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**THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY**

Graduate School of Media and Communications

**OPPORTUNITIES DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES PRESENT FOR WOMEN IN  
MEDIA: MULTI-CASE STUDY OF NEWSROOMS IN KENYA**

By

**FAITH P. ONEYA**  
**535143**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts 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 fulfilment 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  
**FAITH ONEYA-535143**, found it satisfactory and recommended that it be accepted.

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## DECLARATION

I, **FAITH ONEYA-535143**, declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. The editorial assistance provided to me has in no way added to the substance of my thesis, which is the product of my research endeavours.

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Signature

30/01/2020

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Date

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, the late Florence Agutu Owuor.  
What you said would be has become. *Amenitendea.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications (AKU-GSMC) abounds with wonderful and considerate people and this thesis would not have been possible without them. I am indebted to my supervisors Dr. Nancy Booker and Dr. Joseph Nyanoti whose rigor, dedication and passion challenged me to do and be more during this academic journey. Dr. Sam Kamau provided critical advice at the proposal stage of this project and helped shaped my thoughts; for that, I am grateful. I am also thankful to AKU-GSMC staff members Hesbon Owila, Kimweli Wambua and Henry Kibira who went beyond the call of duty to support me in my academic endeavours. The Vice Provost and Interim Dean Dr. Alex Awiti provided immeasurable advice and support throughout this journey. My sincere gratitude as well to the librarians Augustine Gitonga and George Mwangi. A special thank you to my treasured friends Fridah Miriti, Vincent Ng'ethe, Rachel Ombaka, Carlos Mureithi, Cicily Chomba who provided editing and moral support. To my colleagues David Aduda and Caroline Njung'e, thank you for your encouragement and support. To my sister Cynthia Owuor, thank you for constantly cheering me on. I thank my lovely daughter, Imora Omolo, who endured long absences by her mother. To my friends The Raiders, this is for us. Finally, all this would not have been possible without the cooperation of the research participants who sacrificed their time to share invaluable insights.

## ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of the opportunities digital technologies present for women in media. Digital technologies have been praised for providing opportunities to journalism as a whole but little is known regarding those offered to women in newsrooms. The objectives of this study were to: (a) determine new ways women are participating in journalism because of digitisation, (b) establish the new forms of journalism where women have thrived and (c) explore the structures that support women working with digital technologies in the newsroom. The theory that guided the study was Technological Determinism. It employed the phenomenological research tradition. The researcher conducted 12 in-depth interviews with purposefully sampled research participants from five media houses in Kenya: Nation Media Group, Standard Group, Mediamax, Royal Media Services, and Radio Africa Group. Data were analysed thematically and presented in a narrative format. The study did not find an association between digital technologies and women's rise in the media. The results suggest that digital technologies have created substantial opportunities for women in the newsroom as sources, gatherers and decision-makers but the bulk of these lie outside the newsroom where women have used these digital technologies to reinvent and rebrand themselves as content creators, content aggregators and influencers and this is where they have thrived. The results also showed that the research participants found the current structures in digital departments inadequate and in some cases, non-existent. The study concluded that digital technologies offer great potential and opportunities for women in newsrooms but there are barriers, including structures in the newsroom, that need to be addressed for these women to fully benefit. Such structures include gender-sensitive workplace policies, flexi-time, mentorship and flexi-assignments. The study recommends for appropriate gender-sensitive policies, training and mentorship should be implemented by media houses to help them tap fully into the benefits of digital technologies for women.



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AFP:</b>	Agence France-Presse
<b>AKU-GSMC:</b>	Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications
<b>ASNE:</b>	American Society of News Editors
<b>AU:</b>	African Union
<b>AWCS:</b>	African Woman and Child Services
<b>AWMC:</b>	American Women’s Media Center
<b>BBC:</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>ICFJ:</b>	International Center for Journalists
<b>KEG:</b>	Kenya Editors’ Guild
<b>MCK:</b>	Media Council of Kenya
<b>PwC:</b>	PricewaterhouseCoopers

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

This section introduces the background to the problem area and highlights the objectives of the study. It also outlines the statement of the problem, the purpose, objectives, research questions, rationale, significance, scope and limitations of the study.

#### 1.2 Background to the Study

One of the most contested issues in feminist media research is women's presence in the media and how they influence journalism (Zuiderveld, 2011). As the media plays important roles in society, including reporting on events and mobilising citizens and it can be an essential factor in promoting gender equality within the newsroom. One of these ways can be through promotion of women and improving their terms of employment. Beyond the newsroom, gender equality can be addressed by avoiding stereotypes in reporting about women (Kangas, Huma & Fraser, 2012; Llanos & Nina, 2011).

Bias against women manifests itself in various forms across different cultures in Africa and the rest of the world; it also shows up in their pay, professions, employment, positions and access to training (Njoku, Whyte & Vincent, 2018). In journalism, women have historically been marginalised not only in their representation as sources, subjects and news gatherers, but also in media leadership positions and the types of assignments they are given (Media Council of Kenya [MCK], 2015). A report by African Woman &

Child Services (AWCS) in 2009 indicated that in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, 33% of the journalists in newsrooms were female while 67% were male (MCK, 2015). By 2011, men still outnumbered women at a ratio of 2:1 in areas such as governance, production, design and middle-level management but women seem to have made inroads into senior and top-level management positions (International Women's Media Foundation [IWMF], 2010) from a global perspective. However, the same can't be said for Sub-Saharan Africa. The International Center for Journalists [ICFJ] (2019) reports that by 2019, these numbers had not improved much in as women remained at 34% while male journalists were at 66%. The report further indicates that the number of women in newsroom leadership positions (management and editorial) remain low in Sub-Saharan Africa but they have improved in newsrooms globally: women in countries like Russia, North America, Europe, and Latin America are playing a stronger role in the digital revolution age than before.

However, there are recent signs that indicate goodwill from media houses in Kenya as they are making noteworthy efforts to seal the gender gap at editorial and newsgathering levels in newsrooms. Nation Media Group appointed two women in the executive editor and newspaper editor positions in January 2019 (Nation Reporter, 2019) and in October 2018, the Standard Group launched the Standard Group Women Network in a mission to take a leading role in pushing for gender parity by helping address the challenges women face in the workplace (Eve Woman, 2018).

In recent years, media houses have changed the way they operate because of digital technologies and recruitment processes. Digital technologies are disruptive in nature and this has affected how journalists rise to the top of their professions (MCK, 2016; Heckman, 2013). Women seem to have advanced to decision-making roles in



moderate degrees but Steiner (2017) is not so optimistic. She argues that the glass ceiling and double standards in gender continue to stymie the promotion of women to key decision-making and governance positions in print and broadcast news organisations. She posits that even in the online context, women are far from enjoying equity. Scholars like Hargittai and Walejko (2008) agree that there have been as many obstructing factors in traditional media as there are in online media. A study by the European Commission (2018) held that patriarchal ideas and structures would be strengthened and preserved if women were left out of the digital revolution. Digital revolution, it added, will determine how people live and work in future and women participating in this transformation will bring social change.

Management of media houses has persistently been perceived to be a masculine affair (Zuiderveld, 2011). This has meant that gender imbalance and stereotypical portrayal of women in the media have remained rooted as challenges facing media houses. The imbalance, especially in positions of leadership and newsroom management, has been attributed to working conditions that favour men. An example is long working hours that put women, who are primary caregivers in their families, in precarious positions in relation to their careers. Breastfeeding mothers are also disadvantaged because working hours are not flexible and their privacy at the workplace is not guaranteed (MCK, 2015).

Digitisation of media has however had a substantial impact on journalism and the way media houses conduct their business: they have had no choice but to embrace digitisation as a means of survival in a business setting that is extremely competitive (MCK, 2016). To remain profitable, traditional media houses have had to change media production, dissemination, reception and consumption. This includes the fact that

journalists now deploy mobile and digital technologies in their day to day work; like reporting from the field (or wherever they are) using their mobile phones or laptops and working remotely. Today, digital and mobile technologies are integral parts of many media operations in Kenya (MCK, 2016; Nyabuga & Booker, 2013). Newsrooms in Kenya, such as Nation Media Group and Standard Group, have dedicated digital departments (Mwongela, 2015). Additionally, while this study looked at digital platforms situated in hybrid newsrooms, digitisation of newsrooms inadvertently introduces the concept of flexibility and speed in the work environment, which could be deemed advantageous to women. Heckman (2013) said that purely digital media platforms don't have conventional hierarchies compared to traditional newsrooms; so for women and minorities, they offer not only flexibility but also mobility. Similarly, a 2016 study by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) showed that women made up nearly 50 per cent of online-only news organisation employees (York, 2017) and this nature of digital media could potentially provide opportunities for women in newsrooms in how they work and how they rise to the top of their professions.

Overall, Steiner (2017) argues that newsrooms have not only been transformed but they have also been challenged by new economic constrictions, technologies, audiences, norms of professionalism, the women's movement and the marked visibility of women themselves. Disruption has certainly created new roles and opportunities in the newsroom. Further, the economic disruptions also have a bearing on leadership in the newsroom. This study investigated the opportunities presented by digital technologies for women in Kenyan newsrooms.

### 1.2.1 Global Overview

The journalism glass ceiling is a global phenomenon (Chambers, Steiner & Fleming, 2004) and reputable media organisations have been adversely mentioned in the past as having a role in propagating gender imbalance in leadership positions and pay. Although the United Kingdom passed a Gender Bill in 1970, a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report released in 1973 indicated that the working environment in the organisation was hostile towards women because not only were they considered unfit to read news they also expressed fear that they would introduce emotion in their reporting (Franks, 2013). In 2018, the BBC was caught in the eye of a storm again when the House of Commons launched an inquiry into a controversy surrounding a gender pay gap at the organisation. The BBC was found to be in breach of the Equality Act 2010 (House of Commons, 2018). The inquiry into the pay gap was prompted by the BBC China Editor's public accusation of "secretive and illegal pay culture" that systematically discriminated against women (House of Commons, 2018, p.4).

York (2017) holds that as attrition rates for women in journalism continue to go up, women who will have the opportunity to fill leadership roles will continue to be fewer. The author attributes this to the cycle of men hiring men as reported by Anna Griffin in her September 2014 *Nieman Reports* article titled "*Where are the Women?*" where it was noted that since men traditionally hold editorial positions, they will keep promoting fellow men.

Heckman (2013) indicates that one of her interview subjects revealed that when digital media was penetrating newsrooms in 1999, she took up a web-focused job because it did not have glass ceilings. Further, men did not fight her for it because they did not aspire to do such a job. The digital space, as indicated, allows for more flexibility

and mobility, and these have been advantageous to women's growth in the newsroom globally.

### 1.2.2 Regional Overview: Africa

In many African countries, women outnumber men by more than half. However, this does not reflect in how they are presented in the media. This phenomenon is present both offline and online (Kangas et al., 2012). And while the number of female employees in media is increasing, the top leadership positions are dominated by men (African Union [AU], n.d.; Kangas et al., 2012). Some of the barriers for women include long hours spent at work, travelling away from home and gender stereotypes in role assignment. For example, politics and sports are considered male domains (MCK, 2015; Kangas et al., 2012) while lifestyle-related topics like family, health and beauty are considered female domains. Media personality Chinenye Nnoli, the host of talk show *Metrowoman*, said in an interview with international news agency Agence France-Presse that to succeed as a female journalist, one needed to work hard, prove herself and constantly work against the grain (Agence France-Presse [AFP], 2018). Working against the grain suggests that women in media have to overcome many barriers to rise in the newsroom. These include discrimination, gender stereotypes in work assignments and long working hours (MCK, 2015).

However, African newsrooms have not been left behind as they are also undergoing the disruptive impact of digital technologies. This has affected how news is generated and distributed. For journalists, it has meant that they have had to adapt to these changes and also find new and creative ways of working (Mabweazara, 2016). This disruption has extended to roles journalists play and how they rise in the newsroom.

Mabweazara (2016) refers to these changes as “somewhat cataclysmic” but argues that they do not happen in isolation and must be examined within their different contexts. Digital disruption of the media in Africa has been happening for more than 10 years. It has changed how media houses conduct business because they put the online audience (consumer) at the centre of their operations, forcing them to be more flexible and agile in order to meet consumer demand for content (Price Waterhouse Coopers [PwC], 2019). Additionally, there’s a general decrease in traditional newsrooms in Africa and hybrid ones (which incorporate traditional and digital newsrooms) are on the rise (ICFJ, 2019).

