

Influence of Televised Crime news on Audience Actions

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Abstract

Most television newscasts often relay crime stories with detailed descriptions and vivid images. Literally, the media set the agenda of what the audience should pay attention to and think about by selecting crime stories, the audiences are however not usually told how to think about those selected stories. This could mean that the degree to which exposure to televised crime news stories influences audience perception about crime is not explicit and therefore not clear. This study aimed at documenting audience perception of prevalent crime topics in televised news content in order to interpret the actions/behaviour of the audiences. This paper presents results obtained from a qualitative study undertaken in Milimani geographical area of Nakuru town. The study was guided by McCombs and Shaw's Agenda Setting and Gerbner's Media Effects theories to collect and analyse data. The population comprised all categories of people residing, working or learning within Milimani area of Nakuru town. The total sample was 30 participants, an acceptable size for a qualitative study. The results show that different viewers react in varied ways to televised crime news and consequently act differently in varied contexts. This is an indicator that televised crime news influence audience behaviour and consequently, affirming the influence of news bulletins on audience perception of social issues, and in the process, they influence the audience with what to think about because of the emotions they evoke. The question lingers: is televised crime news useful? How much can the journalist reveal? How do audience actions affect the journalists work?

Key Words: Televised crime news, Influence, Audience, Actions

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Introduction

Crime activity is a global phenomenon that manifests itself in various forms and at different levels of magnitude. Whereas crime in itself is not a new phenomenon, it is the diverse and changing strategies that criminals employ which pose great concern for governments leaving them grappling with ways to contain it. To compound this, the reality of crime as a potentially everyday phenomenon in society has been taken a notch higher by the way media content determines the aspects that the audience focuses on. This is because most information that people receive about criminal activities is obtained through the varied media outlets.

Today, the media still has immense influence on its audiences as has been reported in the past (Han Er, 2014), although it does not only rely on propaganda techniques as perceived in the past media activities. Instead, it interrogates different themes that reflect the contemporary society. Crime is one such theme that the media capitalizes on and spends substantial amount of air and print space to capture audience attention. Most of studies have used empirical evidence to establish the impact of the media on the levels of violence by pointing out that the effects of the media cannot be inferred just by analysing the content of media texts. This approach is further complicated by the diversity of media. Bearing this argument in mind, this study diverts from the empirical studies to focus on audience perceptions and actions resulting from exposure to televised crime news in Kenya, which opens more spheres of interrogation because despite the attention that televised crime news receives from diverse Kenyan audiences, it is not clear how such news influence how the audience perceive real crime situations and how they react.

This study aimed to obtain qualitative information that was subjected to thematic interpretation of the participants' perceptions, guided two theories: Agenda Setting of Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) and the second one is Cultivation Theory by Gerbner and Gross (1976), which were used to complement each other to explain audience focus on televised topics as a result of agenda setting strategies and the influence such news could have. The second theory used in this study is the Cultivation Theory which is based on the area of communication research that investigates relationships between exposure to television and beliefs and attitudes about the world. This theory was introduced by Gerbner in 1969 and later expanded by Gerbner and Gross (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Gerbner and Gross posited that television is the primary common source of socialization and everyday information in society and that most television programming shares similar story telling features with various socialization activities Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1994).

Cultivation Effects on Television Viewers

Many scholars have argued in affirmation about the effects of television viewing on the viewers. Some studies claim frequent viewing of television actively leads viewers to "cultivate" information they see on television and integrate it into their real-world judgements. Although the work of Shrum, (1999), cited in Signorielli (2005) supports Gerbner's theory, he instigates criticism, claiming 'television does not necessarily change attitudes, but makes them stronger' (Shrum, 2002, p. 58; cited in Signorielli, 2005, p. 20). Shrum (2002) develops the argument further, stating the images people engross from heavy exposure make the images more readily available, and so people rely on these violent images when building a mental judgement. Similarly, subsidiary research proposes that television has 'cultivated' the attitude of humans, actively brain washing them to believe the world is a disturbed place. This is where the phenomenon of the "Mean World Syndrome" comes to light.

