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Digital media and terrorism: analysis of online visual images of Kenyan security forces in the battle of EL adde

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DIGITAL MEDIA AND TERRORISM: ANALYSIS OF ONLINE VISUAL IMAGES OF KENYAN SECURITY FORCES IN THE BATTLE OF EL ADDE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Digital Journalism

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APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

DIGITAL MEDIA AND TERRORISM: ANALYSIS OF ONLINE VISUAL IMAGES OF KENYAN SECURITY FORCES IN THE BATTLE OF EL ADDE

I, **EDWIN ANJAGO HERENGA-543348,** declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. The editorial assistance provided to me has in no way added to the substance of my thesis, which is the product of my research endeavours.

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Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family for their support throughout this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to analyse online visual images of the Kenya security forces in the Battle of El Adde that occurred on January 15, 2016 in Gedo, Somalia. The study specifically examined the framing of these visual images, the journlistsic and ethical practices employed by online platforms when selecting and publishing images of terror on Kenyan security forces, and the extent to which the framing of these online visual images of terror manifested elements of social responsibility as captured in The Code of Cunduct for the Practice of Journalism as entreched in the Second Schedule of the Media Act 2013. The study analysed a total of 48 visual images purposively selected from five major news websites and adopted the descriptive content analysis design to quantitatively describe manifest features. The findings indicated that 80.0 percent of images published on the news websites projected the Kenyan government and its security forces as losing the war against terrorism as most images published showed more causalities suffered on the Kenyan side. To research used interview guide to address other elements of the study that could not be analysed quantitatively. The research findings from the interviews conducted showed that digital news websites indeed framed visual images of the Kenya security forces in the Battle of El Adde – and adhered to journalistsic and ethical practices in sourcing, selecting or publishing images of terror from the Battle of El Adde. Some of the journalistic principals that came into play included Professional Accountability as captured in Article 3 (1) – where the journalists were required to be independent and free from those seeking influence or control over news content. Further, when publishing images, the journalist pointed out that they would adhere to Article 15: Intrusion into grief and shock. In such incidences, the journalists were required to use the images with sensitivity and discretion.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMISOM:	African Union Mission to Somalia
BBC:	British Broadcasting Cooperation
CNN:	Cable News Network
CS:	Cabinet Secretary
KDF:	Kenya Defence Forces
MCK:	Media Council of Kenya
NCTC:	National Counter Terrorism Centre
NMG:	Nation Media Group
UN:	United Nations
UNODC:	The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNESCO:	The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE SUDY

1.1 Introduction

The media in Kenya has often been accused of promoting the terrorists' agenda of propagating fear through sensationalizing terror events. This the media has achieved through publishing of visual images, graphics and words which often tend to spread panic among the people. This perception came under serious scrutiny when alleged Al-Shabaab attacked African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) army base run by Kenya on January 15, 2016, killing hundreds of Kenyan soldiers (Kriel & Duggan, 2016). The government of Kenya is yet to release the official figures, arguing that such information was sensitive and therefore had to be handled "carefully" and "meticulously," according to then Defence CS Rachael Omamo – who also said that this was "for the benefit of the families of our soldiers."

Official account of what happened has been left to survivors and the perpetrators; the Al-Shabaab, who on January 15, 2016, a few days after the deadly attack, released what they claimed were visual images of the scene of the attack in Somalia. The pictures were published in a number of leading news websites both locally and internationally, among them the *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa*. The shocking images which the bbc.com acknowledged in their story at the time that it could not independently, but still published, showed damaged vehicles, caches of weapons lying in waste and pictures of dead bodies alleged to be those of Kenyan soldiers. The mere use

of the word 'could not independently verify' was used to mitigate were the images to turn out as fake.

In a measured response, the Kenyan government warned anyone who went ahead to share pictures alleged to be those of dead Kenyan soldiers and the destroyed army base, of dire legal action. The government through then Cabinet Secretary Mr. Joseph Nkaissery, said that it was important to guard against "amplification of the terrorist agenda of sharing visual images and empathizing with the terrorists". In the following weeks, local and international news websites published visual images of coffins carrying dead soldiers and covered with the Kenyan national flag as they were airlifted to Kenya's capital Nairobi – for subsequent burial in different parts of the country.

Digital news websites extensively covered this terror incident in Somalia by publishing images of the attack, which forced the Kenyan government through the Ministry of Internal Security to ban indiscriminate publishing of what it deemed to be insensitive material on digital media platforms. A Mr. Eddy Reuben Illah, a Kenyan, was arrested for allegedly publishing on a WhatsApp group called "Youth People's Union" pictures allegedly showing the bodies of Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) soldiers who were attacked and killed in indicated that he did so knowing that the pictures were grossly offensive and with an intent to cause needless anxiety to the family members of the officers and Kenyans (Oladipo, 2016). The suspect was accused of committing a crime under Section 29 of the Kenya Information and Communication Act (KICA), 2009. Appearing before Kiambu Principal Magistrate Justus Kituku, Mr Eddy Reuben Illah who was represented by lawyer Edwin Sifuna denied sharing the images using his mobile phone and was remanded in custody before eventually being released for lack of evidence.

The whole episode illustrated the delicate relationship between media, governments, and terrorists – with the journalists caught in between the fight. During such adversities, visual journalists most of the time are expected to go against the rules guiding objectivity and show government support (Fahmy & Johnson, 2005). Griffin and Lee (1995) argues in covering the Gulf War that only 2 percent of all the pictures published showed wounded or killed US security officers. This is because images of dead or wounded security officers could create the impression that the terrorists were winning which then spreads fear – and enhances the terrorist's agenda.

Advancement in technology and internet and the rise of social media has turned the online space into a platform that the terrorists and their apologists flood with disturbing images of terror attacks any time they unleash terror. Since violence alone can often accomplish very little or even nothing in terms of ultimate goals, the terrorists will seek to extend the duration as well as the impact of their deeds as a strategy to advance their course (Alexander & Klein, 2003). To achieve their goals which, include spreading panic and propaganda, terror suspects have become dependent on media that is often sourced, packaged and distributed online. According to Shoshani and Slone (2008), the world has a new enemy on its doors, and it's not the terrorist groups, but rather its penetration and extension into our individual homes aided by the new media. Digital media in the digital age has been an integral medium by which terrorist groups pass their message, and which has become the main goal of many terrorist purpose to enhance the scale of their attacks (Hoffman, 2006).

1.2 Background to the Study

On January 15, 2016, Kenya suffered a deadly terror attack after Al-Shabaab terrorists attacked the Kenyan army base in El Adde, killing as many as 141 soldiers, a figure that would make this the biggest military loss since 1963 when Kenya got her independence (Kriel & Duggan, 2016). Kenya had witnessed considerably less terror attack until its forces went into Somalia in 2011, in what was dubbed Operation Linda Nchi that was meant to push the terrorists away from the shared border. Kenya would later morph in through the AMISOM which has been involved in peacekeeping since 2007. As part of AMISOM mandate, Kenyan forces have remained in Somalia fighting al-Shabaab, something that has seen Kenya experience increased terror attacks - with Kenya marking Defence Forces Day in October to commemorate the officers who lost their lives in Somalia fighting Al-Shabaab.

Data obtained from the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) shows that Kenya has suffered the second most terror attacks after Somalia in East and Central of Africa. Terror incidences have made headline news ever since Kenyan soldiers went into Somalia in October of 2011 following abduction of a foreign French woman from the coast of Mombasa. The deployment of Kenyan security forces into Somalia to weaken Al-Shabaab terror group has seen hundreds of people including security officers get killed, property destroyed in several terror attacks especially in Nairobi, Mombasa and counties in Northern parts of Kenya. Meanwhile, reporting on such terror incidences, in the digital age has been a great challenge to most journalists.

Article 23 on Acts of violence as stipulated in the Code of Ethics for the Practice of Journalism holds that media shall not present acts deemed as violence, like terror acts,

in a manner likely to glorify the terror events. Most digital news media outlets have often failed to adhere to such codes of conduct in an environment where technology continues to provide terrorists and their sympathizers with a critical communication tool which either by choice or accident, continues to propagate their propaganda as well as psychological warfare goals (Alexander & Klein, 2003).

Digital media has had a problematic relationship with terrorist organisations. The relationship has been described as 'symbiotic' in nature where terror organisations rely on the multiplier effects of media to attract focus to their actions and ideas. Meanwhile, the media benefits from the personal tragedy, collective panic, human drama an individual grief which terrorism provides, and which, unfortunately, guarantees huge audiences (Lopez, 2016).

On its part, the Kenyan government has had problematic relationship with both the local and international media when it comes to reporting on terror. The Westgate Mall attack on September 21, 2013, Garissa University attack on April 5, 2015, and the Mpeketoni attacks that occurred on June 16, 2014, attracted wide media coverage both locally and internationally. As a result, the government placed security on top of its national agenda, with fresh laws and amendments put in place to manage and control the way media covers terrorism specifically the Security Laws (Amendment) Act 2014.

One such amendment is on section 66A (1) on the prohibited publications and broadcasts. The law states thus: (1) A person who publishes, broadcasts or causes to be published or distributed, through print, digital or electronic means, insulting, threatening, or inciting material or images of dead or injured persons which are likely to cause fear and alarm to the general public or disturb public peace commits an offence and is liable, upon

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conviction, to a fine not exceeding five million shillings or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or both. Most of the laws are focusing the spotlight on media which often has been considered as offering terrorist a podium through which they get to propagate their ideals and realise their objectives (A Handbook on Reporting Terrorism - Media Council of Kenya).

The Media Council of Kenya Act 2013, Article 23 on Acts of violence, posits that reporting on terror presents a puzzle to journalists who play the important role of keeping the public informed by objective analyses of such news. Some digital media outlets continue to publish visual images of terror that appear to contravene the code of ethics on a platform that has the capacity to extend lifeline to a well-targeted terror event through sharing on other platforms such as social media. This is important given pictures often speak to an individual's emotion and general feeling (Cho et al., 2006; MCK, 2013).

A post-mortem report by the Media Council of Kenya assessing the media coverage of the Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi that occurred on 21st September, 2013 indicated that a majority of the respondents felt that the media did not ask critical questions like the real and direct impact of terrorism on human rights, the devastating consequences for the enjoyment of the right to life, liberty and physical integrity of victims – but had paid a lot of attention on the tantalizing and brutal accounts in the process amplifying terrorists' brutal acts. For instance, the Daily Nation newspaper was put on the spot for publishing a picture of a female victim of the Westgate Mall attack on its front in what was interpreted as insensitive reporting and general intrusion into grief and privacy. The Media Council of Kenya report pointed out ethical violations and a general lack of observation of professionalism on the part of media practitioners as envisioned in the Code of Conduct

for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya and social responsibility demands (MCK, 2014). The journalists violated Section 14 on Intrusion into Grief and Shock, Taste and Tone of reporting, Section 9 on Obscenity, Section 20 - Use of Pictures and Names (MCK, 2014).

The terror incident granted an opportunity to the media to pursue wide-ranging editorial slants even though the newsworthy and primary activity of the terror attack and its aftermath was the focus of the reportage. The media was feared to have abdicated in its social responsibility role to prioritize, at the onset of coverage, the positive activities like the courage of civilians who fought the terrorists, the international community and Kenyans who joined to assist the injured, the challenges faced by the security officers. This is because editors often tend to focus on events that are unusual and pick the necessary information based on observable facts and unbiased accounts. Although a reporter's account should not be opinionated (Evans, 1972, as cited in Spencer-Thomas, 2016), whenever a journalist arrives at a decision of judgement as to whether a story or news item has the necessary information to interest the audience, he or she will decide informally based on experience and intuition. Nevertheless, according to research, some factors are consistently applied in the reportage of news virtually across all platforms (Spencer-Thomas, 2016). Any attempt to go against these factors may render coverage of an event a public relations exercise and not news.

