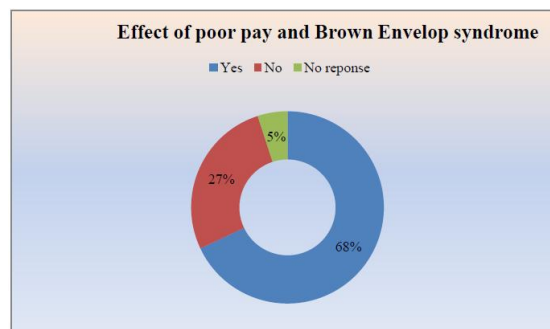
governance. According to Norris and Odugbemi (2010), the media is unable to fulfil its watchdog role by obstacles such as restrictions on press freedom, too much focus on commercialisation, market failures, lack of professional standards, weak civil society, and limitations in media literacy and public access to the media.

Biased and Ethnic Reporting of Governance Issues

Question	Response
Is the media partisan and biased when reporting corruption and application of the rule of law on various issues of governance?	Yes - 49%
	No - 47%
	No response - 4%
Has the public used citizen journalism as a way of fighting corruption and promoting good and accountable governance?	Yes 44%
	No - 49%
	No response - 7%

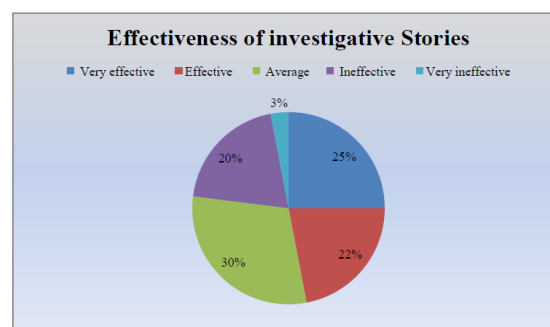
It is evident that 59% of respondents surveyed believe the media practices partisan, biased or ethnic reporting of stories related to corruption scandals, application of rule of law and on various issues of governance. Those interviewed indicate that some political and ethnic factors often inform the coverage of corruption issues. In developing countries with deeply entrenched patronage systems, the media may also be affected by clientelism, making it difficult to break free from its political or business constraints (Governance Social Development Resource Centre (GRDC) 2010)

Poor Pay and Brown Envelop Syndrome’s Effect on Coverage of Governance



Most respondents, or 68%, agreed that poor pay has promoted the brown envelop syndrome which has become a major hindrance to good reporting on issues of accountability and transparency. In fact, those interviewed say corruption is rife in the media and that money often influences the publication or ‘killing’ of stories. Some journalists are also often bribed to change stories, publish false information. According to Minnie (2007), professional standards of journalism in many developing countries are generally considered as low due to inadequate standards of training, lack of quality control within the media, and high turnover of staff. This is particularly the case in Africa and is likely to make the media more vulnerable to corrupt practices. Poor pay, working conditions and under-resourcing of media are also likely to breed corruption. In contexts where journalists receive low wages and fear losing their jobs, good reporting and compliance with ethical values are supplanted by the desire to make money. In such contexts, journalists are likely to accept gifts, entertainment or bribes to complement their salaries in exchange for favourable reporting. Prospects for more lucrative careers can also introduce a bias when reporting on potential employers.

Effect of Investigative Journalism on Good Governance



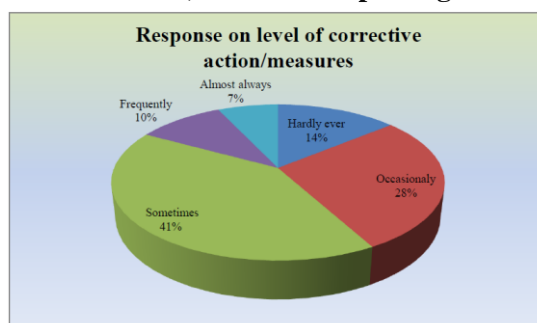
As the chart above shows, 45% of the respondents felt that the media was effective or very effective in enhancing good governance through investigative stories. 23% felt that the media was very

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ineffective or ineffective in its reporting of governance. The measure of effectiveness was based on whether the media was able to achieve corrective or retributive actions after reporting on bad governance.