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The cultivation hypothesis therefore postulates that greater exposure to television causes audiences to feel an increased sense of fear, victimization and a greater sense of vulnerability which bases the foundation for the notion of mean world syndrome (Signorielli, 2005). The concept developed by Gerbner and his colleagues in 2003 furthers their research on Cultivation Analysis. The world ‘cultivates’ to build an image of a mean and selfish world (Gerbner & Gross, 1978; cited in Seger, 2007). The long term exposure to violence forces audiences to interpret the world to be a more dangerous and unsafe society than it truly is, with every individual being at risk of harm. The content displayed on television, begins to shape an individual’s view on society, to alter the way they perceive the real world. Viewers take aggressive television content and create a view that the world is a hostile and unpleasant place. Audiences can sometimes become more fearful to go outside, or they begin to fear the concept of life as a whole (Doerken, 1983). Previous study had claimed that heavy exposure to television often results in more people purchasing home security devices because of their manipulated beliefs and high probability of criminal victimization. This is particularly accurate if the individual already lives within a high criminal area. Their change in attitude is likely to be more powerful, as it only confirms their real-life experience (Sparks, 2010).

Audience living in areas with high crime rates positively correlate with the level of fear they grasp from violent messages and images on television. Increased fear is significantly linked to heightened fear amongst victims from diverse demographics. For example, middle age audiences are more likely to be white, lower-income women. They are believed to have an amplified probability to develop a more advanced sense of fear in contrast to other social groups (Shanahan and Morgan; 1999). Based on these explanations, the present study purposed to determine audience responses to the perceptions that they formed about televised crime news.

Methodology

This study was undertaken within Milimani estate in Nakuru Town. Milimani is located in the Nakuru Town East, in the London County Assembly Ward, which also includes London estate and Viwanda in Nakuru Town East Constituency, Nakuru County in the Rift Valley region of Kenya. Milimani estate is situated in the Northern part of Nakuru town, on the southern slopes of Menengai Hill. Until early years of 2000, Milimani was an exclusive residential location mostly preferred by top business people and civil servants. This area was once strictly planned as a residential estate, where mostly single residential buildings stood on one or more acres plots of land. But this has slowly become crowded with discos, hotels, hospitals, *Matatu* termini and commercial premises.

Consequently, various facilities such as universities, colleges, schools, hospitals, hotels, guest houses and an assortment of businesses have been established within Milimani estate. This situation in effect transformed the landscape and lifestyle of the people of Milimani in the sense that the entry of diverse businesses and varied social amenities opened up the once exclusive space to various activities and people. In effect, there is a concentration of different cadres of people in one geographical area who carry out most their activities day or night in the once exclusive Milimani estate. This concentration of diverse cadres of residents rendered the area ideal for this study because all categories of people, representing the residents of Nakuru town, live or work within Milimani.

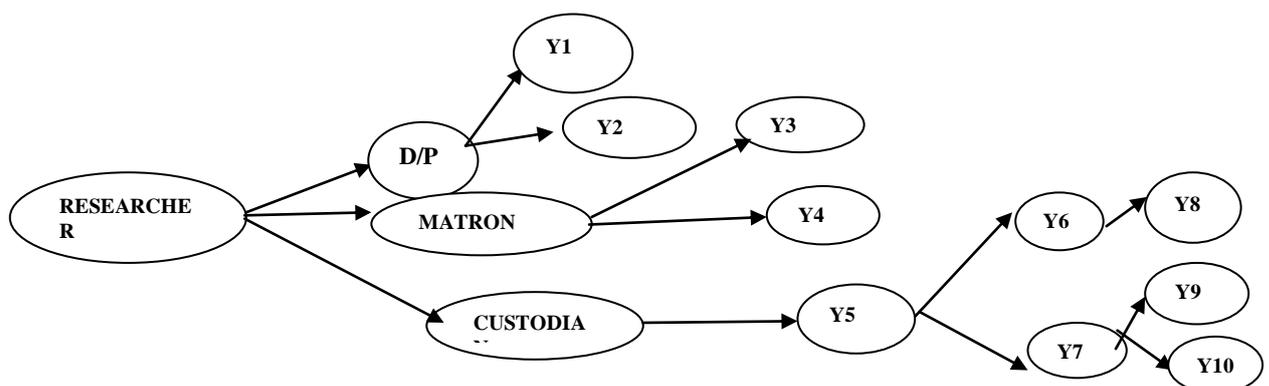
This study used qualitative exploratory case study approach. The approach usually sets to explore any phenomenon, which serves as a point of interest to the researcher and the approach cuts across all disciplines (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Yin, 2009). This study was