Entman, (1991) while comparing framing of visual images in the story involving the US shooting down a plane belonging to Iran and the Soviet shooting down a jet belonging to Korea in 1980s, argued that media in Korean appeared to point accusing figure on the Soviets with its coverage showing human victims – on the other hand media in the US while focusing on the shooting of the Iranian plane avoided telling the story around the

victims. In the framing of visual images, often the use of (or lack of) certain images can play a vital role in communicating terror attacks. In fact, contrary to common belief, studies have over the years established that pictures do not adhere to neutrality (Padgett, 1985; Tagg, 1993).

Gandy Jr et al. (2001) argues that visual images should be selected against a frame that is not wide enough to capture a reality that is complex even if they are not staged, thereby indicating that photojournalists end up putting the framing process on the wheel inadvertently. That although the journalists may be keen on following the tenets of good journalism, they often find themselves selecting and portraying only a frame that is dominant (Entman, 2010). More recently, Schneer et al. (2017) stated that journalists covering the war in Iraq were given far better access in an expansive and robust embed program (Fahmy & Kim, 2008) – however – pictures that made it on US media tended to be supportive of the military. Only a handful of visual images focusing on the civilian casualties received any mention whether from US or Iraqi side. The way in which the suffering is often framed adopts a structure that shows clear difference between the victims considered to be unworthy – and who are therefore depicted as the enemies and those considered as worthy victims – and who are depicted as suffering (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

A vital area of framing of news in both text and visual reportage is often the decision to omit certain elements of news (Entman, 1991; Gamson, 1985). There is a difference between omission of pictures showing anti-war groupings, and yet showing images of US efforts towards providing aid for the people of Afghanistan. Here lies a demonstrable proof of just how picture reporting in the fight can create a frame that is pro-war in nature morally

justified. In comparing the September 11, 2001, attack and the Afghanistan War – one does not need to assume that both were analogous events. The aforementioned comparison is yet to be done - but looking at the available research – it is clear that one can come up with concrete predictions regarding framing of pictures in the two events as carried in the two newspapers (Fahmy & Johnson, 2009). In their reportage, the IHT; an English- newspaper owned by the US and run daily in Paris tended to cover terror events in America than would Al-Hayat which was an Arab newspaper. IHT could incite public perception and voice to support the US in its war against terror by publishing pictures showing the suffering of September 11, 2001, terror victims.

On its part, Hayat Newspaper focused on telling the story of the suffering of the people of Afghanistan, denouncing US for its unjustified acts of shelling the poor Muslim country of Afghanistan. Other near similar omissions were in the coverage of the first Gulf War which saw widespread opposition from Spain, Japan, and other countries – and who demonstrated on the streets. The many rallies and demonstrations were never covered in the US media – who instead gave much airtime to the support it was receiving from the United Nations and other countries of the world (Schiller, 1992).

The media has the important role of reporting terror conflicts, but most international media houses have been accused of only granting prominence to 'fatal frames' that have only focused on destruction, tribalism, while giving less prominence to 'conflict resolution frames' (Kothari, 2010). The argument has been that, especially when looking at international media some of which form part of this study which are part of this study, Nyamnjoh (2016) argues that when journalists are 'groomed in such institutions and societies in which these stereotypical representations of Africa are widespread. It is

difficult to cultivate the sensitivities and sensibilities necessary to report and write about Africa the way Africans would'.

It is safe to say that most of the available research on framing has highlighted massive and important data on terrorism, media, and police. There is no available research locally that seeks to look at framing of visual images by news websites in reporting terror attacks targeted at security forces in Kenya. The lack of research in this area means a lot needs to be researched to fill the existing knowledge gap.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The common argument has been that the nature of coverage of terror events by most media exacerbates a dangerous situation and amplifies anxiety among the public by exaggerating the threats through publication of visual combat scenes images Long (2001). It is not clear how digital news websites in Kenya negotiate between minimizing glorification of terror activities occasioned by publishing images of terrorist attacks against Kenyan security forces and keeping the public informed while ensuring social responsibility.

There seems to exist a dearth of research on the ways in which major Kenyan news websites exercise their duty to the public through framing of visual images targeted at security officers. Meanwhile, the media houses are under pressure to develop an understanding of the role of media in the society in the coverage of terror attacks especially those targeted at security officers. The media has been caught in between with most governments and scholars accusing it of fueling panic among the public by slanting news and images of terror to attract readership and make huge profits.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was to analyse online visual images of terror attack on Kenyan security forces in the Battle of El Adde that occurred on January 15, 2016.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To examine how online visual images of the Kenya security forces in El Adde potrayed the Kenya security forces fight against terror.

2. To examine journalistic and ethical practices employed by online platforms when publishing visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in The Battle of El Adde.

3. To examine the extent to which the framing of the online visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in The Battle of El Adde manifest elements of social responsibility.

1.4.2 Research Questions

1. What framing strategies were used to publish online visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in the Battle of El Adde?

2. What journalistic and ethical practices were employed by online editors when publishing visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in the Battle of El Adde?

3. To what extent does the framing of the online visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in The Battle of El Adde manifest elements of social responsibility.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Terror attacks on security officers in Kenya and Somalia are of great concern to the government and to every Kenyan. The Battle of El Adde which remains the worst attack on Kenyan security forces turned into a photo war after the attack with al-Shabaab releasing photos of what it described as the scene of the attack in what The BBC (bbc.com) described as a well calculated propaganda by the terrorists. Many news websites published the pictures released by the terror organisation.

The traditional media in general and the digital news sites gave and continues to give prominence to use of visual images of terror attacks on security offices. There is a general argument that terrorists unleash terror as a communication strategy with the understanding that ensuing media coverage is key in helping them to realise their objectives of inviting attention to their demands Spencer (2012). The media is often seen as an accomplice in terrorism, which has left the media struggling to strike a balance when reporting on terror even as they seek to remain truthful and objective Hoffman (2006).

Past studies on the coverage of terror have largely focused on print coverage of terror attacks on civilians and the social responsibility of the media. There is a gap in research with regards to the framing of online visual images of terror on security forces. As Fahmy (2017) wrote, objective academic studies and research influences and makes legitimate findings of other research as well as ideas. This research sought to enhance knowledge and provide the campus for directions with regards to not only the current research, but also in the future reportage of terrorism regarding framing of online visual

images of terror on security forces and in establishing what ethical and journalistic practices often come into play.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The last five years have seen Kenyan security forces get targeted by Al-Shabaab terror group - with the January 15, 2016, El Adde terror attack going down into the history books as the worst attack Kenyan security forces have suffered in the hands of terrorists since independence (Kriel & Duggan, 2016). The coverage of this specific terror incident presented a conundrum to journalists in the digital space as just by publishing online visual images of terror activities, the media risked becoming key in terrorists' general strategy (Picard, 1993). Coverage of terrorism stories often portray the media as a participant or accomplice (Seib, 2017). Therefore, the media through their coverage often risk fueling panic and promoting the terrorists' agenda of spreading fear among the populace, yet they have the responsibility to inform the public with some degree of fidelity (Seib, 2016). It's a delicate balance especially for digital media which although relatively new, is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping voice or opinion which has a bearing on the national policy discussions and conversations (Schneer et al. 2017).

The findings of this study are significant as it forms the basis for understanding the digital news media application of the basic tenets of framing of visual images of terror, social and ethical responsibilities as well as the application of the ethical and journalistic principles in the coverage of terror events (Media Council of Kenya Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism, 2007).

The findings provide new knowledge on how digital news sites exercised framing of visual images in their coverage of the El Adde event which although it contained

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important news values tended to give the terrorist undue publicity by portraying them (terrorists) as winning the terror war against the Kenyan government.

Adherence to social norms was an important element in the coverage of the terror event – which against the social responsibility theory used in this study – showed that most of the images of the terror event adhered to acceptable societal standards and norms. The findings show that reference should be made to Article 33 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) – and which states that every person has the freedom to seek, receive or impact information or ideas and freedom of artistic creativity among others – but which does not extend to propaganda of war incitement, vilification of others or incitement to cause harm.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research focused on online visual images of the events around El Adde terror perpetrated by Al-Shabaab terror group on January 15, 2016. The study covered visual images published by five news websites namely: bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke and nation.africa, which according to the recently released 2020 Digital News Report, have registered increased numbers with many Kenyans visiting their news sites to consume news. Daily Nation tops at 39.0%, Standard follows at 27.0%, BBC News online comes third at 13.0%, CNN at 13.0% and finally The Star at 9.0%. The decision to investigate both local and international news websites was premised on the argument that different cultural and political perspectives capture conflict differently. For example, the depiction of the first Gulf War by the US media and the Arab media offers a good example (May, 2001).

The time frame of the study was four (4) years, running from the date of the El Adde attack to January 15, 2020. The visual images comprised those of Kenyan security forces as well as those of the Al-Shabaab.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

One of the possible limitations of this study was the widespread use of online visual images of the El Adde attack whose authenticity could not be proven. To mitigate this limitation, the study used fake image detection tools like Google Reverse Image Search and TinEye. Using the Google Reverse Image Search, pictures were uploaded to Google Images which showed other related images that may have been used on other websites as well as different sizes of that photo. On the other hand, TinEye allowed the researcher to search for pictures without using key words by simply submitting a photo which then creates a unique digital signature and matched it with images that have been indexed. This helped to match heavily edited versions of pictures submitted.

The other limitation was the fact that most of the online visual images may have been intentionally skewed as a propaganda weapon by the Al-Shabaab terror group. Also, the Kenyan government strategically controlled images published after the attack with then Interior Cabinet Secretary, Joseph Nkaissery, warning that the government would arrest and detain those who would share visual images showing the Kenyan soldiers in a vulnerable state. This he said was necessary to avoid "amplifying the terrorist agenda through sharing of visual images and sympathizing with the terrorists."

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Terrorism: The 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and Security Council Resolution describes terrorism as any action, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism as captured in the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolution (2004), that are intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, that when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act. Oxford University dictionary defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of violence against civilians for political aims, which according to Teichman (1989), is not only unspecific but also subjective. This research operationalized the definition of 'terrorism' by expanding it to include attacks aimed at security officers.

News websites/Online newspapers: These refers to newspapers that exist on World Wide Web (www) and in electronic versions with all the characteristics of new media: interactive and have multimedia content, are accessible worldwide and very cost effective to publish and circulate; they extend the reach for advertisers.

Visual Image: Oxford Learners' Dictionary defines an image as a picture, photograph or statue that represents somebody or something. This study defined 'visual image' as anything that depicts visual perception like photographs that largely resemble a subject in focus, usually a physical object for which it provides a clear depiction of it.

1.10 Summary

This chapter looked at the background to the study, objectives, statement of the problem, research questions, justification of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study and operational definition of terms. The next chapter present the literature review, theoretical framework, general literature review and the empirical literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses literature on terrorism with specific interest in visual framing of terror in the digital media space. It delves into framing theory as the theoretical framework of the study. The general literature reviews background information of the news websites to be studied, and literature on online media coverage of terrorism. The chapter also contains empirical literature review which involves highlighting studies conducted on visual framing of terror targeted security officers.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Framing Theory

This theory can be traced back to Goffman (1974) who argued that people tend to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrence. It argues that people often comprehend then synthesize certain information based on how it is presented (Chong & Druckman, 2007). To frame is to select and package certain communicating text or video in order to "advance certain components of a 'perceived reality' so as to make them rather more pronounced so as to endorse a certain element (Entman, 2010). He goes on to argue that framing is the culling of certain elements of a perceived reality and packaging together a narrative that seems to advance a certain interpretation. This interpretation also holds true on terror appear to get prominence so that their interpretation is based on these selected aspects of what could be considered the reality. It is whereby a certain media frame is characterized

by use of a certain specific style, phrases, and visuals with the main aim of passing a certain message to the audience. A frame can also be defined as whatever an audience believes to be the most important or salient aspect of an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Although diversity of theories has benefited the development of an understanding of the faming process, framing as a theory is lacking a theoretical model that is shared besides suffering some operational paradigm (Reese, 2007). Reese defines frames as socially shared organizing principles persistent over time, that work to meaningfully structure the social world.