### 1.2.3 National Overview: Kenya

Kenya is generally advanced in the media industry compared to other African countries, and though few women ventured into the media in the 1980s because of cultural inhibitions and lack of training, this generally improved in the 1990s and 2000s (Muthamia, 2009). Studies show that in Kenya, women journalists experience uneven access to various occupational levels, with men outnumbering women by 2:1 (IWMMF, 2010). Stereotypes, long working hours and media’s male-dominated structure are cited as some of the reasons that hamper women’s growth in Kenyan media. Even though research indicates that there are more girls than boys enrolled in journalism schools, the pattern is not the same in newsrooms where there are more men than women (MCK, 2015).

Kenyan newsrooms have adopted digital technologies in their day-to-day activities, with most maintaining their traditional business dealing in mainstream media like television, radio and newspapers, and running digital versions of the same (Mwongela, 2015). Media houses like Nation Media Group and Standard Group have

dedicated digital departments tasked with managing and distributing digital content (MCK, 2016). Digital media has transformed how media are running their businesses. It has also created new positions and offered flexibility in newsroom operations.

According to MCK (2016):

Both media organisations and journalists have had to change tack and adapt to the disruptive possibilities of digitisation. The full impact of this will be seen in the coming years although the signs are both promising and ominous. (p.41)

Digital technologies seem to address some of the challenges that legacy media presents for women, like rigid structures and long working hours. Digital technologies have changed the content, work processes, structure, and organisation of the newsroom and this present study explored the opportunities brought about for women in Kenyan newsrooms.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Researchers have in the past focused on women's relationships with newspapers, magazines and broadcast outlets (Heckman, 2013) and the narrative has been that of marginalisation as news subjects, sources, gatherers and decision-makers.

The adoption of digital technologies in journalism has certainly affected the newsroom in what Mabweazara (2016) states is "somewhat cataclysmic" change. Heckman (2013) stresses that while they were not completely democratic, these opportunities in digital media in the early days also signalled leadership opportunities for women and offered them opportunities to shape how people conceptualised digital news. The digital media revolution has presented challenges, opportunities and higher aspirations for women in Kenyan newsrooms.

Digital technologies have been praised for providing opportunities to journalism as a whole and studies have shown how newsroom processes, structures and ways of doing business have been disrupted. However, little is known regarding the opportunities that digital technologies have afforded women in Kenyan newsrooms.

#### 1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the opportunities that digital technologies have presented to women in newsrooms in Kenya.

#### 1.5 Objectives of the Study

##### 1.5.1 Broad Objective

To determine the opportunities created by digital technologies for women in newsrooms.

##### 1.5.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine new ways women are participating in journalism because of digitisation.
2. To establish the new forms of journalism where women have thrived.
3. To explore the structures that support women working with digital technologies in the newsroom.

#### 1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions were posed in line with the research problem and objectives:

1. What are the new ways women are participating in journalism as sources, gatherers and decision-makers because of digitisation?
2. What are the new forms of journalism where women have thrived?
3. What structures exist in the digital departments to support women in the newsroom?

### 1.7 Rationale of the Study

Scholarship on women in media is replete with information on discrimination, their missing voices as news sources, and missing participation at decision-making tables in newsrooms. The present study, however, takes a different direction in determining the opportunities digital technologies have afforded women in the newsroom. Digital technologies have changed how newsrooms operate and the study looked at what this means for women in the context of their roles and in breaking the journalism glass ceiling.

This study examined what opportunities and challenges exist for women because of the newsroom adoption of digital technologies.

### 1.8 Significance of the Study

This research will not only add to the body of knowledge about women in journalism in Kenya, but it will also help organisations like MCK and the Kenya Editors' Guild (KEG) by prompting them to look into ways digital technologies can be used to enhance women's careers in the newsroom.

It will also lend a voice to female journalists and sensitise them to the challenges and untapped opportunities in digital media. Moreover, it will serve as reference



material in journalism schools and therefore enrich scholarship on gender, digital media and journalism.

### 1.9 Scope of the Study

The study focused on newsrooms based in Nairobi. It targeted women working in digital departments, which are housed in legacy newsrooms. These were Nation Media Group, Standard Group, Royal Media Services, Mediamax Network and Radio Africa Group. These media houses were selected because they are hybrid newsrooms with full-fledged digital departments.

### 1.10 Limitations of the Study

The geographical location was limiting, as the researcher only focused on Nairobi-based media houses. As such, the study did not capture experiences from other counties, which may be unique. Additionally, the study employed qualitative research methods to investigate the research questions and used in-depth interviews. One of the weaknesses of in-depth interviews is that the interviewer–interviewee relationship can pose a challenge to the research.

Whereas digital technologies are used today across various departments and sections in media houses, the study focused on digital departments only as they are relatively new in contemporary newsrooms.

### 1.11 Operational Definitions of Terms

Digital technologies: In this study, digital technologies referred to the electronic equipment and applications used by journalists in their practice.

Legacy media: This is the media that existed before the penetration of the Internet, like TV, radio and newspapers. A similar definition was adopted for this study.

Glass ceiling: In this study, it referred to the invisible obstacles women face on their way to the top in editorial leadership and decision-making positions.

Women in media: This referred to the female journalists involved in the day-to-day production of news like editors, sub-editors and reporters.

Opportunities: These were restricted to women's roles as news sources, gatherers and newsroom decision-makers because of digital technologies.

Hybrid newsrooms: Such newsrooms combine legacy and digital media in their operations and the same definition was used in this study.

### 1.12 Summary

This chapter provided a global, African and Kenyan local overview of the place of women in media organisations and how digital media has changed operations in the newsrooms. It has also provided the objectives for the study, its significance and limitations. The problem statement, objectives and research questions were also outlined.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This section examines relevant literature on the impact of digital media on newsroom operations, structures and work environment and how women's roles have been impacted. It presents the theoretical framework, general review, empirical review and identifies possible research gaps.

#### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

The growth of digital and internet technology has resulted in changes in society comparable to transitions from oral to print communication and later broadcasting (Hodkinson, 2017). The fourth industrial revolution, through artificial intelligence, the internet of things, blockchain technology and big data continue to impact media and society in major ways. For Marshall McLuhan, the proponent of the technological determinism theory, technology is inextricably linked to society. He argued that media's importance is not in the content but in the form of the media. He made the statement: 'The medium is the message' (Siapera, 2018, p.5) and the main tenet of his theory of technological determinism holds that technology has undeniably important effects on our lives (Adler, 2006).

##### 2.2.1 Principles of Technological Determinism Theory

McLuhan's approach to electronic technologies was optimistic (Hodkinson, 2017). He argued that the relationship between technology and media is such that the two can shape and determine the direction of human activity, be it social, political or

economic (Siapera, 2018). McLuhan posited that the most critical inventions that changed life were the phonetic alphabet, the printing press and the telegraph. He argued that a medium shapes us because we partake it repeatedly until it becomes an extension of ourselves (Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2014). McLuhan's historical analysis has heightened awareness of the possible cultural effects of new media technologies (Griffin et al., 2014). Critics like Finnegan (as cited in Chandler, 1995), concede that while the evidence does not support a strong case for technological determinism, there is something to be said about its ability to illuminate reality. He argues that:

The strong case is perhaps stated over-extremely - but its very extremeness helps to jolt us out of our complacency and draw our attention to a range of facts and possible causal connections previously neglected. As a suggestive model of looking at social development, it may well have value, despite its factual inadequacies. (p. 15)

According to Adler (2006), the understanding on the different facets of change occasioned by technology and the effects of science and social influences has been enriched to a great extent by recent research. This study helped develop this understanding further in determining what opportunities digital technologies have offered women in the newsroom. Hodkinson (2017) argues that in addition to understanding the properties of technology, we must also focus on the organisations that control them, the details of the content they are used to transmit and the understanding of users.

### 2.2.2 The Relevance of Technological Determinism Theory to the Study

Scholars in humanities and social sciences have used the technological determinism theory to explain how technology can cause social change. The theory places great importance on the social significances of technological innovations (Hackett, Amsterdamska, Lynch & Wajcman, 2008). Given that for this study,

innovation is digital technologies used in the newsroom, the theory would be useful and relevant in explaining the shifts or changes in the media environment in relation to women. Research has shown that technological disruption has changed the way newsrooms operate. This has also affected how journalists work and it has brought with it both advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages is faster and more efficient delivery of work. A disadvantage has been job losses as a result of newsrooms adopting technology and more pressure on revenue for the media business (MCK, 2016; Harwood et al., 2018). Of interest to the study was how the adoption of digital technologies has affected work structure and processes in relation to women as digital technologies have been acknowledged as having changed how women rise to the top of their profession (Heckman, 2013). This is because they offer solutions like working remotely and flexibility in working that helps address traditional barriers in the newsroom like long working hours.

### 2.2.3 Application of Technological Determinism Theory

The technological determinism theory has been applied in the social science field to explain how technology causes social change. McLuhan argued that technological development determines the cultural and social change of a generation. As the study sought to determine the opportunities created by digital technologies for women in newsrooms, technological determinism could help explain the emergence of these opportunities and how digital technologies have affected the actions and views of the actors; specifically, women.

Hauer (2017) studied the nature of present-day technological determinism, including the features of new media (e.g. digital media) and how they are used to affect creation and distribution of information and knowledge in the education process. He did

this through a philosophical analysis and found that use of educational technology is influenced by the following: the user of the technology, his surroundings/environment and by technology which means technology affects and is affected by the learning process. He added:

It means that technologies as such are not neutral to the learning process. They structure information in a manner typical of them (the world is structured differently by the medium called writing and the medium called the technical image), they affect the psyche of the user, and even cause social change. (p.1)

Technology sometimes has negative consequences like addiction and cyberbullying, but Hauer (2017, p.1) attributes this to “poor use by the people, not of the very nature of technology”. Hauer (2017) used technological determinism to explain how technology has affected and been affected by education in terms of acquiring, creating and distributing knowledge and skills today. From a technological determinism approach, digital technologies as embraced in newsrooms could influence the historically biased nature of news sourcing, gathering and distribution as well as women’s rise to leadership positions in the newsroom. Adherents of the technological determinism theory emphasise on how it affects the actions and views of the people involved (Hackett et al., 2008) and this was the focus of this present study because those who support technological determinism directly link social changes to advances and innovations in technology and media (Hauer, 2017).

#### 2.2.4 Criticism of Technological Determinism Theory

One of the criticisms of the technological determinism theory is that it tends to overplay and simplify the role of technologies because it considers them the major cause for social change yet change happens in a broader context than this because the effects of technology are not automatic or homogenous (Hodkinson, 2017). Chandler (1995)

agrees that the theory focuses on the causes and effects of technology yet it is difficult to separate the two. He refers to this mono-causal relationship as reductionism. He adds that criticising technological determinism is not to undermine the fact that technical features of different communication technologies facilitate different kinds of use, despite potential applications of technologies not being necessarily realised. However, the theory is suitable in the context of this study. This is because it was a qualitative study that targeted research participants with newsroom experience and who have witnessed how digital technology has transformed the newsroom and how this has affected women's roles.

### 2.3 General Literature Review

This section provides a brief background of the challenges women have historically faced in the Kenyan media. It also provides an overview of the five media houses targeted in the study, namely: Nation Media Group, Standard Group, Royal Media Services, Mediamax Network and Radio Africa Group.

#### 2.3.1 Historical Perspectives of Challenges Faced by Women in Kenyan Media

Research is rife with information on the challenges women in media face in Kenya and the world over. Mugwe (2012) conducted a study to determine the challenges facing women media practitioners in Kenya. It was a cross-sectional descriptive survey and the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. In-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires were employed and the study was hinged on the gender theory of liberal feminism. The researcher determined that a majority of women face gender-related barriers, which stop them from breaking the glass ceiling. 84% of the research participants felt women faced many barriers in their

career advancement in the newsroom. These barriers included sexual harassment, lack of a clear career path, lack of leadership/decision-making opportunities, lack of a child-care policy, an unequal division of labour and minimal gender sensitivity. The corporate culture in Kenyan media houses was also found to be unsupportive of women's participation and career advancement. The study also revealed that while the media houses had gender policies, employees had limited knowledge about them and implementation levels for the same were very low.

