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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Media and Communication

**NEWSPAPER'S QUEST FOR SURVIVAL IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL
DISRUPTION: THE CASE OF THE DAILY NATION**

By

**OPIYO DAVE OLUOCH
535162**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in
Digital Journalism

Nairobi, Kenya

30/01/2020
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APPROVAL PAGE

The Aga Khan University
Graduate School of Media and Communications

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

Members of the Thesis Evaluation Committee appointed to examine the thesis of **OPIYO
DAVE OLUOCH-535162**, found it satisfactory and recommended that it be
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DECLARATION

I, **OPIYO DAVE OLUOCH-535162**, 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 own research endeavours

Signature

30/01/2020

Date

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out the effect digital disruption has had on the Daily Nation Newspaper, while also looking at the strategies the publication has put in place to ensure its survival. The study was guided by the following: (a) The changes and challenges posed by digital disruption on the newspaper and how this has affected its operations, (b) The strategies employed by the newspaper to respond to disruption and (c) The effectiveness of these survival and growth strategies. The study was guided by two theories – Disruption Innovation Theory and Media Economics Theory. The researcher used a Qualitative Research Approach, with the research design being a case study. The researcher employed in-depth interviews as data collection methods. The respondents for this study were experienced journalists and editors, who shared their experiences, while in the newsroom on how the disruption manifested itself and how the newspaper adapted to it. The findings of the study were varied. Briefly, they include Daily Nation's intent on changing how they report their stories – with the main idea being coming up with exclusives and in-depth stories that consumers can pay for, the publication's focus on retraining key staff, including hiring individuals with key digital skills to navigate this new dispensation, encouraging skill development and hiring multi-skilled employees. From the findings, it is clear that the future of newspapers is going digital. The researcher recommends that Daily Nation, however, needs to further scale up the publication of more exclusive content. The publication should equally explore new ways of telling its stories as well as invest more in improving technology used to deliver its information. But this process should be gradual. From the study, it is clear that diversification of revenue sources is the way to go. Businesswise it sounds a great idea, but ethically, what should the media house do when one of the sponsoring organization is caught up in a scandal? This is an area future researchers should explore.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Ads:	Advertisements
CA:	Communications Authority
DN:	Daily Nation
KARF:	Kenya Audience Research Foundation
KNBS:	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MCK:	Media Council of Kenya
NMG:	Nation Media Group
NYT:	New York Times
SIM Card:	Subscriber Identification Module Card
UK:	United Kingdom
US:	United States (of America)
WP:	Washington Post

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This section introduces the background of the study, the problem statement, the objectives, research questions, rationale, significance, scope as well as the limitations of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

Newspapers play an important role in our daily lives. They are considered by many as the ‘mirrors’ of the world because they provide the masses with critical information on many issues. Despite playing this important role, these publications are now faced with a major challenge – that of being disrupted by the digital economy (Akesson & Thomsen, 2015).

But what is disruption? The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (as cited by Hornby, 2005) defines the term as a process to make it difficult for something to operate the normal way. Digital disruption, on the other hand, has been defined as the use of technology, which has been brought about by the advent of the internet, to gain entry into markets and completely change the way things are done (Mcquive, 2013).

This digital disruption has, therefore, given birth to non-traditional sources of information, fueled by new technologies, thereby reshaping the way news is gathered, processed and distributed. The rise of the Internet, smartphones, and other mobile devices

have, therefore, become an almost indispensable part of our everyday life, dramatically changing our news consumption patterns as well as how media companies operate.

This is because the majority of people, especially the youth, heavily rely on these devices to get their daily dose of information. The effect of this is that traditional channels of information have been grossly affected audiences preferring mobile devices. This is because of their availability as well as portability. Westlund (2013), rightly argues that online news uptake, especially by the youth, has led to a decline in readership but also affected the newspaper's business models to get information.

In Kenya, for instance, the media is under intense pressure due to this phenomenon. It is clear that the circulation figures of some of the top newspapers including The Daily Nation, the Business Daily, The East African, The Standard Newspaper, The Star as well as the People Daily, have suffered a major hit.

Indeed, a study conducted by the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) revealed that the majority of Kenyans, – 73 percent, do not read the newspapers regularly, highlighting a major decline in the readership of these publications (MCK, 2019). Recent figures from the Kenya Audience Research Foundation (KARF) indicate that the one-month period between February and March 19, 2019, the circulation figures of the Standard Newspapers, for instance, declined from 459,389 to 457,891. The same applied to the Star newspapers, whose average reach also declined from 23,076 to 22,299 (KARF, 2019).

Audiences have equally shifted to Websites, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Google and Instagram amongst others, social media platforms, which were unheard of five to six years ago, to get information. And this has been made possible by the mobile phone.

Statistics from the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) indicate that as of September 30, 2018, there were 46.6million active mobile phone users in the Country (CA, 2018).

This, according to the report, represented a 2.4 percent growth when compared to the number of subscriptions recorded in 2017, which stood at 45.5 million. The report further revealed that mobile phone penetration passed the 100 percent mark because the majority of Kenyans owned a Sim Card, not one, but two from different telephone service providers.

By the end of September 2018, the report adds, those having active internet in the country, increased from 41.1m subscriptions at the end of June 2018 to 42.2m, representing a 2.7 percent growth. The majority of these people accessed the internet through smartphones.

But why is it that audiences these days prefer to get information online? This is because online instantly update content regularly and many a time, for free. This has in effect taken away many readers away from consuming print media. The Daily Nation, the main subject of this study, has, not been spared by this situation.

The newspaper is part of the Nation Media Group (NMG) and is considered by many as one of the leading independent media houses in Central and East Africa. The media house prides itself on having operations in broadcast, digital media and print publications. Its audiences are mainly in Kenya, but the giant media house has branches in Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania as well. (Group, n.d.).

The impact of this disruption, in the newspaper, has therefore been profound. The media is currently under pressure to reinvent itself. This will, however, be discussed in

depth in other sections of this study. But briefly, one major effect, identified following in-depth interviews with experienced journalists from the publication has been a major decline in both circulation as well as advertising revenue figures.

Indeed, recent statistics indicate that cumulatively, local dailies in Kenya recorded a 33 percent decline in circulation between 2013 and 2018 (KARF, 2019). The effect of this has been massive in the newspaper's operations. One, it led to job losses, both in the editorial and advertising departments, because the newspaper has been unable to meet its revenue collection targets.

But the job cuts also created an opportunity for the newspaper to restructure the newsroom in line with its new digital-first strategy - that integrates the use of various online and mobile platforms to deliver news to the reader as it happens. Sections of the Daily Nation Newsroom has been converged to support this digital department.

One of the major achievements of this disruption is the establishment of a digital division, headed by a Managing Editor, under whose direction the implementation of the new digital strategy falls. Under the Managing Editor's leadership, the newspaper has seen the Daily Nation Newspaper website revamped several times, with reporters on the beat being under instruction to first file their stories for this platform for any breaking news.

This disruption has equally opened doors for new-age journalists, armed with digital skills including search engine optimization techniques, social media, online content marketing as well as online news sourcing – to join the newsroom. Wainainah (2017), points out that the publication has equally had to scale up its edition model – tailoring its news to the different localities of its readers - to help it increase its circulation. With the

demand for digital ads at an all-time high, advertisers, are being encouraged to take advantage of this. The publication has further come up with an e-paper, an online version of the actual newspaper, which can easily be accessed via mobile devices.

Indeed, advertising and editorial lines, have equally been blurred. Editors and reporters, are essentially, being encouraged to ‘be salespeople’ by venturing into business by cultivating good relations with news sources and explore avenues where the publication can make money. Newspapers, in short, have therefore no choice but to take advantage of the changing times, and alter the way they operate, come up with content that adequately caters for their consumers in this digital space. These are some of the issues that this study will delve into. To be, specific, the study sought to examine Daily Nation’s digital-first strategy. It analyzed the changes and challenges experienced by the paper as a result of the disruption and how the publication has responded to these challenges.

1.3 Problem Statement

Newspapers in Kenya and other parts of the world as well are struggling to survive the digital era. The decline in readership numbers and Ads has resulted in the closure of several newspapers across the globe (Bauder & Lieb, 2019).

In the US, for instance, the Financial Times reports that more than 1,800 US newspapers had shut down in the last decade and a half as a result of this digital shift (Nicolaou, Fontanella-Khan & Fortado, 2019). Those that are still in circulation, they add, are what the report described as ‘ghost newspaper,’ which is a clear pale shadow of themselves.

The situation is, indeed, no different in Kenya. Latest Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) figures indicate that the circulation of daily English and Kiswahili hardcopy newspapers have equally continued to plummet, owing to the growth online readership of news content (KNBS, 2019).

The statistics contained in the 2019 Economic Survey Report indicate that last year, the circulation of Daily Newspapers, both English and Kiswahili reduced to 87.1 million and 3.7 million copies, respectively. All this has primarily been attributed to the advent of the internet (KNBS, 2019).

Online, which instantly updated content – and often for free – has taken away many readers of such publications from print media. The average number of online visitors per day continued to increase due to its high preference among many readers, particularly the youth. In 2018, online readers increased by 0.2 percent to 2,857.7 thousand compared to a 53.1 percent increase in 2017 (KNBS, 2019).

This has in effect resulted in the dwindling of newspaper circulation as more and more readers move online. Likewise, advertising revenue – considered by many as the lifeblood of these publications – has gone down significantly, as advertisers take advantage of the more widespread demand for digital Ads and spend significantly less on the print advertisement.

This study, therefore, explored how the Daily Nation newspaper is responding to challenges posed by the digital disruption and the survival growth strategies it has put in place.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect digital disruption has had on the Daily Nation Newspaper and strategies put in place to ensure its survival.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- i. Explore the changes and challenges posed by digital disruption on the Daily Nation
- ii. Explore the effect the changes and challenges on the newspaper's operations
- iii. Explore the strategies the Daily Nation has employed to respond to digital disruption.
- iv. Assess the impact of the survival and growth strategies employed by the Daily Nation in dealing with Digital disruption.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What changes and challenges have been posed on the Daily Nation by the digital disruption?
- ii. What strategies has the Daily Nation employed to guarantee its future in the era of digital disruption?
- iii. What is the impact of the survival and growth strategies adopted by the Daily Nation?
- iv. What is the future of newspapers in this fast-changing digital world?

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study examined how digital disruption affected the Daily Nation newspaper operations in its entirety. From the newsgathering to the processing as well as distribution aspects and how the publication has responded to it. This was done by conducting in-depth interviews by experienced journalists and editors, who gave their insights on this topic.