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informed by Creswell's (2007) argument that the researcher can choose an individual, a group of identified aspects, an incident, a community or a specific geographical area. This study adopted a social constructionist paradigm (Schwandt, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2011), which served as the main guiding principle in analysing and understanding the responses generated from the study participants because the study focused on participant perceptions, which are often individualized. Social constructionism traces origins in part to the interpretivism thought (Charmaz, 2006). However, while the two may share common philosophical roots, social constructionism is distinct from interpretivism. It is more concerned with meaning than structure because it stresses the role of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997).

Data was generated through in-depth interviews guided by pre-planned interview guide questions. The researcher made follow up probing questions in a bid to understand how the participants made sense of televised crime news stories. In that respect, the study was informed by Yin's (2003) assertion that a case study should be considered when either the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions, or the researcher cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study, or the researcher wants to cover contextual conditions because they are believed to influence the phenomenon under study; or, finally, the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. The estimated population of the study area was 2, 451 composed of representations from all cadres of people who resided, worked or learned within Milimani estate at the time of data collection. The researcher used a self-constructed sample frame, by purposively selecting the cohorts of participants for this study: this is allowed in qualitative research as opposed to an already documented frame (Bazeley; 2013, Creswell 2007; Silverman, 2006). This is where cohorts were identified based on the different categories of people who spent most of their day in Milimani estate. This therefore means the sample in this study was not purely pre-specified; it was open although there was an approximated guide to relevant categories and size of the participants as recommended in qualitative studies.

In line with the preceding explanation, sampling was done by two strategies. First, purposive sampling, which was done to select six cohorts of participants based on the identifiable distinct groups of people residing, working or learning in Milimani estate. Sampling then proceeded to snowball where selected participants assisted to recruit other participants for the study. This was appropriate because all the potential participants could not easily be located and recruited directly by the researcher. This strategy is demonstrated in figure 1 below:



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Figure 1: Youth participants snowball sampling process

The study sample categories are summarized in table 1 below. The table does not indicate absolute sample size but an overview of the categories of the participants in this study.

Table 1: Study Sample Cohorts and Size

S/No	Category	Initial anticipated number	Actual number that participated	Reasons for variation
1	Youth (School/College/University)	10	Y1-Y9	One was unavailable the last minute
2	Retail Business Owners	4	RB1-RB3	One left the interview venue just minutes after settling to start, to attend to a personal matter
3	Hotels/Lodges Business	4	HB1-HB3	One was not available
4	Medical/Hospital Staff	4	M1-M3	One got an emergency just before interview begun
5	Domestic Residents	4	DR1-DR4	All were available
6	Private Security Guards	4	PSG1-PSG4	All were available
	Total	30	Actual 26	Acceptable number in qualitative study
		Participants		

Key: Y=Youth; B=Business; BH= Hotel Business; M=Medical staff; DR=Domestic Residents; PSG=Private Security Guards

Data in this study was generated via in-depth interviews, guided by a semi-structured interview protocol consisting of 22 questions that helped to elicit responses to address four research objectives and questions. This method involves direct, one-on-one engagement with individual participants and can take place face-to-face or over the phone, but this study used the face-to-face mode, where the researcher first established rapport with participants to make them feel comfortable and at ease to facilitate generation of insightful responses regarding the topic under investigation.