In summary, frame is that which 'introduces or raises the importance of certain ideas, thereby activating encouraging an audience to think, feel and decide in a certain manner (Entman, 2007). Most research on framing attributes have been anchored on three perspectives namely the cognitive, constructivist and critical views (D'angelo, 2002). On his part, however, Entman (1993) vouches for four framing functions anchored on defining a problem; identifying a cause, presenting a moral evaluation; and finally suggesting a remedy with reference to the coverage of the shooting of the US vs Iran planes – and Soviet vs Korean Jet coverage in 190s as already covered in this paper.

This study specifically looks at five different news websites namely the *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa* in their visual coverage of the terror events following the El Adde attack carried out by Al-Shabaab on Kenyan solders on January 15, 2016. In the comparison study, Entman posits that the difference in the coverage patterns fell within the confines of the ideologically defined boundaries regarding news framing. This study, unlike that of Entman, is anchored on theoretical foundations of similarity with regards to coverage patterns in the digital space.

2.2.2 Social Responsibility Theory

This study also adopted the social responsibility theory to help address the third objective: to examine the extent to which the framing of the online visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in The Battle of El Adde manifested elements of social responsibility. Social responsibility theory arises from the four normative theoretical underpinnings proposed by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm in their book called, *"Four Theories of the Press"* (Siebert et al., 1956). The four theories are identified as normative authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet communist.

Social responsibility theory is ideal for this study as it addresses what the media ought to be in the society with regards to its surrounding. The argument has been that "the press always takes on the form and colouration of the social and political structures where it operates" (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 1). That the media will prioritise values dependent on the society's social structure and the norms that inform and guide how the national and regional media operate.

The role of media with regards to social responsibility has come under scrutiny in the digital era and media convergence where speed and internet is the currency of trade. Unlike Libertarian theory which posits that the media has the latitude to do whatever it desires, social responsibility theory rests on the foundation that truthful and complete account of the news is not necessarily enough (Hutchins' Commission, 1947). According to Siebert et al. (2006), social responsibility theory is anchored on free reportage, minus censorship, but the media should accept obligation from public interference or professional self-regulations or both (Siebert et al., 2006). Social responsibility oscillates between

authoritarian and libertarian theories as it grants media the freedom on one side, while also allowing for outside control on the other. The totality of news should not just be focused on giving facts truthfully, but on necessary and factual analysis and interpretation of reports (Siebert et al., 2006).

On calling for responsibility on the part of journalists, the Hutchinson's Commission argued that since the media wielded power, should it therefore fail to exercise responsibility, then its power and freedom should be regulated as journalism is not only about "reporting facts" (The handbook of journalism studies 2009). That it is about "what" to report and "how" to report that specific story, which means that there will be some element of selection and responsibility on the part of journalists and editors in line with ethical and journalistic principles. This applied in the current study on the visual reportage of terror attacks on security forces where journalists were most likely to exercise social responsibility when sorting, analysing, and interpreting images of terror for subsequent publication on various social media platforms. This is vital especially today at an age where more people depend on digital news for information for cues on how to frame and interpret that information" (Lippmann, 1997).

2.3 General and Empirical Literature Review

2.3.1 Digital Media and Terrorism

Marthoz (2017) argues that terrorists rely on journalistic codes of drama, violence, and surprise, especially for mediums like TV. However, with Internet explosion and social media, the visual images war has become a massive war. This line of argument agrees with that of Cooper (2001) who posits that technology growth makes it easy to develop, and

create fear which is often the heartbeat of terror. It is not difficult to imagine how technology can cause more fear today in news reporting and consumption. A 2012 report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime on Internet and Advancement of Terrorism (UNODC), indicated that technology is one of the factors enhancing use of Internet by terrorists and their supporters for recruitment, propaganda, financing, training, and incitement to commit acts of terror, and the gathering and presentation of information for terrorist ideals.

The Council of the European Union Common Position report of December 27, 2001, on combating terrorism, indicates that reporting on terrorism acts aimed at security forces in the digital media age is particularly complex because journalists should try and give truthful, accurate and comprehensive information to the populace, while at the same time respecting fundamental human rights and guiding principles of good journalism. The report warns journalists against disclosing any information regarding security forces' whereabouts and tactics as coverage of acts of terror must never hamper police action on the ground or in the air (filming or taking pictures from helicopters or drones). The study points out that the faces of security officers must be pixelated to protect their identities whenever they appear in media footages. If distressing images are to be used, these must be editorially justified, and that it is up to editors to decide which images to publish, depending on whether they provide important information or how gruesome they are. That images from previous attacks that do not add value should not be used as they could stir up pain, mislead and invite angst among surviving victims or their families.

According to Bruhn (2009), the emergence of digital media has seen visual framing of terror acts involving security forces become more challenging because of its ability to

immediately react to happenings and events. This kind of media can provide pictures of latest terror events to an audience – and decide what images to place before the audience. Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that the 'power' media must frame projected suffering as either worthy or unworthy. A good example, according to Fahmy (2010), is when one considers the difference between emphasizing images of human suffering against emphasising visual images of military arsenal and the material destruction that could block the moral revulsion that allows societies to see war as justified.

2.3.2 Media Depiction of the Gulf Wars

Visuals images have iconicity and syntactic implicitness which makes them more effective tools for framing and articulating ideological messages compared to written and spoken messages (Gandy Jr et al., 2001). This is because the definitive nature of visual framing makes it less obtrusive compared to when the framing is done verbally, and that 'visual frames tend to convey controversial meanings if they were conveyed through words' (Gandy Jr et al., 2001). In the depiction of the Gulf War, only 2.0 percent of total images used showed images of distressed US soldiers. Most of the news coverage emphasized destruction of property over human victims (Prince, 1993).

2.3.3 Media Coverage of the 9/11 Terror Attack

Fahmy (2010) in a study published in the International Communication Gazette, compared visual coverage of the 9/11 terror attack by two leading newspapers to explore the way the English media and Arabic media covered and, in the process, affected the interpretation of the major events. These has been effectively covered in the earlier section of this study.

2.3.4   9/11 and Oklahoma City Terror Attack

Studies have shown that television coverage of both 9/11 and Oklahoma City bombing has been positively correlated with posttraumatic stress disorder and depression (Galea et al., 2002; Seale et al., 2000). The audience being repeatedly exposed to images of people jumping or falling out of the windows of the World Trade Center played a key role. The question then comes up is whether the primary goal of news reports, namely informing the public, can be achieved when presenting disturbing images of terrorist attacks or whether this leads to a declined information processing due to increased risk perception evoked by the threatening visual material. If the latter is true, broadcasting pictures and videos of terrorist threats and actions, might be useful for only one party- the terrorists who get public attention. The findings indicate that most terrorists perform attacks at least partly for the public attention they get through the media (Silke, 2010).

This assumption is in accordance with Hall, Norwood, Ursano, Fullerton, and Levinson who argued that it is the primary goal of terrorism to disrupt society by provoking intense fear and shattering all sense of personal and community safety. The target is an entire nation, not only those who are killed, injured, or even directly affected in (Brown et al., 2007). Several examples of recorded terroristic attacks and threats can be found on the internet where a considerable number of newspapers and television stations provide articles with diverse photographs, videos, and news reports.

Although most of the findings highlighted here are on studies one on print and broadcast media, these findings apply also to the new media which is driven by internet. On average, 69.0% of the citizens of the European Union watch the news every day on television, a source that almost two-thirds of the user's trust (European Commission,

2002a). Only 20.0% across the European Union use the internet daily. However, 71.0% of those internet users consider it as a valuable source of information and news gathering (European Commission, 2002b). These two types of media are capable of immediately reacting to current events and providing the news, in addition to working with audio-visual means such as recorded videos, respectively. This makes them powerful news sources since they are both able to provide vivid pictures of the latest events like terrorist attacks right away. It has been established that media has a way of touching our psychology - and that there cannot be any doubt about the impact that media content has in terms of shaping people's interpretation of the events displayed (Bruhn, 2009).

This partly explains why terrorists are keen on manipulating the media both in the traditional and digital space. In a study on media and terrorism, Wilkinson (2002) posits that terrorists' manipulation of the media plays an important part in their propaganda war. He argues in his findings that voluntary self-regulation and self-restraint by the media are the best policy options for a democratic society regarding the media's response to terrorism, but that the mass media must devise measures of self-restraint that are appropriate and effective. He also found out that some media organisations have adopted guidelines for their employees to help them prevent the more obvious pitfalls of granting the terrorist unnecessary publicity and ammunition to advance their cause. In his findings he mentions the CBS News guidelines, which commit the organisation to measured, thoughtful and objective coverage of terrorism, and avoiding granting excessive platform for the terrorists. Avoiding live coverage of the terrorists and their acts, avoiding interference with the authorities communications (e.g. telephone lines), using expert advisers in hostage situations to help avoid coverage that might exacerbate the situation, obeying all police

instructions (but reporting to their superiors any instructions that seem to be intended to massage or suppress the news) and attempting to achieve such overall balance as to length' that 'the (terrorist) story does not unduly crowd out other important news of the hour/day' (Wilkinson, 2002).

In their exploration of the portrayal of the of war on terrorism in two leading English newspapers in Pakistan, Jan et al. (2012) showed in their findings that the two newspapers promoted peace journalism in relation to the issue of war on terror, framed the Taliban as foe and depicted the peace frame as more dominant than the war frame. Their finding relates to a study by Lee and Maslog (2005) who also found out that Muslim majority states tended to lean more on peace journalism in coverage of war unlike non-Muslim majority states.

2.3.5 Coverage of the 26/11 Mumbai Terror Attacks

In the coverage of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, the media sowed seeds of fear among the people and satisfied the needs of the terrorist by giving the attacks prominence and consequently helped terrorist by giving them a full picture of the actions and plans of the security forces (Chitra et al., 2009). This media did not take the welfare of the citizens into consideration in their portrayal of terrorist and terror attacks. The study also showed that the 24-hour broadcast media was the most culpable in aiding terrorism activities by sensationalizing the attacks. The survey indicated that most of the Indian public advocated for "the necessity to regulate the media content during emergencies" (p. 10) something that the Indian government did not take up, though "the News Broadcasters Association of India have developed a code to be adhered to in times of emergency" (p. 10). In their conclusion

Chitra et al., (2009) argue that the people of India implied that they "want more responsible media with fair coverage of the terror attacks, with less sensationalism" (p. 10).

2.3.6 Kenyan media and terror reportage

Kisang (2014) in a study titled, Reporting terrorism among Kenyan media: Should journalists be cautious? argue that while the Kenyan government has maintained that the war on terrorism is not pitted against religious groups, too much media coverage portrays a different picture where war on terror seems religious. The findings reveal that the media (through use of visual images, text, and broadcast) gave prominence to terrorism while ignoring their role in enhancing relationships in the society.

Ally (2015) in a study on how Kenya's Daily Nation and Standard Newspapers covered religious communities in the terror attacks in Mandera and Garissa University College found out that in the wake of the attacks, the two newspapers covered Christians and Muslims professionally and in line with the (MCK, 2013), Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism by the Media Council. The presentation of news stories and narratives did not in any way polarize Christians and Muslims. The main themes that emerged in the study's analysis of content include unity of Kenyans in the face of Al-Shabaab attacks, condemnation of attacks by both Christians and Muslims and criticism of the government's failure to protect Kenyans.

In the Kenyan context, the Media Council of Kenya Code of Conduct Article No. 22 cautions that the media shall avoid presenting acts of violence, armed robberies, banditry and terrorist activities in a manner that glories such anti-social conduct. In addition, newspapers shall not allow their columns to be used for writings which tend to encourage or glorify social evils, warlike activities, ethnic, racial or religious hostilities.

