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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Media and Communications

**AN INVESTIGATION ON GENDER PERCEPTIONS IN CREDIBILITY OF
MALE AND FEMALE NEWS ANCHORS IN KENYA**

By

Ngumbau Maluti Musau
5439222

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

Nairobi, Kenya

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APPROVAL PAGE

The Aga Khan University
Graduate School of Media and Communications

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

Members of the Thesis Evaluation Committee appointed to examine the proposal/thesis
of NGUMBAU MALUTI MUSAU-5439222, find it satisfactory and recommended that
it be accepted.

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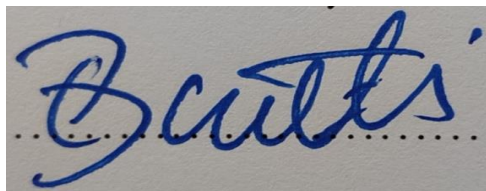
Member,
Thesis Evaluation Committee

09/02/2024

DECLARATION

**AN INVESTIGATION ON GENDER PERCEPTIONS IN CREDIBILITY OF
MALE AND FEMALE NEWS ANCHORS IN KENYA**

I, **NGUMBAU MALUTI MUSAU -5439222**, 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.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in blue ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'Ngumbu Maluti Musau'. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature

09/02/2024

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The success and survival of media houses is based on viewership as informed on audience loyalty that is pegged on perceived credibility of the news items, news anchors and media houses. But, extent of credibility perception as influenced by gender under the gender disparity concept has not been assessed within the Kenyan media space; which forms the focus of this study. The main objective was to investigate gender perceptions in the credibility of male and female news anchors in Kenya. Specifically, the study assessed the perceived credibility of male news anchors in presenting hard news items in Kenya and examined female news anchors perceived credibility in presenting soft news items in Kenya. The study was anchored on social role and social credibility theories and there was use of mixed method approach in obtaining qualitative and quantitative data. The survey involved respondents watching a hard and soft news clip presented by male and female news anchors and answering the research questions by filling the online Google form. Content and thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data, descriptive analysis for quantitative data and independent t-test was for checking the hypothesis. Findings showed that credibility perceptions on presentation of soft or hard news by male and female anchors was not based on gender. The conducted t-tests, thus rejected the null hypothesis based on indiscriminate values for male and female news anchors in presenting hard news. The study concluded that other factors including comprehensiveness and completeness of the information, citing information sources, trustworthiness, factual and knowledgeable news anchors influenced the credibility perception of the news item and anchors. The study recommended use of double pairing anchoring, training programs and involvement of news anchors in the sourcing, scripting, editing and production of news items to improve credibility perception.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ERB:	Ethics Review Board
FM Radio:	Frequency Modulation Radio
GMMP:	Global Media Monitoring Project
JKL:	Jeff Koinange Live
KICC:	Kenya International Conference Centre
MCK:	Media Council of Kenya
NACOSTI:	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
TV:	Television
UK:	United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Credibility in journalism refers to constructs including reliability, trustworthiness, and accuracy of the information (North, 2016). Credibility is a fundamental principle in journalism, and a basic tenet on which broadcast journalism is constructed (McCombs, 2014). It is essential in building and maintaining public confidence and trust in the news item, the information and the content presented by different journalists and other media outlets. Fletcher and Nielsen (2017) posited that news exists in the context of the audience. As such, it is the burden of the media houses and journalists to inform the public on the constructs of objectivity, transparency, independence, balanced, fairness, and verification. Ninke (2020) contend that it is common in many newsrooms to have a man-woman anchor team for its gender make-up. This gender make-up and heuristics work to increase the credibility of the media and stories. However, Shor et al. (2019) claim that females in the newsrooms were still unofficially assigned news stories that were traditionally female such as health, home, community, and lifestyles.

Successful media houses are informed by high viewership and confidence in the truthfulness and accuracy of the news stories (Nziza, 2018). Media houses employ male and female news anchors to increase viewership, but males are assigned dominant roles while females handle lowly ranking roles. The stories anchored by males are programmed

to be first aired to draw the viewers' attention, while those done by females are feature stories that are likely to interest a small group of viewers. Jibril and Abubakar (2017) noted that male anchors present news on current affairs and politics that is of interest to the general public and aired first in the program. Alternatively, the female anchors present stories often aired after a commercial break on specific feature stories such as lifestyle, home living and care.

Similarly, Nampito and Ndhlovu (2020) posited that male journalists took a leading role in investigations while female journalists were assigned a supporting role such as editing. While the studies show a gender disparity in the media houses, there is a need to assess further how the gender disparity affects credibility perceptions. The credibility perceptions in journalism is based on aspects such as the news content, the media house, its staff and viewers' impression and perceptions (Sanusi et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to examine gender disparity as it informs on credibility perceptions of news.

Whenever a media outlet is perceived as not credible, it loses its audience and viewership numbers decrease. Lack of credibility also erodes trust in media items and leads to detrimental societal issues such as spread of fake news and misinformation, which negatively impacts democratic values. Additionally, Klaas and Boukes (2022) contend that journalists' gender is one factor that partly determines the credibility of news items, media outlets, and media houses. Gender dynamism shows the interactions and relationships based on gender in different settings. In journalism, gender dynamism remains asymmetrical, with a small percentage of females making up the media landscape (Selva

& Andi, 2020); yet the females are relegated to cover stereotypical female topic, ‘soft news’ on lifestyle and fashion, while males dominate male topics ‘hard news’ on politics, technology, and economics. There is gendered inequality and segregation based on the division of tasks and assignments. This study sought to examine gender disparity and credibility perception of news anchors. This was achieved by focusing on assessing hard and soft news anchoring by male and female anchors and later conduct a survey to determine perceived credibility based on the news item and gender of the anchor.

1.2 Background to the Study

Journalism is considered the ‘fourth estate’ and a mirror of society as it plays a crucial role in shaping the public's opinion, advocating for social awareness and highlighting vices (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018). The fundamental principles of accuracy, credibility, objectivity and verifiability form the basis of sound and practical journalism work. The gender of news anchors has grown to be one of the many aspects that affect how credible media outlets are, which has drawn increased academic and societal interest. News anchors are at the forefront of distributing information due to the visual and prominence of broadcast journalism; hence their perceived trustworthiness must be held in high regard (Todd & Melancon, 2018).

Klaas and Boukes (2022) mentioned that gender is a credibility factor, as research revealed that female journalists are deemed less credible when compared to males. But with the changing gender roles from distinct traditional gender roles to flexibility in roles handled by the different gender, there is a need to consider if the same applies in

journalism. Boateng (2017) noted that many graduates from journalism schools are females, but the workplace is still stereotyping roles since the profession was male-dominated in the past. Females have become prominent in media, especially as news anchors are showing great strides in attaining gender equality. But there are still gender differences in how viewers judge the credibility of news items based on the news anchor. Based on traditional gender roles, Newman and Fletcher (2017) found that male journalists score higher in terms of audience perception on the credibility of the news item.

On gender dynamism in the journalism sector, Jørndrup and Bentsen (2015) noted that female journalists' account for a small percentage. Additionally, the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 2015) reports that 37% of all journalists are female, and a majority of 63% are male, handling print, radio, television, and online platforms for dispensing news, and it will take 75 years to bridge the gender gap; while the GMMP 2020 survey report a 3-point improvement in gender balance but it will still take 67 years to close the average gender gap. North (2016) shared that even the females in media are assigned to cover soft news topics, including lifestyle and fashion. There is a presence of horizontal segregation linked to the gendered division of reporting assignments and vertical segregation where females are not involved in key decision-making processes.

Soft news is often referred to as feature news or human-interest news that is lighter and emotionally engaging stories focusing on lifestyle, entertainment, food, childcare, culture, society, and human experiences. Newman and Fletcher (2017) noted that it is traditionally left to female reporters, while hard news, defined as straight factual and

objective news are time-sensitive events such as economic, political, natural disasters, political debates, stock updates, sporting events and reports on crime and accidents. It is believed that men are objective and structured, hence better suited to report on hard news while remaining relevant, objective and factual. The distinction between soft and hard news is the content and focus and help the audience better understand the news item. Current media landscape is trying to balance hard and soft news to get cater for the divergent needs of the audience and play its role in informing, engaging and attending to the public's concerns (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018).

Gender disparity and credibility perception in the global scene have been expounded by researchers who responded differently. North (2016) found gendered inequity in the type of stories covered by male and female journalists in Australia. Although there is an increase in female reporters covering hard news items such as politics, technology and business, most females still cover soft news on arts, education, and healthcare. Soft news is considered unimportant and rarely draws the interest of the general viewers compared to hard news that cover current affairs that interest all people. Baxter (2018) revealed that there was gender stereotyping in UK press, as women leaders are negatively portrayed and it narrows the space for women to reach the top. The stereotypes cause the audience and viewers to be unwilling to accept and assimilate information into their daily lives based on the source. The source and presenter influence consumption of the news items and urge to act upon the received information.

The Danish news media show gender imbalance as men are used as experts in coverage of politics as the citizens perceive men to be more competent (Greve et al., 2023). However, there is no gender biases against women who are policy experts but viewers perceive women to be less competent. Loer's (2019) study was based on 25 years of a longitudinal survey of rhetorical analysis of sportscasters, sharing that there has been an increased number of female sportscasters. The female sportscasters used figurative speech, stood while presenting and used pathos and ethos, while male sportscasters often used hand movement, sat down while presenting and dressed in concealing attire.

In Nigeria, Bulus and Lwahas (2020) found that female reporters, when presenting news stories, were perceived as being more credible than male reporters in presenting similar stories. The researchers noted that the women presenters needed more training, mentorship and sensitivity to build and maintain credibility and high perception of the credibility of news items and stories. Jibril and Abubakar (2017) noted that public perception of female journalists was marred by the cultural and religious influence of weaker and less competent gender. There is a perception that journalism is more suited to men, especially when considering investigative work and fieldwork. While assessing the perceived credibility of Ethiopian television channels, Wolde and Woldearegay (2023) noted that it was based on the credibility of the journalists and journalists work and not on gender. In Rwanda, Nziza (2018) avers a big gap between the coverage of hard news stories by men and female journalists. There is little effort to assign women to handle hard news as it is viewed as better presented by males and creates an imbalance.