However, while undertaking the study, various limitations were noted. One major was whether my findings would be generalized to the Kenyan situation. It is a known fact that all newsrooms, across the world, are unique. They are structured differently in terms of workforce required, resources needed to implement a digital strategy amongst others.

Therefore, it was foolhardy to believe that what has worked for the Daily Nation, in terms of implementing its digital strategy, will automatically work for other media houses. That's not true. My findings may, therefore, not provide a 'one cut fits all' solution. Other media houses cannot simply cut or copy and paste them, apply it in their situations and expect instant results. The second limitation regards the literature review. From my readings, it is obvious that there's quite a lot of materials on how foreign media in the US and UK, for instance, navigated the digital disruption. But there is very little published on the experiences of the local media.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research will first and foremost add to the already existing knowledge of how newspapers, across the globe, have survived the digital disruption process. But specifically, it will assist other media houses in Kenya that publish newspapers – like the Standard Group, Radio Africa amongst others refine their strategies to remain relevant in this digital

age. Upcoming journalists and journalism training schools may also use it as reference material.

1.8 Rationale of the Study

This study is important because it will provide media houses with valuable information or insights as to what they need to do to survive the digital disruption era. For newspapers, it is evident that they are facing challenging times – fall in circulation as well as a dip in revenues collected. This has led newspaper managers to take drastic actions like downsizing their staff to cope with this turn of events. But should this be the case? Certainly not. Several other strategies can be employed, as has been done by the Daily Nation to counter this.

1.9 Summary

This section introduced the background of the study, the problem statement, the objectives, research questions, rationale, significance, scope as well as the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on the topic. It also highlights the role of newspapers as well as the history of these publications. It further traces the origins of the Daily Nation and how newspapers in the digital age have evolved as well as internet penetration in Kenya before looking at the various theories that have been used to explain how newspapers are coping with the digital disruption.

2.2 Review of Empirical Literature

2.2.1 Role of Newspapers

Newspapers have for long played an essential part in our daily lives. They have and still provide us with critical information on several issues – be it local, national or even international. This perhaps explains why they have been described as the ‘mirrors of the world.’ It is because they cover all aspects of life.

Fa (2019), says it is unimaginable for many newspaper readers – the majority of whom fall under the working class category - to start their day without their morning dose of newspapers. And even for those who cannot afford to purchase the publications, it is indeed common to see members of the public huddled in groups at various newspaper vending spots discussing the hot topics of the day.

This, therefore, shows their importance in not only informing, educating but also entertaining the masses on various topics that shape our daily lives – be it politics,

entertainment, sports, business as well as trade and commerce. Newspapers usually reflect and report the trends and happening from all parts of the world. Randall, (2000) opines that for newspapers to perform their jobs effectively, they must bring out the information on issues affecting the public and transmit them to the public accurately.

But despite this important role, they have equally had their fair share of criticism arising from readers' opinions or perceptions. This puzzle has been aptly described by Mark Twain when he stated that once an individual does not read a newspaper, he or she is uninformed, but if they read the newspaper, they are misinformed (Rasmussen, 1998).

However, all in all, Newspapers, considered one of the oldest media forms, have played an important role in informing the masses at all times. Newspaper journalists, Editors, Printers, Publishers across the world have been very influential in using the 'power of the pen' to put across their messages to entertain, educate as well as inform the society.

2.2.2 History of Newspapers

But what are the origins of these publications? (Priya, 2016), says Newspapers have undergone a dramatic cycle in its evolution throughout history. Some of the earliest forms of newspapers, the duo opine, could be traced back to the Roman Empire. During ancient times, very important messages were carved out in stone tablets, which were then strategically placed in areas with a high population, where citizens could easily have access to.

This, in a way, ensured that citizens, at the time, were informed of the day to day happenings of their environment. The oldest direct ancestors of the modern newspaper, (Priya, 2016), say were handwritten news sheets which were then distributed in widely in

Venice, a city in Europe considered as a center for trade and therefore information. The Venetian news sheets were later on christened as “gazette”.

They mainly contained lots of information on especially politics and wars from the larger Europe. Their distribution began as early as 1566. The oldest printed newspapers in Europe, at the time, were published every week in the German language in 1609. They included *Aviso Relations* over *Zeitung*, printed by Lucas Schulte, and the other in Strasbourg, *Relations: Aller Furnemmen*, printed by Johann Carolus. The publishers of these newspapers, in the course of undertaking their duty of informing the masses, omitted one major detail – the city in which they were printed. This was to avoid government prosecution (Stephens, n.d.).

With the newspapers gaining lots of popularity and their distribution channels becoming better and better, they rapidly spread throughout Europe. For instance, the newspapers, which appeared weekly, started appearing in Basel by 1610, Hamburg (1616), Frankfurt and Vienna (1615), Amsterdam (1618) and Berlin (1616).

In England, the first newspaper printed appeared in 1621, with France publishing a newspaper of its own in 1631. Italy, on the other hand, had its first newspaper in 1639 while Spain had its first publication by 1641. Kenya’s first newspaper was the *African Standard*, published in 1903 as a weekly publication. Its founder, Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee, however, sold it in 1905 to two entrepreneurs who re-launched it, changing its name to the *East African Standard* (Ndonye & Telewa, 2013).

With its re-launch, the newspaper, which was at the time being published in the coastal city of Mombasa, then changed its frequency of publication from a weekly to a

daily. Its owners then moved its headquarters to Nairobi in 1910. The newspaper was then sold to the Lohnro group, based in Britain, in 1963.

This paved way for another re-launch, which gave birth to The Standard in 1977, but later on, reverted to its old name the East African Standard. The publication, in 2004, went back to using the name The Standard. On the other hand, its main rival – the Daily Nation, was introduced to the Kenyan market by its founder, The Aga Khan in 1959, even though the first actual printed newspapers took their place in the newsstands on October 3, 1963.

2.2.3 The Birth of the Daily Nation

Kenya's rich history is closely entwined with that of the Nation Newspaper Group. The newspaper publisher, founded by his Highness The Aga Khan, began its operations in 1960, launching three different publications in one year.

It all began with the purchase of Taifa, meaning the Nation, a Kiswahili weekly in 1958. This newspaper was then turned into a daily and was given the name Taifa Leo in January 1960. Determined to start an English newspaper, The Aga Khan, on March 20, 1960, launched the Sunday Nation. Later the same year, on October 3, the Daily Nation was born.

With time, the newspaper has grown to become, arguably, one of the largest and the fastest-growing publications in Central and East Africa (Moggi & Tessie, 2001). The two authors describe it as one of the most successful on the continent. Like mentioned earlier, according to the Aga Khan, the main aim of starting these publications was to come

up with a publication produced entirely by African journalists and editors, containing news that resonate with them.

In 1963, shortly after Kenya attained its independence from the British, Hillary Ngweno was appointed Daily Nation's first Editor-in-Chief. Before his appointment, Mr. Ngweno had made his mark as a feature writer. Ngweno was then succeeded by George Githii two years later. Githii edited the paper till 1968.

He was then followed by Boaz Omori. Interestingly, Githii made a comeback and served as the newspaper's head from 1972 to 1978 and was succeeded by Joe Rodriguez in 1981. Mr. Peter Mwaura took over between 1981 to 1983. George Mbuguss then took over, now as Managing Editor. In October 1973, Nation Printers and Publishers was quoted on the Nairobi stock exchange. (Nation, n.d.)

It should be noted that the introduction of the newspapers to the market proved, indeed, very popular, with the circulation figures hovering between 15,000 and 18,000 within the first four years. The figures continued to rise as the years passed by. In 1968, the Daily Nation's circulation overtook that of the East African Standard, Kenya's oldest newspaper. The average sales recorded at the time was around 34,000. When the Daily Nation marked its 10th birthday, its circulation figures had hit 46,496.

By the time the publication was celebrating its Silver Jubilee, the circulation figures had reached 135,000 copies daily, which then rose to more than 160,000 (Moggi & Tessie, 2001). Nation Media Group's success has largely been attributed to technological innovation, being the first newspapers outside Europe and North America to utilize phototypesetting systems.

The company witnesses a major milestone in 1973 when its shares were first offered on the Nairobi stock exchange – for the very first time. An offer for 1.2 million shares was made at Sh5 each. It was, indeed, oversubscribed. Today, the company has more than 10,000 shareholders, owning at least 55 percent of the shares.

The Aga Khan, however, remains the principal shareholder. NMG also owns The East African, a weekly regional newspaper, which was launched on November 7, 1994. Lately, however, due to a combination of Kenya's ailing economy, and with the advent of disruption, the publication's circulation figures are experiencing a downward trend Taifa Leo, on the other hand, is similarly experiencing a similar situation.

2.3 Newspapers and the Digital Age

With the advent of technology, internet to be specific, many have predicted the death of newspapers. This is because they are currently facing sustained and fierce competition from other new media forms, which have transformed the way audiences access and consume information.

Westlund (2013), says citizens in this digital age have been provided with several means through which they can access information but also production and distributing this information themselves. This, therefore, means that the majority of information consumers these days, have access to whatever information they desire, at anytime and anyplace, a fete that has been made possible through the advent of technology – via devices – like mobile phones, iPads, laptops amongst others.

With many looking up to new media to access information, Newspapers across the world have recorded a decrease in print newspaper circulation over the years (Crosbie,

2004). This, essentially, therefore presents journalists with new challenges – which include the packaging and delivering news according to consumer preferences.

Douglas McLennan (2018), rightly supports this argument. He states: “Newspapers have been dying ‘in slow motion’ for two decades now.” He argues that countries like Britain, for instance, has fewer newspapers now than it was fourteen years ago, by about 200. The situation, he goes on, is equally the same in the US. “A once unimaginable scenario has lately become grimly conceivable,” he concludes.

In the U.S, for instance, the circulation of weekday newspapers has indeed declined from 60 million in 1994 to 35 million for combined print and digital circulation today — 24 years of decline (Douglas McLennan, 2018). He goes on to add that advertising revenue is equally experiencing a similar trend, declining from \$65 billion in 2000 to less than \$19 billion in 2016. These figures have had a tremendous effect on newsroom operations, with 40 percent of journalists losing their jobs between 1994 and 2014.

Abernathy (2018), further paints a grim picture of the decline of newspapers, especially in the US, where, according to her, almost 1,800 papers have folded since 2004. This includes more than 1,700 weeklies and 60 dailies. And it is not only newspapers that are folding, but readers of the hardcopy publications are also equally disappearing at an alarming rate. He notes that those who read the newspapers are disappearing at a faster rate than the print publications.