On use of images, the code of conduct dictates that as a rule, the media shall apply caution in the use of pictures and names and shall avoid publication when there is a possibility of harming the persons concerned. Additionally, manipulation of pictures in a manner that distorts reality and accuracy of news shall be avoided. It also states that pictures of grief, disaster and those that embarrass and promote sexism shall be discouraged.

Ross (2007) argues that news media in their coverage of terrorism have created situations where terrorists need only to turn on a television or radio newscast to gain the upper hand, as happened in Kenya during the Westgate Mall terrorist attack. It can also be argued that the media is driven by the commercial logic occasioned by considerable competition among news organizations to be the first to report any news Tuchman (1978), which affects the way news is obtained and portrayed.

The internet is at the middle of terror fight with terrorist organizations such as the Al-Shabaab which use various media channels to proliferate their propaganda. Besides traditional radio, the internet is the most heavily utilised by Al-Shabaab and other militant Islamic groups such Al Qaeda because it is the easiest and most cost-effective way to reach a large audience. As the internet is especially popular with today's youth, organizations such as Al-Shabaab are using online forums and chat rooms to recruit young followers to their cause. Al-Shabaab's official website, featured posts, images, videos and official statements in English, Arabic and Somali, as well as online classrooms to educate followers (Ploch, 2010).

Waldek et al. (2018) found out that over the past decade, the resource-intensive nature of owning and operating newspapers or radio or television stations has been

mitigated because many terrorist groups now have their own websites, which are cost effective and portable.

2.4 Summary

Previous studies on terrorism have tended to address coverage of terrorism in print and broadcast media, with very little focus on news websites. The few studies done have focused on text coverage of the subject but gave visual imaging a wide berth. Terror has often been covered with much of the focus being on the civilian victims and not security forces who risk their lives to protect civilians. As such, there exists a gap in knowledge with regards to framing of visual images of terror on security forces by news websites. It is on this background that the research saw a need to further explore and document the subject with regards to use of visuals online.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study sought to analyse framing of online visual images of terror on Kenyan security in the battle of El Ade. The study did so by examining five news websites namely; *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa*. This chapter presents a discussion of the research approach, research design, population of the study, sampling techniques, sample size, data collection instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques used in the study to address the objectives.

3.2 Research Approach and Research Design

3.2.1 Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed research approach, which involved quantitative content analysis and an interview to collect data that responds to the objectives of this study. Since the first objective of the study sought to establish the framing of the visual images of the security forces in the terror attack, the study operationalised framing of visual images into a number of categories with quantitative approach considered ideal for collecting this particular data. The data was analysed quantitatively to establish the framing of these visual images and assess the extent to which the framing manifested elements of social responsibility.

A qualitative approach was useful in explaining the other research questions of the study that could not be explained in numeric terms. Miles and Huberman (1984) have

argued that qualitative approach is heavily dependent on the researcher's analytic and integrative skills and personal knowledge of the social context where the data is collected. The emphasis in qualitative analysis is "sense making" or understanding a phenomenon, rather than predicting or explaining. Specifically, the qualitative approach will help establish the journalistic and ethical practices employed by online platforms when publishing visual images of terrors on Kenyan security forces.

3.2.2 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design which according to (Kothari, 2004), refers to the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it contains the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data". The current study will specifically adopt a descriptive content analysis which systematically and quantitatively describe manifest features of the message content based on predetermined variables (Roy et al., 2010). The study used a directed content analysis where the researcher explicitly identified the manifest features in the visual images.

3.3 Population

Population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects with a common observable characteristic (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This study targeted visual images published in four news websites namely; *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa* between January 15, 2016 and January 15, 2020. The population of the study are visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces on the digital media.

3.4 Target Population

The target population of the study are all the visual images of the Battle of El Adde published on digital news sites between January 15, 2016, and January 15, 2020. As part of its population, the study interviewed three digital news editors drawn from *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa*.

3.5 Study Site

The research evaluated five news websites namely the *bbc.com, cnn.com, the star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa*. These websites were purposively selected because they rank among the top 10 most read news websites in Kenya according to website traffic statistics tool alexa.com. The study specifically evaluated the two international news websites namely cnn.com and bbc.com in addition to the three local news sites (*nation.africa, standardmedia.co.ke* and the *star.co.ke* to help provide an understanding of how international digital news sites covered the Battle of El Adde.

3.6 Sample Size

This study analysed five news websites namely; *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa* with regards to their online visual coverage of the El Adde attack on January 15, 2016 spreading to January 15, 2020. The images retrieved from aforementioned news websites were from January 15, 2016 to January 15, 2020. The period was chosen because most of the visual images of the El Adde attack continued to be used in the media for many years after the attack.

3.7 Sampling Procedure

To narrow down the search, the study used the phrases "El Ade terror attack", KDF terror Attack" and "Battle of El Ade" Using the three-search word the researcher retrieved all the visuals between the period and analysed all. The choice of the *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa* websites was done purposively, given that they have a wide reach in Kenya. The Nation Media Group (NMG) news website (nation.africa), The Standard (standardmedia.co.ke), The Star (the-star.co.ke), BBC (bbc.com) and CNN (cnn.com) rank among top 10 most read websites in Kenya according to Alexa (https://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/KE). The study purposively settled on the El Adde terror attack based on the fact that this was the worst terror attack Kenya has ever suffered and which attracted global attention (Kriel & Duggan, 2016).

3.8 Research Method

3.8.1 Content Analysis

The researcher conducted a content analysis of online visual images of error on Kenya security forces published by the online websites in the aftermath of the El Adde attack. The study analysed framing of images published between January 15, 2016, and January 15, 2020 and proceeded to systematically and quantitatively describe manifest features based on predetermined variables Jain, Roy et al. (2010). The adoption of quantitative content analysis helped to address the main objective of this study which was to establish the framing structure of online visual images under study. To achieve this, the research used three search phrases "El Adde terror attack" and "KDF terror Attack" "Battle

of El Adde" and retrieve all the visual images that fall within the period as indicated in the scope of the study.

The analysis was directed by the following categories: (1) Painting of the Kenya defence force (2) portrayal of terrorists in the visual images, (3) whether the images are pro-government or pro-terrorists, (4) the size of the images used in a particular terror story, (5) the overall framing of the image and (6) the caption used in the images. Appendix A provide a detailed analysis criterion.

3.8.2 Interviews

The research sought to interview digital editors specifically to answer the second research objective of the study; What journalistic and ethical practices were employed by online editors when publishing visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in the Battle of El Ade on 15 January? Editors from the five news websites namely *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke and nation.africa.* The interview was conducted by phone. The interviewees answered a set of six (6) questions.

3.9 Data Generation/Collection Tools

The study used a code sheet – and focused around five variables around visual terror images including whether they are: pro-government, anti-government, pro-terrorists, anti-terrorist and neutral which was broken down into whether the images indicate uncertainty, reassurance, consequence or action). The code sheet is attached as appendix.

An interview guide was used as a data generation tool during the interviews with the select digital editors. This research interviewed three digital news editors from three news websites specifically to find out the journalistic and ethical practices that were

employed by online editors when publishing visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in the Battle of El Ade on January 15, 2016. The research adopted an unstructured interview format whose advantage is that it is an in-depth interview that allows the researcher to collect a wide range of information with a purpose. An advantage of this method is the freedom it gives a researcher to combine structure with flexibility even though it is more time-consuming.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

Once the intercoder reliability rate was found to be acceptable and all the ethical and regulatory requirements met, the researcher accessed the *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa* websites. This study undertook coding of visual images according to the variables captured in appendix 1. The images were categorised and labelled as either pro-government, pro-terrorists, anti-government - with images depicting the government as the aggressor and instigator of terror, anti-terrorists – with images portraying terrorists as losing the war. The variables were determined by the visual images in the news websites. The researcher used three search phrases "El Adde terror attack" and "KDF terror Attack" "Battle of El Adde" and retrieve all the visual images that fall within the time period as indicated in the scope of the study and analyse: (1) painting of the Kenya defence force (2) portrayal of terrorists in the visual images, (3) whether the images are pro-government or pro-terrorists, (4) the size of the images used in a particular terror story, (5) the overall framing of the image and (6) the caption used where the researcher will analyze the caption in terms of whether it suggests the KDF personnel in the visual is in distress (terrorist winning/glorified) or is in control and/or subduing the terrorists (*See Appendix B*).

3.11 Pre-testing of Data Generation/Collection Tools

A pilot study was carried out to pre-test the coding sheet by engaging two coders who were trained on how to code the visual images using the codebook; the introduction, explanation and the criteria of analysis as intended in the research. Coding was practised individually, and the coders asked to code the same set of images. The researcher and the coders only commenced the study once an inter-coder reliability of 95% is attained. Tinsley and Weiss (2000) define inter-coder reliability as the extent to which different coders assign the same code or rating to each object, in this case each retrieved visual. The results from the pre-test were measured for reliability where they were expected to have a chance agreement with a coefficient of .80 and above Krippendorff (2004) which essentially indicates that the tools are reliable and the coding process acceptable. Once training is satisfactory, the two coders were given access to the *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke and nation.africa* websites to code independently using the same code sheet. Inter-coder reliability using percent agreement was determined. If the discrepancies are huge, the two coders were retrained until an acceptable percentage was achieved.

3.12 Validity and Reliability of Research Tools

The study tested level of relation and agreement on the coders through an objective pre-test to measure the strength of the code sheet (Krippendorff, 2018). The researcher then pretested the analysis criteria and the code sheet to ensure their validity, reliability, and objectivity as research tools. The two coders were given two images each obtained from either the *bbc.com, cnn.com, the-star.co.ke, standardmedia.co.ke* and *nation.africa*

websites to code independently. A Scott's pi was a measure of reliability that accounts for relatedness or differences between coders and which took into consideration Krippendorff (2018) argument that 80 and above as a coefficient is reliable.

3.13 Data Analysis and Presentation Plan

The results obtained from content analysis were cleaned and analysed quantitatively using statistical software SPSS. The data obtained from the content analysis and entered the code sheet was cleaned and analysed quantitatively for analysis and presentation. The results were presented in form of frequency tables, narrative, pie charts and bar graphs. This ensured easy interpretation and conceptualization of the presented results findings. The presentation was tied to the objectives and research questions herein. Finally, the researcher drew conclusions from the data presented.

A qualitative data analysis was conducted on the non-numeric information obtained from interview transcripts, notes, and or audio recordings with editors. Specifically, the researcher conducted a narrative analysis which involved reformulation interview answers presented by respondents considering context and different experiences of each respondent before this information is presented in graphs, pie charts.

3.14 Ethical Consideration

The study followed appropriate research and ethical procedures which are important in social science research since anyone involved in social science research must be mindful of the general agreements on what is appropriate or not in the conduct of scientific enquiry (Boateng, 2012). The study complied with all the requirements for completion of a proposal and clearance to go to the field. The researcher sought ethical

clearance form Aga Khan University and afterwards apply for a NACOSTI permit to meet regulatory requirements.

Since the findings of this research might portray media houses' social responsibility role in bad light causing embarrassment. Therefore, the researcher presented findings in aggregate form and not specific to individual media houses.

3.15 Summary

This chapter presented the literature review, theoretical framework, general literature review and the empirical literature review. The next chapter presents the data analysis in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter looked at the entire process of data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and final presentation in this study. This research was focused on the analysis of online visual images of terror attack on Kenyan security forces in the Battle of El Adde on January 15, 2016, with a view of establishing the role digital media play in the fight against terror. An objective analysis was achieved by specifically examining the portrayal of online visual images of Kenyan security forces in the battle, examining journalistic and ethical practices employed by online platforms when publishing visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in The Battle of El Adde – and by examining the extent to which the framing of these online visual images manifested elements of social responsibility.

The study analysed 48 online images on the Battle of El Adde published in five news websites namely: *nation.africa*, *standardmedia.co.ke*, *the-star.co.ke*, *bbc.com*, and *cnn.com* between January 15, 2016 and January 15, 2020. A total of 48 online images themed on Battle of El Adde were analysed and formed the basis data for this study. A google sheet document was developed where all the selected variables as captured in the code sheet document were recorded for purposes of this study.