In Kenya, gender and media play a big part in the credibility of the media, news items and stories. Kareithi (2013) shared that the roles of men and women are perceived differently based on cultural beliefs and attitudes. For instance, political journalism was the domain of male reporters and was found to be credible, while women had low credibility in reporting hard news. Mugo (2022) noted that women were mainly used in soft news, while hard news was done mainly by male reporters. Men were preferred in print media coverage as they were used as dominant sources of information, but the study did not consider television media. Additionally, the content as either soft or hard news was not analysed hence the need for further research on that sector. The lack of studies in Kenya directly linking credibility perceptions for male and female anchors when presenting either soft or hard news calls for further research in that area.

The trust in media and news has shown a declining trend linked to bias, spin and hidden agendas that make the general public to rate the media and news credibility lowly (Greve-Poulsen, Larsen, Pedersen & Albæk, 2023). As noted by Kareithi (2013), credibility gaps are informed by gender norms and societal expectations of the roles handled by males and females, while other studies do not find that gender influences credibility. However credibility is concerned with aspects of verifiability and credibility of news since some published works are shared without checks and verification. The person presenting the news items may often tend to be biased and lean towards one angle, and this reflects negatively on the credibility of the news, the presenter and the media. Against this background, this study sought to assess the credibility perception of soft and hard news as presented by either male or female news anchors in Kenya.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Credibility and perception of relevance, trustworthiness and accuracy are based on several factors and inform the success and survival of media houses. If the media is rated as not credible, it will lose viewership and audience, negatively affecting revenues, sales and profits, and profits. Paul, Sui and Searle (2022) shared that there is little evidence that the news outlet and gender of the source or presenter affect credibility. However, Klaas and Boukes (2022) claim that women reporters are under-represented and often assigned gender-stereotypic roles and news items. Nevertheless, McCombs (2014) mentions that gender diversity in the newsroom increases viewership, audience and coverage rates of the news items but still fails to comment on the credibility and role of different genders in presenting either hard or soft news items.

The 2021 Media Council of Kenya (MCK) survey reported a massive 12% drop in media trust level. The survey also showed declining rates in trust level, such that in 2019, the rate was 48%, it dropped to 35% in 2020, and there will be a further big drop to 23% in 2021. The survey stated that media stakeholders are puzzled by the drastic decline by 25% within three years in trust levels, with another 24% of the general population stating they have little or no trust in media, media sources and media personnel. The downward trend in trust level is associated with fake news, bias, and poor coverage of important issues. However, the report does not further assess trust and credibility levels as informed by the gender of the newscaster and comparisons between different news items, such as soft or hard news.

The differences in how people perceive the trustworthiness of male and female news anchors have persisted despite advances in gender equality and the significant presence of female news anchors in modern newsrooms (Luisi, Adams & Kilgore, 2021). These differences give rise to serious questions about gender bias in journalism and could jeopardize the values of objectivity, impartiality, and fairness that are fundamental to the profession (Glynn, Huge, & Knobloch, 2013). In addition, gender-related credibility differences have ramifications beyond journalism and media consumption habits. These differences dictate social relationships at home, the education status of the boy vs. the girl child, employment status in all sectors, and social development and participation in economic development.

In seeking to add to the existing conversation on gender and trustworthiness, soft and hard news in the context of broadcast journalism, this study examined elements that contribute to observed differences in credibility perceptions between male and female news anchors. This study sought to conduct a quantitative research survey in examining how Kenyans perceive the credibility of news anchors based on both soft and hard news anchorage and the gender of the news anchors.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study's main objective was to investigate gender disparity in credibility perceptions of male and female news anchors in Kenya.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the perceived credibility of male news anchors in presenting hard news items in Kenya
- ii. To examine Female news anchor perceived credibility in presenting soft news items in Kenya

1.4.2 Research Hypothesis

H1: The Male news anchors are perceived to be credible than female anchors when presenting hard news items in Kenya.

H2: Female news anchors are perceived to be credible when presenting soft news items than male anchors in Kenya.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The media, including news reporting, significantly influences attitudes, standards and perspectives held by society. Informing the public and maintaining democratic values depend heavily on journalism. Divergences in how people view a source's trustworthiness can undermine public confidence in the media and prevent the spread of accurate information. A less informed populace may react to inaccurate opinions of news anchors' reliability that impact society's response to several social issues (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018). The news items are categorized as hard news covering politics, investigations and tragedies, mostly factual and soft, including human and societal interest, emotional, light

stories and responses to societal problems through go funds. The credibility of news items from the two categories is based on the gender of the news anchor; soft news is perceived to be better presented by female anchors, and hard news is better presented by male anchors. But is that perception accurate and is it applicable in the Kenyan setting, this informed the current study.

In their study, Knobloch-Westerwick et al. (2013) found that gender differences in perceived credibility persist despite progress in achieving gender equality and the rise of women in media. To comprehend the continued difficulties women, encounter in the sector, it is crucial to look into these differences. McCombs (2014) posited that public confidence and trust of accurate information is informed by the actual information, the media, and the person delivering the information. Thus, media houses need to consider the accuracy of the news item and the person delivering it during news reporting or anchoring.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study has broader societal implications other than impacting the journalism sector. It can restrict female news anchors' professional growth, increase gender-based credibility gaps, and impact public attitudes and media consumption habits. Additionally, if not properly addressed, Baxter (2018) noted that gender-based credibility can reinforce gender prejudices stereotyping and misconceptions at workplaces and at home. Based on these factors, this study seeks to advance knowledge of the intricate interactions between gender and credibility in the journalism industry. The focus is to seek means of reducing prejudices and building a more equal and inclusive media environment

by identifying the mechanisms through which gender-based disparities occur. This will inform on influencing factors of credibility perceptions of the viewers and push for values of accuracy, fairness, and neutrality in journalism practice, irrespective of gender.

This study's findings will benefit the management in the media houses as they learn the ideal placement of anchors for different news items. The understanding of the perception of credibility of news items by consumers as linked to the gender of the anchoring person will inform the studio, newsroom managers, and media houses on coordination and planning of anchoring of news item based on gender. When seeking to improve the credibility of the news item and the media house, the managers will correctly assign news items to different genders based on the perception of consumers on which of the two genders is ideal in presenting either hard or soft news.

Additionally, the study will inform on the recruitment and placement of news anchors to reflect gender balance and placement based on competency and not perceived gender stereotypes. The human resource department will also formulate guidelines and policies to guide the placement of staff based on gender to ensure there is no insufficiency of any gender. Growth and establishment of the media houses is based on credibility and the management will learn how best to improve its credibility by getting the right gender to present the right news item.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focused on gender disparity in credibility perceptions between male and female news anchors in Kenya. The study specifically focused on male anchors' credibility on hard news, male anchors' credibility on delivering soft news, the credibility of female anchors on delivering hard news and the credibility of female anchors on delivering soft news. The researcher collected primary data using semi-structured questionnaires from the general public. The respondents watched a 60-second news item clip and rated the credibility extent of the news anchor. The collected data was then analysed using descriptive methods and content analysis to understand the implications of the data, drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

To ensure a comprehensive study was carried out, the researcher conducted a survey with viewers having different demographic characteristics such as age, gender, socio-economic status, educational level, residence, and marital status. As such, this study was limited to their opinions and perceptions on the credibility of the news anchors when reporting on soft and hard news to draw the findings and conclusions. The researcher also found that respondents drawn from the general public were willing, free and able to participate in the survey and later provided valuable information relevant to completing this research study.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Hard news: Refers to factual and objective reporting of time-sensitive events and considers news on politics, economics and technology.

Soft news: It is also referred to as feature news or human-interest news that is lighter and emotionally engaging stories focusing on lifestyle, entertainment, culture, society and human experiences.

Gender disparity: It is also referred to as gender inequality and gaps, and it is unequal treatment of individuals based on their gender. The journalist industry is about underrepresentation, unfair treatment, and unequal sharing of responsibilities mostly linked to cultural norms and practices.

Credibility: In this study it refers to elements such as reliability, dependability and trustworthiness of information shared and distributed by different sources.

Credibility perceptions: The process of making a judgment on whether the news items are true or false, factual or not

News anchors: These are professionals tasked with reporting on news and events by different media houses

1.10 Summary

The chapter outlined the focus of the current research it has the study background, the problem, objectives and hypothesis. The chapter also describes the study's justification, significance, scope and limitations. The next chapter discussed the literature as reviewed from past studies. It includes theoretical framework, empirical literature review and conceptual framework. Chapter three presented research methodologies by discussing the targeted population, sampling and sample size, the data type, instrument, collection and how the data was analyzed. Chapter four presents the findings from the conducted analysis and discusses its implication, and the last chapter provides a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents discussions for literature on gender disparities in credibility perceptions. There is a detailed analysis of publications and academic material on different viewpoints on credibility perceptions, gender disparity, and links between the two aspects for male and female news anchors when presenting hard or soft news items.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides a foundational review of theories that are relevant to the study and offers arguments and discussions that can enrich the research work. To provide a wider perspective on the subject matter of this study, it was anchored on social role theory.

2.2.1 Social Role Theory

The theory was developed by social psychologists Eagly and Wood (1991). The theory focused on understanding gender by linking social behaviour and gender roles. The social role theory develops frames which highlight the differences between males and females based on the impact of social and biological influences. The theory proposes the hypothesis that socialization, gender roles, gender stereotypes and physical differences influence the behaviour of men and women. Eagly and Steffen (1984) argue that social

factors are more related to adults and their role than children whose socialization and roles are influenced by biological factors. Thus, the behaviour displayed in male and female adults is influenced by social norms, while in children, the behaviour is linked to the biological functioning of a person.

In a contemporary setting, the theory holds that social roles within society are at the root of either sex differences or similarities displayed by an individual. Koenig and Eagly (2014) mentioned that gender roles and stereotyping are at the core of social role theory. Gender stereotyping is the belief held by the society about men and women and the roles that each group plays. Gender stereotypes and social roles form a part of the conditioning that informs the attitudes and beliefs of people. The role of men and women in society is based on ascriptions that people make on their qualities. The attributes of the social roles are both consensual and normative as they describe the qualities that people perceive to be unique and desirable to each specific gender (Franke, Crown, & Spake, 1997). Regarding sex roles, the two dimensions adopted are descriptive (the expectations that are consensual and explain what members of a society do) and normative (consists of what consensual expectations are made for what people ought to do as members of a society or group).

Under the social role theory, people perceive an expectation for congruency between the roles played by either men or women in society linked to their internal dispositions (Koenig & Eagly, 2014). As such, men/males are expected to handle more physical and risky tasks and be confident and decisive. Alternatively, women are expected

to handle less risky and physically demanding tasks as they are smaller and weaker, and they are perceived as more caring and emotional. Gender expectations help categorise people with additional help of race, cultural practices and age. Eagly and Steffen (1984) report that the expectations of gender roles lead to implicit stereotypes about men and women. These stereotypes cause the preference of certain activities, actions and information to align with the gender-stereotypic expectations in each society.

