

A CORRELATION STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIA
COVERAGE AND THE CORPORATE REPUTATION OF NATIONAL SOCIAL
SECURITY FUND (NSSF)

by

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APPROVAL

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In accordance with Daystar University policies, this thesis is accepted in partial
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DECLARATION

A CORRELATION STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIA
COVERAGE AND THE CORPORATE REPUTATION OF NATIONAL SOCIAL
SECURITY FUND (NSSF)

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other
college or university for academic credit

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AEA	Agricultural Employers Association
COTU	Central Organization of Trade Unions
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
GM	General Motors
KCGEA	Kenya Coffee Growers' and Employers' Association
KETAWU	Kenya Electrical Trades Allied Workers Union
NACOSTI	National Council for Science and Technology
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
PDF	Portable Document Format
RBA	Retirement Benefits Authority
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science

ABSTRACT

The relationship between media coverage and corporate reputation is an essential phenomenon given its influence on perceptions among audiences. For instance, customers affiliate themselves with organizations with good reputations and regularly patronize their products and/or services. Past studies also indicate that the measure of organizational success is based on the attitudes and opinions of the public arising from media coverage of an organization's attributes. The purpose of this study was to explore how negative media coverage influences the corporate reputation of the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). The sample size was 103 respondents drawn from Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU), Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) and Agricultural Employers Association (AEA) who were also the target population. Descriptive research design was used in this research and both questionnaire and Focus Group discussions employed for data collection. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS programme and Thematic Content Analysis for analysing qualitative data. The findings of the study revealed that the publics of NSSF depended on the media as a source of information. However, majority of the respondents depended on their organizations internal publications as a source of information. Majority of the responses from the publics indicated negative perceptions towards the corporate reputation of NSSF. Finally, a correlation was identified between negative media coverage and the corporate reputation of NSSF. The key recommendations of the study included creative use of the media by NSSF such as publishing news articles, production of television documentaries and carrying out Corporate Social Responsibility activities in highlighting positive organizational attributes. It also included initiatives such as media relations and media monitoring in order to safeguard sensitive information likely to influence public decisions.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My late parents, Samuel Ogonji “Doj” and Jeniffer Ogonji “Toto” who strived all their lives to give me the best education, my dear wife Juliet and my children Adele and Darlene, whose inspiration and guidance are with me in whatever I pursue

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This study sought to identify the relationship between media coverage and corporate reputation. This chapter therefore covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, hypothesis, justification of the study, significance of the study, assumptions, and scope of the study, limitations and delimitations, and definition of terms.

Background to the Study

The influence that the media have is becoming progressively significant in the twenty-first century, an era characterized by a media-saturated society. This is because the role of disseminating information and advocacy is moving from mainstream media to audiences (Gaur, 2014). Fondly referred to as the Fourth Estate because of its unofficial and inconsistent recognition from society, media no doubt has power and is one of the means through which information flows (Owusu & Poku, 2013). Newspapers, radio, television and the internet for example, are media channels that are significantly playing a role in forming perceptions of the public. Large numbers of people today spend more time interacting with the media than they do with close relatives or friends and in fact, it is estimated that through the first decade of the twenty-first century, they will spend perhaps an additional 119 hours annually (Gaur, 2014; Gamble & Gamble, 2013). According to a Census Bureau Survey done in US, the average annual media usage time of American adults was 3,532 hours in 2009, constituting 41% of their total available time, twice as much as their work time

(Zhang, 2014). If these statistics are anything to go by, this dependency can be attributed to the proliferation of various kinds of media available now. For instance, “Kenya currently has 37 TV stations, 161 FM radio stations, 16 newspapers and 71 consumer magazines, together with some trade, technical, and professional journals and directories” (Skinner, Kiuluku, Tikolo, & Yankah, 2012, p.29).