According to Muthamia (2009), who conducted a study to determine the role of women in the growth of media in Kenya, the underrepresentation of women in media is historical and dates back to the 1980s where women were inhibited by culture, limited training opportunities and a limited number of role models they could look up to. One of the cultural barriers was that women were perceived by employers as needing more time off than men to attend to domestic duties. Muthamia (2009) further says that women accounted for less than 20 per cent of journalists: even though the airwaves were liberated after 1992 and the number of women joining journalism schools increased, this did not result to a promising growth as the percentage of women represented in journalism, especially in leadership positions, remains low. The research design was exploratory and employed qualitative research methodologies to collect primary and secondary data.

This study explored whether digital technologies had helped tilt this scale in terms of addressing some of the challenges women have historically faced in the newsroom in five media houses: Nation Media Group, Standard Group, Royal Media Services, Mediamax and Radio Africa Group. The five media houses are discussed briefly below.



### 2.3.2 Profiles of Media Houses in the Study

Nation Media Group is a regional media company with footprints in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania. It was founded in 1959 and boasts of print, broadcast and digital divisions. It has 18 media brands in the four countries (Nation Media Group, 2019). Its digital brands in Kenya include *Nairobi News*, *Swahili Hub*, *Nation Mobile*, *Daily Nation* and *Kenya Buzz*. Its flagship brand, *Daily Nation*, has a website which was started in 1998. It was previously known as [www.nationaudio.com](http://www.nationaudio.com) but its current web address is [www.nationmedia.co.ke](http://www.nationmedia.co.ke). The digital department at Nation Media Group was established in 2008 and is headed by a male managing editor who leads a team of online editors, sub-editors, video editors, social media moderators, reporters and developers (D. Wanderi, personal communication, January 10, 2020).

Standard Group Limited is the oldest media house in Kenya, having begun its operations in 1902. It has print, broadcast and digital divisions. The news website, [www.standardmedia.co.ke](http://www.standardmedia.co.ke), has been in existence since 2009. The digital department has been active since 2012 and boasts of 50 employees, including the commercial team. It's headed by a female managing editor who leads a team comprising of sub-editors, team leads/editors (J. Wanjiru, personal communication, January 10, 2020).

Royal Media Services Limited was founded in 1999. The company's business interests lie in broadcast media (TV and Radio). The company relaunched Citizen Digital in 2015 and boasts of 13 million visitors monthly. Some of its digital brands include [Citizentv.co.ke](http://Citizentv.co.ke) website and the Viusasa App, a video on demand application where audiences can decide what to watch in various local languages (Royal Media Services, 2019). The digital department is headed by the head of digital who supervises

a team of 15 that include a digital sub-editor, reporters, the social media team, video producers and cameramen (R. Ombaka, personal communication, January 13, 2020).

Radio Africa Group has established itself as one of the market leaders in both legacy and digital media. It started operations in July 2000 by opening its first radio station, Kiss 100 FM (Khamati, 2014). The Star newspaper was later established in 2007 (Rothmyer, 2010). Its digital department was established in 2014 and currently has 43 employees. Some of the digital brands include *The Star Kenya*, *Mpasho News*, *Classic 105*, *Kiss 100* and *Radio Jambo*. The digital department is headed by a male digital editor who supervises a team of 43 staff that includes a deputy digital editor, website editors, video editors and content creators (reporters, writers and social media creators) (O. Mathenge, personal communication, November 17, 2019).

Mediamax Network Limited operates both print and electronic media and was formed in 2007 by TV Africa (Karuga, 2010). The company has a free daily newspaper, a broadcast section and a digital department, which is headed by Group Head of TV and Digital. Additionally, there's a head of digital who manages a team of 20 people comprising of digital assistants, developers and content managers. (J. Muinde, personal communication, January 11, 2020). Its free newspaper, People Daily, was established in 1992 by Kenneth Matiba, an opposition politician (Collender, 2004).

#### 2.4 Empirical Literature Review

The process of digitising the media has certainly had intense effects on the latter (Siapera, 2018). This has impacted how news is processed, distributed and consumed. One of the changes elicited by the digital media revolution is new forms of work in what Siapera (2018) refers to as “flexibilisation” of labour. This “flexibilisation” involves

feminisation of labour too, with more and more women participating in the workforce in atypical ways. These atypical ways include working remotely, using mobile phones to file stories and engaging in typically male-dominated roles like working as the camera or video people. As one of the barriers that hinder the growth of women into leadership and decision-making roles in the newsroom have been cited as long working hours, this “flexibilisation” of labour could be deemed emancipating for them.

Most of the research about women and journalism typically brings to the fore the deep-seated biases and gender inequality in the newsroom from women as employees to women as sources. In the Western world, most of the research points to women being underrepresented in newsroom leadership, especially as editors who are in charge of different products (Strong, 2018). For instance, in the United Kingdom (UK), there were no women editors in the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century (Franks, 2013).

Women have generally had an arduous journey in newsroom leadership. Williams, Mavin, Stead and Elliott (2016, p.317) state that “Women are historically and contemporaneously viewed, in contrast to men, as bodies rather than leaders, resulting in women performing complex self-surveillance and identity work to regulate their ambition as leaders”. Chambers et al. (2004) observe that throughout history, women have struggled to be taken seriously as professional journalists. Strong (2018) agrees, adding that women in newsrooms have historically been underrepresented in newsroom leadership. The scholar singles out the role of editors in charge of various products as being one that does not have enough female representation. The gender imbalance also exists for women as sources. To date, there is a gender gap in the newsroom, especially in decision-making positions. According to Chandler (2011), America’s Women’s Media Center (AWMC) termed this persistent gap a crisis in 2013. This crisis led to

nationwide editorial forums that focused on how to bring more women up the ranks, as well as research funded by the American Press Institute and the Pew Centre for Journalism Excellence, among others.

Though there are more women today enrolling in journalism school than before, the numbers do not reflect this in the newsroom setting (MCK, 2015). However, recent changes at Nation Media Group and Standard Group where the former has employed women in top editorial leadership positions and the latter has created a women's network to help address barriers to the top (Tumo, 2019; Eve Woman, 2018) both point towards a changing narrative. There is much value to be derived by bringing women on board in leadership and decision-making roles in the media. Women strengthen leadership in ways that can be beneficial at local, national and global levels because their leadership styles have proven to be more transformational, participative and inclusive than those of their male counterparts (Chandler, 2011). Some newsroom culture theorists argue that if women were at the top of newsroom leadership, the selection and treatment of news would not only be different but also better (Strong, 2018).

Dezso and Ross (as cited in Franks, 2013) assert that for the past few decades, women have made considerable inroads into domains traditionally dominated by men. Some of these domains include media leadership (such as news editors, executive editors and editorial directors) and reporting hard news, investigative reporting, politics and sports. Camerawork, photography and video/ audio editing have also traditionally been thought to be male domains (Muthamia, 2009). Franks (2013) concurs but argues that while journalism and the role of women in the workplace are both changing, the two are not always synchronised. She adds that while the digital revolution in

newsrooms offers more flexibility, it can also be viewed as the electronic cage as opposed to the electronic cottage because of pressure on media houses to have 24-hour, seven-day-a-week multimedia presence even as women continue to shoulder the demands of being the care providers at home and delivering at work.

However, much as there may be some disadvantages to women because of the digital revolution, Franks (2013) acknowledges that the “digital whirlwind” has not only created new opportunities but also new forms of journalism where women have thrived.

Franks (2013) says:

Where they can find new ways of doing things and when they carve a new niche, branding themselves in new forms – through a blog or even as a war reporter – this is where women have successfully reinvented themselves. When they enter existing structures they tend to be less successful. There is still evidence of a boys’ club and usually where there is a less transparent process, within a corporate hierarchy, then women lose out. (p.viii)

While this may be difficult to achieve within the rigid structures of legacy media, digital media may allow for such. This is because digital media has transformed the way media companies run their business and they have had to embrace it fully to keep up in the complex and ever-changing environment. According to Odindo (2019), as cited by Tumo (2019), gender imbalance in the newsroom has a historical and cultural foundation. However, he is optimistic that change is happening. He argues that the digital revolution has favoured women but adds that they (women) need to acquire the necessary skills to operate in this new media landscape.

The digital revolution seems to have transformed journalists’ lives for the better. A quantitative study conducted by the ICFJ (2019) in 149 countries among 4,100 journalists and news managers sought to establish the state of technology in global newsrooms and found that most of the journalists and news managers world over (more

than two thirds) believe that their work has been positively transformed by digital technologies. Social media was singled out as the most impactful digital tool to the work of the journalists and news managers. Digital tools have also helped them to tackle persistent challenges like fake news and misinformation. The study also revealed that news outlets which were previously traditional were now becoming hybrid because they had embraced digital technologies in their operations. Furthermore, they determined that globally, women were playing a stronger role than before in newsroom management. Additionally, the study found that women are hired with fewer skills than their male colleagues and 21% of the journalists interviewed had titles like social media editors and content producers. Interestingly, while most agreed that digital tools improve the quality of news and how they engage their audiences, only a small majority said it increased productivity. However, the study did not explore the impact digital technologies have on women in the newsroom.

Khan (2016), conducted a study on the effects of digitisation on top management leadership. He collected data using in-depth interviews with 13 executives and organisational leaders. He found that while digitalisation is a prime challenge for leaders today, research on its effect on leadership is scarce. He identified six characteristics of digitisation: –1. interconnectedness, 2. diminishing time lag and abundance of information, 3. increased transparency and complexity, 4. hierarchy removal and dissolvment of personal barriers, 5. decision enabling and integrity enhancing, and 6. humanising effect – and used them as a framework of analysis. He found that different characteristics not only changed how the leaders practised each of their leadership styles but also how their leadership manifested itself through the use of various digital tools, methods and processes in order to enhance and empower their leadership (Khan, 2016). However, Khan’s research focused on the leadership as opposed to the transformation

on the organisation, its systems and structures and whether these were changed by digitisation and if this created room for others to lead.

Heckman (2013), on the other hand, investigated the status of female leadership in the new journalism ecology using qualitative methods. She used semi-structured interviews with a snowball sample of women in leadership positions at emerging online news organisations. The researcher found that women are slightly more likely to hold leadership roles in emerging digital news organisations than in legacy media. Despite this, she cautioned that those jobs are at hyperlocal websites and not in big digital news organisations. Griffin (2014) echoes these assertions, adding that the people who set the vision and hire personnel at most of the major online news sites are men who will most likely hire other men. However, Griffin (2014) and Heckman (2013) have not studied the progress of women to positions of leadership and decision-making role within the context of legacy outlets that have embraced digital media, as is the case in Kenya.

The context of the Kenyan newsroom is different because most legacy media newsrooms have adopted a digital-first policy operation with dedicated personnel to handle the same and most are now hybrid newsrooms. Heckman (2013) however acknowledges that sweeping technological and industrial disruptions have fundamentally changed the way journalists rise to the top of their profession. However, the study hinted at the habits of legacy newsrooms being repeated in digital newsrooms. This caution by the researcher in celebrating gains made in digital media is echoed by a different study by the MCK (2016) that measured the impact of digital technologies and the Internet on media and journalism in Kenya. This study found that digital media had changed work processes and created job opportunities but it makes a disclaimer that the benefits of digital technology are not homogenous and they depend on how people

and organisations use them. The study, however, did not distinguish how the adoption and use of digital technologies by media companies have affected how female journalists work or rise in the newsrooms, given that they have been historically sidelined. It focused on how the adoption of digital technologies had affected diversity, but female journalists were not directly targeted. The study employed a mixed methods and collected data through questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

A similar study by Nyabuga and Booker (2013) mapped digital media in Kenya and used secondary data as the main source of information. The researchers concluded that available technologies had changed and improved working habits of journalists. Digital technologies had also made work processes easier and faster. The researchers also pointed to rising audience expectations, which means that media houses and journalists have to change their way of working to meet audience demands; they, however, cautioned that as people celebrate the gains from digital media, they need to think about both the positive and the negative consequences. Some of these negative consequences include job losses and pressure on revenue (MCK, 2016).

The digital revolution has brought a different challenge for media companies and some have had to shut down some business units or downsize. Nation Media Group and Standard Group had layoffs in 2017 and 2018 (Harwood, Herrick, Kamau & Ugangu, 2018). Mwangela (2015) concurs with Nyabuga and Booker (2013) on the effect of technology on how newsrooms in Kenya operate. He conducted a study to assess how social media has changed newsroom operations in Kenya using Nation Media Group and Standard Group as his case studies. Research participants for the study cut across all job strata and included entry-level and senior-level journalists. It took a quantitative approach and the sampling was purposive. Mwangela (2015) found



out that media houses have formed digital divisions tasked with website and social media management and that the journalists also tapped into social media to ease their work. He also found that social media plays a complementary role in media houses. Media houses are still grappling with how to leverage digital technologies to maximise revenue (Mwongela, 2015).