Regarding perceptions, expectations and credibility of information, the media and journalist industry is informed by the social role theory, in aspects of hiring, assigning news stories, management and authority given to male or female news reporters and anchors (Hosain et al., 2020). In abiding with gender stereotypes and expectations of social roles, North (2016) posited that then males are assigned news stories that conform to what society expects of men. In this case, the male has confidence and decisiveness in handling the hard news, while females are more caring and emotional and report on soft news items. According to Lauzen, Dozier and Horan (2008) whenever men and women behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the gender stereotype, expectations and social norms, then backlash and negative reactions can be the result. This can help understand and explain why female reporters are assigned feminine stories and male reporters handle masculine stories.

In this study, the theory explains what media houses in Kenya can do to attain and maintain credibility perceptions for its male and female news anchors. The media houses, according to Ward and Grower (2020) seek to create congruency that improves the

credibility of male news anchors while handling hard news items on politics, war/violence and conflicts, sports, international and current affairs and female news anchors on soft news items such as fashion, homecare, family, and socio-cultural aspects. When there is congruence among the source, reporter, and audience, then the credibility perception of the news item is likely to be high.

2.2.2 Source Credibility Theory

Hovland and Weiss (1951) developed the source credibility theory and explained that persuasiveness in communication is affected by the perceived credibility of the source of communication. Source credibility indicates that the communicator has positive characteristics that make the viewer, listener and audience to accept and believe in the message. Lowry, Wilson and Haig (2014) confirm that the perceived credibility of the source of communication largely influences the credibility of communication. This is despite the format, channels, and communication modes used. This theory makes attempt to explain the dimensions in the information source impact the acceptability and usage of source of message.

The concept of credibility was first mentioned by Aristotle who argues that his/her speech establishes reliability of the speaker. However, the persuasion in the speech to the recipient is divided into three categories: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos refers to the message being credible, pathos is based on emotion and logos imply logic in the source, information, and perception of its credibility (Seiler & Kucza, 2017). Based on this theory, credibility refers to the audience believing who and what to trust, while emotion and logic

imply an emotional connection and reasoning by the listeners or viewers and conviction to agree to one side of the speech or argument. These three categories are important to understanding what makes the audience believe, trust and find the message truthful (Yuen, et al., 2023).

According to Amelina and Zhu (2016), the source credibility theory has been applied in communication, law, marketing and political scenarios, where the message is meant to convince the audience of its authenticity, reliability, and truthfulness that leads to credibility of the message. In politics, candidates use credibility to influence voters' attitude, opinion, and perspective to get a favourable outcome. Bhatt, Jayswa and Patel (2013) asserted that credibility of the candidate was based on linking specific issues to an individual's personality traits in the endorsement and advertisement messages to persuade voters to vote them in office.

The theory is also applied in the media and journalism industry to understand the trustworthiness and believability of media content. There is a shift from individual characteristics and sources to characteristics of media behaviours as accurate, fair, no bias, and objective. Seiler and Kucza (2017) observed that active media consumers emphasise the credibility of the source and pass judgment on what is believable and what is a fallacy. Media credibility is also influenced by the individual credibility of the journalist or news anchor; the viewers also perceive media credibility based on source as either elite or non-elite, and hard news is consumed as more credible than soft news.

The theory is criticised for its level of falsifiability of information, as the approach allows individuals to have different perspectives and look at things from numerous points of view. The theory also has high internal consistencies, so Seiler and Kucza (2017) argue that it becomes difficult to assess sources, especially in highly sensitive issues where the sources might not be interrogated. Based on the general social survey, Yuen et al. (2023) claim there is increased public scepticism of credibility of media content, as the stories are biased and connected to powerful individuals and organizations that have the power to influence the narrative. Additionally, Zakaria and Mustaffa (2014) noted that news anchors, journalists, and media houses have admitted to errors and offered public apologies, which erodes public confidence and trust in the news items. Credibility is essential to the media business since a loss of credibility translates to loss of audience, viewership, and earnings for the media houses and owners. Loss of credibility also implies reduced influence on social aspects, awareness creation on socio-political, and public consciousness of current affairs.

In communication, source credibility is important since information and messages influence the behaviour of individuals and reflect positively on societal and community changes. In this study, source credibility theory helps explain the perception that audiences gain basing credibility of the news item and stories to the news anchor as the presented source of the information. Assessing the declining media credibility in Kenya, the theory can help explain the source as part of credibility formation and help the media houses increase their credibility ratings. Based on the constructs of this theory, the increasing credibility rating by the TV audience and viewers focuses on sources of the information.

2.3 General and Empirical Literature

2.3.1 *Defining Gender Disparity*

There are various definitions of gender disparity, but these definitions have common elements in most instances. Disparity is characterized by the differences that women and men face when accessing resources, social well-being and status. In most instances, accessing these elements favors men as institutionalized in social norms, cultural practices, and law (Owano, 2014). Additionally, Mndolwa and Alhassan (2020) claimed that gender disparity stems from social phenomena where people are not treated equally purely based on gender, with the distinctions grounded on social constructs or empirical aspects. The gender disparity covers experiences across many domains, including family-life, career entry, progression, pay/pay rise, education, healthcare, and life expectancy. The experience also varies across different cultures, where, in most instances, it is the women who are discriminated (Kwamboka & Mbebe, 2019).

The disparities are present in all aspects of life, such as income disparity, with males earning more than females within the same job group. A case in point is the BBC in London, where Murphy and Murphy (2016) report that the outward impression of the giant media house is of modernity and equality, but the reality is that female workers at BBC face discrimination in the recruitment and when it comes to paying and promotion. According to North (2016), gender disparity in occupations is where different occupations are ascribed to a certain gender based on characteristics. Gender segregation can take a horizontal dimension where men and women are divided based on physical, emotional,

and mental capabilities, leading to work divisions as manual or non-manual assignments. Vertical segregation is done based on power, income, prestige, and authority and brings in aspects of the glass ceiling where women are excluded from holding executive and leadership roles in organizations.

In media and journalism, gender disparity takes the aspect of assignments given, positions to be held, salary gaps and news stories that one is given based on their gender. Bajić, Vujović and Prokopović (2023) critically analyse female journalism in Serbia in terms of gendered news production, authority, and control in media houses and the commercialization process, realizing that female journalists are disadvantaged. Skjerdal (2016) on professional perceptions of female and male journalists in Ethiopia is such that male journalists are favoured for monitoring, scrutinizing, investigating, and reporting on media functions, while females were found to be more suited to report on entertainment and social building aspects. Thus, gender disparity is differences assumed by society, the workplace place and management in assignments, working station, positions, status, authority, and power and salary matters based on the individual's gender.

2.3.2 Defining Credibility Perceptions

Credibility is defined as a judgement made on the believability of the communicator (person) and communication (message) by the recipient of information as either the listener or viewer (O'keefe, 1991). According to Shahibi, Mazlan, Noor and Hanafiah (2013) information credibility is about accuracy, efficiency, testability, reliability and cost incurred to get the information. The credibility of information is measured by

adopting the credibility index made up of aspects such as believability, fairness, accuracy and depth of the information. Therefore, the judgement made on the credibility of information is entirely left to the viewer or reader (Shariff, 2020). The researcher further states that credibility is one's belief that certain information is either true or false based on several factors, including initial impression, source of information in terms of trust and reputation and quality of the information.

According to Li and Zhang (2018), credibility is differentiated into four types: presumed –based on general assumptions; earned –the experience with the platform; reputed –cognition of approval based on attached references; and surface credibility as based on the usability and design of the platform. These aspects of credibility are considered by consumers of different media items either through watching or reading. Gondwe (2023) claims that credibility is a multi-dimensional and complex concept that lacks a clear definition. The term is related to fairness, accuracy, believability, completeness, objectivity, reliability and trustworthiness. But Wasserman and Madrid (2019) affirm that trustworthiness with elements of morality and goodness of the source of information and expertise with elements of skills, knowledge and experiences of the source of information are the two key dimensions in credibility perceptions. In journalism, credibility perception is informed by consumers of the information using these elements: trust in the source, the communicator, and communication. Accuracy and capacity to counter-check the facts of the information also improve the credibility with the news story (Alhayan, Pennington, & Ruthven, 2022).

The viewers deem News items and stories credible based on the reputation of the media house, the facts presented in the news story, the objectivity of the presenter and trust in the communicator and the information. Newman and Fletcher (2017) argue that certain news stories are assigned to either females or males, as informed on the societal construction of social norms and assigning roles based on gender. Female reporters, as mentioned by Skjerdal (2016), are more believable when presenting or hosting a show on traditionally female roles such as fashion, food/cooking, housekeeping and child-related matters, while males are deemed credible when presenting stories that are fact-based such as politics, sports and investigations. In this construct, credibility is perceived in terms of the reporter's gender, social norms on traditional roles based on gender, capacity to fact-check the information and trust both the source and the information.

2.3.3 Credibility Perceptions of Male News Anchors Presenting Hard News and Soft News

Credibility of information is achieved by the viewers or listeners, and this concept is at the core of decision-making in media houses. How the viewer perceives news items' credibility dictates the planning, managing and assigning of tasks to the media personalities. In a study done by Brann and Himes (2010), viewers rated the credibility of male and female news anchors while doing a 30-second weather report, and it revealed that male news anchors were found to be more credible. This was linked to high ratings in terms of study competence, composure, extroversion and traditional sex role expectations for male respondents. Heuristics can be used to explain how the audience and viewers evaluate

and rate the credibility of males reporting on hard news, as a show of masculinity. Macharia (2020) reports on the Global Media Monitoring Project and states that content in media presents a male-centred worldview. Romano (2021) also confirms the presence of gender disparity in media content, with males favoured and positively viewed to be credible, accurate, and professional.

When it comes to credibility formation for news items, the gender of the reporter and source of information plays a key role (Paul et al., 2022). American journalism has adopted masculine norms, and its news items and issues are male-dominated and watched by more males than females. Additionally, the credibility of male reporters is informed by the source of gender, when there is congruence between the source gender, the reporter and the audience of the same gender; then the news item is deemed credible. For instance, a male reporter sharing a news item with its source being a male person and consumed by a male viewer, will likely rate that news item as more credible (believability) of the news. Credibility is also linked to the source in terms of eyewitness to an event, where the male eyewitness is more trusted to factually relate the events (Oberiri, 2016).