Quantitative content analysis was subsequently conducted to identify and establish the various element or variables that stood out in the selected images. The specific variables were date when the picture was published, how the government forces were portrayed, how

the terrorists were portrayed, whether the images used were pro-government, or pro-terrorists, nature of the caption and the overriding message, size of the images used on specific publications, authenticity of the images, and whether the images adhered to societal norms.

Finally, to establish the level at which the images manifested adherence to journalistic and ethical practices, interviews were conducted using an interview guide. A total of three digital news editors from the news websites under study were interviewed. The journalists/digital news editors were in the newsroom during the same study period and had interacted with the images.

4.2 Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

The presentation used specific variables in the code sheet in this study to give response to the three research objectives. In line with the first objective; To examine how online visual images of the Kenya security forces in El Adde potrayed the Kenya security forces, and the third objective: To examine the extent to which the framing of the online visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces in The Battle of El Adde manifest elements of social responsibility, the researcher used the following elements of the code sheet matrix - (1) the painting of the Kenya defence forces (2) portrayal of terrorists in the visual images, (3) whether the images are pro-government or pro-terrorists, (4) the size of the images used in a particular terror story, (5) the overall framing of the image and (6) the caption used where the researcher analysed the caption in terms of whether it suggests the KDF personnel in the visual were in distress (terrorist winning/glorified) or were in control and/or subduing the terrorists (security forces/government winning the war on terror).

4.2.1 Response Rate and Demographic Results

The researcher examined visual images from a five news websites namely: *bbc.com, cnn.com, standardmedia.co.ke, star.co.ke* and *nation.africa* which was the population of the study. A total of 48 visual images of the battle of El Adde were selected as the target population for the purpose of this study. To answer the second objective question, the researcher only interviewed three digital news editors from the five that the study had intended to interview. This provided a 60 percent response rate which was found to be adequate for this study.

4.2.2 Quantitative Findings

4.2.2.1 Research Objective One.

Research objective one sought to examine how online visual images of the Kenya security forces in El Adde potrayed the Kenya security forces fight against terror. The researcher examined manifest features from the images sourced from the news websites under study. The study found that most of the images published generally painted the Kenyan security forces as losing the war against terrorism. The themes that arose from this objective were; (1) Painting of the Kenya defence force (2) portrayal of terrorists in the visual images, (3) whether the images are pro-government or pro-terrorists, (4) the size of the images used in a particular terror story, (5) the overall framing of the image and (6) the caption used in the images.

Painting of the Kenya Defence Force

The analysis conducted on the 48 visual images from the five (5) news websites showed that a majority of images 80.0% (N=38) projected the Kenyan security forces as

losing the war against terrorism. Only 16.0% (N=8) painted the Kenyan government as winning the war on terror. On the other hand, only 4.0% (N=2) showed Other variable. It was notable that the two international news websites – the BBC at (9) and CNN (10) had most of their visual images projecting the Kenyan government and the security forces as losing the war against terrorism. None of the images published by *cnn.com* and *nation.africa* showed the Kenyan security forces as winning the war against terror with reference to the El Adde attack. Most of the images were those taken during the numerous militarized burial ceremonies of the victims – with their coffins draped in the national flag to show support.
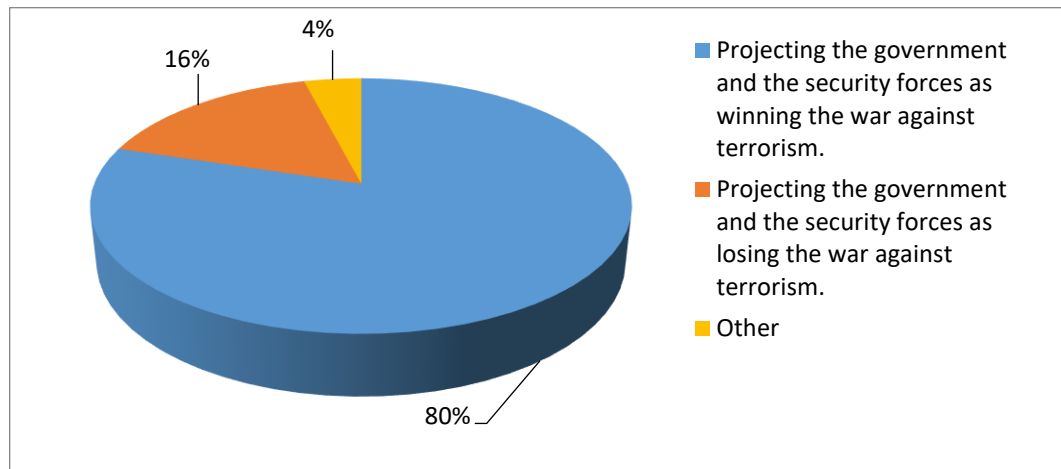
Figure 1: *Painting of the Kenya Defence Forces*

Portrayal of terrorists in the visual images

The analysis conducted on the 48 visual images from the five (5) news websites showed that a majority of images 85.0% (N=41) Projecting the terrorists as winning the war against Kenyan security forces. 0.0% (N=0) Projecting the terrorists as losing the terror war to Kenyan security forces, while 15.0% (N=7) showed OTHER variable. Of all the images published by the BBC (12 out of 48 sampled) – all of them projected a picture of

the terrorist as the winners. This is because the images mostly showed Kenyan as the victims - either in hospital or images of funeral processions. Interestingly, none of the five news websites had images which projected the terrorists as losing the fight against the Kenyan security forces. Of all the 48 images analysed – none projected the terror group as being under duress – thereby protecting them as losing the terror war to Kenyan security forces. Instead, some images showed the terrorist as having taken control of the EL Adde camp soon after the attack – plus the Kenyan military equipment. This finding seems to agree with Hoffman (2006) argument that digital media has been an integral medium by which terrorist groups pass their message, and which has become the main goal of many terrorist purpose to enhance the scale of their attacks.
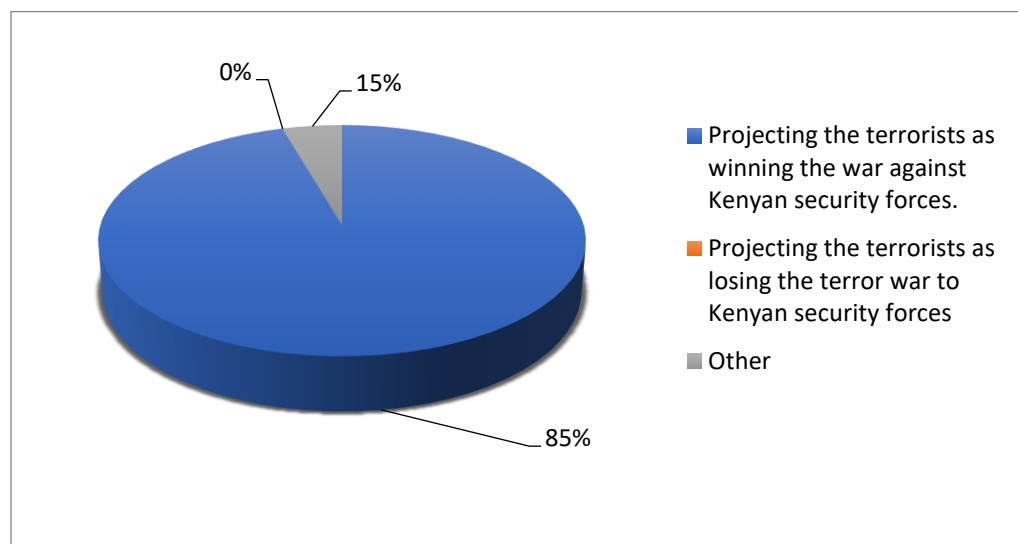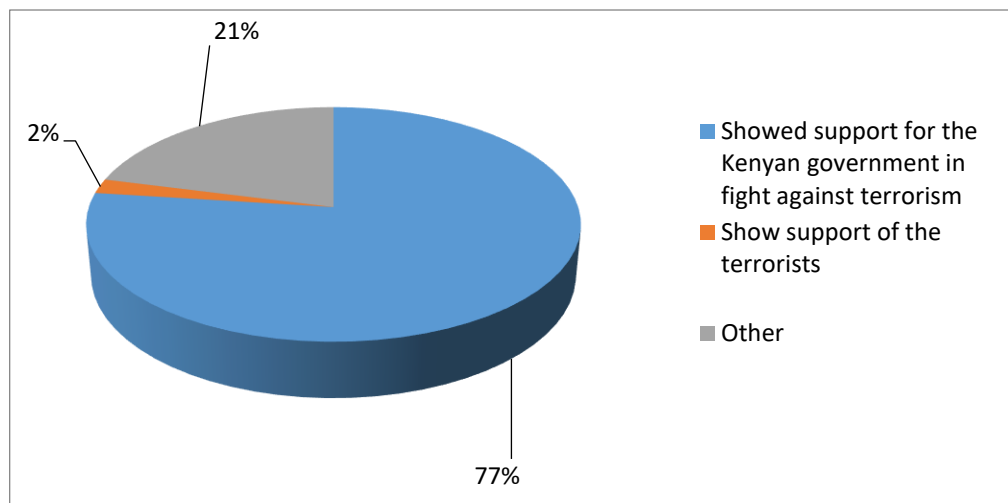

Figure 2: Portrayal of terrorists in the visual images

*Whether the images are pro-government or pro-terrorists*

The analysis showed that a majority of images 77.0% (N=37) showed support for the Kenyan government in its fight against terrorism. Only 2.0% (N=1) appeared to show support of the terrorists, while 21.0% (N=10) showed OTHER variable not necessarily pro-government or pro-terrorists. Although most of the images anayzed portratyed the Kenyan Security parameters as losing the fight – or rather as having taken the greasted casualities – most of the images (77.0%) showed great support for the Kenyan government in the fight of against terror. The support was recorded across both the local and internatioal media – bbc.com (7 out of 48), Standard.co.ke (9 out of 48), cnn.com (7 out of 48), Nation.africa (6 out of 48), Star.co.ke (8 out of 48).

Figure 3: *Whether the images are pro-government or pro-terrorists*

The size of the images used in a particular terror story

The analysis showed that a majority of images 61.0% (N=29) showed use of medium sized images. Only 19.0% (N=9) showed use of large images. On the other hand only 20.0% (N=10) showed preference for small sized images. The OTHER had 0.0% (N=0) recorded use showing other variables.

	Large size	Medium	Small	Other
■ Series1	19.00%	61.00%	20.00%	0.00%
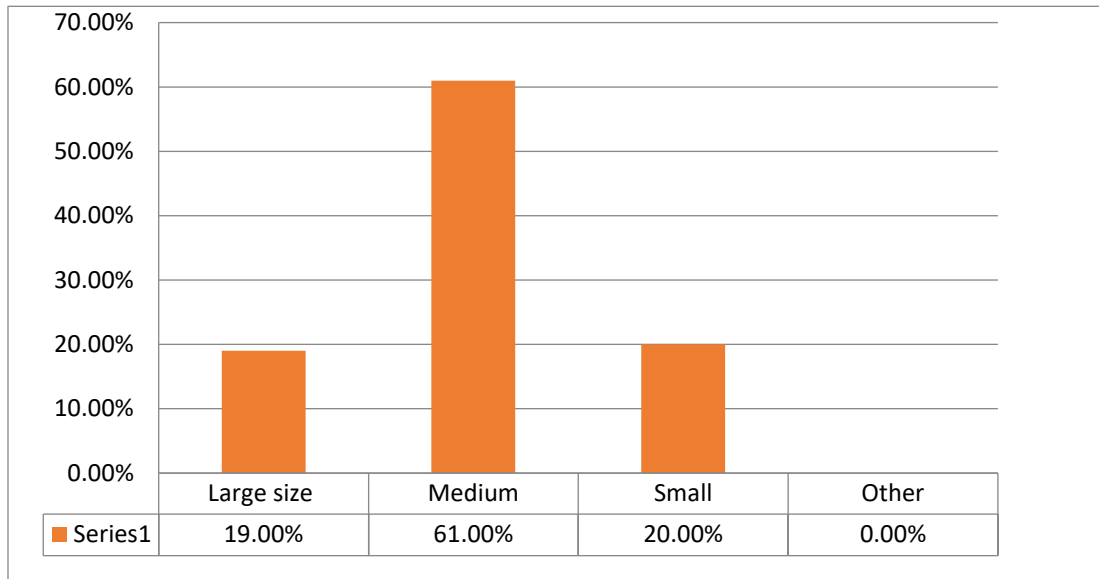
Figure 4: The size of the images used in a particular terror story

The overall framing of images

The analysis showed that a majority of images 69.0% (N=33) projected failures by the government and the national security agencies in the war against terror. Only 4.0% (N=2) .