The interview guide open questions helped in establishing the types of perceptions formed about crime, based on television news coverage as determined by the mode of representativeness in the news texts and images to unravel the degree of representation, as perceived by the participants. The flexibility of this approach allowed for the discovery or

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elaboration of information that could be vital to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the researcher.

Results and Discussion

All the participants in this study affirmed that televised news occupies a large percentage of air space for many television channels and that such news causes them to worry and to feel that the world is not a safe place to live in. In this regard, bad news may affect the viewer both in terms of news comprehension and emotional reaction. The key element to be discerned in this study is how viewers feel about what they have perceived from the televised crime news and how they react.

Research objective (d) of this study aimed at determining how the audiences react wherever they are to the perceptions they form about crime as a result of viewing crime news. In order to achieve this objective, the participants were asked “if the televised crime news stories influenced the way they reacted or even acted”. This question was followed by subsequent probing questions that elicited varied responses from the participants.

Table 2 illustrates how the responses were constructed. From the summary in table...one participant was categorical and sounded as though he had despaired. This participant said:

I do nothing, what can I do? You have seen that even very highly protected people are attacked and even killed, so I actually leave it to God, may be just waiting for my turn, I will deal with it when it comes.

This is a strong indication of desperation among the viewers. Such a reaction is indicative of apathy because of the tendency to just give up and do nothing. It can be construed that the participants, and by extension Kenyans, do not think that they are protected against criminals and that is why they seem to surrender and wait for their fate.

There were also spontaneous reactions to different news items by all the participants in this study. They all indicated that they took every precautionary measure to stay safe because of the way the news indicate that there is no escape whenever you are targeted. Many residents within Milimani in Nakuru indicated that they feel unsafe despite the police official reports indicate a reduction in criminal activities within Nakuru. Such fears, when not proportionate to the actual threats faced, can adversely affect both the individual quality of life and the well-being of the community as a whole.

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Table 2: Audience Responses to Perception of Crime

Perception	Responses	Category
Crimes are everywhere	Do nothing	All
We, and our property are unsafe	-Lock doors all the time, -Alerting friends of my movements	All
Crime news are terrifying	Avoid socializing to stay safe	Youth
Criminals trail your movements before they strike	-Be discrete/Secretive -keep neighbours off my house-avoid 'nyumba kumi' exposure	Domestic Residents(DR)
Law enforcers Collude with Criminals	-Avoid employing security guards	-Retail Business -Domestic Residents (DR)
Criminals are so daring, they fear no one and no time	-reinforcing the fences, -not allowing children to play unattended, -taking their children to school physically and picking them up	-Domestic Residents (DR) -Business
Criminals Target Isolated people	Formed/joined Milimani residents' Association to feel safe	-DR -Business
Never take crime for granted	-Increased security personnel -installed security cameras -use hand scanner gadgets activity. -Educate employees on terrorism related threats	-DR -Business Medical/Hospital
Crime is a great risk to our survival	-Updated locks -risk Insurance cover taken against terrorist attacks; -employment of crisis management specialist	Hotel Business -Retail Business
-Crime is a threat to Lives and livelihoods -displeased with suspicion news reports.	-Ignore -Hide -apathy	Private Security Guards

Comments made by the different participants in this study indicate that televised crime news scares them, makes them conscious of the environment in which they are, they avoid

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socializing and makes them not to live a normal life. One participant said that “whatever happens on the television makes me scared of being mugged at any time. I cannot even go out any more, so I just lock myself in the hostel room”. This showed that the participant and others reflect on the news and relate to their own living environments. Participant Y2 said that he is afraid and that that why “I cannot go to school alone. I wait for my colleagues so that we are many, you know when we are many and with boys, it may not be so bad”. This means that the participants could not live a normal life since they believe that the news they watched is the reality within their environment.

Further, participant Y3 said reflected on the terror attacks and said “Like the Garissa attack, this affected me a lot, it has made me to be very conscious and I even fear sitting near someone I do not know. The university education that I am pursuing can end any time you know”. Additionally, the social life of the participants was affected by the televised crime news that they watched on television because participant Y4 was categorical and stated “By the way, I don’t even post messages on social media because I might be captured through such avenues.