The author further points out that the circulation of weekly newspapers, had over the last 15 years declined from 122million to 73 million. This dramatic loss, he adds, had

been driven not only by changes in readers preference – who prefer to receive information online, but also business decisions of the newspaper owners.

Therefore, in this digital age, the traditional media, as mentioned above, must adapt to new ways of delivering information. Media managers must always come up with new strategies to deliver their products to the market, and especially appeal to the younger audience, the majority of whom have embraced the internet to get information. Gates (2002) in a bid to reinforce this argument states – that newspapers must indeed change with the times.

2.3.1 Internet Penetration in Kenya

Digital connectivity in any country plays a critical role in not only improving people's livelihood but equally, transforming society. This is so because it opens doors to employment opportunities as well as assist in providing knowledge to many across the globe.

According to CA (2018) statistics, there were 42.2 million active Internet/data subscribers in the country, as at the end of September 2018, from 41.1 million as at the end of June 2018, representing a 2.7 percent growth. During the period under review, mobile data/Internet subscriptions also went up by 2.7 percent from 40.7 million to 41.8 million from 40.7 million. Globally, the report further adds as, of July 2018, the number of active internet users stood at 4.1 billion. From this figure, 3.3 billion were active social media users. This, indeed, points to the effect of expanding Internet access and usage through the increased availability of broadband networks.

2.3.2 New York Times Experience

The New York Times has experienced unprecedented growth in its number of digital subscribers, and now makes 40 percent of its revenue from largely through a well thought out strategy, that has been hailed as a game-changer and one of the ‘greatest success stories’ in the newspaper industry in regards to digital transformation. (Times, 2017).

In 2018, the Times generated \$709 million in digital revenue, putting it ahead of an ambitious goal set in 2015 to hit \$800 million by 2020. It had also set a goal of growing its subscription business to more than 10 million subscriptions by 2025 and the figure currently stands at 4.3 million, counting both digital and print (Times, 2017).

This was made possible through a well thought out digital transformation strategy ‘Journalism that Stands Apart’. The strategy was initiated in 2011. During this time, the newspaper realized it had to do more to be competitive, especially in the digital space.

The New York Times, therefore, identified three broad strategies to drive this shift to the future. They purposed to change how they report their stories, their recruitment of staff and how they work. In terms of recruitment, the strategy team proposed to employ more multi-skilled journalists, empowering them with time, resources and expertise to find, share their most important stories.

They equally intend to add other skilled journalists with unique digital skills like graphics, analytics, video technology, etc. The Newspaper hired around 1,300 editorial employees for its newsroom, a number of which hasn’t changed over the years, not even when it struggled financially.

In terms of how the media house works, the strategists proposed that the newsroom be re-organized to ‘reflect their digital present and future.’ This entails ensuring that everyone understands his job and the media houses’ vision. (Times, 2017).

On changing the way they report, the strategists acknowledged that the media company, on one hand, produces lots of excellent stories, others simply lack ‘significant impact or audience.’ To cure this, the strategists proposed that the media house embarks on using “digital storytelling tools that allow for richer and more engaging journalism.” (Times, 2017).

To this effect, they developed different subscription products and packaging for its subscribers. In addition to the basic subscription, the company offered several additional options and extended subscription packages with multiple options. This, amongst other strategies, created a picture of a company that takes care of its customers’ needs. The million-dollar question, therefore, remains, what can other newspapers learn from this experience?

2.2.3 The Washington Post Experience

The Washington Post has been described as the most innovative company in the newspaper publishing business. Its success has been pegged on a sound strategy, whose implementation has tremendously increased the revenue brought into the company, by turning it into a business that could generate \$100 million a year (Pope 2016).

Pope (2016) Writes that three years after the publication was bought – for around \$250 by Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, the post underwent a dramatic change, ‘reinventing itself with digital speed.

Its Web traffic has doubled and this far outstrips The New York Times (and even BuzzFeed) in the number of online posts its reporters file every day. So successful has the Post become in the digital game that it now licenses its content management system to other news outlets, a business that could generate \$100 million a year.

Pope (2016) attributes this success to hard work. Just a few years before, the Washington Post, he adds, was not performing well – including losing its editor. But due to a sound digital strategy, the paper's terrible period became a thing of the past.

First, it invested heavily in technology and now, the office now has the feel of a tech start-up...Video screens that scrolling Web Analytics are hanging above the newsroom(Pope 2016). Bezos, Pope (2016) adds, also appreciated the importance of partnerships by working with Google to ensure that his 'Mobile sites load stories faster. This, Pope adds, was done under the notion that audiences chose a medium through which they can get their information depending on how fast they load the stories.

The company further developed a tool that automatically hounded journalists for not filing stories on time. Bezos saw the importance of having the right persons on the job to champion this digital shift and appointed Shailesh Prakash, the Post Chief Information Officer and Joey Marburger, the paper's director of product to steer this ship.

The duo, later on, came to be known as the newspaper's digital killers. They talk more to Bezos than anyone else in the newsroom. That makes them critical to the continued success of the Washington Post, but also important players in the future of newspapers, as owners and editors around the world increasingly look to the Post as a turnaround that is working.

Apart from hiring world-class journalists and investing in new technologies, Breiner (2017) writes that the publication also ventured into new markets a move that increased their audiences. Breiner (2017) says part of the plan was to ensure they share their content to as many social media sites as possible – from Facebook to Twitter and others to get as many people as possible to sample their products, then encourage them to purchase once they had sampled the quality.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Disruption Innovation Theory

Christensen, Raynor and McDonald (2015) describe the theory as a process where “smaller companies, often with fewer resources, can successfully challenge established incumbent businesses.” This theory predicts that when such smaller companies take on the more established one's head-on, offering better products or services, the incumbents will accelerate their innovations to defend their businesses.

In many ways, this Theory aptly describes what my research is all about. That majority of traditional media houses in Kenya, for instance, were caught napping by the digital shift is no secret. Even though quite a number of these them established an online presence – like having websites, they were quite unprepared for effects of the uptake, especially by the youth.

Christensen et al. (2015) argue that disruptive innovations are normally at play when they start in markets ignored by two types of markets that incumbents overlook - New Market as well as Low-End footholds. Low-End Footholds, they say, exist because the

established ones focus on their most profitable and demanding customers at the detriment of their less-demanding counterparts.

In the case of New Market Footholds, disrupters create a market where none existed. Another characteristic of disruptors, the authors argue, is that innovations don't catch up with the mainstream customer until quality catches up to their standards. They are initially considered inferior by most of the incumbent's customers because they are less expensive and instead wait until quality rises enough to satisfy them.

These characteristics, in my assessment, are the hallmarks of what, for instance, social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube possess. It is a known fact that some of these sites – like Facebook, started on a small scale, but grew into huge businesses, fueled by their uptake by the youth. Mark Zuckerberg, then 23, founded Facebook in 2004 at Harvard University where he was studying psychology (Phillips, 2007).

Facebook proved so popular that more than 1200 students had signed up within 24 hours of its rollout. The site is now one of the largest social networking sites globally, having more than 30 million registered users (Phillips, 2007).

The same concept applies to twitter, which was born in 2006, with co-founder Jack Dorsey, imaging it as a Short Messages Services based communications platform, where groups of friends could check on what their colleagues were doing mainly using their status updates -like texting. These sites explored a market where none existed.

It should be noted that traditional media did not view these innovations as threats. But as they continued to evolve, they began taking notice, due to their huge uptake, by the

youth, reason being - one their ability to get information instantaneously, the variety of content and most of all, their interactivity, amongst others.

This perhaps sets the stage for disruption in the media. As a result of this, several such publications, that did not embrace the digital shift, folded as a result of heavy losses, with no one to purchase their publications or even advertise because their audiences had moved elsewhere.

There are, however, those that are trying to adapt to this shift, perhaps, explaining the phrase that social media poses the greatest challenge to journalism. A report by the International Center for Journalist (ICFJ) report reveals that today, the majority of newsrooms have access to new platforms and formats, from social media sites to mobile apps to virtual reality, which they use to distribute their stories and reach wider audiences (ICFJ, 2017).

Facebook, the report says, is used by more than three-quarters of journalists worldwide. It is followed by twitter then YouTube. The internet has, therefore, advanced electronic journalism changing it from an information transformation career to an information processing one. Internet journalism has altered the function and nature of the media, enabling citizens to contribute to media content, disseminate information, counter news via a virtual network, and to participate directly in news production.

These are the exact characteristics if disruptive technologies. Put more bluntly, firms that do not come up with systems that support their customers in whatever service they are offering don't stay in business for a long time.

For firms to succeed, they first need to study the needs of their customers, then listen carefully to their feedback, while incorporating what they want while rolling out their products. But when the new technology is more appropriate for a new set of customers, this knowledge and focus on existing customers become a weakness. With disruptive technologies, firms must simultaneously support their existing customers while they search for new ones (Funk, 2004).

2.4.2 Media Economics Theory

The term Media Economics, according to Alexander, Owers, Carveth, Hollifield, and Greco (2004), deals with the financial and business operations companies undertake in the process of generating and distributing content. They further explain that media economics concerns media industries' allocation of resources to create information and entertainment content that meets the needs of audiences, advertisers and other societal institutions.

According to Albarran, Chan-Olmsted & Worth, (2006) media economics studies how media organizations fulfill the demands of their audiences using the available resources.

This, in essence, means that audiences tend to understand how the media operates, as it gives insights on how media managers decide on how resources are used. Alexander et al. (2004) believe that media organisations have equally experienced and continue to experience a myriad of changes – both technical and organizational – putting them under immense pressure to perform and remain relevant in the ever-changing business world.

They, for instance, give the travails of AOL Time Warner Inc. as an example. The merger was praised, by its proponents, as a ‘masterful organizational development’ to address challenges occasioned by changes in technology as well as the financial demands by their investors.

However, within two years, the merger was deemed to have failed. This experience, they say, “clearly implies the need for ever more efficient management of such firms.” With many media organisations heavily reliant on advertising and by extension, circulation, to earn their revenues, how the economy performs, therefore, affects how their respective businesses perform.

Revenues for media firms from direct expenditure by consumers are dependent on broader economic aggregates such as levels of disposable income and consumer confidence (Sagepub.com).