News items on a male-dominated topic, such as sports, politics, natural calamities and market and economic trends that are mostly factual, are found to be more credible if presented by a male reporter (Rupar & Zhang, 2022). Since television is inherently visual in its base nature, then appearance of the news anchor and journalists serve in forming perceptions on the trustworthiness and credibility of the news item. Boateng (2017) noted that in most newsrooms, all male news anchors must wear a suit and tie, while those

presenting on sporting activities wear sport-related clothes, including tracksuits and sneakers. This is done to increase the credibility of the stories being aired, building trust in the news anchor and believability of the story. Newman and Fletcher (2017) revealed that the older male news anchors were rated as more credible, especially when doing interviews and presenting political stories, linked to their age and many years of experience in the industry.

Escobedo (2015) in the research study on source credibility and race as linked to responses from black viewers of television anchors. In the study done in the USA, it was revealed that credibility was based on the believability of the story based on the story and its source. The black viewers' who participated in the study mentioned a lack of trust in the news and the media house, due to lack of black anchors (race) and the few used were mostly females who focused on feature stories (soft news) that was not interesting to the black male viewers. Black male news anchors are likely to be believable likened to their dominant nature, making the news items more credible. Alternatively, Klaas and Boukes (2022) found that articles written by male journalists were perceived to be slightly more credible, especially on a typically male topic.

In Sweden, Wiik and Andersson (2016) posited that males were found to manage the newsroom better through professionalism, standardisation, and accent, which has affected journalist autonomy and status. Males were found to be more credible in news production by focusing on management–staff relationships. Males have dominated the managerial positions in newsrooms which works to enhance credibility and trustworthiness

in the news items shared with the general public. Craig and Hallaq (2019) on gender of news presenter, sharing that American households trust televisions, news anchors and reporters, but an important fact is regarding who is presenting the news to the audience. Findings showed male reporters were more trusted by the general public, but there was no difference in credibility of the news anchor being male or female. Although, there was preference for males to present news stories that were stereotypically in the male domain or masculine.

In Zambia, Nampito and Ndhlovu (2020) on investigative journalism noted that 55% of the investigations were conducted by male journalists taking the lead, while female journalists took a supporting role in terms of editing and putting the story flow. Males did the field work while the females did editorial work in newsrooms. Nziza (2018) noted the presence of big gaps in the representation of men and women in media and news stories. The men featured a lot in coverage of hard news stories and took a dominant role in handling assignments in the media houses, while women took a low-rated position and were projected as fragile and weak, contributing negligible efforts to the production and distribution of hard news. Onyalla (2021) found bias and negative valence on Kenyan media that portray conflict-driven journalism that male journalist does has dominated that space. The source diversity for different stories presented by journalists increased the credibility of the story item.

2.3.4 Credibility Perceptions Female News Anchors Presenting Hard News and Soft News

Television as an information medium, considers the viewers' perspective on several issues. Edström (2018) mentions that viewer's subconsciously use the gender of the anchor to conclude what they are watching. Gender and appearance of the anchor registers in the subconscious mind and plays a key role in gender construction of the story being aired and later inform on trust, believability and makes sense or not. In the past, the media and journalism was a male function and in the 1980s, the industry was purely male-dominated, with females playing supporting roles. But over the years, efforts have been made towards gender balance, and more women have been hired and involved in mainstream media. Usher, Holcomb and Littman (2018) shared that women are assigned stereotypically traditional female stories such as health reports, human-interest feature, home-making, and child-related stories categorized as soft news.

Martin (2021) mentions that the credibility or objectivity of the story based on several studies show that female news anchors are more trusted, believed, and objective when presenting more emotional news items. Assessing political scandals in six Arab nations, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Tunisia, Jordan, and Lebanon and finding media credibility was based on gender, and gender bias affected mostly female reporting on the story. The credibility of the story was based on the gender of the reporter and males were perceived as truthful and believed to portray the facts in the scandal, while females were emotional and thought to distort facts. Klaas and Boukes (2022) assert that younger male

audiences that were interviewed rated female journalists as less credible, with younger female journalists scoring the lowest marks, compared to older males. It shows that audiences and viewers have pre-conceived ideas on who and what to report, hence the need for better visibility of female journalists. On the other hand, McCombs (2014) argues that there is a gradual shift in credibility perception in media and journalism as more viewers are becoming modern and focusing on quality in presentation and accuracy of the information instead of the presenter.

North (2016) noted that female reporters currently cover hard news on politics, economics and technology, but the majority are still assigned soft news on literature, health, fashion and family life. The gender dynamics in media, communication and journalism is asymmetrical, where female journalists account for a small percentage, but the landscape is shifting slowly. Igleheart (2018) discussed harmful gender stereotyping and sexism that female journalists face, with the notion that the female reporter/anchor or journalist is not authoritative enough and hence not suitable for hard news on items such as politics and reporting on war zones. Men anchored over 60% of all news items, and news analysts on current affairs were mostly males. Although there are steps to include women, they are mostly designated to soft news with lower news coverage and viewership.

In the USA, Ninke (2020) research was on anchor team gender make-up, revealing that for many decades, the anchor team was man-woman in all national and local news. But in the recent past, the high profiled national media houses have shifted to using two news anchors of the same gender. The two female anchors (female to female team) were

rated to be more credible as they were more approachable and attractive and had hand poise in their voice. The heuristics and socialization worked in the viewers to increase the credibility of female anchors presenting both soft and hard news items. But Shor, Rijt and Miltsov (2019) study on women in the newsroom, mentioned that in the traditional anchor team gender make-up female news anchors were unofficially assigned traditionally female roles such as health feature stories and human-interest stories. Stories and news shared by females received positive coverage feedback and were perceived to be accurate. There was also increased coverage of gendered stories that was soft, akin to women but females in leadership roles have been unable to change the rigid gender structures and stereotyping.

In Switzerland, Searles, Spencer and Duru (2020) claimed that TV news items ratings in terms of credibility was based on the newscaster's trustworthiness and the message's credibility. News items read by females was found to be perceived as more credible. This was informed by gendered role and emotional state of females linked to the inability to lie and twist the truth in news items. The study also noted that when women reporters deviated from gender roles in reporting, they were penalized, as they experienced more abuse from online comments. Negative online comments addressed to women reporters reduced the author's credibility and news item. For Portuguese women news anchors, Lopes, Álvares and Ávila (2023) found gender discrimination where women were disadvantaged. The fact that television is visual led to credibility measures assuming constructs of appearance, age and poise of the women news anchor. Physical appearance and beauty improved the credibility of younger female reporters but disadvantaged older female reporters in the media industry.

In their study on audience perception of credibility, news presentation, and source attractiveness, Sanusi, Daniel, Olanihun and Olanrewaju (2022) revealed that the dressing appeal of the news presenter informed on the decision about the credibility of the news item. While the female news presenters in Nigeria were appealing and cast to look nice when compared to male news presenters, the concept of appeal did not factor in the decision on news credibility. But, elements of voice, eloquence, and personality of the female news presenters influenced credibility perception amongst the viewership. Additionally, including females in television to enhance source attractiveness led to improved news credibility of the television audiences.

Bulus and Lwahas (2020) found that Nigerian women in news and reporting were often used to show sensitivity to a number of topics and issues, mostly social and women's issues. Furthermore, for every woman hired in media industry, seven men were also hired, and the women are in lower status positions but the women were found to be more credible when presenting news stories. Oduor (2015) on women journalists' participation in media coverage of 2007 post-election violence in Kenya; revealing that women journalists were sidelined covering only 6% of the stories and mostly reported on humanitarian stories and peacebuilding. The women were not involved in reporting on the actual violence and combat attacks, they were paired with male journalists and stories on violence written by women were not given great providence and not published on the top page.

Opee, Otieno and Adoyo (2023) on television news talk shows and participation in politics by female students focused on three talk shows –JKL, Crossfire and Punch-Line.

The findings revealed that the language used discouraged many of the female students and topics chosen were irrelevant, creating gender inequality. Additionally, most of the talk shows having topics on current affairs and politics were hosted by male news anchors who were found to be more credible, while women covered talk shows on fashion, social events, and social, and cultural aspects, and the audience rated them as credible.

2.3.5 Emerging Research Gaps

Various studies have been conducted on gender disparity and credibility perceptions of either male or female news anchors. Some of these researches include Escobedo (2015) on source credibility and race which found that the lack of black news anchors reduced trust and credibility of the media house and news items. Alternatively, the black male reporters were more believable, and their sources were seen as more credible. Craig and Hallaq (2019) found that male reporters were trusted more by the audience to anchor on male-dominated topics, such as hard news. Nziza (2018) study on the representation of women in news showed that men were featured more in covering hard news stories which increased credibility.

Lopes et al. (2023) on Portuguese women news anchors, noting gender discrimination where the women news anchors were unfairly viewed and suffered bias and disadvantages. Another study by Shor et al. (2019) on the topic of gender make-up of the anchor team, revealed that many media houses have shifted to adopting male-female anchor team. But the females presented traditionally female-oriented stories such as healthcare and human-interest stories. Additionally, North (2016) observed that female

reporters are currently covering hard news items such as politics and technology in mainstream media, but their credibility perception is not very high.