The news also affected even the normal operations of the participants because participant Y5 said that “I am always scared of the *boda boda* and yet I must use it so whenever I board a motorbike, I have to ring my friends to tell them that I am on the way. Normal relationships were affected by the continued watching of crime news that touched on individuals like participant Y6 who said that “I fear even having a girlfriend because I don’t know if I might be chopped like I have seen many men suffering on television.”

Multiple participants said that that take various precautions including “locking the door to my room very early, like before 8pm, let them find me in my room and not out there! I even carry my laptop everywhere you can imagine the weight”. However, other participants said that there is nothing they could do because they had to go on with their daily routines. Participant Y2 even reflected on,

...the news item described how the riders were preying on underage girls who seek their services, just like us here. It is very scaring because the report said that there have been cases where girls were being violated sexually around six in the morning. This is the time I come to school by *boda boda*!

Other Domestic residents participants had various reactions and responses to the televised crime news that they had watched and several of them shared what they did. Participant DR1 implied that the news seemed to show that the victims of the crimes are left to protect themselves and therefore they usually have to be prepared. The participant commented that:

You remember the shocking television story of the three armed officers from here in Nakuru, who were arrested in Kericho after they reportedly abducted a motorist? In such situations you just have to be creative on how you can take care of yourself. You see the officers have turned against us instead of looking after us.

Participant DR2 was aware of the community policing of but was wary that this was not even safe because it was possible to invite criminals into your private home. The participant said that “This *nyumba kumi* thing is not safe, when you decide to invite every neighbour into your house, what happens is a different story. I prefer to remain private.” This sentiment was

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supported by another participant who said that even the security were not trusted because they had seen in the news how they abet crime. Participant DR3 said that:

I have seen news about the security guards colluding with criminals, so I no longer engage security guards, no dogs also because they attract attention. Without those two, no one knows who is in the compound

The retail business participants also indicated that they took varied safety measures like closing businesses early, forming vigilante groups. Participant B1 took precaution by “closing my business as early as 6.30pm to avoid falling prey to criminals, we cannot dare go 24 hours”. Participant B2 said that he had to take precaution both as a resident and a business person because he lived in Milimani area, had business in town and within Milimani. The participant said:

I live here and also have some business in town so you imagine the pressure that I experience when I see the different crime news relayed over television. We encourage one another to be our brother’s keeper. We actually pioneered the Milimani Residents’ Association that deals with various issues, the main one being, how we can keep ourselves safe here at home and at our businesses because we have been victims the same way the news describes.

The domestic residents similarly indicated that they have put extra precautionary measures in place like reinforcing the fences, not allowing children to play unattended, taking their children to school physically and picking them up: Participant DR1 said “I actually had to fix an electric fence to scare the prospecting thieves when they survey during the day because I know that really they survey before they attack.” While participant DR2 was afraid for their children who were endangered by abduction criminals. The participant said that:

As a parent, I obviously will warn my children to beware of strange individuals or even not to walk alone late in the evening because of what I see happening to some children over television during news time.

Besides individual precautionary measures, Milimani residents had formed an association, which met once every month and one of the agenda in each of their meetings was security update. The association had also created a public information strategy where by all information was posted on a notice board, which was strategically placed at the main entry to the estate and the neighbouring businesses and institutions.

The responses above are an indication that when the audience is watching the televised news about crime topics news, the disturbing images seen on-screen seemed familiar. This could be due to the continuous and ongoing crimes, conflicts, wars, and reports of victims of numerous attacks and murders. This why the responses are similar, although different categories of the participating members of the Milimani area observed varied crime news presentations.