How then do media affect audiences? These effects “implies that media messages have a direct and significant effect on the knowledge, attitudes and even behaviour of members of the audience” (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna & Kinsey, 2005, p. 144). With the explosion of media, audiences are being exposed to a lot of content that one wonders whether perceptions are being shaped by virtue of the exposure. According to Tench and Yeomans (2006), media effects refer to the responses that the media has on audiences as a result of the audiences being exposed to the media and its content. Their representations of different issues can further influence how audiences understand and engage with that world they live in (Curran, Gurevitch & Woollacott, 1979).

From the foregoing, it is observed that media is central to corporate organizations especially in the dissemination of messages to the general public and can further assist in the formation of different publics and in maintaining them (Owusu & Poku, 2013; Curran et al., 1979). The media further provides a means of sharing information that is used in forming perceptions of organizations. The level of information disseminated by the media about a corporate, its brand, specific products or services is significant in forming perceptions held about the organization. This strengthens the power of the media to make or break organizational reputation. Therefore as media coverage rises, it raises awareness levels which organizations must acknowledge specifically in reputation formation (Owusu & Poku, 2013;

Carroll, 2011).

Corporate organizations must always strive to maintain favorable reputations. According to Schultz and Werner (2005), it takes a long time to develop a good reputation, and it can be lost by a solitary news story or item. This is because consumers rely on firms' reputations since they have less information than managers do about firms' commitments to making profits or achieving their objectives (Carroll, 2011).

According to Burke, Martin and Cooper (2011), corporate reputation is a function of the perceptions and attitudes towards an organization held by individual members of a particular stakeholder group. Carroll (2011) defined corporate reputation as the aggregation of single stakeholders' perceptions of how well organizational responses are meeting the demands and expectations of many organizational stakeholders and the evaluation of a firm by its stakeholders in terms of their effect, esteem, and knowledge. Corporate reputation therefore rests on assessments made by individuals outside the organization and is further associated with a company's financial performance. People also prefer to do business with companies they like, employees stay longer and work harder for companies that are liked and individuals prefer to work in firms having good reputations. However, corporate reputation can be damaged quickly given increasing media scrutiny and global coverage of organizations (Burke et al., 2011).

Toyota Company for instance, over time established a high-calibre reputation on the strength of its commitment to continuous improvement, customer focus, reliability, quality and superiority in manufacturing and design. Its good reputation contributed to high market share, customer allegiance, and financial muscle (Fan, Geddes & Flory, 2011). However, perceptions of Toyota indicated a substantial drop

when information regarding the recall of Lexus brand hit majority of the media entities. Fan et al. (2011) stated that the time pattern of the corporate reputation about the carmaker dropped abruptly in the year 2010 after a progression of value issues and reviews. Problems began on September 10, 2009 when a 911 call recording was released of a car crash that was being driven by a patrol officer which resulted in his death and ultimately of his family. By 2009 and 2010, Toyota had recalled about eight million vehicles worldwide, including six million in the U.S (Fan et al., 2011). Subsequent media coverage of the crisis had an enormous effect on the company. Negative coverage that focused on the inadequate responses of Toyota strained public trust, buyers, supervisory bodies, and government officials. Consequently, Toyota vehicle sales and shares in the U.S plummeted in January 2010 and in February 2010 compared to the same months in 2009 (Fan et al., 2011).

A faulty ignition switch which caused at least 13 deaths forced General Motors (GM) to recall about 16 million vehicles from its US fleet. GM had to deal with extremely negative media coverage when the story broke that they had delayed the recall for multiple years, despite the fact that the defective piece costed less than one US dollar. As different entities began to focus their attention on the company, the government and the media incessantly pointed to the company's culture of cover-up with the media even predicting a colossal scandal (Cheng, 2015). As a result of the continuous pounding by the coverage, GM's trading volume could never sustain its peak (89,207,600) in January and dropped to the lowest point (4,496,000) in December with a 95% decrease. Furthermore, the stock change rate of GM almost halved during the recall, dropping from 40.95 on January 2nd to 29.79 on October 13 (Cheng, 2015).

From the foregoing, the illustrations point to the fact that media coverage can

potentially affect the reputation of an organization and can further influence the perceptions of people that have actual or potential interests in them.