The reviewed literature has shown a gap in that none of the studies was on comparative analysis of male and female news anchors, the gender disparity and credibility perceptions for each gender when covering either soft and hard news. Most of the reviewed studies have also not looked at the African context and, therefore the need to expand literature on the subject matter. This study seeks to bridge the gap by focusing on Kenyan media and the concept of gender disparity and credibility perceptions of male and female news anchors when presenting hard news and soft news.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework gives a pictorial representation of the association between the independent and dependent variables. In this study, the dependent variable is on credibility perceptions by viewers' and the independent variables is on gender disparity for male and female news anchors while presenting either hard or soft news items. The relationship between the two variables as informed by the social role theory on gender roles, stereotypes, and expectations that inform on credibility perceptions. The conceptual framework is as shown in Figure 1

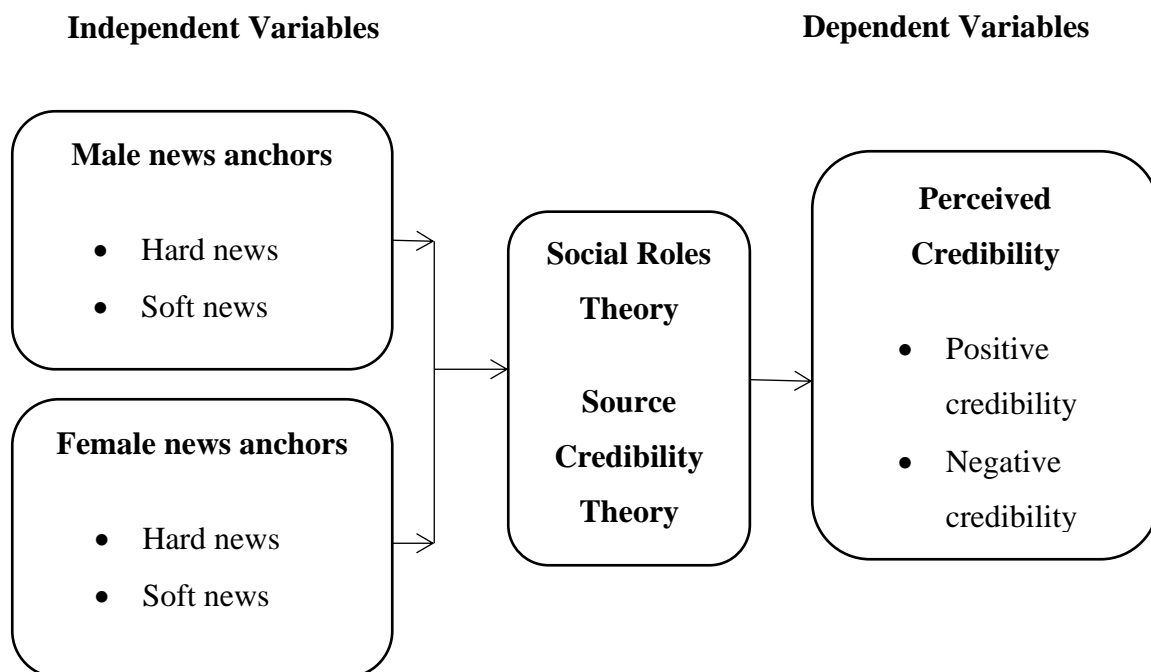


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.5 Summary

The chapter has discussed the grounding theory as social role theory which informs on gender differences and societal expectations that influence credibility perceptions of the male and female news anchors. The general and empirical literature review section has discussed the study objectives based on views and findings of past researchers and authors on the subject matter. A discussion on gaps was identified, creating a need for further research to expand knowledge on the topic. The conceptual framework has given a pictorial representation of the relationship between the study variables.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and approaches adopted when collecting and analysing data. The other sections cover the target population, sample selection and sample size, the data collection methods and how the data will be analysed. The aim is gaining an understanding of gender disparities in credibility perceptions of male and female news anchors.

3.2 Research Approach and Research Design

This study adopted a mixed research methods where qualitative and quantitative data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires. The study employed a descriptive research design that allowed the respondents to describe their perceptions of the credibility of the news anchors by gender. A descriptive research design seeks answers phenomena by asking the element's 'what, where, how, and who' (Siedlecki, 2020). Therefore, the design was ideal in describing how and what male and female anchors make them credible. This design was ideal for answering the research questions on credibility perceptions for either male or female anchors when presenting hard and soft news.

3.3 Population

The population for this study will be the general citizens of Kenya who watch news either over the Internet or the traditional way. The Kenya media landscape report, states that 39.6 million (81%) of Kenyans own a television set, and 24.5 million (51%) have access to internet and use it to watch news (Kenya Media Report, 2022). Therefore, this study collected data from a representative group of people who watched news and participated in the survey. The respondents helped understand the credibility perceptions of the news anchors.

3.4 Target Population

The target population is a group of individuals that interests the researcher and have the necessary features and information to answer the research questions and draw conclusions from which the researcher can draw conclusions (Asiamah, Mensah, & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). This study targeted people who are aged 18 years and above who watch news in the traditional way on television or those who have access to Internet and stream news. A representative of 10 people from each of the 47 counties formed the target population for the current study.

3.5 Study Site

The study was done in all 47 counties that form the geographical landscape of the entire country. The respondents were spread out across the counties, and their perspective on gender-based credibility was a reflection and representation of the entire country.

3.6 Sample Size

A sample is a small group of entities that are drawn from a larger population and portrays similar characteristics (Ahmad & Halim, 2017). This study employed a simple random sampling method to get 470 respondents to represent the population of people who watch news. The respondents were males and females, from different backgrounds regarding education attainment, profession, age group, residence, and socio-economic status. This gave a general perspective of all viewers of news stories in the country.

3.7 Sampling Procedures

Sampling is the procedure adopted to select a portion of elements from the entire population group for estimating the target population and the sample size (Asiamah et al., 2017). The researcher selected the respondents through the simple random sampling technique when selecting the survey participants. Members of the general public were then randomly selected to take part in this study, and the researcher ensured there is variety to get views from a widely dispersed group of people.

3.8 Research Method

Research methods cover the ways in which data is collected and analysed when seeking answers to the research questions. In this study, primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The respondents were given a link, where they opened and watched the news item done by male and female anchor and thereafter filled the attached Google form. According to Mkandawire (2019), questionnaires are a tool for

collecting large volumes of data and are relatively cheap and easy to administer. This study used a questionnaire to expedite the process, reduce cost for data collection and allow immediate use of the data.

3.9 Data Collection Tools

In this research, questionnaires were the tools used to collect primary data. The tool enabled the researcher to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The selected respondents first viewed the news item clip and then filled the questionnaire to get views on the credibility of news anchors for each news item. The questionnaire was developed by having sections such as the respondents' background information covering the research objectives. The survey involved watching a 60-second news item read by male and female news anchors, and then the participants asked if the news anchor was credible. The news item was in two parts –hard news on a political scandal, and soft news on home living. Both male and female anchors read the hard and soft clip and then rated on extent of credibility by the respondents who viewed the two stories.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought approval from the Aga Khan University and obtained an introduction letter, which was used to apply and obtain a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher then randomly selected the respondents from the general public, and those who accepted were sent the link to view the news item and after that filled the questionnaire. This exercise

took place for four days, allowing most of the respondents to be reached and increasing the response rate. The research exercise was online where respondents watched the link and filled an online questionnaire. The collected data from the respondents was used to collaborate with past empirical literature and theoretical frameworks to either prove or disprove the information.

3.11 Pre-testing of Data Generation/Collection Tools

The research tools are pretested by testing it on target population to assess how reliable and valid the instrument is. This seeks to get an ideal tool to collect data and make any adjustments before the final data is collected. The researcher pre-tested the data collection tools using 23 people who account for 5% of the study's sample size and who filled the questionnaire (Mohajan, 2017). The data was analysed, and findings helped refine the tool and gave the researcher a chance to interact with the tools. Pretesting also helped to check the relevance of the data collection tools.

3.12 Validity and Reliability of Research Tools

The validity of a research instrument assesses the extent to which it measures what it is designed to measure (Mohajan, 2017). There are different validity testing methods and this study used content validity by getting experts' opinions including the supervisor and other university lecturers and making adjustments as per their suggestions. Face validity was also employed by getting expert opinions from external research experts who critically examined each research question and linked to the objectives. Construct validity was done

using factor analysis to check that questionnaire items align with the research objectives. Credibility was measured using a scale adapted from Gaziano and McGrath (1986). Participants rated their perception of credibility on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1- strongly disagree, 7- strongly agree). An item would read: “This news reporter is trustworthy or accurate, fair, tells the whole story, cares about the audience's needs and interests.”

Reliability is the extent to which the research instrument yields similar results after multiple trials (Bolarinwa, 2015). To test for reliability, the researcher used internal consistency through the use of Cronbach’s Alpha for the dependent variable. The Cronbach’s Alpha is set at 0.7 as its standard to denote a reliable research tool. SPSS was used to compute the Cronbach’s Alpha for the credibility measure. Once the reliability is determined, the researcher computes a composite scale to be used in hypothesis testing.

3.13 Data Analysis and Presentation Plan

The study had quantitative data which is in numerical form, and was coded and entered into SPSS for analysis. Data analysis included descriptive statistics to obtain means, frequency counts, percentages, and standard deviation. Additionally, an independent samples t-test was used to test the two hypotheses. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analysed using content analysis by grouping the information into themes as per the research objectives. There also was a discussion to interpret the findings and link to past literature and theoretical framework. All the findings were then be presented in tables, charts and figures.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained a research permit from NACOSTI, got approval from the Ethics Review Board and an introduction letter from Aga Khan University before commencing on data collection. During the data collection, participation in the study was on a willing basis with the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. The respondents' identities were kept secret and they were not to share their names and any other facts that can identify them. No harmful activities were done in this study, and the information obtained were treated with confidence. All the information to be collected were used in this study and for academic purpose.

3.15 Summary

The chapter extensively discusses the research methodology that was adopted in this study. A descriptive research design was employed in the study. The target population included members of the general public and the study site was across the 47 counties in Kenya. The representative population was reflective of the entire country. A simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting the study respondents and questionnaire and observation guides were developed to help in data collection. A pilot study was done to check for the validity and reliability of the data collection tools. The obtained quantitative and qualitative data was analysed using descriptive and content analysis methods to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter covers the analysis of the findings as informed by the study's objectives. It is structured into sections covering the response rate, reliability analysis and the analysis of each of the study's specific objectives.

4.2 Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.2.1 Response Rate and Demographics Results

Out of the 470 questionnaires that were administered to respondents during data collection, 277 were filled and returned. This translated to a response rate of 58.9% as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

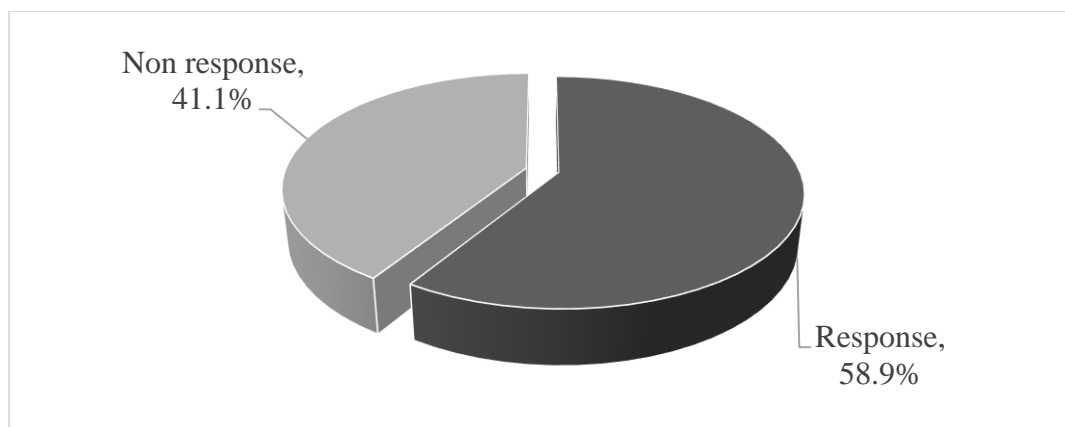


Figure 2: Response Rate

According to Babbie (2010), a response rate of above 50% is good to support analysis in a survey study.