According to Chambers et al. (2004), women's employment in journalism has surged during moments of crisis or innovation across the news media industry. Going by this, it should be a good time for women in Kenyan media and this study will establish whether this is the case or not.

Harwood et al. (2018) conducted a study on strengthening Kenyan media. It was mixed-method research with employed questionnaires and focus group discussions in collecting data. Additionally, the researchers used key informant interviews and desktop reviews. They found that there were still high attrition rates of women in the newsrooms attributed to sexual harassment, online harassment and harsher judgment when they get something wrong but expressed optimism about the rise of female journalists through media ranks in the newsroom and contend that they continue to work to overcome these barriers, even as these forces narrow the critical pipeline. The study also found that digital media has changed the way media businesses run by reducing the cost of publishing and distributing information. More importantly, it has freed independent journalists from the whims of a small number of decision-makers who control the media establishment.

Scholars generally agree that it would be hard to predict how online journalism will impact gender patterns. Chambers et al. (2004) observe:

Will on-line journalism evolve into a job for ‘the boys’, given its ‘techy’ label or, conversely, is it likely to become a job attractive to women with childcare responsibilities given the 9–5 office-based nature of the occupation? The answer will depend on whether the work is divided off from traditional forms of journalism and what kind of newsroom culture arises within it. (p.235)

Overall, scholars agree that digital technologies have afforded women both challenges and opportunities in the newsroom but research on the same is scarce in Kenya and this will be the focus of the study. It will also identify what structural issues need to be addressed to facilitate the full participation of women at all levels of media organisations.

## 2.5 Summary

This chapter provided relevant literature about the problem. It has outlined the research methodologies used and identified possible gaps in the research. The theoretical framework has also been discussed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, target population, sampling, data collection techniques and analysis. It also looks at the ethical considerations of the study. It provides the rationale for selecting the research procedures in understanding and analysing the research problem.

#### 3.2 Research Design

A research design is defined as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in the procedure (Kumar, 2019). As such, this study adopted a descriptive design and employed phenomenology as the qualitative research approach to investigate the opportunities created by digital technologies for women in newsrooms in Kenya. A descriptive design was deemed suitable because the knowledge sought was not obvious and was garnered through deep interactions with people who had relevant information.

#### 3.3 Research Approach

The researcher employed a phenomenological research approach. A phenomenological research approach, according to Creswell (2007), describes the meaning of the lived experiences of individuals about a concept or phenomenon. This approach was found suitable for the study because the research was focused on the lived experiences of the women working in the digital departments of hybrid newsrooms.

Daymon and Holloway (2010) posit that one of the strengths of phenomenology is that it helps the researcher to perceive the phenomena as the research participant would.

### 3.4 Population

The population refers to the entire group from which the information about a phenomenon is ascertained. As such, the population was female digital journalists working in digital departments of hybrid newsrooms like Nation Media Group, Standard Group, Mediamax Network, Royal Media Services and Radio Africa Group.

#### 3.4.1 Target Population

The target population was women working as journalists in digital departments of hybrid newsrooms. The inclusion criteria of the research participants were whether or not they have worked with digital technologies in digital departments in the capacity of managing editors, online/content editors, social media editors, online sub-editors and online reporters for a minimum of three years as this determined whether they had information the researcher needed.

The female journalists working in the digital departments shared their experiences on the opportunities and challenges brought about by digital technologies to their work. Further, they shared their perceptions on the effect of digital media in breaking the glass ceiling in women's leadership and decision-making roles in the newsroom.

Table 1 below presents the target population of the study. The numbers were sourced from editors, digital departmental heads, and the 2019 MCK list of accredited journalists.

*Table 1: Target Population*

Media House	Number of Women in Digital Department (Working as reporters, sub-editors and editors)
Nation Media Group	10
Standard Group	16
Royal Media Services	4
Mediamax	1
Radio Africa	17
Total	48

### 3.4.2 Sample Size

The sample size was 12 participants. These were female journalists working in editorial roles in the digital departments of newsrooms. It targeted managing editors, online/content editors, social media editors, online sub-editors and online reporters. Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe and Young (2018) posit that the answer to “how many” is not straightforward because the sample size depends on a multiplicity of elements, which can be epistemological, methodological or practical. However, Daymon and Holloway (2010) recommend 12 to 20 as the sample size for a heterogeneous group in qualitative research.

### 3.4.3 Sampling Techniques and Procedures

In qualitative research, the principle of saturation is often applied in sampling because the sample size does not determine the quality of the study (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). Saturation point happens when there’s no new information from the research participants which is deemed relevant for the study that is being generated

(Daymon & Holloway, 2010; Vasileiou et al., 2018). The researcher relied on his or her judgment to gauge if the sample selected represents the population targeted in the study. This was considered the best technique to help the researcher get rich and in-depth information from the research participants in the study (Daymon & Holloway, 2010).

Purposive sampling asks why and how to sample and Daymon and Holloway (2010) assert that people form the main sampling units and this is followed by an inclusion or exclusion criteria for the study. The 12 interviews were divided as follows: Nation Media Group (3), Standard Group (3), Royal Media Services (2), Mediamax Network (1) and Radio Africa Group (3). The media house with the largest number of female journalists working in the digital departments as reporters, managing editors, online/content editors, social media editors, online sub-editors and online reporters had the highest number of interviews sampled. Each media house was a separate case that was treated in an in-depth manner. As the study aimed to explore the opportunities that digital technologies have presented to women in Kenyan newsrooms, the inclusion criteria were: 1) female journalists whose years of experience of working in the digital department in Kenyan newsrooms totalled not less than three years, 2) female journalists who employ digital technologies in their daily work in the newsroom and 3) female journalists who work for at least one of the five media houses targeted in the study. The researcher reached out to the various media houses directly and also used the MCK List of Accredited Journalists to determine the sample.

### 3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The data was collected using an in-depth interview guide (See Appendix A). This was deemed the most appropriate data collection tool because the researcher sought for more information from a specific clique of people who worked in the

newsroom and who had an understanding and lived experience of the opportunities digital technologies present for women in the newsroom. The researcher prepared a list of questions in the form of an interview guide. The principle of probing was used as advised by Daymon & Holloway (2010) who say that probing reduces the ambiguity of the questions for the researcher and for the participants. Probing helped in instances where the researcher was seeking clarification on a response. This was made possible by the fact that in-depth interviews are a flexible format and the researcher could tailor questions appropriately (Daymon & Holloway, 2010).

Daymon and Holloway (2010) argue that having an interview guide is important for uniformity in the type of data collected from the various research participants in the study. It also saves time and allows the researcher to decide what questions they want to probe or pursue further.

### 3.5.1 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher reached out to the participants via social media platforms (Twitter and WhatsApp) and phone calls where a formal introduction to the study was done. Thereafter, screening of the participants was done through the same platforms and interviews set up. During the screening process, the researcher used a screening questionnaire (See Appendix B) to ensure the participants met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for participants was that: they should have worked in digital departments of the media houses for at least three years, should be women working with digital technologies and must have roles like managing editors, digital editors, social media editors and digital reporters or their equivalent. Screening also ensured that only people that were most significant to the study were selected to participate in it.

The following information was sought in the screening process, which was done via phone calls and social media platforms between 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2019. 1) role played in the digital department, 2) number of years worked in the digital department of a newsroom, 3) whether or not they use digital technologies for work, 4) how they use digital technologies for work.

All the 48 participants were screened. After the screening, which was done by a trained research assistant, the participants who fit the criteria of the study were selected. A final list of 12 participants was purposively selected for the study. The researcher then booked appointments with female journalists working in digital departments of legacy media houses through phone calls and met them for interviews on a one-on-one basis. The researcher worked with a research assistant who collected and transcribed five of the 12 interviews. The research assistant, however, played no role in the compilation of the report. The interviews were conducted at the work premises of the 12 participants.

To protect the privacy of the participants' and for their convenience, the researchers made use of private office spaces and boardrooms within the premises of their respective media houses. These were also deemed the most conducive places for audio recording because of the quiet environment they provided. The questions asked during the in-depth interviewing process were simply a guide and were loosely formed as the interview was unstructured (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). This helped in obtaining unrestricted responses from the participants on their perceptions and experience about the research problem.

There were nine questions and probing was done where necessary. Probing helps in instances where the researcher is seeking clarification on a response (Daymon



& Holloway, 2010). The interviews lasted 25 to 45 minutes and were conducted over a period of three weeks between 8<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The researcher and her assistant took notes during the interviews and audio-recorded the discussions, which were later downloaded for review and transcribed. Follow-up questions on the responses were done via phone calls where it was found necessary.

### 3.5.2 Pretesting

Pretesting the data collection instrument is an integral part of quality control during the research. This was done through piloting the in-depth interview questions with selected female journalists from Nation Media Group and Standard Group who work in legacy media departments in the newsrooms. Piloting helped the researcher determine if the participants understood the questions, if there were weaknesses in the questions and whether some of the questions were insensitive or unnecessary. For example, one of the questions the research participants found ambiguous and too open was: *What would you tell a person who asked you about the structures that exist in the digital department to support women in the newsroom?* The researcher changed the question to *What structural issues, if any, need to be addressed to support women working with digital technologies in newsrooms?*

The two in-depth interviews were recorded and the researcher noted down problem areas in the questions. Preliminary feedback from the pre-tests was used to modify the questions or the tactics for asking the questions.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is a methodical process of transcribing, collating, coding and reporting the data in a manner that makes it sensible and accessible

to the reader for purposes of interpretation and discussion. It is the assigning of categories and putting together emerging issues into themes in an attempt to answer the research questions (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011). Daymon and Holloway (2010) posit that there are no rigid stages for the same.

### 3.6.1 Data Processing Procedures

The data was organised and cleaned (edited) before the analysis began. During the organisation stage, Marshall and Rossman (2011) recommend that a researcher should take note of all the data that has been gathered, including from the field notes, and make minor edits before labelling or categorising them as appropriate and this is a step that the researcher followed. Daymon and Holloway (2010) posit that a researcher should also check that the audio recording is captured well. The researcher opened a computer folder to help manage the data emanating from the 12 interviews.

Additionally, data cleaning is also an integral part of the data processing procedure as missing or erroneous data can compromise the quality of the study findings (Salkind, 2010). Data cleaning is therefore done to arrest issues with the data before analysis. The researcher edited the information collected—including the field notes and transcripts—to minimise errors in the data. The text was also edited for clarity, grammar and logical flow of thought.

### 3.6.2 Data Analysis Techniques

As the data analysis process is a continuous one in qualitative research (Daymon & Holloway, 2010), the researcher used her field notes and observations as part of the preliminary analysis for the study. The notes or memos outlined the thinking of the researcher and helped in conceptualising the answers to the research questions before

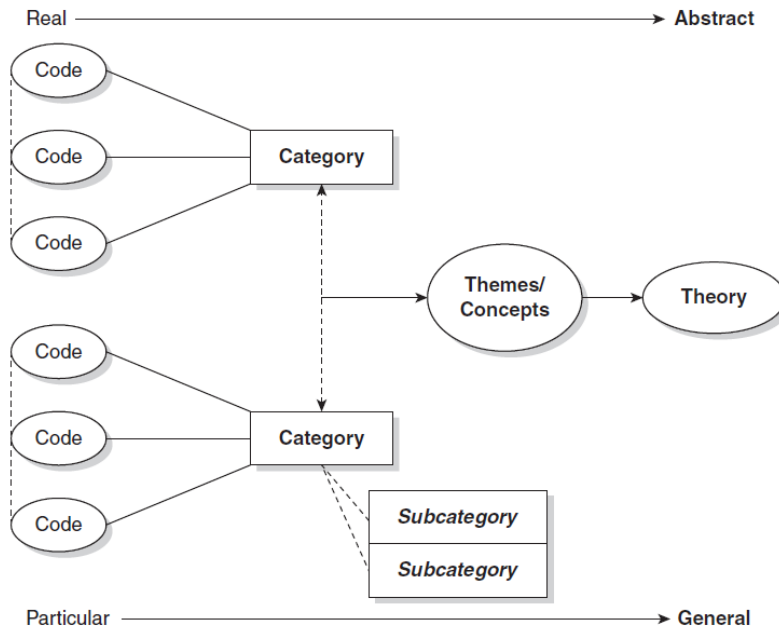
the analysis began. Marshall and Rossman (2011) assert that qualitative researchers should engage intimately with the material or the data of the study at hand as this will help them make sense of the voluminous data.