According to Callarmand (2010), one of the pre-requisites for fighting corruption and bad governance through the media is that the problem must be publicly acknowledged and denounced by the media community through regular reports and stories. Investigative journalism, as a powerful tool to fight corruption and uncover corruption in the media, can help in this regard.

Impact (Corrective Measures and Action) of Media Reporting on Bad Governance



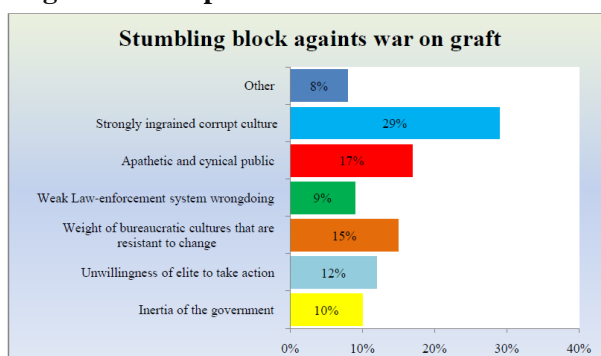
A majority of the respondents (41%) felt that sometimes media reports on bad governance played a role in the corrective measures and action while 28% thought that this occasionally happened. 14% felt that the media hardly has any effect on bad governance. While watchdog reporting may push the wheels of change and reform, however, the media have little control of the direction these take and the obstacles they face. The impact of watchdog journalism is often diminished by the inertia of governments, the unwillingness of elites to take action, the weight of bureaucratic cultures that are resistant to change, a law-enforcement system that is incapable of punishing wrongdoing, and an apathetic and cynical public (Coronel 1999: 18).

Gagging the Media

Questions	Response
Are there efforts to gag the media through legislation, fines and penalties and are these informed by the media's watchdog role with regards to good governance?	Yes - 89%
	No - 7%
	No response - 4%
Do you think patriotism is an issue when reporting governance?	Yes - 75%
	No - 19%
	No response - 6%

A large majority of those interviewed, or 89%, believe that there are efforts to gag the media through legislative fines and penalties due to its watchdog role. 75% of the respondents also agreed that patriotism was key to reporting on issues of good governance. There is broad consensus that a free press helps curb corruption by improving “citizens’ accessibility to information which in turn makes it more difficult for politicians and public servants to get away with corrupt behaviours. In particular, the media plays a key role in exposing corruption and raising general awareness of its detrimental effect upon society, as well as in promoting integrity and accountability norms, values and practices in society. Research has also shown that accountability and transparency tend to improve as the access to information increases” (Fardigh et al., 2011: 90-91).

Impediments on the War against Corruption



Almost a third of those interviewed, or 29%, blamed a culture of deeply entrenched corruption as one of the major stumbling blocks on the war against corruption. 17% felt that an apathetic and cynical public, reluctant or seemingly resigned to the rampant graft, as another stumbling block. 15% blamed the weight of bureaucratic cultures that are resistance to change as one of the impediments against the fight on corruption. One of the pre-requisites for media engagement and success in fighting corruption is that the problem is publicly acknowledged and denounced by the media community through regular and consistent reports and stories. Investigative journalism can help in this regards as a powerful tool to fight corruption and uncover corruption in the media. The use of free media space and operating within the legislative framework will enhance media achievements in being part of the solutions to corruption in society and governance systems.