2.5 Summary

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature on the study. It also highlighted the role of newspapers as well as the history of these publications. It further traced the origins of the Daily Nation and how newspapers in the digital age have evolved as well as internet penetration in Kenya before looking at the two main theories – The Disruption Innovation Theory and Media Economics Theory - that have been used to explain how newspapers are coping with the digital disruption

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the research design, data collection techniques, and analysis as well as the target population.

3.2 Research Design and Approach

This study employed the Qualitative Research Approach. This approach involves a description, interpretation, and analysis of information a researcher gathers from the field, interviews conducted and written documents to enable him or her get a better understanding of the topic being researched on (Patton, 2015).

Qualitative researchers engage in naturalistic inquiry, studying real-world settings inductively to generate rich narrative descriptions and construct case studies. Inductive analysis across cases yields patterns and themes, the fruit of qualitative research (Patton, 2015).

Researchers have championed the use of multiple sources to gather data as this, in more ways, validates the study. This is because data collected, on the subject being researched on, from these different sources should always lead to similar results. Therefore, research on an issue, from several angles can assist researchers in coming up with a broader and holistic angle on the research topic.

The research design employed for this study was a case study of the Daily Nation Newspaper. This design aids the investigation of a research problem using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This, they say ensures that the issue is not “explored through one lens, but a variety, which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood.”

The NMG has for the last few years, been implementing a new strategic direction, which they say “will secure their current business and position the organization to win in the future” (NMG, 2016). To achieve this, the company says it is ‘cognizant of the changing trends in which audiences are utilizing their products, both in print and digital, in line with this reality.

The company, has, therefore, embarked on a process changing the way it operates to be in sync with the demands of a modern 21st Century digital content company that embraces a mobile-first/ digital business model (NMG, 2016). This statement, in itself, shows the media house’ seriousness in moving with the times and come up with a new approach in implementing their business strategy. Being the largest media house in Kenya, and by extension, arguably, the East and Central African region, documenting Daily Nation’s transformation journey to a digital entity would be of interest to many.

Daily Nation, it should be noted, is one of the publications under the Nation Media Group’s stable. Since this Newspaper has a well-documented history, this will provide me with an opportunity to generate an in-depth, multi-faced understanding of its journey towards a digital transformation. Case studies enable a researcher to interrogate, in-depth, complex situations and recommend a practical solution to challenges.

A case study, unlike other research techniques like surveys, offers researchers an opportunity to use a range of tools on one subject. This gives the researcher ample space and time to understand the topic while exploring all factors influencing the research topic in detail. As opposed to getting a single view of an individual during the process of an interview, case studies equally enable a researcher to capture a range of perspectives, giving him or her a greater opportunity to gain a good understanding of the subject in question thereby, reducing any bias potential.

3.3 Population

Population refers to the entire pool from which a sample is drawn. In this case, the population for this study was mainly drawn from the Daily Nation – i.e. editors, reporters and those working in the commercial division.

3.4 Target Population

The target population was editors, reporters and business executives who have been at the Daily Nation for at least 10 years. This is because they have been at the publication longer to have witnessed the digital disruption process, hence could easily share their experiences on the changes, challenges that have occurred, the strategies employed to counter the disruption process and how effective these strategies have been.

3.5 Justification of the Site Selection

The Study was primarily done at the Nation Centre, Nation Media Group's headquarters. Nation Centre is situated at the heart of the Nairobi Central Business District.

It is located along Kimathi Street and faces Banda Street. It houses several offices – including Banks, the Nairobi Stock Exchange, and several colleges amongst others.

But the main tenant is the Nation Media Group. The building serves as the headquarters of the giant media house. The location was ideal because it is at the heart of the operations of the largest independent media house in East and Central Africa.

The media house has print, broadcast and digital media divisions, which serve audiences in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda. It is also ideal because it is where the majority of my primary sources are. These include Editors, journalists, as well as Advertising staff, who narrated their experiences, thus giving me the information I needed most because they are, at some point, part of the team either leading or implementing the digital strategy. Nation Centre also hosts the company library, which contains crucial documents on its digital strategy.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher employed in-depth interviews as the main data collection technique. This data collection method granted me the opportunity to harvest as much information as is required.

A qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to uncover their world they lived in before scientific explanations. It is a specific form of conversation where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and interviewee (Kvale, 2007).

Interviews usually help the researcher to expose and learn from the information they have missed otherwise. When one has a good set of questions and is experienced enough to conduct proper interviews, he or she has a better chance of getting proper responses from the persons they are seeking information from.

But this method has its weaknesses too. One is that reaching out to all respondents may be a tall order and time-consuming exercise which may lead to an increase in the cost of conducting the process and to ensure the effectiveness of the whole exercise.

3.7 Unit of Analysis

My unit of analysis was the Daily Nation Newspaper. This is because the newspaper is the flagship product of the Nation Media Group. It is the highest-circulating newspaper, not only in Kenya but in the East African region as well. This profile makes it an interesting unit of analysis.

3.8 Sampling Design in Qualitative Research

My research primarily utilized the purposive sampling technique design. Also known as judgment sampling, the researcher deliberately chose the individuals having the information due to the qualities they possess. Simply put, the researcher decides what he or she needs to know and identifies the individuals who can assist or rather are willing to provide it.

3.8.1 Sample Size

The sample size was 12 participants. These were senior editors, journalists as well as those working at Daily Nation's Commercial division. Even though there's still debate

as to what is the recommended sample size, in qualitative research, this rarely determines the quality of the findings. The interviews conducted by the researcher were therefore done up to the point of saturation.

3.9 Techniques of Data Collection, Processing and Analysis

3.9.1 Data Collection

The researcher first came up with an interview guide (See *Appendix A*) consisting of a list of questions that would direct the interviews with the respondents. The interviewees were therefore carefully picked, based on the positions they hold in the newsroom as well as the number of years they have worked.

This was a deliberate effort since the researcher was only looking for individuals who had started working at the publication before the onset of the disruption and had experienced what life in the newsroom was thereafter. The researcher had initially purposed to interview 18 respondents but the number was considerably whittled down due to the availability of some of the respondents.

The researcher then booked appointments with the available interviewees after which the questions were administered. The researcher audiotaped the discussions. Follow-up questions were done via telephone calls.

3.9.2 Data Processing Procedures and Analysis

Data processing means a process of converting data into information while analysis, on the other hand, refers to the process of analyzing the data to reveal its various patterns and characteristics. The researcher, therefore, went through several stages to actualize this.

Once all the interviews had been completed, they were transcribed. Everything that was said during the interview process was typed verbatim. The data therein was then sorted. This involves sieving what is relevant and is needed by the researcher to aid the study, and what is not.

This was done out of the realization that while processing data, researchers, many a time, have lots of irrelevant data, which may not be of use, and reduces the perfection of the information being sought.

The researcher then coded the data. This step usually involves putting the random data already collected by the researcher in a particular structure. This process was done via a web application known as Atlas.Ti. The researcher also used spreadsheets to code. The researcher used a thematic framework to analyze the data generated from the interviews. This procedure categorizes content into themes and is most of the time suitable to identify repeat or typical responses from the respondents.

Cleansing – This step increases the quality of the processed data. In this step, the quality controller validates the data. Data is double-checked to secure faultless data processing. This cleansing helps you to process the data very efficiently and quickly.

Proper Formatting – Last but most important step to end the process very effectively is proper formatting. Without proper formatting, there is no meaning of data processing. Proper formatting is very much helpful to understand the data very easily and concludes the decision quickly.

3.9.3 Ethical Considerations

Before the researcher went out to collect data, he first had to seek the approval of the Aga Khan University Ethics Review Committee. This was granted (See *Appendix B*). The Graduate School of Media Studies further provided an introductory letter (See *Appendix C*), which was used to get a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) (See *Appendix D*).

There are several ethical considerations that the researcher put into consideration. One is objectivity. This means not being bias in any aspect of the work being undertaken and saying it as it is. This includes, amongst others, when collecting data, analyzing it or even interpreting the same. But during my data collection, the researcher came across a lot of sensitive information the Nation Media Group would not allow published. Like the sales and circulation figures. Even though the resercher swore to be objective, while undertaking my research, my conscience would not allow me to publish this information. So the researcher chose to omit them.

Another important ethical consideration is respect for intellectual property. This involves not plagiarizing other people's work and passing it as your own. It has always been said that if in doubt, acknowledge, to avoid any risk of plagiarism. There is also the issue of confidentiality. Interviewees will, more often than not, provide information 'off the cuff' or in confidence. This means that whatever has been said should not, at all, be published. This must be respected at all times.

3.10 Summary

This chapter delved into the methodology that was used in coming up with the research – from the research design, data collection techniques, and analysis as well as the target population.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The current chapter undertakes to review, wholesomely, the findings of the present research. As detailed in the preceding chapter, qualitative research, in the form of in-depth interviews, was the preferred method of data collection. The approach accorded the researcher an opportunity to develop a wholesome view of where NMG stands in its bid to weather the digital storm, which threatens the prominence of the Daily Nation. The findings are aligned with the emerging themes as gathered from the extensive interviews, numbering 18, that enlisted a wide range of individuals presently working for the DN either as administrators, journalists, editors, and commercial agents.

4.2 Changes and Challenges posed by Digital Disruption on the Daily Nation.

All the respondents acknowledged that digital disruption is a reality at the Daily Nation. It has visibly affected how the newspaper operates - leading to a shift in the manner in which news is gathered, processed and distributed. To adapt to this reality, the respondents agreed that the publication has been compelled to make one key change –to remain relevant in this era – i.e. - establish and maintain a dynamic digital presence, which is responsive to its audience needs. This, according to the respondents, was done as follows:

4.2.1 Website Design

A section of the respondents was of the view that to reach the wider audiences, not only in Kenya but across the globe as well, coming up with a website www.nation.co.ke was key to realizing this goal. This, they argued, was out of the realization that the Daily Nation's hardcopy newspaper had a limited reach and could, therefore, not get to all their audiences. The predominantly computer-based website was later on customized for smartphones – enabling them to reach an even wider audience. This is what they had to say:

Digital presence is not enough if people are not consuming (information) using platforms they frequently use. We, therefore, had to come up with a website... the website for the mobile is different from the desktop website. This is a deliberate effort.

4.2.2 A shift in Newsgathering, Processing and Dissemination Process

Respondents also noted that the digital disruption process equally precipitated a shift in the manner in which news is gathered, processed and distributed. They noted that these days, the work of journalists at the Daily Nation has been made easier because they have been allowed to source for and even file and disseminate their stories via some social media apps like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter. This, they argued, has speeded up the rate at which stories are filed especially breaking news. They noted:

Even before the news is brought for processing, how we have been doing it has changed. Right now, for instance, people are filing stories on WhatsApp. We have people filing photos and videos on WhatsApp. This has speeded up the process of filing stories.