4:2.1.1 Reliability Analysis

Values of Cronbach Alpha Coefficients were computed to establish the reliability of the study questionnaire, and Table 1 is a breakdown of the findings.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
Perceived Credibility of Male News Anchors in Presenting Hard News Items	5	.88
Female News Anchor Perceived Credibility in Presenting Soft News Items	6	.78
Overall score		.83

The findings in Table 1 indicate the mean value of Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the two variables was 0.83. Cronbach Alpha coefficient values for the individual variables are 0.88 and 0.78, respectively. According to trials by Bolarinwa (2015), such Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values above 0.7 indicate that the study tool is designed using a reliable scale. Hence, the scale that was used to design the items on the questionnaire for analysis in this study was reliable.

4.2.1.2 General Information

The General Information about respondents was sought, determined and summarized as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: General Information

Category	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender distribution	Male	153	44.4%
	Female	122	55.6%
Age group	18 -30 years	65	23.3%
	31-40 years	118	42.5%
	41-50 years	85	30.9%
	51+ years	9	3.3%
Education	High School	21	7.6%
	Diploma	58	20.7%
	Bachelor's degree	126	45.5%
	Master's degree	69	24.7%
	Doctorate	3	1.1%
Region of residence	Nairobi	181	65.8%
	Central	21	7.6%
	Eastern	18	6.5%
	Northern	7	2.2%
	Rift Valley	21	7.6%
	Western	14	5.1%
	Coast	15	5.5%

There were 277 participants ($N = 277$) used for analysis. The sample was composed of 55.6% female and 44.4% male. Age ranged from 18-51 plus. Most of the participants were under the 31-40 age group (42.5%), followed by 41-50 (30.9%), 18-30 (23.3%), and 51 plus (3.3%). Educationally, the greatest number of the participants had a bachelor's degree (45.5%), master's (24.7%), diploma (20.7%), high school (7.6%), and doctorate (1.1%). Most of the participants were from the Nairobi region (65.8 %), followed by Rift Valley (7.6%), Central (7.3%), Eastern (6.5%), Coast (5.5%), Western (5.1%), and Northern Kenya (2.2%).

4:2.2 Results/Findings

4.2.2.1 Perceived Credibility of Male and Female News Anchors in Presenting

Hard News Items

The subsequent sections detail the analysis based on the perceived credibility of male and female news anchors in presenting hard news items. The results are highlighted in Table 3

Table 3: Perceived Credibility of Male and Female News Anchors in Presenting Hard News Items

Survey Item	Male		Female	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The news anchor is trustworthy	3.22	1.11	3.20	0.99
The news anchor is knowledgeable on the subject matter	2.92	1.18	2.88	1.12
The news anchor is factual when presenting the news item	3.15	1.15	3.16	1.04
The tone of the news anchor is authoritative	3.15	1.26	3.08	1.09
I find the news anchor reliable	3.14	1.09	3.12	1.01
Average	3.12	1.16	3.09	1.05

Table 3 indicates the composite score on the perceived credibility of male news anchors in presenting hard news items as 3.12, while the females news anchors had a composite score of 3.09. This implies that the respondents rated both male and female news anchors lowly on the credibility of their presentation on hard news items. As further confirmed by the verbatim response given by a respondent sharing that:

I don't find him credible. He says the journalist's murder was not an accident but neither presents any facts to support that claim nor does he attribute the claim to anyone. Who said it wasn't an accident? Was it the

investigators? The government? Rumors? He doesn't seem comfortable or familiar with the subject matter as he is reading a script while looking down for most of the clip. He mumbles on some words leaving the audience to guess what he is trying to say.

This indicates a low opinion on the male news anchor's credibility when presenting the hard news item. The gaps and questions raised by this respondent reflect poorly on viewers' trust of the news anchor, the media house and even the news item.

Respondents who participated in the study rated low scores for whether the news anchors were trustworthy, where the male news anchors' scores were ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.11$) and female news anchor scores ($M=3.20$, $SD=0.99$). On the statement of the news anchors being knowledgeable on the subject matter, the findings showed low score rates for male news anchors ($M=2.92$, $SD=1.18$) and female news anchors ($M=2.88$, $SD=1.12$). Besides, respondents were neutral on whether news anchors were factual when presenting the news item for male news anchors ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.15$) and female news anchors ($M=3.16$, $SD=1.04$).

On the statement of news anchors having authoritative tones, male news anchors rated as ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.26$) and the female news anchors rated slightly lower as ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.09$). Similarly, one respondent stated that:

I struggled to follow the news item because the news anchor didn't seem to have a grasp on the story, did not make eye contact and it came across as he was just reading the news story. I don't think I would believe the news reader.

The information indicates that the news anchor was not authoritative and had no firm command of the story, as reflected by the low tone and lack in eye contact when

presenting the news item. The lack of mastery of the information reduces confidence levels and trust.

Whether respondents found the news anchor reliable, the male news anchor scores were at ($M=3.14$, $SD=1.09$) and the female news anchor scores were at ($M=3.12$, $SD=1.01$). The respondents rated both the female and male news anchors on perceived credibility with a number of constructs when presenting hard news items as largely low.

Which echoes what one respondent shared that

They aren't relying on their own knowledge but reading from a source. I'd have loved if they had stated the sources, e.g., according to Reuters, Associated Press.

To triangulate the findings, the researcher asked why the respondents chose the answers that they gave. This helped in getting qualitative responses to help make sense of the quantitative data. Some participants argued that they did not perceive the presenters as credible because they did not include data to support their claims. Below is a verbatim response given on news anchors presentation of hard news:

The News Anchor is not credible as he seems to be reading what has been prepared for him. He was not ready for the bulletin and does not seem to believe what he reading himself.

Based on the means and standard deviations for both male and female anchors, it is clear that they are both perceived as credible when presenting hard news. Therefore, H1 was not supported. In other words, the credibility ratings for both male and female were not different. To confirm this, the researcher ran an independent samples *t*-test. The *t*-test revealed that there was no significant difference in credibility ratings between the two groups

(male and female), $t(260.90) = 0.73$, $p = .69$, 95% CI [-.19, .21]. These results suggest that male anchors ($M = 3.12$, $SD = .0.85$) were not perceived to be more credible than female anchors ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.83$) when presenting hard news.

4.2.2.2 Perceived Credibility of Male and Female News in Presenting Soft News

Items

This section details the findings from the analysis conducted on the perceived credibility of male and female news anchors when presenting soft news items. This is shown in Table 4

Table 4: Perceived Credibility of Male and Female News Anchors in Presenting Soft News Items

Survey Item	Male		Female	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The news anchor is trustworthy	3.48	0.99	3.42	0.93
The news anchor is knowledgeable on the subject matter	3.37	0.99	3.35	0.96
The news anchor is factual when presenting the news item	3.50	0.95	3.45	0.92
The tone of the news anchor is authoritative	3.48	1.10	3.18	1.08
I find the news anchor reliable	3.51	0.95	3.36	0.91
Average	4.08	0.86	3.99	0.82

The findings in Table 4 present composite scores for males and female news anchors when presenting soft news items. The study noted the overall mean on the perceived credibility of male news anchors in presenting soft news items has an aggregate mean score of 4.08 with a standard deviation of 0.86, and the average scores for female

news anchors when presenting soft news had scores of 3.99 the mean score and standard deviation of 0.82.

The respondents rated news anchors as trustworthy as average when presenting soft news item, with the male news anchor scores at ($M=3.48$, $SD =0.99$) and the female anchor slightly lower at ($M =3.42$, $SD =0.93$). Trustworthiness of the news anchor was found to be low since practicality of the news item was questionable. This is reflected in the statement shared by one respondent:

No, I don't find him credible because this is an event meant to showcase Kenyan fashion designers and culture so it's hard to imagine the governor promoting western designers and clothes at a Kenyan fashion event.

When asked if the news anchor is perceived as knowledgeable on the subject matter, the scores are such that the male news anchor was ($M =3.37$, $SD =0.99$) and for the female news anchor ($M =3.35$, $SD =0.96$). The respondents averagely agreed that the news anchors were factual when presenting the soft news item, where male anchor scores were at ($M=3.50$, $SD =0.95$) and the female news anchor score was at ($M =3.45$, $SD =0.92$). But these respondents were unsatisfied with how the news item was presented, considering these verbatim responses:

I don't find the News Anchor credible as she is reading directly from the copy without giving the story a bit of life. As this is a light piece, the anchor should read while smiling and adding puns that will give the story some 'life'.

And another respondent stated that:

I do not find her credible as she appeared to be rushing through the presentation and did not maintain much eye contact.

When the respondents were asked to rate the tone of the news anchor as authoritative when presenting soft news item, the scores are such that the males ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.10$) and the female rates were at ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.08$). The respondents shared that they found the respondents to be averagely reliable when presenting soft news item ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.95$) for the male news anchor and ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.91$) for the female news anchor reliability rating scores. This implies that most of the female news anchors were moderately perceived to be credible in presenting soft news items. Additionally, the male news anchors had passion, was presentable and were found reliable in the presentation of soft news items.

The study probed to understand whether respondents found the news anchor to be credible when presenting the news items. This was an open-ended question, and mixed reactions were obtained from the respondents regarding the same. For instance, some of the respondents believed the female new anchors were credible when presenting soft news items on account that some of them were professional in their approach, they were presentable, they had confidence during their presentations, they had credible dressing codes besides their clarity. However, a huge proportion of the respondents believed that the female news anchors were not credible during their presentation of soft news items. Some of the arguments provided to back-up this claim included the fact that some of them were not satisfying, lacked knowledge on the subject they were presenting, some lacked confidence with their audience and lack eye contact.

The following are some of the verbatims that were shared by respondents regarding this statement of credibility of male and female news anchors when presenting soft news items:

Yes, I find Him credible due to how he gives the story line. like just how any person would like to get the news but not she is not in a good place there is a lot of noise.

Not very credible. She doesn't seem to have gone through what she is reading out.

Based on the means and the standard deviations for both male and female anchors, it is clear that they are both perceived as credible when it comes to the presentation of soft news. Therefore, H2 was not supported. In other words, the credibility ratings for both male and female were not different. To confirm this, the researcher ran an independent samples *t*-test. The *t*-test revealed that there was no significant difference in credibility ratings between the two groups (male and female), $t(255.52) = -.12, p = .83, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.17, .15]$. These results suggest that male anchors ($M = 3.12, SD = .085$) were not perceived to be more credible than female anchors ($M = 3.10, SD = 0.83$) when presenting hard news.