The audio recordings were downloaded into a computer and transcribed verbatim immediately after each interview. The transcripts were edited for clarity in the data-cleaning phase before analysis began. The researcher coded the data before drawing themes from the data. The goal of the analysis was to unearth themes, patterns and insights into the opportunities afforded to women in newsrooms by digital technologies.

### 3.6.3 Framework for Analysis

Thematic content analysis was used in the study. The framework of the analysis had the following stages: (a) familiarisation, (b) coding and generating themes, (c) indexing and charting and (d) mapping and interpretation. In the familiarisation stage, the 12 interviews were transcribed verbatim and organised into separate documents. The researcher ensured that each word and phrase was recorded. Familiarisation helps the researcher have a good sense of the whole picture (Daymon & Holloway, 2010).

The second stage was coding and generation of themes. A code is a word or short phrase which captures the essence or attribute that is suggestive in a phrase. The researcher used the topic of the study to draw codes that would help reduce and summarise the data (Saldaña, 2015). The coding was reviewed a number of times by the researcher to ascertain that the data was valid (Zuiderveld, 2011). Below is a figure that outlines the codes-to-theory model.



Source: (Saldana, 2015, p.12)

Figure 1: A codes-to-theory model

Indexing and charting involved the annotating the codes (adding extra information and phrases to help qualify the codes) and creating a chart for each key theme with entries from several participants. The researcher used excel sheets to aid this process. In the mapping and interpretation stage, the researcher considered the associations, patterns based on the topic of the study and the research questions and used these to interpret the data.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained approval from the AKU-GSMC Ethics Review Committee (See Appendix C). The researcher also used a letter of introduction that was provided by AKU-GSMC (See Appendix D). Additionally, a research permit was sought for and granted by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to the researcher (See Appendix E).

The researcher was obligated to get informed consent from the participants. This means that they had every right to know that they were being researched and what it entailed and also be offered the opportunity to decline to participate at any point during the research (Silverman, 2016). The researcher informed the participants the methods that would be used to collect the data, for example, audio-recording and note-taking, and sought their consent before beginning the research. The researcher also made it clear that participation was voluntary. Each participant signed an informed consent form.

The researcher was obliged to protect information on who the participant was, where they lived and their locations, except for research purposes (Silverman, 2016). This is referred to as confidentiality. The researcher took every precaution to ensure that the identities of the interview subjects remained secret unless they gave express permission to do otherwise. For example, the names of the participants were not recorded anywhere and the responses presented in the study are anonymous.

The right of privacy of Kenyan citizens is protected by the constitution and the researcher made sure that they do not infringe on this right by trespassing on people's property and divulging their private details.

Bias is a deliberate attempt either to hide what you have found in your study or to highlight something disproportionately (Kumar, 2019). As the researcher is a media practitioner with Nation Media Group, there was a possibility of being biased in favour of the company while conducting the research. The researcher controlled her biases by having a research assistant conduct the Nation Media Group interviews.

Kumar (2019) holds that incentives can be in the form of tokens of appreciation after the interview has been done but not before. Some researchers provide incentives to participants for their participation while others think it's unethical (Kumar, 2019). The incentive provided to the participants was that the summary of the findings would be shared with them upon completion of the study.

### 3.8 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology process, which included the research method, design, population, sample size, data collection and analysis procedures. A rationale was provided for the choices in the methodology. The section included some ethical considerations that arose during the fieldwork phase.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the key findings in line with the research objectives, which informed this study. It also explains the data analysis process.

#### 4.2 Overview of Research Participants

The study targeted 12 research participants from five media houses and the researcher completed all the interviews. This indicated a 100% response rate. The interviews were conducted over a period of three weeks between November 8<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The interviews lasted for 25 to 45 minutes. They took place in Nairobi at the respective media houses of the research participants. Private offices and boardrooms were used for privacy, convenience and to allow for a noise-free environment for audio recording.

#### 4.3 Data Analysis

This research aimed at determining the opportunities digital technologies have afforded women in Kenyan newsrooms. As it was a multi-case study, the researcher conducted 12 in-depth interviews with female journalists from five media houses, namely: Nation Media Group, Standard Group, Mediamax, Royal Media Services and Radio Africa Group.

The following research objectives guided the study: (a) to determine new ways women are participating in journalism because of digitisation, (b) to establish the new

forms of journalism where women have thrived and (c) to explore the structures that support women working with digital technologies in the newsroom.

In analysing the data, the researcher considered the theoretical framework that the research project was based and the analytical possibilities and representations applied as proposed by Flick (2014). The researcher employed a phenomenological approach in conducting the research and analysing the data. According to Flick (2014), phenomenologists place a high premium on bracketing (which means the researcher had assumptions about the phenomena under study), reflecting on the data and what they mean, reducing the data and deriving themes from it and constructing the findings by writing and rewriting. The process of analysing data was also guided by the objectives of the study. There were different themes, which emerged that were not originally under the framework used in this study and they have been highlighted. Table 2 below presents examples of the codes generated:

*Table 2: Example of Codes Generated*

Code	Verbatim Quote
Flexibility	In terms of opportunities, I think the fact that you can work from anywhere is a big plus: you can assign stories without being physically present as compared to print where I have to be at the office to know what the story is, assign a page and decide the layout. For digital, all I need to say is where that story is done: the layout is preset and I think that's the advantage of digital and the fact that it can allow us to use low-quality images especially when it comes to the production of photos. A low quality photo can be edited and will serve well for digital as compared to print.
Online harassment	An email came in from a viewer who lamented how an anchor had interviewed a particular person and she did not seem not to know the topic. However, instead of criticising her interview or research skills, the person who sent the email commented on how the anchor has not been able to have children and things like that, so it makes you wonder what a news anchor's private life has to do with her



	interviewing skills. Most cases of online harassment usually go that direction. That particular email was sent to the general newsroom email; there are others who have done it on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook
Addiction	You get addicted to your mobile phone, you're almost always on your screen, every ten minutes I'm checking my WhatsApp messages, I'm checking what has been Tweeted even in the middle of the night, if you get insomnia, you're on your screen, you go on leave but you're not really on leave, you're always checking your gadget, that of course has to be the biggest challenge of working with technology, addiction also makes you feel like leaving your phone is very difficult, like a part of you is missing, you feel you don't know what is going on, which brings about anxiety. Addiction, no 'me time', being over-dependent on your mobile phone

#### 4.3.1 Profile of the Research Participants

The researcher purposefully selected research participants from five hybrid media houses: Nation Media Group, Standard Group, Royal Media Services, Mediamax and Radio Africa Group. The names and contacts of the research participants were sourced through the researcher's networks, heads of digital departments and the MCK list of accredited journalists. The participants comprised of heads of digital departments, deputy chief sub-editors, online sub-editors, social media editors and online/digital reporters.

The inclusion criteria for participants was that they should have worked in digital departments of the media houses for at least three years, should be women working with digital technologies and must have roles like managing editors, digital editors, social media editors and digital reporters or their equivalent. The female digital journalists interviewed for the study commonly worked with digital technologies like

smartphones, computers, social media and content management systems. Their roles ranged from editing and reporting to social media management.

Although the participants were from different media houses, there were some common themes, which emerged from the interviews with regard to the three research questions. The researcher has indicated the few distinctions arising and some of these were based on the position/ rank of the women.

#### 4.3.2 New Ways Women Are Participating in Journalism

This objective sought to address the new ways women are participating in journalism as a result of digitisation. The findings revealed that digital technologies have democratised the media space for more women to participate in new ways as sources and news gatherers but not so much for decision-making. The glass ceilings that exist in legacy media spaces seem to persist in digital media departments.

*Social media has played a significant role in amplifying women's voices but online violence remains a threat*

On women participating in journalism as news sources, the findings revealed that social media has played a significant role in amplifying women's voices. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter have enabled women to galvanise their voices and "force" traditional media platforms to take notice of their topics of discussion/ causes as opposed to staying in their "little corners" as one participant described it. A participant said:

Women publish information on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Podcasts. For us who work as journalists, this helps with easy and immediate reach irrespective of location as well as anonymity where it is necessary.

Some participants cited examples of columnists like Beryl Itindi who was discovered through her Facebook posts and credited social media for getting women attention from the media as potential sources and news gatherers. For instance, one participant said:

Social media has actually allowed women who are ready to speak to build a profile for themselves that has garnered attention from the media. Women who are ready to speak and have established themselves as authorities or experts through social media, vlogs, blogs or podcasts are often approached by media houses to sit in panels or become columnists.

However, one participant was of a contrary view, arguing that women are traditionally difficult sources and digital technologies have not helped much in making women more willing as sources. She said:

Women are difficult sources yet media houses rely on willing sources. Women are slow to respond, claim they want time, authority from organisations they are working for, etc. In this case, digital technologies have not really helped.

Generally, most of the research participants across the five media houses felt that women have tapped into digital technologies to build profiles for themselves and in this way, garnered attention from the mainstream media. Conversely, online “trolls” marginalise/ silence women’s voices. Some participants expressed concerns over the marginalisation of women as sources and gatherers because of technology-assisted violence against women. One participant said:

Sometimes you write a story and when you look at the comments section, you get traumatised and wonder if you should have written anything in the first place.

Technology-assisted violence against women was a thorny issue raised by participants across the five media houses. Another participant said:

An email came in from a viewer who lamented how an anchor had interviewed a particular person and she did not seem not to know the topic. However, instead of criticising her interview or research skills, the person who sent the email commented on how the anchor has not been able to have children and things like that, so it makes you wonder

what a news anchor's private life has to do with her interviewing skills.

*Social media has helped lift barriers to women's participation as sources*

Social media seems to have helped break gender barriers for women as sources. Most of the participants in this study believe that women have been able to penetrate traditionally male-dominated roles as sources in the legacy newsroom because of digital technologies. These roles include being panellists in television shows and tackling topics on politics, energy, etc. A participant commented that a news source like Jerotich Seii, who speaks boldly about Kenya Power and Lighting Company through the hashtag #SwitchoffKenyaPower, gained a spot in a political show on KTN called Pointblank as a source. One participant said:

Seii is speaking about pertinent, important things about power, and keeping in mind that the energy sector is heavily male, the faces are male but now she's one of the women who were brought to the political show.

Women seem to have benefitted from the fact that media houses no longer have a monopoly on news sources, agenda-setting or coverage. A participant said:

If a woman feels going to a journalist directly may not work, she can choose to go on social media first and if that generates a lot of interest, the media will end up seeking her out.

*Women are participating as newsgatherers through content creation and aggregation*

The findings revealed that women are participating in journalism as news gatherers through content creation (within and outside digital departments of newsrooms) and content aggregation. Some of this content creation is through blogs, vlogs and podcasts and the participants felt they were cutting a niche in lifestyle content on these digital platforms. Terms like 'mummy vloggers' and bloggers were used to describe these women. One participant said:

Women journalists source for information from WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Podcasts. They can also convene panels on the same platforms without having to be physically present to moderate conversations from diverse locations.

Digitisation seems to have come with more freedom to create as cited by one participant:

Women can now create content without going through several channels of approval and that has made them decision-makers at every level, not just top-level. A number of women have thrived in mobile journalism. Many have come up/are able to come up with creative ideas, making them an easy sell.

Most of the participants felt that digital technologies have created opportunities outside the newsroom as opposed to inside for women as news gatherers as women are now content creators and aggregators. Vlogs and blogs were touted as some of the places where women have benefitted as news gatherers. A participant said that if these bloggers or vloggers stuck with traditional media, they would not have had similar opportunities as news gatherers. She said:

Inside the newsroom, I can't say there's much in terms of opportunities as news gatherers, I can't measure it but let me start from outside, I see a lot of female bloggers and vloggers, so we have now people who are writing about fashion, painting, cooking and there are a lot of female influencers as well.

Social media platforms were also deemed sources for information for women to gather news. A participant said:

Women journalists source for information from WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Podcasts. They can also convene panels on the same platforms without having to be physically present to moderate conversations from diverse locations.

Most participants felt that women are leaving the newsroom, as there are more opportunities for them to work with digital technologies outside than within the newsroom. This was attributed to the culture in the newsroom, which is male-dominated. A participant said:

Women are leaving the newsroom especially after they hit the glass ceiling. For example, Janet Mbugua left her role as a news anchor and is now very popular online as an ambassador for menstrual health policies for young girls. Adelle Onyango left her job as a radio show host and started a podcast show.