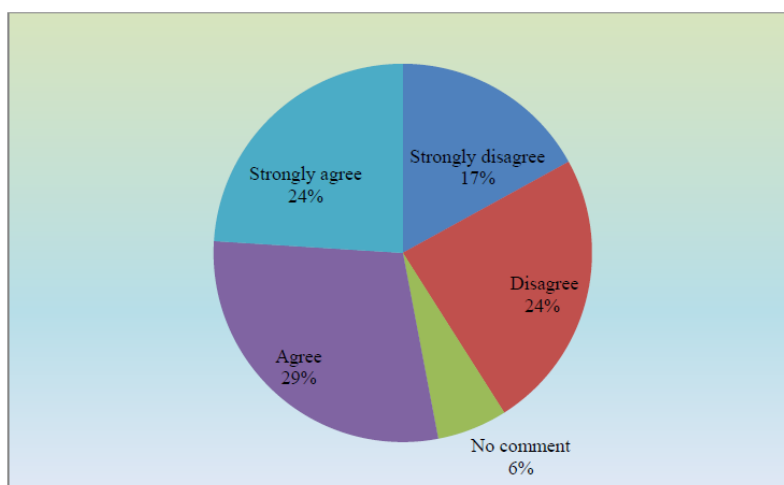
Effects of Inaction on Journalists' Morale

Questions	Response
Do you sometimes feel disappointed that corruption cases unearthed by the media have not been acted upon after so much effort and does this discourage you from pursuing similar stories?	Yes - 69%
	No - 27%
	No response - 4%
Do the media provide contextualised reporting by handling systemic, historical or structural questions on corruption cases?	Yes - 60%
	No - 37%
	No response - 3%

Many of those interviewed (69%) expressed their disappointment with little or no action taken on corruption cases unearthed by the media despite the investment of huge monetary and time resources and effort. This, they indicated, had discouraged them from pursuing similar stories in future. In his study of investigative reporting in Latin America, Waisbord (2004) has indicated that factors unrelated to the quality of journalistic work affect the impact of an exposé. These include the timing of the report's release, the prestige of the news organization, and the production values of the investigation. Scandals involving well-known figures and sensational details get more public attention as do investigations that appeal to the public's voyeuristic appetites. Structures and systems are hard to explain. Journalists throughout the world are accustomed to dealing with the current and the empirical; they are generally handicapped in handling systemic, historical or structural questions. Even if they had this skill, however, such content would find scant space in the commercially oriented media. Stories that have a human and dramatic element sell better. It is also easier to correct wrongdoing committed by an individual rather than one that involves systemic or structural change (Waisbord, 2004).

Scandal mongering and Kenyan Media

Has the Kenyan media become more of a scandal monger whose role is to titillate and amuse citizens, rather than inform and mobilize them for reform with regards to good governance? Most of those surveyed, or 53%, agreed with the statement. 41% disagreed.



Kaplan (2002) argues that competitive media, coupled with democratic institutions and structures to scrutinize wrong doing, create a hothouse environment for scandal politics. This type of politics becomes a permanent feature of democracies and does not necessarily result in either cleaner

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governments or more responsible media. Instead, scandals lead to cynicism rather than a renewed commitment to democratic values and institutions. Kaplan further argues that in many developing countries, accusations of corruption and even bad governance played out in the media are mere parts of political contestations. The charges of malfeasance sometimes made by organisations friendly with accusers have become regular media fare.

Using Financial Incentives to Access Information from Sources

Questions	Response
Have you ever used financial incentives to get access to news sources and information in pursuit of stories of corruption, system inefficiency and ineffectiveness as relates to good governance?	Yes - 23%
	No - 47%
	No response - 30%
Have you ever used surreptitious news gathering techniques including hidden cameras or microphones to obtain information in pursuit of stories related to bad governance?	Yes - 40%
	No - 47%
	No response - 13%

As the table shows, 23% of the respondents indicated that they had used financial incentives to get access to news sources and information in their pursuit of stories on corruption, system inefficiency and ineffectiveness. 40% of those sampled, admitted using surreptitious news gathering techniques including hidden cameras or microphones to obtain information on bad governance. Published stories may sometimes contain information obtained through bribery. The stories may also contain false or skewed information meant to favour particular individuals or organisations. Such practices undoubtedly undermine the integrity and impartiality of media reporting, resulting in widespread practice of fictional news, biased news or news for sale (Spence 2008).