4.2.2.3 Summary of Findings and Hypothesis Testing

A recap of the overall means and standard deviations across the categories of news anchors and the nature of news presented by anchors was determined and summarized. The sought to test hypothesis one states that male news anchors are perceived to be more credible than female anchors when presenting hard news items in Kenya. The sought to test hypothesis two states that female news anchors are perceived to be more credible than

male anchors when presenting soft news items in Kenya. The findings in Table 5 give the results from the conducted analysis;

Table 5: Summary of Findings and Hypothesis Testing

Nature of Information	Gender of News Anchor	Overall Mean	Overall Standard Deviation
Hard News	Male	3.12	1.16
	Female	3.09	1.05
Soft News	Male	4.08	0.86
	Female	3.99	0.82

The findings in Table 5 indicate that for hard news items, the differences in mean score is indiscriminate between the male and female news anchors as the scores were male (M =3.12, SD =1.16) and for the female (M =3.09, SD =1.05). A difference of means of 0.03 is negligible on the perceived credibility of the news item based on gender. Further results indicate a slight preference and perceived credibility of male news anchors when presenting soft news (M =4.08, SD =0.86) compared to female news anchors (M =3.99, SD =0.82). The differences in means is also negligible at the mean of 0.0, showing the perception of credibility in presenting soft news items is indiscriminate as there is no gender disparity. Based on the findings, the study rejects hypothesis one on male news anchors perceived credibility being higher when presenting hard news items. The study also rejects the null hypothesis and confirms that female news anchors have high credibility perception when presenting soft news items. It indicates that credibility perception is based on other factors besides the gender of the news anchor.

4.3 Summary of Key Findings

The chapter has vividly presented the findings obtained from the conducted analysis. The descriptive analysis provided means and standard deviations and aggregate scores on the study variables. The chapter also shows the assessment of credibility of news anchor on presenting hard and soft news and it was confirmed using independent samples *t*-test. The findings were presented in tables, figures and prose form for the discussions on the qualitative data collected and reported in verbatim. The findings showed that credibility perceptions of news anchors when presenting hard or soft news was based on other factors besides gender of the news anchors.

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CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study's focus was on investigating on gender disparity in credibility perceptions for male and female anchors in Kenya. Specifically, the study set out to assess credibility of male or female news anchors in presenting either hard or soft news item. This chapter covers the discussion of the findings and conclusion as informed by the key findings from the analysis and the theoretical foundation. It also presents the recommendations, and suggests areas that require further studies to be conducted in future by other researchers and authors.

5.2 Discussions of Key Findings

5.2.1 Perceived Credibility of Male and Female News Anchors in Presenting Hard News Items

This study set out to establish how Kenyans perceive male and female anchors in presenting hard and soft news. From the study's results, male and female anchors were perceived similarly when presenting hard news. This study is contrary to previous research by Brann and Himes (2010), where viewers rated the credibility of male and female news anchors while doing a 30 second weather report, revealing that male news anchors were

more credible. Macharia (2020) reports on the Global Media Monitoring Project and states that content in media presents a male-centred worldview.

Respondents indicated that neutrality on whether news anchors were trustworthy ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.104$), factual ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.151$), their tones were authoritative ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.256$), reliable ($M=3.14$, $SD=1.091$) or the news anchors were knowledgeable on the subject matter ($M=2.92$, $SD=1.182$) when presenting the news item. This means that the male news anchors were, on average, trustworthy, factual, and knowledgeable during their presentation of hard news items. From the information that was reported by the respondents on the open-ended question, most of them believed that the new anchors were not credible since they lacked ownership of the information, failed to carry out detailed research in the subject before presentation and most of them read the scripts like mere stories.

The responses from the qualitative data and findings can be placed into these themes, including lack of confidence, as both the male and female news anchors are not making eye contact, they are reading every word like a script and their body language and content are not aligned. It seems the news anchors had not prepared the script, so there was some stammering and hesitation and seems unprepared. The male and female news anchors were found not to be credible because of the lack of authority experienced during the presentation of the hard news clip item. The tone, body language, and background setting did not cement the news item's authority, control and power. Credibility of the news anchor

is informed by ownership and command of the story, and the respondents lacked it, hence low rating scores for perceived credibility.

Another emerging theme is the lack of facts and additional information, no wonder some respondents shared that it seems they were reporting on rumors. When reporting on the murder of the journalist, it is expected that the news anchor will share key pertinent information such as the date, the place, the security officers and state of investigations; but what was presented lacked the additional information and reduced reliability of the story. The news anchors failure to share the information and facts on the case, convinced the audience who rated them as not credible. The comprehensive and completeness of the information is some of the constructs that make the audience and viewers rate news anchors as credible based on a presentation of facts about the news item.

Another theme that emerged from the presented verbatim responses shared by the respondents is trust of the media house, the presenter and background setting. Some respondents believed that Spice FM is not one of the main media houses, which impacts the credibility of the news anchors and news item. The background noises and picture also failed to align with the seriousness needed when presenting such a story item. The noises also distract the viewers from concentrating on the news item. The female news anchor was not seated in a professionally made news room but rather the setting seemed like a corridor, indicating lack of preparedness. It seemed the female anchor was ambushed with the news item, so the audience could not trust her and the information shared. The dress

code and too much make-up, according to the viewers also does not align with the serious nature of the story item linked to murder of the journalist.

The findings from the conducted descriptive analysis and themes formed from the qualitative data, reported on low credibility of both male and female news anchors when presenting the hard news item. Escobedo (2015) mentioned a lack of trust in the news and the media house, due to lack of black anchors (race) and the few used were mostly females who focused on feature stories (soft news) that was not interesting to the black male viewers. Black male news anchors are likely to be believable likened to their dominant nature, making the news items more credible. However, this study was done in the Western world, where race is distinct.

Alternatively, Klaas and Boukes (2022) found that articles written by male journalists were perceived to be slightly more credible and especially on a typically male topic. In Sweden, Wiik and Andersson (2016) posited that males were found to manage the newsroom better through professional, standardize, and accentuate which has affected journalist autonomy and status. Males were found to be more credible in news production by focusing on management–staff relationship. In a study that was done by Craig and Hallaq (2019), male reporters were more trusted by the general public, but there was no difference in the credibility of news anchors being male or female. This is similar to the findings of the current study, where perceived credibility was not based on gender of the news anchor.

Although, there was preference for males to present news stories that were stereotypically in the male domain or masculine. In Zambia, Nampito and Ndhlovu (2020) on investigative journalism noted that 55% of the conducted investigations were done by male journalists taking the lead, while female journalists took a supporting role in terms of editing and putting the story flow. Onyalla (2021) found bias and negative valence on Kenyan media that portray conflict-driven journalism that male journalist does has dominated that space.

5.2.2 Perceived Credibility of Male and Female News Anchors in Presenting Soft News Items

The study examined male and female news anchors perceived credibility in presenting soft news items in Kenya. The findings indicate the statements under female news anchor perceived credibility in presenting soft news items were moderately ranked by the respondents ($M=3.99$) and males were ranked slightly higher than female anchors on presenting soft news at ($M =4.08$). This finding contrast with Edström (2018) who mention that viewer's subconsciously use the gender of the anchor to conclude what they are watching. Gender and appearance of the anchor registers in the subconscious mind and plays a key role in gender construction of the story being aired and later inform on trust, believability and makes sense or not.

From the conducted content analysis, the emerging themes include direct news item reporting. The body language for the male news anchor is stiff and eyes are stuck on the i-pad while the female news anchor is simply reading the entire story from her phone. The

body language does not communicate confidence and certainty with the story. There is the theme of inaccurate facts about the story, where the audience is left with questions and simple facts such as the acronym of KICC -as Kenya international conference center as convention center which can be easily checked and corrected. The news anchors are also unconvinced, and it comes clear from their tone and lack of excitement when talking about the governor's dress code and Gucci attire brand.

Another theme that emerged is knowledge of the news item, and most respondents shared that they found the news anchors knowledgeable, since enough background information was provided, presents the news with a link to a reporter who is in the actual event, and presentation of the material content was accurately done. The story item also resonates with the general public as it is on Kenyan content instead of global content deemed abstract. The female news anchor's artistic background, colorful makeup, sound and dress code align with the study while the complete suit for the male news anchors seems a bit off and he is overdressed in a formal attire for such a story item.

The confidence, trust and affirmation of the female news anchor's dressing and suggestion for the male anchor to dress casually created moderate credibility rating for soft news item. Additionally, the comprehensiveness and story with a local content help build confidence while low tone, posture and no excitement of the storyline, align with ratings and findings of this study. Therefore, this led to the audience rating the male and female news anchors as moderately credible, since the information was backed up with facts, comprehensive information and evidence.

In the past, the media and journalism sector, was a male function and in the 1980s, the industry was purely male dominated, with females playing supporting roles. But over the years, efforts have been made towards gender-balance, and more women have been hired and involved in mainstream media. Usher et al. (2018) shared that women are assigned stereotypically traditional female stories such as health reports, human-interest feature, homemaking, and child-related stories categorized as soft news. However, the results of the current study did not find any differences in how male and female anchors are perceived when presenting both hard and soft news.

There are several explanations as to why these results did not support the hypotheses the researcher proposed. The cultural context of the Kenyan population could explain the first explanation. For instance, Kenya has experienced progressive shifts in gender roles and expectations, leading to a more egalitarian view towards professional roles such as journalism, it may contribute to the equal perception of male and female news anchors. Secondly, the news environment plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions. Kenya boasts a diverse representation of both genders in news reporting, audiences may have become accustomed to seeing men and women delivering news with equal proficiency. For hard news males had ($M = 3.12$) and females ($M = 3.09$) and for soft news males ($M = 4.08$) compared with females ($M = 3.99$). Additionally, the level of training and professionalism among male and female news anchors could be a contributing factor. If both genders undergo similar training and adhere to the same professional standards, it could reinforce the perception of equal competence in presenting both hard and soft news.

Furthermore, the influence of societal attitudes and progress in gender equality initiatives cannot be overlooked. There has been a recent emphasis on gender equality and feminism in Kenya, which may have positively impacted the perception of female news anchors. Similarly, understanding viewer attitudes and preferences is paramount. Most of the participants (46%) had a bachelor's degree, which puts them among the most educated in Kenya. Such an audience could place high value on qualities like credibility, professionalism, and delivery style over gender, which may contribute to the observed similarity in perceptions.