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF)

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) was set up in the year 1965 through an Act of Parliament under Cap 258 Laws of Kenya. It was proposed to serve as the social security mainstay of both formal and informal workers (Chitembwe, 2007). The vision of the Fund is “to be a trusted centre of excellence in the provision of social security and its mission is to offer social protection to all Kenyan workers through registration, collection of contributions, prudent investments of funds, and ultimately pay out benefits to eligible members or dependents” (*NSSF Corporate Strategic Plan*, 2014, p. 36). The Fund’s core values include customer focus, integrity, innovation, accountability and team work.

According to Schultz and Werner (2005), in order to develop and protect a good reputation, companies need to prudently consider how their operations and engagements are perceived by all stakeholders. Over the years NSSF has perennially suffered major setbacks in its day-to-day operations and in fulfilling its mandate. Numerous controversies have arisen pertaining to the governance and management of the Fund. Reported recently in the Daily Nation was a story on how former managers at NSSF spent over Kshs. 1 billion to buy non-existent shares from the Nairobi Stock Exchange. Consequently, the Fund lost Kshs. 1.6 billion in the scheme (Ochieng, 2016). Daily Nation further reported that the anti-corruption commission carried out investigations on allegations that at least ten billion shillings in workers' contributions to the giant fund was at stake following migration to a new information management system (Menya, 2015). The Business Daily reported that the Fund was on the spot for extravagance that saw it book three out of every four shillings contributed by workers

as administrative expenses, which is nearly 400 times more than what private pension schemes claim for expense (Michira, 2012). Of further interest is the manner in which the news story was reported on television;

The public goodwill and confidence that had started building around NSSF is fast failing. This follows numerous flip flops by the giant pension fund in the recent times such as increasing administration costs, management concerns and bloated costs relating to construction projects (KTN News Kenya, 2013).

The apathy regarding new NSSF rates did not go un-noticed by the media. While in essence NSSF contributions are savings towards old age, the framing of news reports seemed to imply that workers would not be saving anything but actually losing a large percentage of their earnings (KTN News Kenya, 2013). The following is how the story regarding the new NSSF rates was introduced;

Many argue that with the high cost of living, workers are already overburdened to handle another financial obligation regarding the proposal of the new NSSF rates (KTN News Kenya, 2013).

On December 24, 2013, following a protracted gestation period, NSSF Act no. 45 of 2013 received presidential assent with an implementation date of January 10, 2014 which was subsequently pushed to May 31, 2014. The new Act which replaced the previous Act implemented in 1965 established two new funds: a pension fund and a provident fund. The pension fund is mandatory for all employed persons in the formal economy aged 18 and 60. The provident fund is aimed at covering self-employed persons through voluntary contributions. Contributions are divided into two Tiers; Tier I based on the minimum wage and Tier II on the national average earnings. In line with the new Act therefore, upon application to and subsequent approval by the Retirement Benefits Authority (RBA), employers have an option of paying Tier II contributions into a retirement benefits scheme other than NSSF (NSSF guide book,

2014). Where clients dealing with private institutions reserve the rights to choose whom to save with and can further diversify their options at will, employers dealing with NSSF don't have the same privileges since contributions to the Fund is a mandatory requirement governed by the statutory laws of Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Media coverage to some extent influences the reputation of an organization for instance Chase Bank Kenya Ltd. The media reports around the instability of the bank together with information circulating on the internet damaged the perceptions of the public. There has been immense negative media reporting of NSSF as a corporate institution on issues such as mismanagement of workers' funds, corruption allegations, financial scandals and inefficient leadership. The media therefore have an effect in expanding existing positive or negative perspectives of the publics in the way in which they feature stories and news items on NSSF. It was therefore important to establish the correlation between the negative media coverage and the corporate reputation of NSSF.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore how negative media coverage influences the corporate reputation of NSSF.

Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives; to;

1. Identify the extent to which NSSF's publics depend on the media as a source of information.
2. Identify the perceptions of the publics towards the corporate reputation of

NSSF.