*Digital technologies have enhanced information gathering*

The findings also suggest that information gathering for women has been enhanced by digital technologies. This has enabled them to venture into reporting on different topics, even male-dominated ones, from the comfort of their seats. It has also substantially reduced the need to have human sources as these are available online. One participant said:

Technology has democratised information to the extent that you can research, compile and publish everything from the desktop without having to speak to a source.

Most participants felt that information gathering had been made easier because cameras and video cameras are more portable as a woman could even use her mobile phone to shoot and edit unlike before when photography and videography were male-dominated roles as the cameras were huge and needed men to carry them. One participant said:

Women can produce their own content end to end. With smaller cameras, better technology by journalism, the perception that the camera was always for the man is no longer the case, I also think vlogging, blogging and the democratization of the online space has helped us tell stories that traditionally would not be told, for example, you'll find a lot of mummy bloggers now telling their own stories.

Women who participated in this study acknowledged the role digital technologies have played in reducing the approval channels for content created by women. This is also made possible by the fact that they are creating their own content outside of newsrooms and do not rely on a chain of approval for their content to be published.

*Women benefitted as decision-makers in early days of digital journalism in the newsroom*

On women participating as decision makers, some participants felt that women benefitted more as decision-makers in the early days of the adoption of digital technologies in the newsroom, which also signalled the setting up of digital departments as it was regarded as unimportant. There was little competition for a role in the digital department, even one in leadership, as it was non-threatening and feminised, and men were not competing for these roles. One participant said:

An editor's position in the online department wasn't thought to be a big deal in the early 2000s at the Standard and people did not have an appreciation of how far digital could go. The men were more willing to give up or not fight for positions in the digital department because they were going after what was 'hot'. Women who were early adopters benefitted from this because they became editors.

Another participant agreed that it was easy for media houses to become gender blind in the early days of the adoption of digital technologies in the newsroom. She said:

I think it is just natural that when people have locked you out of a sector and a new thing comes, everyone is just trying to do everything, so there's a point that they are just looking for anyone with a skill in that area and if there's that greater need, they become gender blind which they should always be in every situation.

*Women are marginalised in authoritative narrative about digital journalism in the newsroom*

One of the major concerns by most of the women who participated in this study was that their male counterparts –especially those in decision-making positions–still discriminated against them during editorial meetings and did not consider their opinions credible. One participant, who heads a digital section on a news website, noted:

The digital department is very male-dominated, maybe it's a reflection of the whole newsroom but it feels very male dominated. And again these things start from the top, if you're a male boss, it's natural to

have a blind spot, there are things someone will not see that I will see so something may be problematic and it's mostly male-dominated so they may not see it as a problem.

Another participant decried the assumption that matters to do with digital technologies are too complicated for women to understand:

People assume that women do not have the skills or knowledge to work with digital technologies so they treat us in a very condescending manner. Sometimes you wonder if you need a deeper voice so that you can be heard during a meeting.

*Decision-making roles are more prominent outside newsrooms than inside*

Digital technologies seem to be affording women opportunities to be decision-makers outside the newsroom as bloggers, vloggers and social media influencers because there's no glass ceiling. One participant said:

The glass ceiling is non-existent on these platforms because they can make their own decisions with regard to what kind of content they carry.

On women as decision-makers in the newsroom, digital technologies seem to have enhanced the participation of women in decision-making for women who already have the title but do not seem to have aided much in shattering the glass ceiling in decision-making as the top positions in digital departments, according to the participants, are still male-dominated. A participant said:

The other thing is that very rarely do we see women being given positions that they can make decisions in the digital field in the newsroom; they are there but they are few. When making work rotas (work schedules), there is no special consideration for mother with young children.

However, a few participants felt that since thriving in digital is about innovation and one's impact is measurable (through page views and engagement), it's not a gender issue. One participant said.



It's all about how innovative you are. Digital technologies have made the playground equal for everyone as long as one is willing to learn and keep innovating.

*Digital tools aid women who are already in decision-making roles*

For women who are already in decision-making roles in the newsroom, digital tools such as Google Analytics, Chartbeat and Google Trends make it easier for them to determine reach, quality and popularity of content which then influences decisions made on future assignments and this was hailed by many of the participants in decision-making roles as a great benefit of digital technologies. One participant said:

With digital, your impact as a decision-maker is very measurable so when you're working in the digital space and you understand how to use data and how to demonstrate the impact of your work, what happens is that a lot of the gender biases that are usually central to editorial decisions are able to kind of reduce.

Another participant added that digital technologies allow women to have a level playing field like men because data can be used to show the impact of their work. She said:

I can be able to show you the data, I can show you the impact, I can show you the number of shares, I can tell you this is the exact revenue I've earned against my product, and it gives you something tangible that is not necessarily subject to the perceptions of a person or the inherent biases.

#### 4.3.3 New Forms of Journalism Where Women Have Thrived

This objective sought to establish the new forms of journalism where women have thrived in the newsroom and in journalism as a whole.

*Women seem to be cutting a niche as content creators, aggregators on various digital platforms*

The study revealed that digital technologies have enabled women to thrive in different forms of journalism: vlogs, blogs and podcasting as earlier stated but these

mostly happen outside the newsroom. Within the newsroom, women seem to thrive in non-traditional roles like social media editing. Notably, the terms “mommy vloggers” and “mommy bloggers” were used to describe some of the women who had thrived outside newsrooms. A participant said:

Green Calabash and Kaluhi’s Kitchen are two examples of women creating lifestyle content and thriving at it.

Most participants emphasised that the opportunities for women to thrive in new forms of journalism existed outside newsrooms. These opportunities include blogging, vlogging and influencers. One participant said:

Inside the newsroom, I can’t say there’s much. But there are very many female bloggers and vloggers, so we now have people who are writing about fashion, painting and cooking.

#### *Women are reinventing themselves and rebranding using social media*

Women are reinventing themselves and rebranding using social media as influencers. According to the women who participated in this study, female journalists seem to be exiting the traditional newsroom, reinventing, and rebranding themselves through social media, making a living as influencers. Some of these journalists include radio and TV personalities like Adelle Onyango, Caroline Mutoko and Janet Mbugua, among others.

The findings also suggest that women are cutting a niche as content creators and aggregators on various digital platforms. Many of the participants felt that women had thrived more outside than inside the newsroom and pointed out vlogging, blogging and podcasting as some of the new forms of journalism where women have thrived. Particular subjects of interest included lifestyle topics, health and gender. A participant said:

Caroline Mutoko transitioned from being a radio presenter to producing content for the web. She has her own shows on YouTube and Facebook.

Another participant also spoke about female journalists finding a voice and space outside of newsrooms. For instance, one participant said this about Adelle Onyango, a former radio host:

Adelle started a program where she's been getting funds looking for safe space for women who have experienced sexual harassment so it feels like once women realise their stronger role as a media personality, they take that celebrity status to make a name for themselves.

Some participants felt that women thrive in new forms of journalism outside the newsroom because there are no structures or hierarchies, compared to the traditional newsroom. They also suggested that the fact that starting a digital venture was less labour and capital-intensive made it more attractive for women to venture into. As one participant noted:

There are a number of women who are creating their own sites and also aggregating content. They have also been able to monetise this content.

Another participant added that women were leveraging on social media to create their own brands

If you look online right now you'll see they're so many YouTubers and you find that they're gathering their own stories, they're coming up with their own content, and they're funding their own ventures and getting money from it.

*Women thrive in non-traditional forms of journalism in the newsroom e.g. social media editors*

Within the newsroom, the findings revealed that women seem to thrive in non-traditional journalism roles in the newsroom e.g. data editors and social media editors.

A participant said her role as a social media editor was made possible because of digital

technologies and cites it as a privilege as she was able to make five months of maternity leave instead of three because she could work remotely. She said:

I'm an example of equal opportunities for women. The role of social media editor did not exist before and I was hired as one based purely on my skill, not gender. That's what we have always wanted.

Another participant added that women were changing the narrative that they could not thrive if working with digital technologies. One participant said:

There's a general feeling that women and tech aren't best friends but there are women here who are changing that narrative. In our digital department, there are a number of women who are departmental heads: from the head of department to the head of social media and even the head of the entertainment section of the website.

#### 4.3.4 Existing Structures in Digital Departments to Support Women in the Newsroom

The study also sought to explore the structures that exist which support women working with digital technologies in the newsroom. Many of the women who participated in the study pointed to a lack of a supportive and enabling policy environment in the digital departments in the newsroom to support them in their work. Such structures include flexi-time, flexi-reporting and policies that considered the workplace with a gendered lens.

##### *'Flexibilisation of labour' as a burden and asset for women*

'Flexibilisation of labour' or flexibility was deemed as both a burden and asset by most of the women who participated in the study. This is because as much as flexibility allows them to work remotely and combine work and home duties as women often bear the burden of child care and domestic work, it's a double-edged sword because of the demands of a 24-hour, 7-day per week newsroom which exerts a lot of

pressure on them. For example, one of the research participants went on maternity leave but was still expected to respond to WhatsApp chats, emails and other social media because she could use her phone to work. There was a consensus by the participants that there is need for work policies and structures, which recognise that women have a unique role as caregivers at home and would be more productive if allowed to work from home. A participant said:

It's not about giving special treatment but recognising that for example, a woman who has just given birth needs more assistance than a normal person would. There is someone who recently joined our digital department as a new mother. She works very few hours within the confines of the office because she can work from anywhere.

The participants also revealed that the flexible nature of work in the digital department also meant that there was no official start and end time, which meant that the same burdened women. One participant said:

We actually don't even have an official time when duty really ends, we try and structure shifts as much as we can, sometimes we can have a full day and sometimes a half shift. You basically start your work at six then you end at around four or three thirty and at times you start at eight and end at six-thirty or seven, depends on how the day is. If it's not busy you can leave a bit earlier maybe by an hour.

These unpredictable working hours were deemed especially punishing for young working mothers. Another participant said:

The web desires us to work twenty-four hours yet sometimes you have a young child so you can't take up the position as it is too demanding, you know, we work in shifts so if you're working the evening shifts and you have young kids, it can be a challenge so that can be a barrier. If news breaks, you have your mobile phone with you all the time meaning that your family time might suffer.

*The newsroom culture/norms and lack of digital mindset affect the structures of work*

Some participants lamented about the casual approach by reporters and correspondents in producing content for the digital platforms compared to the

newspaper because the priority has always been delivering news for the print section. For instance, a participant said:

I think my only issue would be that digital journalism is yet to be considered as a credible source of journalism, there is a perception that digital journalists are not real journalists.

It was also felt that some of the bosses of the digital department did not understand how it worked and were therefore, a barrier. One participant said:

As long as we work with bosses who don't understand digital, then we are like ducks paddling in the water and not going anywhere.

*The structures in the digital departments were felt to be either unavailable or unclear*

Most of the women who participated in the study indicated that as digital departments were relatively new in the five media houses, the structures were quite unclear, leaving them open to the interpretation based on standards set by the legacy newsrooms. They also decried the lack of mentorship for women in the digital departments. A participant t said:

I wish there was a mentor- someone who tells you what you have to do to succeed in the online space and who always checks up on you to see if you're making any headway in your career.

Another participant felt that the digital department was relatively new so newsrooms are yet to adjust to how it operates. One participant said:

I think the structures right now are not clearly outlined because it is still a relatively new concept especially in most newsrooms because for the longest time print and broadcast. It is only now that more people are becoming more open to consuming digital news.

#### 4.4 Summary of Key Findings

- Opportunities for women occasioned by digital technologies were thought to be present and the women who participated in this study hailed the characteristics

of digital technologies like speed, flexibility and immediacy of feedback as having helped them in their roles as news gatherers and decision-makers.

- Some of the new ways women participate in journalism as sources or news gatherers included content creation, aggregation and using social media to amplify their voices.
- Digital technologies were also hailed as having helped women in information gathering. They use tools like mobile phones, tablets and other gadgets, which make information gathering-including taking photos and videos, at the click of a button.
- Digital technologies don't seem to have helped women break the glass ceiling within newsrooms. Research participants felt that it is only outside newsrooms, where glass ceilings did not exist, that women could become decision-makers. Within newsrooms, women seemed to have benefitted as decision-makers in the early days of digital journalism because it was not thought to be important and therefore men did not fight them for it. However, a few were of the opinion that the decision-making roles are not genderised because digital technologies have flattened the field.
- The challenges faced by women who participated in this study include cyber bullying/ trolling, addiction and long working hours.
- For women who already hold decision-making positions in the newsrooms, digital tools aid in their decision-making as they rely on measurability of their output to make critical decisions.