Another respondent also pointed out a change in the tools in which journalists use to gather information. Initially, the respondent pointed out, journalists used pen and paper to write their notes. But this has now changed:

Yes, I have seen it all. I started as a pen and paper journalist. Every week I would think what story would I tell and how I would tell that story was first going for interviews, taking down notes and in the instances that I would record the interview, it would be for my reference, to ensure I get the quotes right...but seven years on, today I think about online publishing. So in between, I have transitioned from a newspaper reporter into a digital journalist.

4.2.3 Embracing Convergence

The respondents also noted a change in the mentality of journalists at the Daily Nation's Newsroom, especially in terms of filing stories. The interviewees noted that journalists at the publication are first required to send out news alerts, via their mobile phones on location, then filing stories online first before processing day two stories for the newspaper, in line with their digital-first policy. One respondent said:

Then after that, we came up with the digital-first approach two years ago. Meaning any content that is produced, must go to our digital platforms first. They include breaking news and any content that is not exclusive to us and can find space there, will be put there...

Another stated:

When I joined the Daily Nation, we didn't focus much on online publication. For example, you could come to the office and simply put down the story and send it to your editor who will then work on it and it is put in the newspaper to be published the next day. However, as time went by, things started changing. Nation launched the breaking news alert system, which is an SMS system where subscribers pay a certain fee to get breaking news alerts. With time the website became more and more active, reporters were routinely advised to be filing breaking stories for the online team and the website was being updated from time to time.

Another respondent added:

I started as a pen and paper journalist. Every week I would think what story would I tell and how I would tell that story was first going for interviews, taking down notes and in the instances that I would record the interview, it would be for my reference, to ensure I get the quotes right...but seven years on, today I think about online publishing. So in between, I have transitioned from a newspaper reporter into a digital journalist.

4.2.4 A New way of Telling Stories

The interviewees revealed that instead of relying on text and pictures as was the practice before, Daily Nation journalists have now been practicing new storytelling techniques. One, they said, was the videos. And this, they revealed was easily done by their mobile smartphones. One respondent said:

The communication and information landscape today requires a different set of skills in the newsroom. It also demands a different pace and style of storytelling. Merely text or straight video does not cut it anymore. Newsrooms must, therefore, keep innovating.

Some respondents also revealed that instead of relying on ‘diary or docket stories’, which entails reporters being sent to functions that had been booked well in advance by news sources, investing in exclusive content was key. One interviewee stated:

The other way of dealing with disruption is investing in exclusive content.

Another argued that:

Editors are also moving away from ‘he said, she said’ kind of reporting, events or docket kind of journalism to exclusives. They prefer the stories that are not docketed for the day, to more analytical pieces and exclusives.

4.2.5 Talent Management

The digital disruption has opened up new employment opportunities for both journalists and non-journalists who, previously, would not have had an opportunity to work in media houses including those doing Web Analytics, Graphic Designers, and Audience Engagement Producers amongst others, the respondents say. The respondents further revealed that the Daily Nation had invested heavily in training its journalists so that they keep up with the demands of the shift to digital. This, some of them said, entails flying in

experts from, for instance, Europe and the US to teach Daily Nation journalists of the changing trends in digital journalism. One respondent said:

I have seen the digital division grown leaps and bounds. I have seen people who would not have been employed at the Nation, before 2012, now getting jobs. I am talking about people who do Web Analytics, there are more Video Editors. Before, it was just a simple unit for videos. But today we have video editors sitting in front of the news desk which was unheard of before...

Another interviewee added:

We have several people who have either gone back to school. We have several others who have left the country. There's in-house training – we have had experts flying in from Europe, the US and other areas to train people. There's a whole big plan to ensure those who want to continue working for the Nation has a feel of how digital works because that is where we are going as a company.

Another opined:

The other lessons are that when we are hiring, we may not have to look the traditional way. I am happy that HR has already adopted this. Most of the people getting jobs have some digital aspects.

4.2.6 Transformation of the Classic Journalist

Another palpable change is the transformation of the classic journalist, required to draft notes and reproduce and report on stories, to the current status where the journalists are required to develop in-depth stories suitable for publishing in digital spaces/platforms. Journalists who were required to work exclusively on DN are now reporting on digital platforms, the departmental boundaries that existed are fast closing down. Further, this is pushed by the demand for journalists to not only write for newspapers but to also generate digital content:

I started as a pen and paper journalist. Every week I would think what story would I tell and how I would tell that story was first going for interviews, taking down notes and in the instances that I would record the interview, it would be for my reference, to ensure I get the quotes right...but seven years on, today I think about online publishing. So in

between, I have transitioned from a newspaper reporter into a digital journalist

4.2.7 Challenges

The respondents equally noted a myriad of challenges brought about by the digital disruption process. They enumerated them as follows:

4.2.7.1 Convergence

Some respondents revealed that despite being a noble idea, this concept has not been fully embraced by some journalists at the Nation Media Group as a whole and the Daily Nation in particular. These respondents said asking a journalist, who was used to filing stories for newspapers alone, to also write for other online platforms proved a little difficult. One respondent said:

The main challenge has been inter-departmental convergence...What has, however, not worked out so well was getting TV people to do newspaper and vice versa. Looking back, we realize we may have been too ambitious because you look at these two platforms and you realize the skill set is very different. Even the way they work is very different. We may have to relook...do we want a TV journalist reporter to write an in-depth piece for the newspaper and the newspaper guy to go shooting videos for TV. They can do it using the mobile phone for the videos for social and others but TV standards are way ahead. It requires HD footage and stuff like that.

Another added;

First of all, as a reporter, you were suddenly being told that you should be a photographer, you should be able to edit some of the content before it is published... When something new comes in and you are being asked to do all those things then it means you...had to go back to class and maybe do some retraining.

4.2.7.2 Story Leaks

A section of respondents raised concerns that the new ways of filing stories – for instance – WhatsApp -exposed them to leaks to other media houses. This is because

journalists in these groups, having ulterior motives could easily copy and send the information to rival media houses, without being noticed. One respondent opined:

Right now, for instance, people are filing stories on WhatsApp. We have people filing photos and videos on WhatsApp. This has speeded up the process of filing stories, however, it has also opened up that process to a lot of challenges. For instance, it is very easy for content to leak to external sources or competitors because we do not have control over who shares what is posted on the WhatsApp groups.

4.2.7.3 Fake News

There was also a concern by some respondents that several journalists were getting information from social media websites and publishing them without checking their veracity. This many a time, led to media houses publishing fake news merely because the information they obtained had gone viral. One respondent said:

Sometimes you find that some pieces of information go viral...many of them are unreliable pieces of propaganda. But many still find the believable. It has, therefore, become the duty of journalists to debunk that kind of story...It has become the duty of newsrooms to jump into such types of stories and clarifying them. Fact-checking has become a critical aspect of our journalism yet not all of us have recognized this to be the case.

4.2.7.4 Revenue

The respondents equally identified loss of revenue as another challenge that has been experienced by the newspaper as a result of the digital disruption. This, they added, has largely been attributed to reduced circulation and reduction in the number of advertisers, most of whom have gone online. One respondent said:

The main challenge has been revenues...money. Nation Media Group and Daily Nation for that matter are commercial enterprises. It runs and survives on how much it generates in terms of sales and mainly, through advertising. With the coming of digital, Daily Nation suffered most in terms of disruption... with the coming of the Internet, the blogs, the Apps, Social Media, and influencers for that matter, then they started taking a share of what Nation has been subsisting on.

4.2.7.5 *New Competition*

According to a large section of these respondents, digital disruption has introduced new competitors who are competing for the same clientele, notably advertisers, who now have an option of digital influencers. The loss of this dependable revenue stream is a major cause for alarm. One respondent said:

Daily Nation suffered most in terms of disruption. This was in terms of its advertising model such that the display Ads and the Classified that we used to run – we had a huge monopoly – like every other advertiser would come to DN to advertise. But then with the coming of the Internet, the blogs, the Apps, Social Media, and influencers for that matter, then they started taking a share of what Nation has been subsisting on”

4.3 How the Changes and Challenges have Impacted the Newspaper’s Operations

4.3.1 Newsroom Realignment

Digital disruption in the DN has prompted a realignment in the newsroom to cope with the technological shifts. A majority of the respondents acknowledged that digital disruption has forced the entire organization to relook at their journalistic approaches. The change is prompted by two notable factors; firstly, the need to retain a grip on the readership and secondly the need to be efficient. This has led to the establishment of a digital division, this is solely charged with producing and presenting news to the digital audience. The digital audience has concise demands, demanding a fast circulation of news items and continuous updates.

4.3.2 Newspapers no Longer Break Stories

Some respondents revealed that newspapers – the Daily Nation for this matter, no longer break news to its audiences. The Respondents expressed that for a long time the DN

was the leading source of news across the country. However, this has changed since people are now able to access news through different and numerous online platforms.

This has greatly affected DN's functional model which must now be reexamined to reclaim the lost readership. The effect of this is seen in declining Newspaper circulation. Additionally, the DN is currently playing second fiddle in the breaking news segment, since digital sources, mainly blogs, can produce and update information at a much faster rate meaning that the autonomy in breaking news no longer exists. This, therefore, presents Daily Nation Journalists with the headache of coming up with new and compelling story angles if they are to make any sales the next day. One respondent said:

About 10 years ago, the Daily Nation was in the business of breaking news. In the digital era, we are no longer in that business. It has been taken over by those running Twitter and Facebook accounts. And it's interesting because this for a long time was a newspaper mainstay. It was what the newspaper was founded on.

4.3.3 Innovative Ways of Telling Stories

The majority of the respondents were in agreement that the Daily Nation Newspaper has remained relevant during this digital disruption era, because of the way they practice their journalism. Their focus, the interviewees argue, has been on in-depth stories, investigations, and analysis. This practice, the respondents add, has made them appear different from the stories that are published online. One respondent said:

The fact that we no longer break news, the hope for newspapers is in in-depth journalism. Editors are also moving away from 'he said, she said' kind of reporting, events or docket kind of journalism to exclusives. They prefer the stories that are not docketed for the day, to more analytical pieces and exclusives.