3. Examine the extent to which media coverage of NSSF stories influence the corporate reputation.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions;

1. To what extent do NSSF's publics depend on the media as a source of information?
2. What perceptions do the publics hold regarding the corporate reputation of NSSF?
3. What is the relationship between media coverage and the corporate reputation of NSSF?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses guided the study;

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between negative media coverage of NSSF stories and corporate reputation which may result in unfavourable perceptions among publics (H_0).

Alternative hypothesis: Negative media coverage of NSSF stories decreases corporate reputation which may result in unfavourable perceptions among publics (H_1).

The argument in (H_1) holds that the publics may have adverse perceptions arising from negative media coverage. This is likely to affect the corporate reputation of NSSF. Therefore, when the publics exhibit unfavourable perceptions of NSSF, the greater will be the degree to which negative media coverage influences corporate reputation.

Justification of the Study

The justification of this study encompasses the expanding significance of studying the way media coverage influences corporate reputation, given its role of raising awareness and highlighting issues affecting audiences. The liberation of statutory obligations, increasing competition and the rise of consumerism are factors worth consideration by the management of NSSF in achieving its mandate. Therefore, this study can fill a scholarly gap by evaluating NSSF's reputation based on media coverage of its attributes and reporting of stories.

Significance of the Study

The effort of this study would substantially assist NSSF in media relations with a view to improving corporate reputation and relations with the key publics. This study would also be beneficial to the policy makers of the institutions that represent employers and workers in championing their views to bring change and lasting solutions to the contributors of NSSF. Owing to the fact that perceptions held about an organization can be affected by media coverage, the study is significant to corporate institutions in developing ways of creating a good image in order to mitigate news coverage that may impact negatively on their bottom line. The study is also significant to media organizations in trying to understand the role they play in establishing reputations of corporate organizations.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that the respondents depended on the media for information regarding NSSF and that their responses would be honest and candid. It was also assumed that the sampled categories of the Fund's publics was appropriate enough and relevant for the study and also had a sincere interest in participating in the

research.

Scope of Study

The study was limited to 3 organizations that are representatives of employers and employees who remit contributions to the NSSF pension scheme.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Objectivity in the research study was likely to be questionable since the researcher is an employee of NSSF and therefore may not have been impartial as required. The use of research assistants in collecting data for the study played a role in eliminating bias and further ensured that professional ethics were implored throughout the conduct of the study.

During the data collection exercise, a limitation was observed specifically from the respondents from Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) who felt that the questions in the questionnaire were intrusive since they were part of NSSF's management. To therefore obtain their objective responses for the study, this limitation was addressed through the use of a Focus Group discussion.

Definition of Terms

Corporate - The word corporate "refers to the business setting in which corporate communication emerged as a separate function alongside other functions such as human resources and finance. It further emphasizes a unified way of looking at internal and external communication disciplines" (Cornelissen, 2011, p.5). However, for purposes of this research, corporate is a term used as belonging to an organization, both private and public.

Corporate organization - A corporate organization according to Hussain

(2003) is a formal group of people with a defined purpose, such as a business motive or government department that is created by law with distinct rights and liabilities. For purposes of this research, corporate organization refers to any organization in both the private and public sector.

Corporate reputation - Corporate reputation is an “individual’s collective representation of past images of an organization (induced through either communication or past experiences) established over time” (Cornelissen 2011, p. 5). For purposes of this research corporate reputation refers to the opinions held by audiences over a period of time regarding an organization’s attributes.

Correlation – correlation is the presence of a definite relationship between two or more variables (Saleemi, 2009). For purposes of this research, correlation refers to the relationship between negative media coverage and corporate reputation.

Media - Baran (2013) defines media as the means of sending information and messages to “people as newspapers carry the printed word and radio conveys the sound of music and news” (p. 6). They are the tools for disseminating news and communication channels for campaigns (Cornelissen, 2011). For purposes of this research, media refers to the means of communication, that is, broadcasting, publishing and the internet regarded collectively.