The hoteliers participating in this study described varied ways they put in place to protect themselves and their businesses against security threats posed by criminal activities against their businesses and clients. Many of them indicated that they employed adequate security personnel, installed security cameras and use gadgets to detect any suspicious

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activity. They also said that they educate employees on terrorism related issues. Two of the hotel establishments said that they have gone a notch higher and laid down adequate plans, which they can use to recover from terrorist related attacks in case they occurred: they have adequate procedures laid out on how to react in case of a terrorist attack in the hotel; risk Insurance cover taken against terrorist attacks; employment of crisis management specialist to help the hotel in recovering from terrorist attack; creation of a business continuity planning unit to deal with any future terrorist activities and ample protection to the employees of the hotel and coordination with security forces such as Criminal Investigation Department and National Security Intelligence Service on terrorism related issues.

Varied participants in the hotel business cohort specifically described the measures they had put in place to protect their clients from theft and burglary of personal effects that included updating security locks and were in the process of installing sophisticated security doors. Participant HB1 said:

We have decided to update our locks so that the current locks can track who goes in and out of rooms to deter theft. So even when employees realize that there's an audit process on door security, it makes rooms less prone to theft. This will protect both the employee and our clients. We also plan to upgrade and automate bolts, which can better prevent external threats from thieves, or even install systems that eliminate master keys.

Participant HB2 said that they did not ignore any security related complaints and issues, any issue was addressed without delay because they were aware that criminals were employing varied means to penetrate their premises as shown in the news,

If we know of something that has happened, if someone was robbed or there was an accident, that area is quickly addressed. We can't ignore it. We do something immediately to prevent a similar misfortune from happening. We take everything serious.

Participant HB3 explained that in the hotel industry, it was wise to take long to address an issue affecting clients because it is easy to be sued for small mistakes. So they often carry out liability audit just remain updated.

Guest safety is not the type of situation that a hotel should wait to deal with until it is sued. We have decided that we shall be conducting regular legal liability audit so that we can understand the risks that we face within our establishment.

These protective measures imply that inadequate security might have repercussions beyond guests losing belongings to theft. Hotels can be held liable for the criminal acts of third parties; this is why individual hotels seemed to show interest in all types of crimes that might take place within their premises or even their environs.

The other participating business people in this study indicated that crimes committed against businesses "have and will continue to affect how I operate my business and how much it costs to operate it". This is because it has become necessary for most businesses, regardless

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of the size, to begin to bear the cost of installing security systems and personnel to safeguard their customers and employees on a widespread basis. It is view of the fact that the Kenyan government cannot possibly bear such. Some said that they are now turning towards private security measures as they need to think of new ways to protect themselves from theft. As such, there is now an increasing demand for a range of specialist services provided by private security companies for their security solutions because they do not think that the government security agents are sufficient and effective based on the continued news on heinous crimes against all types of retail businesses.

All the private security guards participants in this study indicated that they took varied measures to protect themselves from falling victim of the similar stories as they ones that they saw over television news. Participant PSG1 commented that:

Just imagine that I am supposed to protect people, their merchandise, their money, and equipment, and I have nothing, that is why when I see my colleagues killed mercilessly my gangsters, I am prepared to duck when they appear, I won't just stand and wait for death!

Participant PSG2 said that:

I am supposed to control students, supervise parking for all the staff that come here and even direct traffic during functions, but when there is danger like I see on television, no one protects me, I will be the first to die. This makes me sometimes reluctant to work hard

Participant PSG3 reflected on the nature of their work and said that:

I spend considerable time on my feet, either assigned to a specific area or patrolling these buildings and grounds. This is not a simple job, it is very tiring and dangerous. You even saw how one security guard was mauled by fierce and hungry dogs that were supposed to help him work in Nairobi. But whenever there is a crime reported on TV, we see our colleagues arrested and accused of being accomplices of the theft; this is very discouraging and sometimes tempts me to be a thief!

The three comments above have grave implications for those who rely on the private security guards to secure their businesses and homes. The participants in this cohort expressed their displeasure with the kinds of television crime news reports that seemed to describe them as suspects in some serious robbery and murder crimes. This is a pointer to the fact that the private security guards perceive news about criminal activities that affect their occupation as a threat to their jobs and lives.