The overall framing of the images

The analysis showed that a majority of images 69.0% (N=33) projected failures by the government and the national security agencies in the war against terror. Only 4.0% (N=2) projected the negative effects of terrorism and terror attacks to the economy 17.0% (N=8) of the images was NOT CLEAR, while 10.0% (N=5) showed preference for OTHERS. The images did not give much focus on th effect of the terror attack specifically the El Adde attack on the economy.

Table 1: The overall framing of images

News site	BBC	Standard	CNN	Nation	The Star	Total	Percentage (%)
Projecting failures by the government and the national security agencies as failing in the war against terror	6	5	9	6	7	33	69.0%
Projecting the negative effects of terrorism and terror attacks to the economy	2	0	0	0	0	2	4.0%
Not clear	4	4	0	0	0	8	17.0%
Other	0	1	1	0	3	5	10.0%
Total percentage							100%

The captions accompanying the visual images

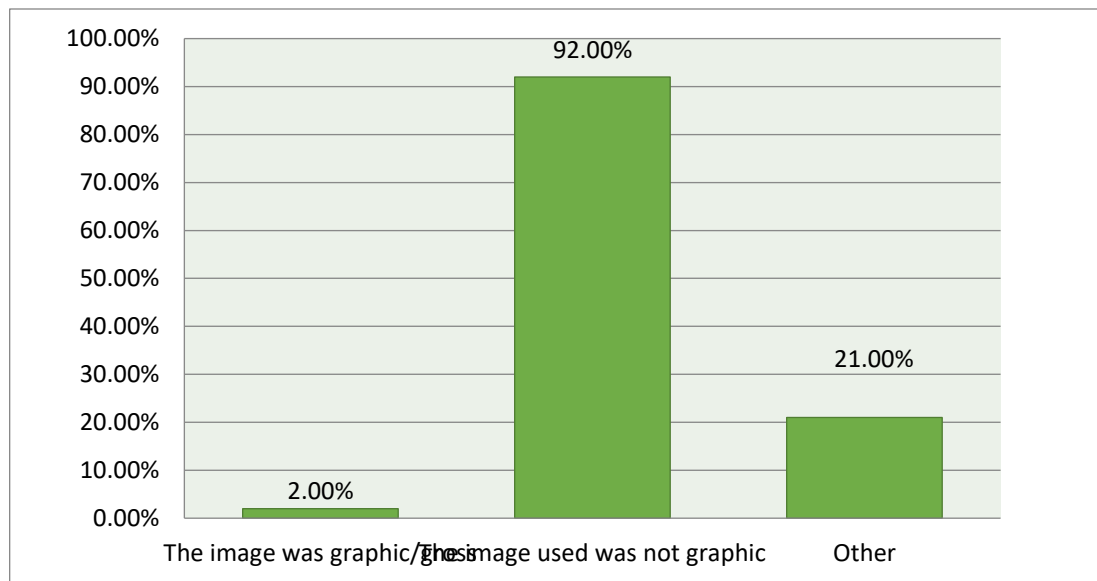The analysis showed that a majority of images 61.0% (N=32) had captions suggesting distress on the part of Kenyan officers, only 2.0% (N=1) had their captions depicting a situation where the Kenyan government is winning, 0.0% (N=0) with captions suggesting distress on the part of the terrorists, 12.0% (N=3) with captions depicting a situation where the terrorists are winning while 25.0% (N=12) showing other.

Table 2: The captions accompanying the visual images

News site	BBC	Standard	CNN	Nation	The Star	Total	Percentage (%)
Captions suggest distress on the part of Kenyan officers.	3	6	10	6	7	32	61.0%
The caption depicts a situation where the Kenyan government is winning.	0	1	0	0	0	1	2.0%
Captions suggests distress on the part of the terrorists.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
The caption depicts a situation where the terrorists are winning	3	0	0	0	0	3	12.0%
Other	6	3	0	0	3	12	25.0%
Total parentage							

Nature of the image used

Analysis showed that a majority of images 92.0% (N=44) used was not graphic, 2.0% (N=1) of the images were graphic/gross and 6.0% (N=3) for OTHER variables. The media houses obviously adhered to the guiding priciples and the code of conduct for the practice of journalism.

Figure 5: Nature of the image used

Authenticity of the images used

The analysis showed that a majority of images 83.0% (N=40) was factual and truthful, 0.0% (N=0) of the images were fake/not factual and 17.0% (N=8) catered for OTHER variables. Not a single image could be identified as fake or not factual returning a 0.0% result largely because most of subsequent images showing the devastating effects of the terror event recorded in El Adde were those of local and international media only capturing wounded soldiers or pictures of militarized burial ceremonies. These pictures were captioned with clear by-lines from recognised reporters working for legitimate media houses. None of the mages came out as a fake or factual – and which included pictures posted by the terror groups – showing them roaming freely at the El Adde camp moments after ambushing and overrunning Kenyan security officers. The news websites under study tended to shy away from specifically pictures posted by alleged Al-Shabaab group showing faces of people (Kenyan security officers) they claim they have in their custody after their attack at El Adde.

4.2.2.2 Research Objective Two.
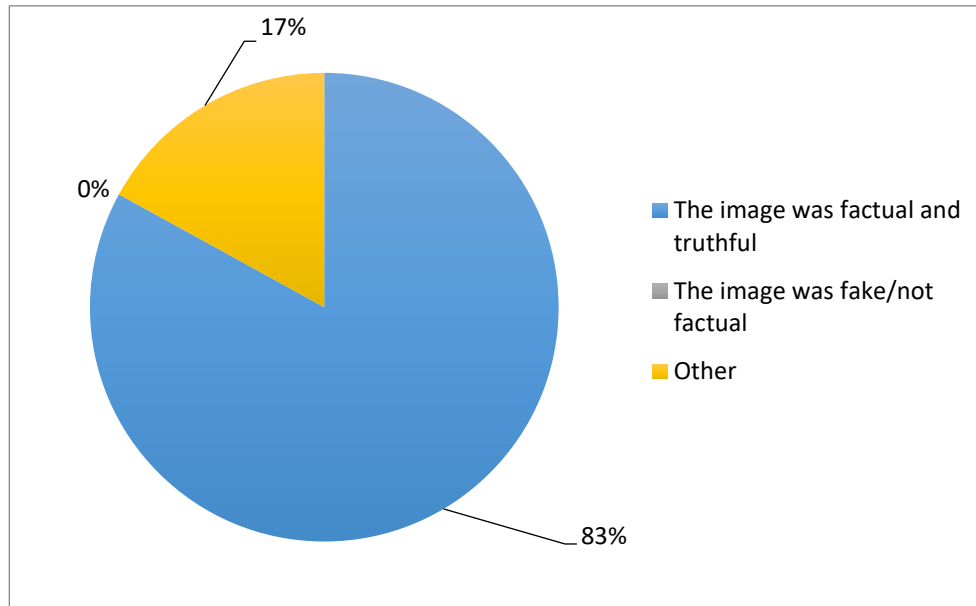
Figure 6: Authenticity of the images used

Adherence to societal norms

The analysis showed that a majority of images 90.0% (N=43) adhered to acceptable societal standards and norms, 2.0% (N=1) of the images did not adhere to cultural norms, while 8.0% (N=4) OTHERS. This data sought to answer the questions around the third research question which was – to what extent does the framing of online images of the EL ADDE attack manifest elements of social responsibility. Indeed – the mages largely showed adherence to social norms and ethical principles that are not necessarily journalistic. For instance, only 2.0% (N=1) from the entire pool of 48 did not adhere to social norms that are acceptable in the Kenyan setting. This agrees with the social responsibility theory which argues that "the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures where it operates" (Siebert et al 1956, p. 1). The media will priorities values dependent on the society's social structure and the norms that inform

and guide how the national and regional media operate.
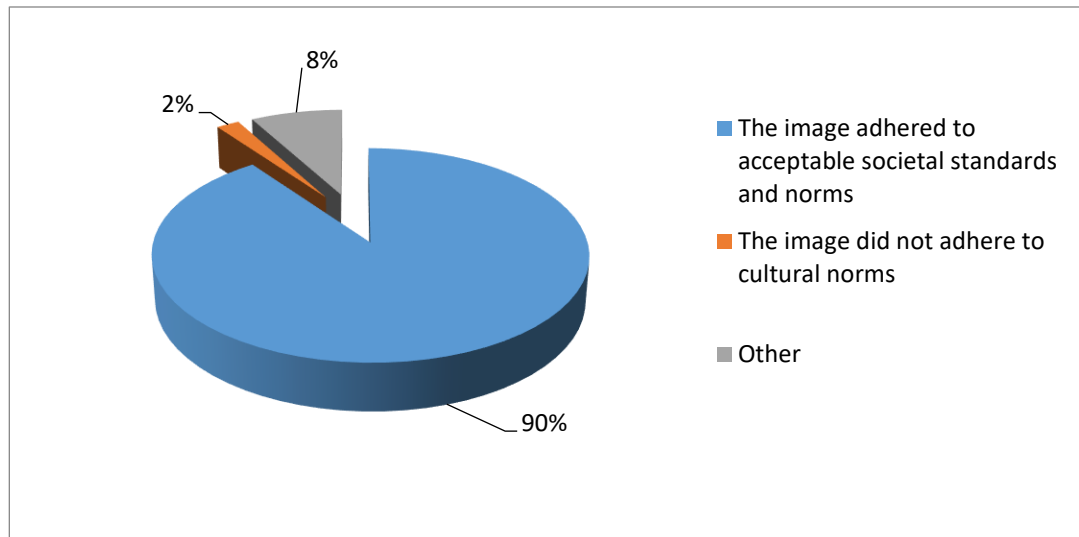
Figure 7: Adherence to societal norms

4.2.3 Qualitative Findings

4.2.3.1 Research Objective Two.

Interviews conducted with three digital news editors to answer the second objective question revealed a number of important findings. The researcher asked the three digital news editors from *bbc.com, standardmedia.co.ke* and *star.co.ke* six (6) key questions which sought to address the third objective question. The digital editors were each asked a set of six questions (*see Appendix A)*.

On what journalistic principles journalists employed when selecting visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces

The digital news editors used certain journalistic principles whenever they were selecting visual images of terror on the El Adde attack. One principle required them to respect the privacy of the security officers and their families. This meant they had to either blur or avoid using pictures that exposed security officers and their family to danger. This is similar to what Griffin and Lee (1995) found when talking about the Gulf War, where only 2 percent of total images used showed images of wounded or killed US soldiers. A digital news reporter from BBC said thus:

> All of us are expected to follow religiously the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism and the international guidelines in the coverage of terrorism. These are like the road sign that guides us digital news editors on how to report on terror so as not to add fuel to terror – but report objectively. (BBC Digital News Editor)

The other journalistic principal revolved around Professional Accountability as captured in Article 3 (1) - where a journalist is required to be independent and free from manipulation from those seeking influence or control over news or content. This would mean presenting a story in a balanced form to ensure both voices are captured. This partly answers the question on how digital news editors ensure balance between informing the citizenry objectively and still not falling into the trap of appearing to support terrorism.