Fund – the term for purposes of this research means the National Social Security Fund

Media coverage - Media coverage refers to the “mention in the media of a corporate, its products and services” (Cornelissen 2011, p. 260). For purposes of this research media coverage refers to any mentions, stories or news items of an organization in the media, both broadcasted or published.

Perception – According to Severin and Tankard (2014), the term perception refers to “the process by which we interpret sensory data” (p. 73); it is the means by which we make experience our own (Baran, 2013). For purposes of this research, perception refers to the way that audiences regard an organization’s attributes.

Publics - According to Cornelissen (2011), publics are “people who mobilize themselves against the organization on the basis of some common issue or concern to them” (p. 8). Publics in corporate communication are any group of people with a stake in an organization, issue or idea (Baran, 2013). For purposes of this research, publics refer to Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU), Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) and Agricultural Employers’ Association (AEA), which are the representative bodies of employers and employees.

Summary

This chapter covered the background of the study, gives the statement of the problem, the rationale of the study and limitations to the study. The next chapter builds a theoretical framework for this study through the use of relevant literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Literature review “involves the systematic identification, location and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem being investigated” (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012, p. 29). This chapter therefore covers the theoretical framework, general literature review, empirical literature review, conceptual framework and its discussions. Furthermore, the chapter endeavours to systematically unpack media coverage and its influence on corporate reputation from a perception of NSSF’s publics.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is an important section in research and it shows the base on which the research will be built. In this study, the researcher used two theories; Framing and Agenda Setting.

Framing Theory

The media is important to the extent that they provide audiences with news, information and warnings they need to make informed decisions (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). The power of the media to influence audiences therefore cannot be underestimated and is based on its capability to reach masses of ordinary people and elites and their ability to convey information in a speedy manner (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). They also affect our awareness, knowledge and perceptions and one way the media enables audiences to form perceptions is by distinctively framing issues (Gamble & Gamble, 2013; Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997). Audiences are

therefore limited in the manner that stories are presented to them because of media framing. Furthermore, their comprehension and views are purely based on specific frames that the news is conveyed through.

At the point when people have minimal direct learning of events, their reliance on news media increases as well as their need to seek new information and further comprehending those events (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna & Kinsey, 2005). Framing is therefore the process, by which a correspondence sources, for example, a news association, characterizes and develops an issue (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997). Framing depends on the presumption that how issues are portrayed in news reports can have an impact on how audiences understand them. Media tend to have inclinations displaying constrained and repetitive images and ideas of certain versions of reality and specifically as with news reporting, the pattern is quite inevitable (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Curran, Gurevitch & Woollacott, 1979). “The media hold a very selective mirror since the whole world - in all its vastness and complexity, cannot possibly be represented. Some things are overrepresented, others underrepresented, and still others disappear altogether” (Baran, 2013, pp. 414 - 415). It therefore holds that the effect of messages is in the way they are presented and not the content. News framing is the capacity of the media to change an individual’s perception of reality by prompting key concepts in the long-term memory that the individual uses in consequent psychological assignments (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Severin and Tankard (2014) commented that:

The framing of news stories may also have more subtle and powerful influences on audiences than bias in news stories. Audience members may be able to detect that a story is biased against a particular corporate organization. But they may not detect as easily that a news event is being packaged as a certain type of story. (p. 278).

Framing is a “theoretically rich approach that has been used to understand and investigate communication and related behaviour” (p. 148) and in particularly mass communication (Cornelissen, 2011). In addition to allowing more refined examinations of news coverage, the concept of framing may enable us to see how individuals process news. Framing of news stories have significant influence in the manner in which information in news stories are administered. Certain methods of news framing may attach better than others with existing thoughts or representations about a subject that individuals already hold in their minds. Previous research further indicates that framing in media can influence the way individuals finally construe issues (Severin & Tankard, 2014).