Training and Capacity to Report Governance

Question	Response
Is journalism education and skills received sufficiently prepared you to report governance and become an effective watchdog?	Yes - 67%
	No - 27%
	No response - 6%
Do editorial policies at your work place facilitate your reporting and exposure of bad governance?	Yes - 64%
	No - 27%
	No response - 9%

Most of those surveyed, or 67%, indicated that the knowledge and skills they received during their journalism training adequately prepared them to effectively play the watchdog role. 27% felt that editorial policies in their media houses encouraged them to report and expose bad governance. Some of major challenges to the way the media promotes good governance include lack of or inadequate training, poor technical skills among journalist, low professional standards, limited financial resources, inadequate legal frameworks and an undemocratic political system. In addition, corruption in the media may further undermine the role that the media can play in fighting corruption and promoting good governance and accountability (Spence 2008).

12. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

That the media can enhance good and accountable governance is not in doubt. But such capacity depends on its ability to provide accurate or truthful and robust reporting on issues of governance. This can be further potentiated by its capacity investigate malpractices, excesses and failures and provide the information necessary for the development and sustenance of good and accountable governance. In other words, the media can raise awareness on social problems by informing elected officials about public concerns and needs and giving society the platform through which they can ventilate, engage with issues and participate in public opinion formation.

In addition, the media can provide a platform and channel through which the governors and the governed can interact. It can offer the space through which the voices of the ordinary populace can be heard. Granted, it must not pander to the whims and interest of the elite, and the (politically and economically) powerful at the expense of the issues of genuine public interest. For the media to effectively promote good governance, it must be free from any kind of influence, particularly political, ownership, commercial and government. Such is not the case with the Kenyan media which

are often owned, controlled or easily manipulated by the elite. Granted, it is important that the media, be it commercial, public or community be interested in issues of good governance as the basis for the advancement of democracy and development

What's more, the media must uphold the professional tenets of 'truth' and accuracy, objectivity, fairness, balance, impartiality, as well as embrace principles of patriotism, accountability and transparency in their work. A credible media is one that offers accurate and unbiased information. This promotes trust in the media as a reliable institution capable of midwifing change in society, and upholding the rule of law. The Code of Conduct provides the foundation for good governance in the media and the development of a reliable and credible media that cares about the welfare of society

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

Training of journalist on investigative reporting skills and ethical standards accompanied by adequate funding of investigative journalism will improve reporting on governance issues like corruption, accountability and transparency.

Media owners should try and desist from influencing any editorial decisions which may affect ethical and professional reporting on governance. In addition, media organizations should be more transparent about their ownership, their editorial decision making processes and the pressures and restraints on reporting on governance. Providing better pay and job conditions for watchdog journalists will help objectively report on issues of bad governance with resistance to influences like bribery. The media should deepen the information role they play in facilitating participatory governance by explaining processes of government and public policy formulation, as well as by monitoring government performance.

Journalist should ensure that they adhere to ethical standards and public interest principles as they seek information from news sources. Ethical standards with public interest principles should guide how, if, when a story should be published. There is need for media enterprises and journalists to exercise fairness, objectivity and professionalism when reporting on stories that involve governance and more especially when conflicts are involved. Such reporting accords the public the opportunity to make objective decisions as to what is factual and what is not in a way that enhances proper feedback for good governance. Journalists and media enterprises should provide background information that includes legal/constitutional provisions that relate to the stories they carry. This calls for capacity building for the media on the Constitution and related good governance requirements. Journalists and media houses should distinguish the sensational, dramatic and political and factual issues when reporting. Differentiation between comment, fact and conjecture should be made in line with the code of conduct. Stories should be reported in context and summative wrapping -up stories should be discouraged as it destroys objectivity.

The coverage of governance issues is limited in both quality and quantity across every type of media; therefore; the governance coverage should be increased, and the quality of governance reporting must be enhanced. There is no denial that well-informed citizenry and society can help them make better decisions and increase the level of their participation in development and governance. To contribute to achieving this goal, the role of media in disseminating quality news about governance is indispensable, if not paramount. To achieve a more balanced focus, media outlets should focus on other state and non-state actors such as other state agencies, county governments, businesses, social and political organizations and citizens in general when reporting on issue of governance. This is because to enjoy wholesome fruits of good governance, the media should exercise absolute inclusivity and participation of all concerned entities.

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