> The principle of fare balance always comes into play when covering terrorism. This we would do to ensure objective and informed coverage that is devoid of bias. The balance is achieved by correctly and fairly representing the truth – but still with strict adherence to journalistic/professional ethos. In my media house we call is the 50-50 balance. (Digital News Sub Editor).

On what ethical considerations the editors took when selecting images on terror targeted

at security forces for publication online

A number of ethical issues came into play. Some of these were whether on the nature of the images; were they gory or gross in nature? Or were the images socially acceptable. Did the images follow the acceptable social and cultural guidelines of the Kenyan society? This was important because every journalist, beyond just reporting the truth, is expected to present certain truths in a manner that is socially and culturally acceptable. Then there was the consideration of the Article 15: On intrusion into grief and shock. The article requires journalists to only use images that will not appear top ride on the grief and shock for the purposes of driving numbers (Handbook for the reporting of terrorism: MCK).

> Since digital media is known to thrive on viral and sensationalised news – and bearing in mind the devastating effect of the El ADDE attack on families – we often made sure that we did not hurt the victims by publishing gory pictures of the event. Doing so would mean intrusion and grief which is unethical. (Standardmedia.co.ke Digital New Reporter).

On what takes precedence when choosing what image to publish online? Is it journalistic

principles, or ethical principles?

The editors were (and still are) always under instructions to adhere to both journalistic and ethical practices whenever they are faced with the choice of selecting and publishing terror images that appear to promote or advance anti-social conducts.

> As a digital news editor, I assume full responsibility for the published content. Be it text or image. It is my duty to ensure that whatever image I clear for publication meets the threshold for publishing - and adheres to the editorial guidelines. Some of these guidelines are written but many others are unwritten. One cannot separate journalistic principles from ethical guidelines. In my view, one cannot exist without the other. It's a very thin line. I would say that both are important. (The Star Digital News Editor).

On the most challenging ethical issue digital editors faced when publishing visual

images of terror on Kenyan security forces.

The editors highlighted reporting on security officers is a challenge. As editors, they have to select and package content that will not jeopardise security operations and the general security situation in the country. The question has been whether the primary goal of news reports, namely informing the public, can actually be achieved when presenting disturbing images of terrorist attacks or whether this leads to a declined information processing due to increased risk perception evoked by the threatening visual material making them only useful to the terrorists who benefit by receiving public attention (Silke, 2010).

> As editors we are guided by personal/intrinsic/moral beliefs and even by common sense when reporting on terror events that have the ability of destabilizing a country's security system, families and organizations. It one of the most challenging things for us editors. There is always the danger of exposing security officers and their family members to danger by revealing personal information like where they live. (BBC Digital News Editor).
>
> The other danger or challenge is the vulnerability to misinformation especially where a journalist is limited both by time and resources to report certain terror events – which sometimes sees them misrepresent facts and which can be disastrous. There are many things we are unable to qualify or confirm because the attacks like on in El Adde happened in another country where our reporters cannot reach. (The Star Digital News Editor).

To mitigate these challenges, one of the editors said his media house practices strict adherence to the Article 21: Use of pictures and names as stipulated in the code of conduct for the practice of journalism. As a rule, the editors apply general caution when selecting and using pictures and names of security officers. The editors said they generally avoided

publishing visual images of the El Adde attack whenever they felt that the image published could harm the security officers or their next of kin.

4.3 Summary of Key Findings

The study intended to analyze online visual images of Kenyan security forces published on digital news websites after the battle of El Adde that occurred on January 15, 2016. The analysis was done against the backdrop of two theories namely framing theory and social responsibility theory. The analysis of data presented in this chapter shows three key findings:

1. Most of the visual images in the study projected the Kenyan government and its security forces as losing the war against terrorism. The percentages of visual images that painted the Kenya defence force as essentially losing the war was the highest at 80.0 percent. Only a small percentage of the images studied painted the Kenyan government as winning the war on terror. The findings clearly showed a slant in the coverage essentially due to the fact that most of the images published were those taken during the numerous militarized burial ceremonies of the victims – with their coffins draped in the national flag to show support. There were no images showing loss – whether economical or human – on the side of the terror groups because of the limitations that come with reporting the same especially when an act of terror occurs in dangerous or hostile environment like was the case with the El Adde attack.

2. Most of the images publshed by the five news websites projected the terrorists as winning the terror against the Kenyan security forces with 85.0 percent of the

images analysed sendign this message. From the images, none of the images projected the terrorists as losing the terror war to Kenyan security forces. This is because the images were either of injured soldiers in hospital or images of funeral processions across the country that followed the attack. The net effect, and the perception the images left in the minds of the audience was of a sense of loss suffered by the Kenyan people and the government. It is worth noting that alsthough the terror groups have have suffered some leel of loss in the attack – such images never made it to the media due to the obvious limitations with regards to the ability of journalists to take such pictures – or even to trust such pictures when presented by alleged terror groups. Of all the 48 images analyzed – none projected the terror group as being under duress – thereby showing them as winning the terror against the Kenyan security forces. There were, however, images that showed the terrorist as having taken control of the El Adde camp soon after the attack. This finding seems to agree with Hoffman (2006) argument that digital media has been an integral medium by which terrorist groups pass their message, and which has become the main goal of many terrorist purpose to enhance the scale of their attacks.

3. Most of the images published showed support for the government. This was achieved through publishing images that evoked a sense of empathy and patriotism on the Kenyan people. Most of the images published showed damaged military equipment like tankers and buildings and human loss (deaths of soldiers). A majority of images – especially of coffins carrying remains of dead Kenyan solders draped in the national flag or of funeral processions and/or of wounded soldiers

being airlifted for medical emergencies appeared to evoke a sense of oneness in grief – and seeking to justify the presence of Kenyan security forces in Somalia. Although this study did not seek to find the effect of this terror attack, it was clear that it brought a sense of national loss – with the government keen to attract empathy and support from its people in the war against terror. These images painted terrorists as evil people who had no regard for life – and who must be fought at all cost.

4. The images overally projected failures by the government and the national security agencies in the war against terror. The sense of failure appeared to have been measured against the number of human loss suffered in the tragedy. Only a handful of images (2 out of 48 pictures analysed) appeared to focus on the economic damage suffered. Indeed, the images tended mostly to evoke emotions on the part of the Kenyans – with most of them focussing on deaths suffered – and not the economic loss and pobable failure by the government to protect its own security forces. This als exlains why the Kenyan government has never clearly come out to reveal the actual number of soldiers who died in the El Adde attack.

5. Most of the images (61.0 percent) were not graphic in nature. It was clear that the news websites clearly adhered to the guiding priciples and the code of conduct for the practice of journalism when selecting images for publication. This was informed from the fact that the digital platforms under standy are primarily attached to their traditional wings of their respective media houses – which alread have an elaborate editorial policy that guide selecting and publication of news. The bbc.com, cnn.com, nation.africa, standard.co.ke and star.co.ke are already

established media houses with a reputation built over the years as reputable media houses. As such, the editors are expected to adhere to strict professional code of conduct and ethos whenever they are executing their work. This is also informed by the fact that publishing graphic images go against the code of conduct for the practice of journalism – and the in-house editorial guidelines.

6. Size of images is an important framing aspect of visual reportage. The findings in this regard showed that most of the images used were of medium size. The size element appeared to be dictated more by the quality of pictures that the message in a specifit picture. Most of the images taken and published by international websites like bbc.com and cnn.com themselves tended to have better quality – and therefore could be used in medium or large size without pixalating. The same cannot be said about images supplied by the terrorists themselves (as they were of poor quality) or those taken by amatures.

7. Most of the captions at 61.0 percent suggested disress on the part of the Kenyan soldiers. Overally the captions did very little to add value to the images – as most of the captions only revealed what was already obvious in the images. Ideally, a good caption should add value to a story by adding impotant details. This was not the case with regards to images used in the attack – as most only recounted what the audience could already see in the pictures. For example, it would be meaningless to caption a picture showing a funeral event of one of the soldiers as 'a burial ceremony of a soldier ho died in the El Adde attack' It was clear that most journalists did not have adequate information on the attack or had intentionally decided to be cagy with information due to the sensitivity of the matter.

8. The analysis showed that a majority of images 83.0 were authentic having been taken by reputable photographers from reputable media houses. Not a single image could be out rightly come out as fake. This is because most of images showing the devastating effects of the terror event were those taken by local and international media. The few images that were sourced from the terrorists were clearly captioned 'unverified images'. The findings show that the news websites adhere to the code of conduct for the practice of journalism as well as the Media Council Act 2014 on the reportage of terror. The editors were careful not to publish images that would fuel fear while promoting the terrorists' agenda.

9. The findings showed that most images adhered to the acceptable social norms and ethical and journalistic principles. This is in agreement with the social responsibility theory which argues that "the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures where it operates" (Siebert et al 1956, p. 1). It was clear from the interviews conducted that the editors adhered to ethical and journalistic principles whenever they were selecting visual images of terror on the El Adde attack. This included respecting privacy of the security forces and their families – and which saw most of the images blurred often avoid exposing security officers and their family members to danger. To ensure balance – yet remain objective without appearing to sensationalize terror vents – the journalists sought to correctly and fairly represent the truth in strict adherence to journalistic/professional ethos.

4.4 Summary

  This chapter presented the data collection instruments, pretesting, the data analysis plan and the ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the outcome of the analysis of the data collected during the study survey. The next chapter presents the outcome of the analysis of the data collected during the study survey.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the study presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations for adoption possible adoption. The study examined online visual images of terror attack on Kenyan security forces in the Battle of El Adde that occurred on January 15, 2016, with a view of establishing the role digital media play in the fight against terror. To achieve its general objective, the study conducted a quantitative content analysis of visual images published in five leading digital news website namely - *nation.africa, bbc.com, standardmedia.co.ke, star.co.ke* and *cnn.com*.

5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

This section looks at the key findings of the study in against existing literature and body of knowledge on the online coverage of terrorism targeted at security forces. Interpretation of the results from the study and the ensuing discussions are presented against the three objective questions. The study draws on the findings of other research and the framing and social responsibility theories to show how these findings will impact on practice and policy.

5.2.1 Research Objective One

The first objective the study sought to examine was how online visual images of the Kenya security forces in El Adde potrayed the Kenya security forces fight against

terror. This essentially looked at the framing of the visual images of the El Adde attack published between January 15, 2016, and January 15, 2020. The study specifically used three search phrases "El Adde Terror attack" and "KDF terror Attack" "Battle of El Adde" to retrieve all the visual images that fall within the time period as indicated in the scope of the study.

A total of 48 images from the El Adde terror attack were retrieved for the purposes of this study following the search - to examine the aspects of the study such as (1) the painting of the Kenya defence force (2) portrayal of terrorists in the visual images, (3) whether the images are pro-government or pro-terrorists, (4) the size of the images used in a particular terror story, (5) the overall framing of the image and (6) the caption used.

The findings showed that most of the images published in the various news websites were intentionally selected and package visual images of terror in order to "advance certain components of a 'perceived reality 'and make them rather more pronounced to endorse a certain element (Entman 2010). Most of the visual images in the study projected the Kenyan government and its security forces as losing the war against terrorism with 80.0 percent of the images analyzed framed to project this message.

The framing element was manifest in how the news websites projected the terrorists. The images showed them (terrorists) as winning the terror against the Kenyan security forces – something that has become socially acceptable among the Kenyan populace. This speaks to the argument held by Reese (2007) that defines frames as socially shared organizing principles persistent over time, that work to meaningfully structure the social world by 'introducing or raising the importance of certain ideas, thereby encouraging an audience to think, feel and decide in a certain manner (Entman, 2007).

The findings showed that the media houses attempted to show support for the government mainly achieved though publishing images that tended to show solidarity at the time of calamity. Most of the images published showed Kenyan leadership (President Uhuru Kenyatta, Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga who was considered as an opposition leader, Deputy President William Ruto and other leaders coming from different ideological standpoints) coming together to face a common enemy in a show of solidarity.