4.3.4 Effect on Newspaper Sales

With audiences preferring to get their information online, the majority of respondents were of the view that this decision has affected and will continue to affect the sale of newspapers worldwide, the Daily Nation included. The net effect of this, according to some respondents is that media houses will, by the day, reduce the number of copies of publication they print and take to the streets for sale. With time, according to some interviewees, the publications will ‘fizzle out and die.’ One respondent said:

Look at the Daily Nation experience.... But the newspaper will be there. The physical paper we get in the streets will start fizzling out. The vendor you have in your estate will close shop in 10 to 15 years, but the paper will still be around but consumed digitally. The revenue model is going to be heavily reliant on subscriptions. This is what will sustain this business this is because the Ads will go hand in hand with the live websites. The newspaper will, therefore, be here. But it will not be as physical as we see it now.

4.3.5 Convergence

Traditionally, the role of journalists was well stipulated, there were also clear boundaries between different journalistic areas. However, the digital shift has brought the need to be efficient, this has been translated to getting independent journalists to do more and blur the classic boundaries. Today, DN journalists are required to gather news, record videos, take photographs, edit videos, etc. Distinct roles that were previously occupied by different personnel but now DN demands that people develop these capabilities and skills.

4.4 Strategies Employed by the Daily Nation to Respond to Digital Disruption.

The researcher collated five areas that NMG’s digital strategy is focusing on, based on the responses given by the respondents. They are as follows.

4.4.1 Content

The respondents from the interviews revealed to retain audiences, attract new ones and build loyalty, the Daily Nation recognized the need to provide them with the content that meets their needs. This, they argued, means in-depth reporting of exclusive stories and analysis, which the audiences can pay for, and not the ‘He said, she said’ type of stories.

The respondents were equally emphatic that if they were to win the trust of their audiences, they equally needed to get their facts right while doing their stories. This, the interviewees said, was as a result of the rampancy of disinformation and propaganda spread through a plethora of digital channels has heaped additional pressure on digital journalists to fact check and present credible facts for the expectant audience. One respondent said:

We still find cases where reporters go out and come and repeat word for word what the news sources have said, without adding any critical voice into the matter. Sometimes what news sources say is not entirely true. We therefore must report what happened and what was said but give the audience a sense of guidance whether what was said was factual, whether it is tenable. That skill is probably more valuable in our journalism today yet not all journalists recognize that.

Another added;

We want to build a content operation that delivers relevant and timely information to people in their spaces. What that means is that if we look at the current behavior, that content must work on mobile. It means that we must have sufficient content that meets the needs of these audiences. It is not just doing such stories for the sake of it, it means taking care of the audience's needs daily and create content that matches those needs. So it is not just information that you should know, but information that helps answer some questions you have in your unique space.

4.4.2 Staffing and Skill Development

The respondents highlighted staff management and skills development as a key strategy the Daily Nation has employed to survive the digital era. Most respondents acknowledged

that the reality of digital disruption is that every journalist must now gather commensurate knowledge. More so, the newsroom must have individuals who are well versed with the new technology. Staff retraining to build the capacity of the existent employees to deal with the demands of digitization and hiring of new staff well versed with the digital world accord DN an impetus to survive in light of shifting news and business models.

They pointed out that over the years, several quality journalists, who have helped the publication come up with in-depth exclusive stories and analysis and non-journalists, who, traditionally would not have had jobs in the newsrooms have been employed to help the publication in this digital era. Some of these non-traditional jobs include Audience Engagement Producers amongst others.

But they equally pointed out that the publication has witnessed over the years witnessed massive job lay-offs, with many journalists being sent home. Digital disruption, majority of the respondents added, had further necessitated the retraining, as journalists are required to be multi-skilled. Retraining staff, encouraging skill development on digital journalism.

One respondent said:

I have seen people who would not have been employed at the Nation, before 2012, now getting jobs. I am talking about people who do Web Analytics, there are more Video Editors. Before, it was just a simple unit for videos. But today we have video editors sitting in front of the news desk which was unheard of before. I have seen sort of an explosion of digital operations at the Nation.

Another opined:

Newspaper bosses are now concerned about getting quality journalists...I have seen top reporters hired from the competition. They are coming in to do long-form, more in-depth analysis for the paper because the fact that we no longer break news, the hope for newspapers is in the in-depth journalism. There's a lot of investment to ensure we have quality journalists.

Another added:

One of the challenges was the pirated newspaper. People have been sharing the PDFs of the Daily Nation. That happened for like a year or so, but Nation has managed to end that. It is through the hiring of the best of the minds from the competition and within the market that they were able to find the software to lock the pirates off this.

Another respondent added:

We have several people who have either gone back to school. We have several others who have left the country. There's in-house training – we have had experts flying in from Europe, the US and other areas to train people. There's a whole big plan to ensure those who want to continue working for the Nation has a feel of how digital works because that is where we are going as a company.

4.4.3 Technology

Another strategy that the Daily Nation has been involved in as revealed by the respondents includes revamping the digital infrastructure to take digital journalism to the world. This, the respondents said, includes investing heavily in building websites and apps that are responsive to gadgets extensively utilized by the majority of the audience. NMG, the respondents said, further aims to convert all content into digital content. Following years of pen and paper journalism, the DN now recognizes the need to present content in a digital format. A host of its readers now own digital devices such as smartphones and laptops.

In order not to lose its appeal to this section of readers the DN is working on publishing and continuously updating news items online. One respondent said:

We have therefore had to shift a lot and put resources where developing Apps, Mobile-friendly websites. We have also to train and spend more to get people to do the digital bit where the consumer has shifted.

Another added:

So when we talk of the consumer shift from print, TV, and radio to a digital platform, we have a strategy on how we want to clean that space

called digital in terms of how do we put our journalism on websites, on Apps, and how can they be consumed on small screens like mobile and how best they can be consumed on large screens like desktops, and the medium screens like iPads.”

Another respondent said:

There’s also a strategy to push the E-paper, and hiring the best minds in the market to ensure that in that space, Nation is also playing at that highest level.”

4.4.4 Augmenting Revenue Sources

All the respondents agreed that the Daily Nation has witnessed a decline in circulation figures and revenue from Ads. This, they said, necessitated a rethink on how best to make more money to complement what is already being done.

The respondents mentioned diversification into music production (through Lit 360) and cookery websites (Pishi), partnerships between the Daily Nation and other sponsoring organizations, Monetization of content, which includes coming up with premium content that can be sold as some of the strategies already being implemented to augment the revenue sources. One respondent said:

On the revenue side, the Nation wants to go the subscription way. We are in the process of developing premium content that can be sold. But our strategy is very different from the Western model, in which subscribers use credit cards to pay. But are exploring a method called ‘spot sell’ where you pay for your content is very easy ways, including mobile money.

Another respondent said:

Now, the strategy that we are working on that has not been fully developed is selling content online – monetizing the content. People have been coming to websites and consuming that content free of charge. There are special reports – investigative stories, things that are exclusive to us that we think can monetize. We are working on a digital subscription model for mobile and desktop.

Another respondent opined:

We have so many events. If you look at our calendar – we have several events that have been planned to generate revenue. Previously these could be supplements that could not generate much. So you see what we are doing is different.

The respondent added:

We now have a music production house which is run by the Nation – It is called Lit 360, where musicians, especially the new ones, are signed by the Nation, just like Ogopa Deejays or Wasafi Records by Diamond. We do every bit, like organizing for their events, sell their music and partnership on revenue sharing is there. So Nation has diversified from just a media-oriented media house to various arms – for instance, when you look at the cooking arm – Pishi – they are not concerned about publishing news, it's about recipes, organizing cooking epos and what not. All this is aimed at shoring up revenues for the company.

Another added:

Newspaper publication is a business; we have always been told that from the time we joined the company. And so one of the things we are doing is that to attract some money on the online content, we either pitch it to advertisers or work in concert with other institutions to publish content that is paid for. So far we do not know how that has picked up but it is a strategy that they have talked about very deeply engaging with the outsider partners.

Another respondent said:

The main pillar of the group digital strategy defines our journey into paid content. We are investing heavily. Not just in the platforms but in the newsroom culture to ensure we create an ecosystem that puts out content that can be monetized. So it is not just doing journalism in the digital space. We want to do sustainable journalism and generate some revenue to sustain the cost of getting that content.

4.4.5 Audience Engagement

All respondents acknowledged that even the internal changes are very much driven by the need for survival, digital disruption has prompted an unprecedented focus on the news consumer. Every change under digital disruption is geared towards meeting the audience's

desire for news and most notably delivery of news in the most convenient manner and space.

The respondents further said the DN is now more ‘consumer-centric’ as evidenced by the introduction of a new position, the Audience engagement producer, the new position is a marker of the renewed need to produce and present only that which the consumer is interested in and most importantly in the format the audience desires.

The respondents stressed the need for the publication to regularly consulting audiences to gauge their demands to tailor-make their products according to their preferences by creating content that takes care of their needs. One respondent said:

(We need to have our) eyes on the ground, to engage constantly with audiences, to monitor their consumption practices, to have someone checking the website every time to check who is consuming our content from where and how long they have been doing so, and to just be dynamic in the way we approach digital.

Another respondent:

Significant parts of the audience are unable to distinguish between credible digital channels that deliver reliable journalism to sources of disinformation so that, especially for the young ones...We want to, therefore, build a content operation that delivers relevant and timely information to people in their spaces. What that means is that if we look at the current behavior, that content must work on mobile. It means that we must have sufficient content that meets the needs of these audiences. It is not just doing such stories for the sake of it, it means taking care of the audience's needs daily and create content that matches those needs.

Another added:

We know that such a question will keep changing. So this demands that we keep ways of learning and tracking those shifts in audience needs. The fact is because audience needs are always shifting, we cannot do a one size fits all approach. It means we will have to keep innovating and experimenting with new things, many of which will not end up working. The approach is therefore to start some of these ideas small, the ones that work, we scale up, and the ones that don't we discard.

4.5 The Impact of the Survival and Growth Strategies

The respondents had mixed feelings about how effective the survival strategies put in place by the Daily Nation have been. While some were optimistic, hailing the strategies as having produced to produce some results, others were pessimistic, noting that despite massive investments and the painstaking effort to align with the strategy, not much has been achieved. They enumerated their reasons as follows;

4.5.1 Content

The respondents agreed that presently, the Daily Nation has not been able to monetize revenue for the digital content currently available to the audience. A section of them said sponsored content had shown actual potential for monetization but the revenue is limited. The business is seasonal and thence cannot be relied upon wholly. One interviewee said:

I can say they have had seasonal benefits. For example, the issue of sponsored content. It can work but you know it mainly depends on events... So it doesn't come every day. Because there's competition from other cheaper platforms, it means that you either offer low rates or lose out. It is not a very stable source of revenue.