- The new forms of journalism where women have thrived include social media influencing, content aggregation and creation. Within newsrooms, women seem to thrive in non-traditional journalism roles like social media editors.
- In terms of existing structures in digital departments to support women in the newsroom, the participants felt that they were either non-existent or inadequate. Further, flexibility was seen as both a burden and an asset to women working with digital technologies in Kenyan newsrooms. Most of the participants also said that the digital mindset had not been fully adopted by their newsrooms and their work in digital was therefore regarded with less seriously than traditional journalism.

#### 4.5 Summary

This chapter outlined the data analysis, presentation and interpretation. This study sought to determine the new ways women are participating in journalism as sources, gatherers and decision-makers because of digitisation, the new forms of journalism where women have thrived and the structures that exist in the digital departments to support women in the newsroom. Digital technologies have changed the way newsrooms operate and in turn, how women rise to the top of their professions and this study has shown that the Kenyan newsroom scenario paints a similar picture. The findings revealed that digital technologies have offered substantial opportunities for women to participate in new ways forms of journalism and thrive but the barriers that dogged women in traditional media, according to some studies, seem to persist in digital media.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. It also offers suggestions on future areas of research.

#### 5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

The discussion of key findings was done based on the following research objectives: (a) to determine new ways women are participating in journalism as a result of digitisation, (b) to establish the new forms of journalism where women have thrived and (c) to explore the structures that support women working with digital technologies in the newsroom. Relevant literature was linked with the findings.

##### 5.2.1 To Determine New Ways Women Are Participating in Journalism because of Digitisation

The findings of this research, based on the shared views by the participants who were drawn from five Kenyan media houses, indicate that digital technologies have democratised media spaces and allowed women to be heard and to contribute in male-dominated topics like politics and energy. Some women have built profiles for themselves and used digital technologies like social media to amplify their voices. Any woman who has an opinion and is willing to share it can do so and thus become a news source.

The advantage of women participating in different ways as sources for women in the newsroom is that it provides them with a database of sources for women-centric

and other topics. Women use platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Podcasts to participate in newsrooms as sources and female journalists rely on these platforms as well to get sources.

From these findings, it is evident that in Kenyan newsrooms, women's participation as sources has been enhanced by digital technologies. Research has indicated that in the past, women's participation as sources has been minimal and where it has existed, it has been dogged by stereotypes and the portrayal of women as victims and sex objects. The findings mean that social media can be tapped into to address these challenges. The results are similar to what Cummings and O'Neil (2015) found out as they concluded that digital ICTs have the ability to increase the power of not only women but also girls by giving them the ability to share their opinions, interests and inclinations. Conversely, this also exposes the women to technology-assisted violence like cyberbullying and trolling, as the findings in this study indicate. This might end up marginalising or muffling their voices.

Newsgathering seems to have become easier, more efficient and less bureaucratic but this specific advantage/ opportunity is not genderised as some participants in the study also revealed. From this finding, it is clear that women seem to have an equal chance with men in leveraging on digital technologies for their work. This means that with the right digital tools, the gender gap can be sealed. These findings are similar to previous research by Nyabuga and Booker (2013) who said that available technologies had changed and improved working habits of journalists and that those digital technologies had also made work processes easier and quicker. Additionally, digital technologies seem to allow women to participate in new ways through content

creation as bloggers, vloggers and influencers. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section on the new forms of journalism where women have thrived.

Technological determinism, the theoretical framework used in this study, offers explanations about why women are participating in new ways as sources and gatherers. The proponents of this theory hold that the relationship between technology and media is such that the two can shape and determine the direction of human activity, be it social, political or economic (Siapera, 2018) and in this study, it seems that the social and economic direction of women in the newsroom is being shaped by digital technologies. McLuhan also posited that as media are extensions of humans, they cause long-lasting changes which change him and his environment (Siapera, 2018) and it's the transformation in the work for women in media as a result of media houses adopting digital technologies that this study focused on. The transformation includes women participating in new ways as sources, gatherers and decision-makers and flexible ways of working which includes more mobility and flexibility (Heckman, 2013).

The study did not find a connection between digital technologies and women's rise in media. The structural barriers in the newsroom still exist. Even those who made it to the decision-making table still faced discrimination as *"just because you have a seat at the table does not mean your voice is welcome,"* according to one of the participants. However, a few participants felt that digital technologies had enabled women to be decision-makers at "all levels" within the newsroom.

One of the participants said: *"digitisation has given women more freedom to create content without going through several channels of approval"*. This finding means that digital technologies in Kenyan newsrooms offer potential for women to break the glass ceiling in media but this can't happen until structural issues are

addressed. These findings are similar to what Steiner (2017) who was not so optimistic about digital technologies helping address barriers for women in rising in the newsroom and getting a seat at the table, said. She argued that even in the online context, women were not immune to the glass ceiling and double standards in gender, which stood in the way of their promotion to decision-making roles in legacy media.

Hargittai and Walejko (2008) agree that there have been as many hampering factors in traditional media as there are in online media. Some of the participants in the study alluded to gender discrimination and being marginalised in authoritative narrative about digital journalism in the newsroom because it is still male-dominated. As York (2017) put it, since it's men who traditionally hold decision-making positions in newsrooms, they will keep on promoting fellow men from the "boys' club". Stereotypes, long working hours and media's male-dominated structure are cited as some of the reasons that hamper women's growth in Kenyan media (MCK, 2015) and according to the results of findings, these have not been addressed by digital technologies.

However, the study found that women seem to have benefited as decision-makers in the early days of digital journalism in the newsroom. This is because in the early 2000s, digital journalism was still fresh in the Kenyan newsroom, according to some participants, and it was deemed non-threatening by the men and therefore, it was "feminised" as they stereotypically categorised it with features, lifestyle and health, which typically had female editors. From this finding, it is clear that in Kenyan newsrooms, the role of women as decision-makers that was witnessed in the early days of digital technologies in the newsroom was a temporary win that was soon overtaken by the "boys' club" habits. It's also clear that the glass ceilings persist even for women

working in digital departments in the newsroom. This means that more effort needs to be put by media houses in leveraging on digital technologies to enhance leadership opportunities for women in the newsroom.

The findings are similar to what Heckman (2013) reported. One of the participants in her study said that in the early days of digital media, she took a web-focused job partly because it did not have the glass ceilings that traditional media had and men did not fight her for it because it was not an aspirational position for them, adding that a lot of women joined online departments also because it was a place that allowed innovation and failure. Heckman (2013) adds:

The early days of digital news, while not entirely egalitarian, appear to have provided women with leadership opportunities and allowed them to shape our concepts of digital news. (p. 28)

This means that Kenyan newsrooms need to make an effort in creating space for women working with digital technologies to lead because they only seem to have benefitted in the early days of the adoption of digital. Researchers have documented the invaluable input bring to the exercise of leadership like diverse strengths, viewpoints, and novelty (Chandler, 2011) so it would be imperative to have them participate more in decision-making roles in media. Some newsroom culture theorists argue that if women were at the top of newsroom leadership, the selection and treatment of news would not only be different but also better (Strong, 2018).

One of the participants, however, felt there was more upward mobility in digital departments as opposed to legacy media departments. She said: *“The barriers are not as rigid in digital, there might be fewer barriers in digital than print, actually they are much fewer so I found that probably I would not be where I am now in my career if I started in print, I feel like I moved faster in the digital department”*. From this finding,

it is clear that the catalytic nature of digital technologies in hastening the growth of women's careers in Kenyan newsrooms is a potential advantage. This means that there's an opportunity to explore how digital technologies can be used to advance the careers of female journalists. As Heckman (2013) also reported in her findings, digital platforms do not have an established hierarchy like traditional newsrooms and as such, they offer both flexibility and mobility for women and minorities. However, Heckman's study was restricted to purely digital platforms while this study looked at digital departments located within hybrid newsrooms.

### 5.2.2 To Establish the New Forms of Journalism Where Women Have Thrived

The findings from this study indicate that women have thrived in alternative formats of creating and disseminating news like vlogs (*YouTube* channels), podcasts and blogs/websites. Additionally, it has allowed for women to work remotely due to flexibility, although this comes at a cost; as will be discussed in the next section on structures that support women working with digital technologies in the newsroom. Franks (2013) acknowledged that the "digital whirlwind" has not only created new opportunities but also new forms of journalism where women have thrived. For example, women can work remotely, keep abreast of the news agenda, brand themselves using social media or blogs and reinvent themselves. She adds that in places where women can create a special position and brand themselves in new forms, they have reinvented themselves but are less successful in places where structures exist and where there's evidence of the boys' club.

The trend seems to be for both women who have worked in traditional newsrooms as journalists as well as those who haven't and are experimenting with these new forms of journalism that are more flexible and less expensive than traditional forms

like print, radio and TV. Within the newsroom, digital technologies have enabled some female journalists to experiment with new forms of journalism like social media editing, data editing and mobile journalism. This finding suggests a need for Kenyan newsrooms to tame attrition rates for women by addressing systemic cultural barriers that get in the way of their growth. This means that the “boys’ club” will remain impenetrable for women despite digital technologies unless Kenyan newsrooms work towards addressing it through gender-sensitive policies geared towards the promotion of women within newsrooms. These policies also need to respond to the realities and demands of working with digital technologies e.g. the 24-hour, 7-day news cycle.

The participants in this study pointed out prominent TV/ radio personalities like Caroline Mutoko, Janet Mbugua who had carved niches for themselves as YouTubers, vloggers, bloggers, podcasters and influencers as examples of women thriving in different forms of journalism. For most of the participants, the opportunities and possibilities offered by digital technologies lie within the frame of alternative media. This means that Kenyan newsrooms have an opportunity to use women who are thriving on various digital platforms as sources and content creators.

Heckman (2013) however cautions that these new avenues for journalists to advance professionally bring a mixture of challenges and opportunities for women. Some of the participants in the survey used the term “Mommy Vloggers” and “Mommy Bloggers” to describe the new forms of journalism where women have thrived. These are terms that, according to Heckman (2013) are filled with gender stereotypes and it stops their work from getting intellectual recognition. As journalists are taught to build their brands, how they are perceived becomes very important, as women also need to be viewed as capable professionals. From this finding, it is evident that gender biases

and stereotypes persist even in online platforms. This means that Kenyan media houses need to play a role in addressing such biases. This can be done by avoiding gender bias when assigning stories and in the selection of news sources.

The findings also point to a pattern of women having to leave the newsroom in order to experience the full benefits of working with digital technologies. From this finding, it is clear that in Kenyan newsrooms, female journalists have to step out of traditional newsrooms to thrive. This means that barriers that exist in traditional newsrooms also exist in digital departments and need to be addressed. Heckman (2013), who measured women's leadership in the new journalism ecology (focusing on their role in digital startups) observed that it is outside of traditional journalism institutions that women have the best opportunity to trump old habits of the newsrooms which stand in the way of the career progression of women. Some of these old habits include the boys' club and a culture of men promoting men. In the past, researchers have focused on women's relationship with traditional media like newspaper, magazines, TV and radio with the narrative being that of marginalisation in various ways as subjects, sources, news gatherers and decision-makers.

The findings of this study suggest that the narrative is slowly changing, especially with regard to women as sources and newsgatherers, but the challenges that dogged women in the past still persist. Most of the opportunities afforded for women are not gendered but hold the potential to break gender barriers especially for women as decision-makers. It's also clear from the findings that because of these traditional barriers that still exist in the newsroom, it's only when women step out of the newsroom and venture into content creation, aggregation and influencing (through social media) that they thrive. It means that women in the newsroom are yet to enjoy the fruits of



digital disruption but media houses can break the cycle by dismantling the boys' club and other old habits that get in the way of women's careers. Some challenges that are specific to digital technologies like technology-assisted violence against women also need to be addressed.

### 5.2.3 To Explore the Structures that Support Women Working with Digital Technologies in the Newsroom

The findings revealed that the current structures in the newsroom to support women working with digital technologies are inadequate. This was a view shared by all the participants in the study and they recommended flexi-time, flexi-assignments and gender-sensitive work policies as possible remedies.

One of the changes occasioned by the digital media revolution is new forms of work; what Siapera (2018) refers to as "flexibilisation" of labour. The findings suggest that this was deemed to be both a curse and a blessing. This "flexibilisation" involves feminisation of labour too, where more and more women participating in the workforce in atypical ways. As one of the barriers that hinder the growth of women into leadership and decision-making roles has been cited as long working hours (MCK, 2015), this "flexibilisation" of labour, as cited by many of the participants, should ideally be emancipating for them.