Cornelissen (2011) further stated that:

Framing theory emphasizes on how messages are created in such a way that they connect with the underlying psychological processes of how people digest information and make judgements. The notion of framing is best understood metaphorically as a window or portrait frame drawn around information that delimits the subject matter and thus focuses attention on key elements within it. (p. 148).

Hence, framing involves identifying the information to be included and excluded in messages in addition to the emphasis. Framing further comprises choosing parts of perceived reality and making them more notable in conveying content so as to advance a specific issue (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna & Kinsey, 2005).

Typically, by selecting particular salient points, “frames organize or hold together certain ideas that the organization wants to communicate, diagnosing a situation and prescribing a course of certain action” (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 188). Frames also shape singular comprehension and assessment concerning an issue by focusing on particular components or highlights, thus decreasing a generally complex

issue to just several key facets. Furthermore, frames make certain thoughts appear to be more significant than others, which in turn convey significant weight in the final perceptions. Frames can characterize issues, analyse causes, assist in decision making and suggest recommendations. Certainly this can be done using textual gadgets. They involve using specific words and expressions, making logical references, picking specific photos or films, providing examples referring to particular sources and many others (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997).

According to Scheufele (1999), framing effects are outcomes of the interaction between three participants; corporate organizations, journalists (media) and audiences (news consumers). There are three interrelated framing practices involving the above mentioned members. First, there is development and utilization of media frames by journalists and others working in news media, and continually managing sources in addition to news values application and angling in the production of the news. Secondly, the manner in which framed news reports are transmitted to the audiences. Thirdly, there is response from the audience, which might be positive or negative, and is evidenced by their perceptions towards the particular focus of the frames.

As far as corporate communication is concerned, “framing theory suggests that communication professionals frame a particular corporate decision, issues or events in such a way that it furthers and promotes the interest of the organization” (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 149). Frames structured in a press release, a corporate report on the company’s website or the company’s spokesperson speech is referred to as the corporate frame for the media and the general public. However, editors and journalists are likely to interpret the same issues or events differently. It therefore follows that framing of news items substantially depends on the views and philosophies of journalists and news media (Cornelissen, 2011).

The issue of framing of news stories provides an interesting context for testing its effects on audiences' perceptions of corporate reputation. It is essential to comprehend the nature of these effects and to explore some of the mechanisms by which message frames influence perceptions of a corporate's publics. Frames can apply obvious impact on audiences' perceptions of an issue and consequently the attitudes they express (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997).

Agenda Setting Theory

This study is anchored by agenda setting theory, whose basic proposition “is that the way in which news media report particular issues influences and helps to shape public awareness and debate” (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna & Kinsey, 2005, p. 12). Agenda setting theory portrays the effect of the media on psychological changes in audiences (Carroll, 2011). The principle thought of the theory is that the news media demonstrate to people in general what the primary issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public recognize as the fundamental issues. In Agenda Setting, the news media raise public awareness and highlight concerns for certain issues. Through this process a variety of news issues is sifted and lessened to a couple for presentation to the public, and this focus on specific matters or themes result in people seeing those to be more critical than others. In other words, Agenda Setting alludes to the possibility that there is a solid connection between media emphasis on specific issues and the significance credited to these issues by the audiences (Carroll, 2011; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

The media knowingly or unknowingly defines which issues have to be given importance and therefore has a huge and substantial impact based on its ability to focus attention of audiences on specific crucial issues. In as much as audiences get

how much noticeable quality to relegate to a subject on the premise of its feature in the news, they are also able to determine current issues or trending stories by virtue of what is reported and written about often (Gaur, 2014). It therefore follows that these stories will be considered to be the top priority in a given situation. Baran (2013) further asserted that “the Agenda Setting power of the media resides in more than the amount of space or time devoted to a story and its placement in the broadcast or on the page” (p. 428). More importantly is that there is incredible consistency and repetition between all media sources in decisions regarding amount of coverage of issues or events, which signals to individuals the significance of these issues or events. Furthermore, the more consistent the issues are presented and the more exclusively they gain extensive attention then the more probable is the anticipated impact to happen (Curran, Gurevitch & Woollacott, 1979).