The findings of this study tended to show that most digital news sites promoted unity journalism by framing the Al-Shabaab as the foe and depicted the Kenyan security forces as the victims and not the aggressors. The themes that emerged following the content analysis was that of unity of Kenyans in the face of Al-Shabaab attacks as was the case in the coverage of the Garissa University attack (Ally, 2015).

5.2.2 Research Objective Two

The second objective sought to examine journalistic and ethical practices employed by the five online platforms under study when selecting and publishing visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces with reference to the Battle of El Adde. The findings from the interviews conducted showed that the digital journalists exercised journalistic and ethical practices when selecting and publishing visual images of terror.

Most of the images published showed clear adherence to social, ethical, and journalistic principles that govern news reportage. For example, most of the images at 92.0 percent were not of graphic or gory in nature – a clear indication that ethical considerations came into play. The findings showed that not a single image could be identified as fake or not factual returning a 0.0 percent result. This shows that journalists took into consideration

privacy of the affected security forces and their families – in accordance with the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism by the Media Council of Kenya.

It is safe to conclude that digital news journalists from the media houses exercised social and ethical responsibility when selecting and publishing images on the websites. Although they reported the heavy loss suffered by the Kenyan government – the reportage did not glorify terror activities which should have been the case in a sensationalized coverage.

To discuss this specific objective within the framework of the social responsibility theory used in this study, the digital journalists focused on covering the events objectively – as they had been captured by the lenses. The general reportage with regards to nature of images, the overriding theme or message in the published images as well as captioning showed that the journalists adhered to ethics and journalistic principles – and therefore did not negate the important role of social responsibility.

5.2.3 Research Objective Three

The third objective two sought to examine the extent to which the framing of the images in the Battle of El Adde exhibited social responsibility. The findings from the study showed that most of the images published adhered to tenets of social norms. The images selected were factual, were not bloody in nature – or intentionally framed to promote an idea that went against the cultural and social belief of the Kenyan society. The framing of images took into consideration privacy concerns of those affected including families – and the sensitivity of a matter that has all the elements of degenerating into a religious war between Muslims and Christians. From the findings, 90.0 percent of the images adhered to acceptable societal norms – with only 2.0 percent failing in this regard.

To discuss this against the social responsibility theory – one can argue that the digital news sites intentionally took on the form and coloration of the Kenyan social and political structures where they operate when covering the terror incident. This showed that the digital media sites prioritized values dependent on the society's social structure and the norms that inform and guide how the national and regional media operate (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 1).

5.3 Conclusion and Implications for Practice

The framing of visual images was an important element in the coverage of the Battle of El Adde. Images of the attack published in the *bbc.com, cnn.com, nation.africa, standardmedia.co.ke*, and the *star.co.ke* were carefully selected and published to communicate a certain perceived reality. The images tended to raise the importance of certain ideas in the process encouraging the audience to think, feel and decide in a certain manner (Entman, 2007). The images appeared to have been focused on "whatever the audience believe to be the most important – in this regard the loss of life of Kenyan soldiers (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The danger, however, arises when the framing of images or stories of such magnitude is lopsided – thereby only advancing a certain truth that only the editors or even the terrorists wants the audience to see – as the framed truth may not be the ideal situation.

The study also showed that digital journalists follow certain ethical and journalistic principles when reporting on terror events. These could be laws/guidelines developed in-house or guidelines developed by the Media Council of Kenya. Most of the digital news sites subscribed to the code of ethics for the practice of journalism – developed by the Media Council of Kenya, the Media Council Act 2013 and the Constitution of Kenya 2010

to guide their reportage around terror activities. The journalists exhibited strict adherence to Article 23 on acts of violence as stipulated in the Code of Ethics for the Practice of Journalism which holds that media shall not present acts deemed as violence like terror acts in a manner likely to glorify the terror acts. It is possible to conclude that journalists from well established – and formal digital media houses like the ones under study adhered to ethical and journalistic principles. The same may not necessarily be said about non-formal digital platforms like blogs – which have often failed to adhere to such codes of conduct in an environment where technology continues to provide terrorists and their sympathizers with a critical communication tool to propagate their propaganda as well as psychological warfare goals (Alexander & Klein, 2003).

The study also concluded that most images published exhibited high level of social responsibility. The digital news journalists exercised abundance of caution when selecting and publishing images of the El Adde attack on the websites. The media prioritised images that focused on courage of security forces, the Kenyans who joined hands to assist the injured, and the challenges faced by the security officers in Somalia. Although editors will often tend to focus on events that are unusual – the coverage generally followed acceptable societal norms.

5.4 Recommendations

The study found that the images of the El Adde attack were framed in a certain way to project a certain perception. The discussion around such coverage measured against earlier research findings within the framework of framing theory suggests some shortfall in effective framing. Since framing tends to be lacking a theoretical model that is shared besides suffering some operational paradigm (Reese, 2007) – journalists should carry out

framing of images of terror with abundance of caution so that it does not appear as if the editors' have the discretion to decide and control what is the acceptable truth to the audience. Since framing introduces the importance of certain ideas, in the process encouraging an audience to think, feel and decide in a certain manner, this study recommends that framing of visual images of terror involving security forces be done within the confines of existing operational paradigm (Reese, 2007). This is important noting that the study found that 80.0 of the images painted the Kenyan security forces as losing the war against terrorism – while none painted the terrorists as losing the war or being under any form of duress. Whether intentional or accidental, this is likely to have an impact in the war against terror with the media appearing to be propagating the agenda of terrorists of spreading panic.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

This study only focused on online visual coverage of El Adde attack focusing on five news websites *namely bbc.com, cnn.com, nation.africa, standardmedia.co.ke* and the *star.co.ke*, thus, there is need to focus on the less formal news sites like that fall under the blogs category. This would include sites like *Tuko,co.ke, Kenyans.co.ke*, Kahawa Tungu and Business Today which have a significant readership in Kenya. This will provide a better understanding of how the general online media (whether formal or informal) cover terror events.

Another area for consideration for further research – and which this study did not cover – is on the elements of peace journalism in the Kenyan context in relation to the coverage of terrorist attack targeted at security forces. This study found that none of the

images were out rightly pro-war frames – but were instead slanted to show unity and peace among Kenyans at the time of adversity. This is an area that needs further research.

Another focus should be on what informs editors' framing of terror narratives with particular attention on what exactly they consider of public interest when choosing which images to publish and which ones to avoid with regards to terror events whose subjects are Kenyan's security forces.

5.6 Summary of Chapter Five

This chapter presented the discussions of the key findings, conclusions, recommendations arising from the study and areas that should be considered for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. What journalistic principles do you apply as a journalist when selecting visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces?

2. What are some of the ethical issues you take into consideration when selecting images on terror targeted at security forces for publication online?

3. What is the most challenging ethical issue you face as a digital editor when publishing visual images of terror on Kenyan security forces?

4. What do you take into consideration when choosing visual images of terror on Kenyan security officers for publication?

5. What takes precedence when choosing what image to publish online? Is it journalistic principles, or ethical principles?

6. How do you do you balance between informing the citizenry objectively and still not falling into the trap of appearing to support terrorism?

Appendix B: Code Sheet and Content Analysis Criteria

A code sheet for the framing analysis of online visual images of Kenyan security forces in the battle of el Adde.

1.   Date

This is the date the picture was published in any of the five news websites under study.

2.   Painting of the Kenya defence force in the visual images

100 Projecting the government and the security forces as winning the war against terrorism.
200 Projecting the government and the security forces as losing the war against terrorism.
300 Other

3.   Portrayal of terrorists in the visual images

100 Projecting the terrorists as winning the war against Kenyan security forces.
200 Projecting the terrorists as losing the terror war to Kenyan security forces.
300 Other

4.   Whether the images are pro-government or pro-terrorists

100 Images show support for the Kenyan government in fight against terrorism.
200 Images show support for the terrorist factions.
300 Other

5.   The size of the images used in a particular terror story

400   Use of large images
500   Use of medium images
600   Use of small images
700   Other

6.   The overall framing of the image

800   Projecting failures by the government and the national security agencies as failing in the war against terror
900   Projecting the negative effects of terrorism and terror attacks to the economy
10   Not clear

300   Other

7.   The captions accompanying the visual images
100   Captions suggest distress on the part of Kenyan officers.
200   The caption depicts a situation where the Kenyan government is winning
300   Captions suggests distress on the part of the terrorists.
400 The caption depicts a situation where the terrorists are winning.
500 Other

8.   The nature of the images uses
100   The image was graphic/gross
200   The image used was not graphic
300 Other

9.   Authenticity of the image
100   The image was factual and truthful
200   The image was fake/not factual
300 Other

10.   Adherence to societal norms
100   The image adhered to acceptable societal standards and norms
200   The image did not adhere to cultural norms
300   Other

Appendix C: Research Timelines

ACTIVITY	APR/MAY/JUN/JUNE				JULY-SEPTEMBER			OCT – NOVEMBER					NOV/DEC 2021			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Selection and approval of topic	■	■														
Working on the draft proposal			■	■	■											
Working with supervisors on the proposal						■	■	■	■	■	■					
Defense of the proposal											■					
Application for the NACOSTI document and Ethical approval												■				
Collection of research data												■	■			
Carrying out analysis of the data														■	■	
Carrying out plagiarism check															■	
The final defense															■	
Corrections and final submissions																■

Appendix D: AKU Ethics Review Committee Approval Letter

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Media and Communications

REF: AKU-GSMC/ERC/2021/009

Date: November 15, 2021

Dear Edwin Anjago (Student No. 543348)

RE: DIGITAL MEDIA AND TERRORISM: A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF ONLINE VISUAL IMAGES OF KENYAN SECURITY FORCES IN THE BATTLE OF EL ADDE

This is to inform you that Aga Khan University – Graduate School of Media and Communications Ethics Review Committee has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your approval period is November 15, 2021 to November 14, 2022 and your application's approval number is AKU-GSMC/ERC/2021/009.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following, under the supervision of your two supervisors:

1. Only the approved documents including the informed consent form and the data collection instruments will be used.
2. Any changes, made on the approved documents that may increase the risks or affect the welfare or safety of the participants or compromise the integrity of the study must be reported to GSMC within the shortest time possible. The amended documents will be taken through a fresh review and the due process of approval.
3. In the event that the research cannot be completed within the one year approved period, the researcher will request for renewal of approval 30 days prior to the end of the approved period.
4. The researcher will be required to submit a comprehensive progress report when applying for renewal of approval.
5. Submission of an executive summary report to the GSMC's Ethics Review Committee within 90 days of completion of the study.
6. Produce all the data collected using the approved tools as and when required by the Ethics Review Committee within the 90 days of completion of your study.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be required to obtain a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). You can access the application portal from the website on https://www.nacosti.go.ke/.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Prof Nancy Booker
Associate Dean

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P.O. Box 30270 – 00100 G.P.O. Nairobi, Kenya
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Appendix E: Introductory Letter from AKU

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Media and Communications

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
P. O. Box 30623 – 00100
Nairobi

November 15, 2021

Dear Sir/Madam.

EDWIN ANJAGO (STUDENT NO. 543348)

Edwin Anjago is a registered student at the Aga Khan University, Graduate School of Media and Communications. He is enrolled in the Master of Arts in Digital Journalism Programme and has completed his course work. He is now working on his Master's thesis. Mr. Anjago's topic is **"Digital Media and Terrorism: A Framing Analysis of Online Visual Images of Kenyan Security Forces in the Battle of El Adde."**

The purpose of my writing is to request you to assist Mr. Anjago complete this important academic exercise. Any information collected will be used solely for academic purposes. Upon completion of the research, Mr. Anjago's thesis will be available at our library. He will also submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of his completed work to your department.

We appreciate your support to our student towards his successful completion of his thesis research.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely.

Prof Nancy Booker
Associate Dean

Appendix F: NACOSTI Research Licence