As previously discussed, there is evidence pointing at the fact that both direct victimization, as well as victimization that is relayed over the television channels, have substantial impact on viewers' fear of crime. The current research focuses its attention on the indirect experience with crime: the media. It seems reasonable to believe that media have at least some impact on popular culture and the way people view crime.

Some researchers (Marsh & Melville, 2009; Happer & Philo, 2013; Altheide, 2009) have argued that the effects of media are greatest among those who have direct experience as a victim of a crime or are surrounded by criminal behaviour. Other researchers have argued

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that the effect of crime is greatest among those who have no direct contact with police and rather use the media to fill in the gaps of what is reality. Many participants in this study indicated that they fear for their lives whenever they view the repeated stories. One participant was emphatic that “What does that tell me, I am not safe, anywhere, whether I am Chauffeur driven or no”. This is in addition to the comments made by the security guards earlier in this section.

Another aspect that emanates from the data obtained and presented above is the fact that televised crime news is presented to the audiences using the journalist techniques of priming and framing, which is an indication that the news makers communicate specifically selected news stories, uniquely presented in order to capture the attention of the audience. They use repeated techniques to help sustain the attention that has been won so that they can continuously get audience glued to their channels for purposes of selling their stories convincingly. One of the participants commented:

You see like these news stories of the male ‘transformers’ being chopped, all the television channels kept looking for more similar stories as if they were just snooping around for what was trending. And it really works, because you hear every one speaking about it everywhere that you go about “kunyofoa” (chopping private parts).

Another participant said that they got interested in some of the crime stories that are shown on television because they tend to spread so it is prudent to know who the perpetrators could be or how they do it.

I get very interested in knowing where else the same thing has happened because, it becomes viral! Everyone wants to commit the same crime as another one or what? But I think, it is the news people who look for similar stories to follow one another so that they can drive the point home by injecting real fear in us,

All the participants were aware that the repetitive nature of similar crime incidents captured their attention all the time. This is why one participant simply said “It is the power of repetition!”

Conclusion

Based on the responses obtained and interpretation made, the study concludes that all television channels that are viewed by Kenyan diverse audiences give prominence to crime topics that are often included in their prime news bulletins. It is also concluded that the crimes news stories, which are broadcast on different television channels affect different audiences in different ways and hence the reactions are varied. However, the youth category of television viewers are more keen on crime information because the participants in this study identified and discussed more crime topics that interest them than all other participating categories, this is contrary to the misconception that the youth do not watch televised news. Additionally, different viewers perceive televised crime news variedly. In this regard, perceptions are not homogeneous, although there were similarities in the perceptions among people who watch television news on regular basis. They reported feeling less safe walking along the Milimani

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neighbourhood, in town or when riding in vehicles or motorbikes, because of frequently televised crime content over various television channels.

Journalists, editors, publishers, and other news producers have a responsibility to be accurate in their portrayal of social issues (in this context, crime), because the news, which viewers are exposed to can considerably determine the way they view society. Society's views on social issues and stereotypes can influence the way people behave and act.

Recommendations

This paper recommends restrictions prescribed and enforced for media houses that publish or broadcast material likely to cause fear or alarm to the public, and pass provisions in the law that would grant broad surveillance powers to Kenyan security forces to enable them monitor crime news content and the likely effects on the audiences. Such active enforcement of restrictions can cushion television against undue media pressure from the manner in which they disseminate crime stories over the television.

It is also recommended that television news editors should partner and collaborate with security experts and agencies all the time so that every televised crime news bulletin can be followed by a specialized commentary about the actual crime situation and possibly provide information on documented statistics in each County. This is because not all the television viewers have access to official crime statistics documents. This can help the audience make appropriate decisions about their safety and take accurate measures instead of panicking meaninglessly.

In order to make the Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Act 2013 and the Media Council Act 2013 helpful, a platform or forum can be availed where television viewers can comment on specific crime news stories and make practical contributions to the effects of the crime news to their perceptions. By so doing, the practitioners and policy makers can arrive at effective implementation strategies of the laid down laws by incorporating stakeholder views and suggestions, instead of fighting and leaving the 'grass' to suffer irreversibly.

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