In conclusion, these factors – cultural shifts, media representation, training and professionalism, demographics, content analysis, social progress, and viewer attitudes – collectively provide a nuanced understanding of why male and female news anchors in Kenya may be perceived similarly when presenting hard and soft news. Acknowledging the complex interplay of these elements is crucial for a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the study's findings.

5.3 Conclusion and Implications for Practice

This study was set out to examine how Kenyans perceive male and female news anchors in terms of credibility when presenting hard news and soft news items. Based on the conducted survey where the respondents viewed hard and soft news clip items presented by a male and female news anchor; the findings of this study are based on comparison made for male and female news anchor when presenting hard news and soft news. It is thus, concluded that credibility perception of male and female news anchors was not based

on gender, but other factors contributed to rating the news anchor as credible or not. The credibility was perceived by aspects such as completeness of the information, citing the sources, trustworthiness, factual and knowledgeable news anchor.

The study also concludes that based on findings from a representation of the entire population in Kenya, such that Kenyan viewers and audience are stepping away from traditional social roles. The changes in social roles are reflected in the findings that draw on no link between gender and credibility. Therefore, it is concluded that credibility perception in media spaces in Kenya is informed by the actual information, source and completeness of the story where all gaps are filled and presentation of facts about the story. It implies that the general Kenyan public are able to internalize the inform and make individual assessment on its credibility besides considering the presenter of the news item.

The study further concludes on the theoretical perspective under social roles theory, which is used to develop frames that dictated the differences in social and biological roles. Under the social role theory, male and female roles are clearly outlined and it is distinctive but based on the study's empirical perspective, the findings reflect a different view from the core constructs of the social role theory. The findings reflect that male and female news anchors were not found credible when presenting either hard news or soft news clip. Thus, it is concluded that shift in societal function and dictating roles and functions of each gender, is present and a true reflection of the study findings. Additionally, the current generation deviates from social roles dictated by societal expectations and reflects individual intuition, a modern attitude, perception and thought process.

The theory further states that behaviour displayed is influenced by social norms, such that it aligns with the study findings and the changes in social norms with indiscriminate roles for either males or females. These changes in social norms could explain why the respondents did not rate the news anchors' credibility purely based on gender. The perception of credibility was based on factors such as citing sources of the information, comprehensively presenting the news items and others; as an indication to demand for quality by the society as opposed to gender dictates. The conclusion is such that there is deviation from the traditionally assigned male and female roles as a reflection of the modern society.

On source credibility theory, the focus was on perceived credibility likened to source and persuasiveness of the communication. The audience and viewers could believe an information item based on reasoning and cognitive intrigues that were informed by the sources of the information. Therefore, based on findings such that there was no gender disparity for credibility perception, then it is concluded that source of information for the presented hard or soft news in this study influenced the respondents' ratings for perceived credibility. Thus, sources of information informed on perceived credibility of the news anchor without inference to the gender of the news anchor.

5.4 Recommendations

The management teams of all media houses in Kenya should provide short term and refresher courses among male and female news anchors to cultivate and enhance their trustworthiness, knowledge, authoritativeness and reliability when presenting hard news

items. Additionally, when the news anchors in Kenya are actively involved in creation of hard news contents for airing to ensure they air factual information, this would help improve credibility perception for the presented news item.

The study found that credibility perception of the hard and soft news items was not informed by gender of the news anchor. In addition, hypothesis H1 and H2 were rejected, as the means differences were small and negligible, indicating that credibility was not largely influenced by gender. Therefore, this study recommends that the media houses in Kenya to do double anchoring by having male and female anchors teamed together to present different news items.

Since the female news anchors airing soft hard news items in Kenya were found to be presentable, they need to improve their trustworthiness, knowledge and reliability as well as authoritativeness when covering different news items. The male news anchors were largely found to be reliable, factual, authoritative and trustworthy in presentation of soft news, hence the need to work harder to become more knowledgeable on the news item they are presenting. This study recommends that these news anchors should carry out thorough research and be involved in the creation of soft news items which would be easier for them to present to the audience. They also need to cite sources of information and use credible sources that can be trusted and seem reliable to the audiences.

The study's recommendation on policy and regulation is that the Media Council of Kenya should be undertaken extensive researches to inform its members including media houses, independent producers, and journalists on sourcing, presentation and

communication with the viewers. The study will also inform on the recruitment and placement regulatory framework in the media houses to reflect the changing modern society. As such, the policy will inform media houses of what expectations the general public has on different news items -hard and soft; but largely to focus on source, double pairing of news anchors, completeness and comprehensiveness of the stories that allow the viewers and audience to reason and match the story and the facts. Ultimately, the survival of media houses is based on viewership, hence the need to seek ways of enhancing credibility perception on news items.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

The present study was limited to use of descriptive statistics like means and standard deviations during the analysis. Although these are important in providing an opportunity for analysis and reporting of the findings, future studies should focus on incorporating descriptive statistics like correlation and regression analysis. These tests will yield *p*-values that would in turn guide drawing of more robust inferences and testing of the formulated hypotheses. Apart from being limited on primary data, future studies can be conducted with emphasis of both primary and secondary data.

Additionally, the findings showed that the perceived credibility of hard news was not based on gender of the news anchor. Therefore, future research could explore other factors that influence credibility perceptions amongst viewers on hard and soft news within the Kenyan media landscape.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Hardcore News -Male Anchor

For this section, view the clip labelled V.1 on hard news which is reporting on time-sensitive events; and answer the following questions on perceived credibility of the news anchor. Credibility perception in this study is based on your judgment on whether the news item is false/true and factual or not. Please rate the extent to which you agree/disagree with these statements with the scale ranging from 1 =strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

1. The news anchor is trustworthy
2. The news anchor is knowledgeable on the subject matter
3. The news anchor is factual when presenting the news item
4. The tone of the news anchor is authoritative
5. I find the news anchor reliable
6. In general, I find the news anchor credible when presenting the news item
7. a). In general, I find the news anchor credible when presenting this news item
b). Why?

.....
.....

Hardcore News -Female Anchor

For this section, view the clip labelled V.2 on hard news which is reporting on time-sensitive events; and answer the following questions on perceived credibility of the news anchor. Credibility perception in this study is based on your judgment on whether the news item is false/true and factual or not. Please rate the extent to which you agree/disagree with these statements with the scale ranging from 1 =strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

1. The news anchor is trustworthy
2. The news anchor is knowledgeable on the subject matter
3. The news anchor is factual when presenting the news item
4. The tone of the news anchor is authoritative
5. I find the news anchor reliable
6. In general, I find the news anchor credible when presenting the news item
7. a). In general, I find the news anchor credible when presenting this news item
b). Why?

.....

Softcore News -Male Anchor

For this section, view clip V.3 on soft news, defined as human-interest, feature stories that are lighted and emotionally engaging. Rate the extent that you find the news anchor credible viewed as the judgment on whether the news item is false/true and factual or not and you have confidence in the news anchor. Please rate the extent to which you agree/disagree with these statements with the scale ranging from 1 =strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

1. The news anchor is trustworthy
2. The news anchor is knowledgeable on the subject matter
3. The news anchor is factual when presenting the news item
4. The tone of the news anchor is authoritative
5. I find the news anchor reliable
6. The news anchor looks presentable
7. a). In general, I find the news anchor credible when presenting this news item
b). Why?

.....

Softcore News -Female Anchor

For this section, view clip V.4 on soft news, defined as human-interest, feature stories that are lighted and emotionally engaging. Rate the extent that you find the news anchor credible viewed as the judgment on whether the news item is false/true and factual or not and you have confidence in the news anchor. Please rate the extent to which you agree/disagree with these statements with the scale ranging from 1 =strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

1. The news anchor is trustworthy
2. The news anchor is knowledgeable on the subject matter
3. The news anchor is factual when presenting the news item
4. The tone of the news anchor is authoritative
5. I find the news anchor reliable
6. The news anchor looks presentable
7. a). In general, I find the news anchor credible when presenting this news item
 b). Why?

.....

Demographics

1. What is your gender? (select one)
 - Male []
 - Female []
 - Other []
2. Which age group do you fall into? (Select one)

18 -30 years []

31-40 years []

41-50 years []

51+ years []

3. What is your highest education level or status? (Select one)

High School []

Diploma level []

Under -graduate Bachelors' degree []

Master's degree []

PhD Doctorate []

4. Which region do you reside in? (select one)

Nairobi []

Central []

Eastern []

Northern []

Rift Valley []

Western []

Coast []

Thank you for your time and accepting to participate in this study!

Appendix B: AKU Ethics Review Committee Approval Letter



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Media and Communications

REF: AKU-GSMC/ERC/2023/029

Date: November 24, 2023.

Dear Maluti Musau (Student No. 543922)

**RE: AN INVESTIGATION ON GENDER DISPARITY IN CREDIBILITY
PERCEPTIONS OF MALE AND FEMALE NEWS ANCHORS IN KENYA**

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 24, 2023, to November 23, 2024, and your application's approval number is AKU-GSMC/ERC/2023/029.

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 the 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

For 

Prof Nancy Booker
Dean

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Appendix C: 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 24, 2023

Dear Sir/Madam.

MALUTI MUSAU (STUDENT NO. 543922)

Maluti Musau 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. Musau's topic is "**An Investigation on Gender Disparity in Credibility Perceptions of Male and Female News Anchors in Kenya.**"

The purpose of my writing is to request you to assist Mr. Musau complete this important academic exercise. Any information collected will be used solely for academic purposes. Upon completion of the research, Mr. Musau'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
Dean

Appendix D: NACOSTI Research License


REPUBLIC OF KENYA
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 743625 **Date of Issue: 06/February/2024**

RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Mr. Ngumbau Maluti Musau of Aga Khan University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Baringo, Bomet, Bungoma, Busia, Elgeyo-Marakwet, Embu, Garissa, Homabay, Isiolo, Kajiado, Kakamega, Kericho, Kiambu, Kilifi, Kirinyaga, Kisii, Kisumu, Kitui, Kwale, Laikipia, Lamu, Machakos, Makeni, Mandera, Marsabit, Meru, Migori, Mombasa, Muranga, Nairobi, Nakuru, Nandi, Narok, Nyamira, Nyandarua, Nyeri, Samburu, Siaya, Taita-Taveta, Tanariver, Tharaka-Nithi, Transzoia, Turkana, Uasin-Gishu, Vihiga, Wajir, Westpokot on the topic: An Investigation on Gender Disparity in Credibility Perceptions of Male and Female News Anchors in Kenya for the period ending : 06/February/2025.


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 Director General
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