Another added:

The strategy that we are working on that has not been fully developed is selling content online – monetizing the content. People have been coming to websites and consuming that content free of charge. There are special reports – investigative stories, things that are exclusive to us that we think can monetize. We are working on a digital subscription model for mobile and desktop.

There, however, were respondents who noted that the content flow at the Daily Nation had improved tremendously, with more exclusive and in-depth stories being filed

by journalists. The digital-first strategy was equally working, with reporters regularly filing for the different platforms.

In terms of convergence, the respondents equally raised concerns that this has been slow, even though they noted that there was some progress at the department level, it is not evident at the organizational level.

For instance, they pointed out that the adoption of digital skills by TV personnel is slow. They are still operating independently, in certain departments, which is against the idea of convergence. The respondents attributed this to a poorly communicated strategy and whose finer details are still at the executive level. One respondent said:

What has, however, not worked out so well was getting TV people to do newspaper and vice versa. Looking back, we realize we may have been too ambitious because you look at these two platforms and you realize the skill set is very different. Even the way we work is very different. We may have to relook...do we want a TV journalist reporter to write an in-depth piece for the newspaper and the newspaper guy to go shooting videos for TV. They can do it using the mobile phone for the videos for social and others but TV standards are way ahead. It requires HD footage and stuff like that.

4.5.2 Technology

A section of the respondents observed that the Daily Nation's migration to digital spaces and huge investments in digital spaces was done too fast. The feeling among the majority of the respondents was that DN could have instead made greater effort to make Newspaper work, a related view was that there ought to have been a balanced investment between legacy media and digital media, especially because a bulk of revenue is still coming from legacy media. One respondent said:

Some of the key lessons I have learned are that readers are still interested in quality journalism and also it is not only advisable to sort of kill what is already profitable, starve it off and invest in a new operation and

overlooking the old platform. I've learned that it is possible to just ensure that we focus on both at the same time.

However, others argued that some progress had been noted, pointing out that the website – both mobile and the computer has been active and being updated regularly, thus attracting more audiences. Added another respondent:

Nation launched the breaking news alert system, which is an SMS system where subscribers pay a certain fee to get breaking news alerts. With time the website became more and more active, reporters were routinely advised to be filing breaking stories for the online team and the website was being updated from time to time. So the regular updates on the website increased, and the newsroom also had a dedicated team that was involved in working on the stories that go on the website.

4.5.3 Staffing and Skills Development

The respondents were in agreement that said there has been an improvement in the quality of stories that currently being told by Daily Nation journalists. This, they say, is because of the management's deliberate efforts to hire experienced journalists while at the same time, offering extensive training to the others:

Newspaper bosses are now concerned about getting quality journalists... I have seen top reporters hired from the competition. They are coming in to do long-form, more in-depth analysis for the paper because the fact that we no longer break news, the hope for newspapers is in the in-depth journalism. There's a lot of investment to ensure we have quality journalists.

4.5.4 Augmenting Revenue Sources

The respondents gave mixed views on the success or otherwise of this strategy. According to some respondents', the returns presently being generated from the digital investments are not only low but also irregular.

Given the number of resources that the DN has expended on facilitating digitization, there is little to show in terms of the organization's ability to produce digital content and

generate sustainable revenue from it. According to the respondents, up to date, the DN has not been able to generate any meaningful revenue from its digital wing.

On the content front, the respondents, as mentioned above, agreed on the need to monetize it to bring in more money to the publication. But they pointed out that there were equally other successful ventures that the publication had been involved in to bring in revenue – like partnerships, sponsored content amongst others.

4.5.5 Audiences

One of the successes a section of the respondents noted was the fact that the Daily Nation had been able to woo audiences to read its website. A respondent said:

There have been successes in terms of wooing audiences...When the Daily Nation aggregates its audiences let's say for a year, it does not just look at the newspaper circulation, it looks at the guys who buy the hard copy and those who subscribe to the digital formats of the newspaper. At the same time, the guys who visit our website, we are also looking at how they engage with our content. There has been some exponential growth aided by digital technology.

4.5.6 Further Improve Newspaper

The feeling among the majority of the interviewees was that DN could have instead made greater effort to make Newspaper work, a related view was that there ought to have been a balanced investment between legacy media and digital media, especially because a bulk of revenue is still coming from legacy media.

Notably, respondents admitted that despite the doom and gloom surrounding the Newspaper, it will continue being a major source of news due to its present reputation of providing actual and verifiable content. Based on this view, a majority of the respondents believed that investment in digitization should not be done at the expense of the current

model which is still DN's cash cow. Resultantly, the present focus should be on developing or enabling a hybrid system that accommodates the Newspaper and the digital means of news production and distribution. On respondent said:

Every market is also unique such that the successes of the New York Times cannot be cut and paste here. It will backfire. This has been the notion that because NYT has made money, through subscriptions, then all media houses around the world should just invest in premium content and sell. Some of the markets we are serving as the third world, Kenya being one of them, we realize that maybe we rushed to fast to assume that the advertising model was broken already.

4.6 Summary

The current chapter reviewed the findings of the research. In-depth interviews, was the preferred method of data collection. The approach accorded the researcher an opportunity to develop a wholesome view of where NMG stands in its bid to weather the digital storm, which threatens the prominence of the Daily Nation. The findings are aligned with the emerging themes as gathered from the extensive interviews, that enlisted a wide range of individuals presently working for the DN either as administrators, journalists, editors, and commercial agents.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the findings and offers a succinct view of the Daily Nation's bid to survive during this turbulent time, turbulence brought about by a digital wave.

5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

The digital wave, or as the study refers to it, digital disruption, is manifest in Kenya. Statistics, supplied by the CA, show that there are currently about 42.2 million active internet/data subscribers. More so, internet coverage has expanded reaching 112 percent, and it's growing (CA, 2019).

From these statistics, it is evident that Kenya is formally part of the digital revolution. The citizenry has taken up commensurate trends that place traditional business models in jeopardy. Consequently, every business, specifically those involved in the print industry have to revisit their manner of doing business.

The Daily Nation Newspaper, which has dominated the newspaper industry is now at crossroads. The newspaper stares at the possibility of obsolescence, according to interviewees, as the digital disruption invalidates the traditional journalism and business model.

On the other hand, a hurried shift to digital platforms, although commensurate with the global trend, risks disorienting a significant population that still favors ‘the old fashioned’ way of accessing news.

As the research revealed, the newspaper circulation will decline, and there are already signs. However, the popularity of newspapers as a credible source of information will persist, in light of a plethora of blogs as well as the prominence of social media.

Banning and Sweetser (2017) in their research found out that to varying degrees, online news sources are seen as less credible than the traditional media. Further, their research also revealed that a rising number of media organizations presently have an online presence or Internet news, and this has added to a degree of credibility.

Whereas it is not always possible to believe what one reads on the Internet, the research indicated that branding of online content with a trusted source name significantly increases the credibility of the published news (Banning & Sweetser, 2017). Consequently, Daily Nation has seized the goodwill gathered over the years, as a credible news provider, to attempt to build credible Internet news.

Typical of the New York Times and the Washington Post strategies, the Daily Nation has equally invested in having a workforce with skills fit for the digital arena. To gain traction in the Internet news, Daily Nation has offered training for journalists, employed a new crop of journalists and continues to converge the newsroom.

These efforts are geared towards having in place a multi-skilled workforce. Traditionally, Daily Nation had dedicated reporters and editors, all of whom fitted into the class of traditional journalists, the pen and paper journalists. However, the introduction of

the online news requires modern journalists to be able to carry out several tasks, such as video editing, news publishing and so on.

Nygren (2014) refers to this demand as ‘multiskilling’. He further elaborates that this is a result of “cross-platform production, deadlines 24/7 and flexible news workers going in and out of production and growing interactivity with the audience” (p.76).

This has given rise to what is separately defined as ‘versatile journalism’, in the novel age of converging media, journalists have to keep up with the trends and build their versatility as their jobs become rationalized and re-designated.

Nation Media Group, the parent company of the Daily Nation, has earnestly started the process of rationalization and re-designation, to nurture flexible journalistic practices that emerge in television and newspaper production which in collaboration with online journalism have brought about a weighty effect on the Daily Nation journalist, and in extension every modern journalist.

Additionally, the research also illustrated that Daily Nation journalists are now required to have business skills. The news environment has significantly changed and journalists are now called to do more than gather and report the news.

The research in the Daily Nation indicated that journalists are now expected to develop business acumen. This is because they are required to pitch to businesses to establish partnerships. Due to a decline in newspaper circulation, the number of classifieds and advertisements has also reduced.

More so, the monopoly enjoyed by newspapers, owing to their extensive geographical reach, has been overcome by the Internet (Wilding, Fray, Molitorisz & McKewon, 2018). Businesses now have numerous platforms to advertise, including the use of social media influencers. This research revealed that businesses are heavily inclined to online advertisements as they can determine aspects such as reach and distribution of clients.

The situation fits perfectly under the dictates of the Disruption Innovation Theory. The theory explains a situation where smaller companies take on the more established ones, head-on. Today, the Daily Nation faces unparalleled competition from social media influencers and social media entities, in the business of news generation and advertisement (Christensen, Raynor & McDonald, 2015).

Daily Nation now, more than ever, faces the need to determine a progressive way of managing this level of competition. The current research viewed the best option as having in place a concrete digital strategy.

Indeed, the Daily Nation has a digital strategy that is currently shaping their movement towards a digitized world. The strategy is based on five tenets; a review of the manner Daily Nation reports and presents news, to develop in-depth and quality news, retraining, and hiring of multiskilled journalists, developing a web-centric strategy, where all news is first published online, augmenting revenue sources and encouraging continuous investment in digital knowledge and platforms to improve consumer experience.

The scale of investment in the aforementioned areas has been expected to yield results, financially. However, the research showed that the scale of investment has not been

matched by revenue. The Daily Nation has not been able to fully monetize its online news business. This remains very much a work in progress.

Is this alarming for the Daily Nation, which is painstakingly working towards developing a sustainable revenue source given the declining newspaper circulation? Grabowicz (2014) argues not necessarily. Grabowicz (2014) writing on the transition to digital journalism, made the following observation, which captures the current reality in the Daily Nation, that the influx of people consuming news online presents the organization with a dilemma on revenue allocation to build their readership.

On one hand, there is an irrefutable need to hold on to their existing, and often aging print or broadcast audiences. Thenceforth, in preliminary stages, online revenues for a majority of news media are a small fraction of the income from traditional print or broadcast.