However, as discussed, many of the participants felt that this "flexibilisation" of labour was advantageous and disadvantageous. These disadvantages are what Franks (2013) referred to as electronic cage as opposed to the cottage because of pressure on media houses to have 24-hour, seven-day-a-week multimedia presence even as women continue to shoulder the demands of being the care providers at home and also

delivering at work. One participant said that one *“never really leaves work behind because it follows you everywhere”*. This means that as long as gender-sensitive workplace policies are not put in place by Kenyan newsrooms, flexibility will continue to be a burden for women, especially breastfeeding mothers and those with young children.

Many of the participants recommended that media houses should look at working conditions of women using digital technologies with a gender lens, as this would help them come up with structures that would support them like flexi-time, flexi-assignments, workplace policies to support young mothers like a six-month maternity leave, gender mainstreaming policies, mentorship and targeted training for women. In terms of flexi-assignments, one participant had this to say:

CNN did this, there’s an Asian business reporter who did a series on motherhood when she was expectant. She focused on issues such as flexi-time, about the concerns of working moms, she even held roundtables and you see, there’s a certain authenticity when you see a lady with a baby bump having a conversation with another lady about that.

This optimism by most of the participants with regard to the opportunities digital technologies present for women in newsrooms is in line with McLuhan’s approach in the technological determinism theory. He was just as optimistic and regarded the relationship between technology and media to be such that the two can shape and determine the direction of human activity, be it social, political or economic (Siapera, 2018). McLuhan posited that the most critical inventions that changed life were the phonetic alphabet, the printing press and the telegraph. He argued that a medium shapes us because we partake it repeatedly until it becomes an extension of ourselves (Griffin et al., 2014).

The findings on lack of adequate structures to support women in newsrooms are similar to what Chambers et al. (2004, p.235) said when they put forward that the answer to “whether online journalism will evolve into a job for ‘the boys’ or become a job for women will depend on whether the work is divided off from traditional forms of journalism and what kind of newsroom culture arises within it.” These findings are also similar to what Zuiderveld (2017) found. She asserted that one of the obstacles for women’s rise in the newsroom were structural problems which had to do with sexism, male-oriented news values and routines that were so difficult that they could not be combined with family life thus making women leave the newsroom. [From this finding, it is clear that for women to fully benefit from the opportunities that arise from digital technologies, the newsroom culture has to change. Some of the remedies suggested by the participants like flexi-time, flexi-assignments, mentorship and training can be a first step towards changing the newsroom culture.

### 5.3 Conclusions

The study confirms the long-standing hypothesis that digital technologies have offered substantial opportunities to women working with digital technologies in the newsroom but have done little to address the barriers that get in the way of female journalists rising to the top of their careers.

Digital technologies have paved the way for amplification of women’s voices through social media. Women are participating in journalism in new ways as sources, gatherers and decision-makers but these opportunities are more prominent outside newsrooms than within newsrooms because traditional barriers like the boys’ club and long working hours continue to dog women’s careers despite the existence of digital technologies which were meant to address some of these barriers.

The new forms of journalism where women have thrived include content creation and aggregation for digital platforms and social media influencing. Most of these opportunities lie outside of newsrooms. The findings also suggest that for women to thrive, they have to leave the newsroom, which means that attrition rates will continue to be high as long as traditional barriers exist.

The existing structures in the newsrooms are deemed inadequate and unsupportive of women working with digital technologies. Flexibility/ Flexibilisation of labour, holds the highest potential as an opportunity for women working with digital technologies in the newsroom but remains unexplored because there are no adequate policies or structures to support this. Challenges like addiction to technology and technology-assisted violence against women also need to be addressed for women to fully embrace the opportunities presented by digital technologies. Hauer (2017) however attributes these negative effects of technology to poor use and not really because of the technology per se.

#### 5.4 Recommendations and Implications for Research and Practice

One of the implications for practice from the findings is that media organisations in Kenya stand the risk of repeating the same mistakes from the past that saw women being marginalised and eventually leaving the newsroom because they are not responding fast enough to changes occasioned by digital technologies. Media houses therefore need to increase the pace of response and adaptation to changes in the way media professions work and how they rise to the top of their profession. The findings reveal that digital technologies are an enabler of change and have made work processes easier, faster and more efficient but these do not seem to have translated into gains for women as media houses are yet to fully tap into the potential the technologies hold.

Women's voices and input seem to be missing in authoritative narrative about digital technologies in the newsroom and this could hurt journalism in future. In McLuhan's theory of technological determinism, technology shapes people and people shape technology. If women's voices and input are missing, newsrooms risk losing relevance and competitiveness as studies have demonstrated the value of having women at the decision-making table. Media houses should consider having targets for women to join the decision-making table but this may be a temporary measure. There is also need for training, mentorship and up-skilling for women working with digital technologies as this will help address some of the challenges faced like technology addiction and online violence. Up-skilling will also equip women with the necessary technological skills to help them take a seat on the decision-making table in the newsroom.

The women who participated in this study face challenges similar to their male counterparts like long working hours, addiction to technology and online violence. Research has however shown that the latter affects more women than men as women are more targeted (Franks, 2013). Media houses need to implement stringent policies to protect women from online violence as it gets in the way of them practising journalism as it affects their physical and social wellbeing. As Siapera (2018) put it, it presents issues such as sleep deprivation, loss of appetite, isolation, conflict with family members among others. The question that arises is the extent to which this affects journalists working with digital technologies. Further research can address this.

Additionally, women often shoulder the burden of domestic work and child-care so they are more likely to be affected by the long working hours. Digital technology offers flexibility as a great opportunity for female journalists, especially those with

young families but its potential is yet to be fully tapped into for the benefit of women. There's therefore need to have practical measures to implement workplace policies that are sensitive to these unique challenges that women face or women may leave media houses for jobs in public relations and communication as past trends have indicated.

Research has also indicated that media houses have gender policies but levels of knowledge among employees and rate of implementation by the companies is low. One of the solutions is flexi-assignments, whereby a reporter takes on a beat that is flexible and convenient for them. One of the participants in the study provided an example of having a pregnant journalist cover stories related to women and pregnancy in the workplace and this is something media houses may want to consider. The other remedy has been flexi-time that considers the special needs of breastfeeding mothers and those with young children because they are primary caregivers at home.

Generally, women have been aided by digital technologies to participate in new ways as sources and news gatherers but this happens mostly in alternative spaces where these women, some of whom are professional journalists, have cut a niche for themselves but mainstream media is yet to fully tap into this potential. For women who've left the newsroom and are thriving in various digital platforms as content creators, aggregators and influencers, the stereotypes like "mommy vloggers" and "mommy bloggers" also follow them, and they risk not being taken seriously as journalists.

Within media houses, women do not seem to be reaching the echelons of digital media leadership and some attribute this to gender stereotypes. It is therefore imperative to raise awareness about these stereotypes and editors can do this through conscious efforts not to assign women stereotypical assignments and roles. Media houses can also

play a role in this by “portraying women as experts and contributors” (Franks, 2013, p.55). Additionally, media houses can utilise the lifestyle content produced by the bloggers, vloggers and podcasters for their websites, newspapers, TVs and radio platforms. Further research on how gender stereotypes are reflected in digital platforms is also recommended.

### 5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Future research can take a quantitative approach to measure the extent to which digital technologies have presented opportunities for women in media. The scope can also be widened to include purely digital news platforms for comparison with hybrid newsrooms. Newsrooms based outside Nairobi can also be targeted. Key informant interviews with industry experts and human resources managers could also offer useful insights in future research.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A In-depth Interview Guide

#### Introduction

Thank you for taking time to meet with me today. My name is Faith Oneya and I'm conducting a qualitative research survey on the opportunities that digital technologies have created for women in Kenyan newsrooms. The interview will take approximately one hour and I would like to request your permission to record it so that I don't miss anything you say. I will also take notes during the session.

This research is in partial fulfilment of the Master of Arts in Digital Journalism course I am undertaking at the Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications. Please provide your honest opinion.

Your anonymity is guaranteed and the responses you give as a participant will be completely confidential. The results will be analysed and reported collectively. As such, no findings will be directly attributed to you as an individual.

1. Please tell me a little about what you do and how do you apply digital technologies in your work on a typical day? What do you like most about your role?
2. What are the first words or phrases that come to mind when you think about digitisation in the newsroom in relation to your work?
3. What roles are women in media taking up in the digital era in the newsroom? Can you give me examples of the same?
4. What are the new ways women are participating in journalism as sources, gatherers and decision-makers because of digitisation?
5. What are the new forms of journalism where women have thrived?
6. What opportunities or advantages does working with digital technologies afford you as a woman in the newsroom?
7. What challenges does working with digital technologies in present to you as a woman in the newsroom?
8. In your opinion, what role, if any, has digitisation played in equalised gender representation in the digital department in the newsroom?
9. What structural issues need to be addressed to support women working with digital technologies in newsrooms?
10. Is there anything more that you would like to add?

Thank you for your time.

## Appendix B Screening Questionnaire

### Introduction

Name:		Gender Male ... Terminate Female... Proceed to Q.1
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1. Which of the following titles best describes your role?	
Managing editor	01 Proceed to question 2
Online editor	02 Proceed to question 2
Content editor	03 Proceed to question 2
Social Media Editor	04 Proceed to question 2
Online sub-editor	05 Proceed to question 2
Online reporter	06 Proceed to question 2
Chief sub-editor online	07 Proceed to question 2
Deputy chief sub-editor	08 Proceed to question 2
None of the above	09 Terminate

4. How long have you worked in a digital department of a media house?	
Less than 2 years	01 Terminate interview
3 to 5 years	02 Proceed to question 3
Over 5 years	03 Proceed to question 3

5. Which of the following digital technologies do you use in your day to day work as a journalist? (Multiple answers allowed. Participant must say yes to at least one digital technology, otherwise terminate the interview)	
Laptops	01
Smartphones	02
Desktop Computers	03
Social media	04
Website	05
Internet	06
Video	07
Other( Please specify)	

6. Please describe how you use the digital technologies mentioned above for work? (Participant should be able to describe how they use the technology for work. Proceed to recruit the participant if she can describe how she uses the digital technologies. If not, terminate interview)	
Laptops	



Smartphones	
Desktop Computers	
Social media	
Website	
Internet	
Video	
Other( Please specify)	

You may qualify for a study that seeks to explore the opportunities digital technologies present for women in media. If you would like to participate, please give me your phone number and the researcher will contact you.



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY  
*Graduate School of Media and Communications*

REF: AKU-GSMC/ERC/2019/003

Date: October 30, 2019.

Dear Faith Oneya (Student No. 535143)

**RE: OPPORTUNITIES DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES PRESENT FOR WOMEN IN MEDIA: A  
MULTI-CASE STUDY OF NEWSROOMS**

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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 November 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020 and your application's approval number is AKU-GSMC/ERC/2019/001.

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 of 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 approval period.
4. The researcher will be required to submit a comprehensive progress report when applying 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). The process is and 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

*Nine (9) West Building, 7th Floor, Mkungu Close, Off Parklands Road  
P.O. Box 30270 - 00100 G.P.O. Nairobi, Kenya  
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Email Address: [info.gsmc@aku.edu](mailto:info.gsmc@aku.edu) ; Website: [www.aku.edu](http://www.aku.edu)*

Appendix D Introductory Letter from AKU



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY  
*Graduate School of Media and Communications*

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

October 25, 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

**FAITH ONEYA (STUDENT NO. 535143)**

Faith Oneya is a registered student at the Aga Khan University, Graduate School of Media and Communications. She is enrolled in the Master of Arts in Digital Journalism Programme and has completed her course work. She is now working on her Master's thesis. Ms. Oneya's topic is "**Opportunities Digital Technologies Present for Women in Media: A Multi-Case Study of Newsrooms**".

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Nancy Booker**  
**Director – Academic Affairs**



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**




**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION.**

Ref No: **521589**

Date of Issue: **07/November/2019**

**RESEARCH LICENSE**



**This is to Certify that Miss. Faith Oneya of Aga Khan University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: OPPORTUNITIES DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES PRESENT FOR WOMEN IN MEDIA: A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF NEWSROOMS IN KENYA for the period ending : 07/November/2020.**


License No: **NACOSTI/P/19/2585**

*Muditha*

Applicant Identification Number  
**521589**

Director General  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &  
INNOVATION**

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