To contextualize this, Grabowicz (2014) reported that in the first years of operation, typically 15 percent or less of overall revenue, came from the online operation. Arguably, Daily Nation does not need to panic from negligible earnings from their online investment, it takes time.

Notwithstanding, the Daily Nation must recognize the clear trend, where people, especially the young, are turning to the Internet for their news needs underlining the need to have in place an effective digital strategy.

Considering the findings, the Daily Nation's strategy was unclear or it meant different things to different journalists and the newsroom hierarchy. The publication has

failed to properly communicate its strategy. This could partly explain the lack of concrete gains from the organization's management.

Kramp and Loosen (2017) writing on strategy identified that a strategy, in this case, a digital strategy, is so critical in this time and age, as it is part of changing a news industry struggling with disrupted business models and declining audiences.

A digital strategy allows a media house or will enable the Daily Nation, to rediscover and reengage audiences through digital media channels (Kramp & Loosen, 2018). Such a strategy needs to follow a linear process and take place simultaneously within the newsrooms and across all individual journalists, this is not happening in Nation Media Group and the Daily Nation.

There is no linearity, and this is extensive because the senior management has not openly communicated the strategy to everyone and even to those in the know, the knowledge on what are the exact priority areas is disjointed.

Seuri (2016) however, explains that a formulating a sound digital strategy does not involve every individual in the newsroom, this would be a disaster. Nonetheless, the final version should be communicated to enlist the support of everyone in the organization and to harness support across the board.

This is because newsroom managers, majorly the various section editors and desk heads, play a crucial role in strategy implementation (Kramp & Loosen, 2018). It is in this regard that the Daily Nation is failing. The repercussion is a prolonged period of having the strategy fully operational in the organization and could also lead to disorientation across the newsroom staff.

The Media Economics Theory is concerned with resource allocation in the media industry, ideally, the goal is to allocate resources to create information and entertainment content to meet the needs of audiences, advertisers and valid social institutions (Albarran, Chan-Olmsted & Wirth, 2006).

Daily Nation's allocation of resources can be questioned, given the astronomical resources dedicated to building a fully-fledged digital week, capable of meeting the needs of all stakeholders, there is no commensurate growth in the outcome, the digital strategy appears disjointed, digital platforms are not yet fully optimized and convergence is still to fully happen.

The view is that although the Daily Nation faces a genuine threat, the Nation Media Group is yet to fully implement its digital strategy that will guarantee steady revenue to supplement lost revenue from a slowed newspaper readership. The Daily Nation is still caught in the transition stage, it still faces a conundrum as the traditional media, which the Daily Nation seeks to earnestly replace is still the paper's cash cow.

5.3 The Future of Journalism

Radical shifts in journalism are changing virtually every aspect of the gathering, reporting, and reception of news. This, perhaps, explains why media houses, struggling under the era of digital transformation, are under intense pressure to reinvent themselves to remain relevant and survive disruption.

Franklin (2016) says this struggle, has, however, precipitated a massive change in the way media organizations are managed. This change, he says, does not, however, mean

that opportunities for quality journalism have disappeared. Only that the opportunities are now different and with that, new ways are required to provide it.

But just what is the future of journalism? Franklin argues that even though it is too early to foresee this, some prominent tendencies are perceptible. He says there will be a significant change in structures and competition surrounding news provision, growth in the number of forms of news and information providers and that the definition of journalism and journalists will be based on practices not employment.

A report by the Aspen Institute (2017) has put it more succinctly – that the digital revolution has and will create a fertile field for more media start-ups looking to compete with legacy newsrooms.

Franklin (2016) agrees. He says there will be space for more commercial and commercial new enterprises, but it is likely that a few large generals, commercial news providers – either in print, broadcast, or digital-only platforms, will dominate provisions in most countries in the digital form.

“As these changes occur, some players will reduce the frequency of their print publications, cutting out the unprofitable days...they will switch the focus of their daily operations to digital platforms.” He argues that more independent, entrepreneurial journalists and production cooperatives will emerge to provide specialized coverage, localized news, and information.”

“Some of these enterprises will find ways to operate as for-profit entities with funding from syndication, paying audiences and advertising. The others will operate non-

profit enterprises and obtain funds from a multitude of sources including foundations, community organisations amongst others.”

5.4 Conclusion

This study confirms the long-standing hypothesis that digital is the way to go for newspapers, not only in Kenya but around the world as well if they are to survive the disruption era. Even though newspapers will not die, as many expect that in the near future, what will change is the way they are consumed.

The physical paper we get on the streets, will at some point, fizzle out. This means job losses for most of the people depending on that production chain like vendors, those responsible for printing it, drivers ferrying them to the various markets amongst others. But as this happens, the physical paper will have taken a different form – online.

This perhaps explains why the Daily Nation found it necessary to have an online edition as well as an E-Paper, which is a direct replica of the physical paper, but its access only limited to online. Newspaper publishers, therefore, have no choice but to adopt a format that is suited to the technology of the day.

Newspapers will also have to critically relook at its revenue streams, given that both circulation and advertising numbers are dwindling and continue to plummet by the day. Even though a lot is being done to remedy the situation, for instance, by engaging in other money-minting measures like partnerships, engaging in events, this is not enough. A lot more needs to be done, starting with encouraging audiences to subscribe.

This, however, cannot be done with poor quality content. Stories published by the Daily Nation must be exclusive, in-depth, must tell the reader something new and not simply telling audiences what they already know from social media.

This is where day two reporting must come in. Journalists at the publication must embrace the importance of telling a story already out there differently. Exploring angles that have not been touched. This, however, cannot be achieved without proper and adequate training. This is what will sustain the business.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been derived from findings and conclusions:

- i. The Daily Nation needs to further scale up the publication of more exclusive content. This, however, should not be a preserve of the hardcopy newspaper alone but in its digital spaces as well. Exclusive stories can come in the form of features or even news that no other competing publication has. This tends to differentiate the Daily Nation and its competition and will go a long way in improving circulation figures and increase traffic to the digital spaces as consumers will always want to associate with such publications.
- ii. The Newspaper should equally, be constantly exploring new ways of telling its stories to its audiences. Apart from what the audiences have been used to – pictures, video's and texts, the publication, in its website should explore new formats like Podcasts, Live Chats, Maps, interactive storytelling tools like Augmented Reality amongst others.

With audiences spending most of their time on media websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others, media houses must critically think of how to package their information to suit the needs of these individuals. These individuals like stories they can interact with – when to read a text when to look at photos, when to watch a video, when to listen to sound and so on.

- iii. Invest more in improving the technology they use to deliver information to its audiences - that will improve user experience. It should be noted that as technology, being dynamic, evolves, it has a corresponding impact on how media houses tell stories.

With more and more people using smartphones, where stories can be watched and read on-demand, media houses should not take their eyes off this channel. They should constantly be looking for ways of delivering their content through this channel, by developing user-friendly Applications (Apps) that will facilitate this. Secondly, with immersive storytelling gaining popularity in other parts of the world, the Daily Nation should also experiment with this. This is where Augmented Reality comes in. The publication should invest in equipment that will deliver this to their audiences.

- iv. Invest more in hiring experienced journalists and empowering the existing staff with digital storytelling skills that will enable them to adapt to the digital era. Having experienced journalists in newsrooms has its advantages. One is efficiency. They can be relied upon to get and tell exclusive stories with ease because they have, during their many years in the trade, interacted and made friends with numerous news sources amongst others. The Daily Nation should equally invest in hiring

individuals with other equally important skills required in the newsrooms like audience engagement, design, fact-checkers and others.

The publication should equally invest more in training its staff. The reality of digital disruption is that every journalist must now gather commensurate knowledge. More so, the newsroom must have individuals who are well versed with the new technology. The publication should, therefore, build the capacity of the existent employees to deal with the demands of digitization.

- v. To improve its revenue streams, it is evident that the newspaper has already set in motion measures to improve this. These include events, partnerships, diversification into other none core businesses like music studio - 'Lit 360', cookery channel 'Pishi' amongst others. But it hasn't rolled out other equally important revenue streams like subscriptions. The New York Times and The Washington Post, have, for instance, improved their revenue tremendously through this venture. Even though there's still debate about whether this will work out in the developing world like Kenya, I think it's worth a try.

5.6 Areas for Future Research

Faced with dwindling revenue sources, media houses are these days diversifying to areas that are considered none core. The Nation Media Group has, for instance, ventured into music production and established a record label called Lit 360, whose main responsibility include signing new musicians, organizing their events as well as selling their music. Businesswise, this sounds a great idea as the venture will bring in more revenue to the company but is this right ethically especially when such organizations are faced with scandals. How have media houses navigated this quagmire? What lessons have they learned

in the process that may influence future relationships and others? This is an area future researchers should explore.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Interview Guide

- i. What do you understand by the term digital disruption?
- ii. What changes and challenges have been posed on the Daily Nation by the digital disruption?
- iii. What strategies has the Daily Nation employed to guarantee its future in the era of digital disruption?
- iv. How effective have the survival and growth strategies adopted by the Daily Nation been?

What key lessons have been learned from the entire process
- v. What, in your opinion, is the future of newspapers in this constantly changing digital environment?

Appendix B Ethics Review Committee Approval



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Media and Communications

REF: AKU-GSMC/ERC/2019/004

Date: October 26, 2019.

Dear Dave Opiyo (Student No. 535162)

**RE: NEWSPAPERS QUEST FOR SURVIVAL IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL DISRUPTION: A
CASE OF THE DAILY NATION NEWSPAPER**

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 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020 and your application's approval number is AKU-GSMC/ERC/2019/004.

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

Dr Nancy Booker
Director- Academic Affairs
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

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Appendix C Introductory Letter



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Media and Communications

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

October 26, 2019

Dear Sir/Madam.

OPIYO DAVE OLUOCH (STUDENT NO. 535162)

Dave Opiyo 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. Opiyo's topic is "Newspapers quest for survival in the Era of Digital Disruption: A Case Study of the Daily Nation Newspaper."

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

Dr. Nancy Booker
Director – Academic Affairs

Appendix D Nacosti Research Licence

Republic of Kenya
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 125304

RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Mr.. Dave Opiyo of Aga Khan University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: **Newspapers quest for survival in the Era of Digital Disruption: A Case Study of the Daily Nation newspapers for the period ending : 12/December/2020.**

License No: NACOSTI/P/19/2796

125304
Applicant Identification Number

Director, General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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