The prominence of media attention to particular topics and stories no doubt has an effect on the thinking of publics and particularly to a corporate organization's publics. Research carried out on Agenda Setting theory has resulted in extending the theory to demonstrate that the media additionally impact the way in which the public understand news items. Moreover, with the general resurgence in news coverage and corporate ignominies getting more media attention specifically, the time is right to consider how the Agenda Setting effects of the media impacts the publics' attitudes about corporates (Carroll, 2011). The understanding therefore is that “Agenda Setting theory has clear affinities with news framing and media effects” (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna & Kinsey, 2005, p. 12).

Priming is the process in which the media attend to some issues and not others and thereby alter the standards by which people evaluate corporate organizations (Severin & Tankard, 2014). Priming happens when the content in news proposes to

audiences that they should utilize particular issues as yardsticks for assessing performance of organizations (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

According to Severin and Tankard (2014), “obtrusiveness of an issue may be an important factor in whether or not Agenda Setting takes place” (p.228). This suggests that when the public has an indirect experience with a certain issue, it follows that they will heavily rely on news media for information concerning that issue. For example, obtrusive issues are those that people experience directly, like crime and cost of living. Issues that people are not directly involved with, like pollution, are considered unobtrusive issues.

Another important concept of the Agenda Setting theory is abstractness. According to Severin and Tankard (2014), “abstractness is the degree to which an issue is difficult to conceptualize or to be made sensible” (p. 228). Issues considered to be intellectual are not pronounced by media as public agenda and discussion. However, this may be a significant thought in evaluating media effects since majority of issues in the public domain are quite essential and can also be considered abstract.

Severin and Tankard (2014) investigated the issue of time taken “for media content to have an effect on the public's subjective rankings” (p. 229). It is therefore necessary to examine the level to which audience members are exposed to various information and news stories to influence their perceptions towards certain things. According to Nelson, Clawson and Oxley (1997), information must be accessible to be influential. Severin and Tankard (2014) additionally added that “the more exposure individuals have to the news media, the more they tend to be concerned about various issues receiving media coverage” (p. 230).

According to Severin and Tankard (2014), the comprehension of Agenda Setting informs decisions on what the media can undertake to increase the audience's ability to articulate common issues. Furthermore, the Agenda Setting function should enable the media to provide adequate consensus on public issues in order to eliminate divergent views between groups. To this end, "Agenda Setting serves as a consensus-building device that permits democracy to work" (p. 239).

Agenda Setting indicates a 'cause and effect' relationship between media coverage and audience perception of the salient issues. It "refers to the media's capability, through repeated news coverage, of raising the importance of an issue in the public's mind" (Severin & Tankard, 2014, p. 219). This study therefore sought to analyze the impact of media content on the perceptions of reputations of NSSF through Agenda Setting and Framing theories.

Media Coverage of NSSF

The news values of stories regarding corporate organizations do predict the amount of coverage by the media. Subsequently, media coverage predicts audience attention given to the stories and events covered on corporate organizations. For instance, in early 2016 the banking industry in Kenya received heavy bad publicity, with in-depth media coverage after the Central Bank of Kenya closed several banks. Dubai Bank (in August 2015), Imperial Bank (in October 2015) and Chase Bank (in April 2016) ceased operations within a nine-month period and left millions of bank customers unsettled as the banking industry was portrayed to lack good corporate governance (Konje, 2016).

NSSF being a mandatory pension contribution scheme to formal workers in Kenya, has been subjected to media and public scrutiny owing to reports suggesting

questionable leadership, misuse of workers' funds, colossal financial scandals, poor investments decisions and corruption. Substantial media coverage of the Fund in the past two years has focused on leadership and management intrigues, bloated administration costs and trust issues surrounding the proposed new contribution rates. A specific example from the local newspapers include a threat by COTU to withdraw workers from NSSF should the Government kick out its representatives from the Board. The story mentioned that "should that happen, Mr. Atwoli said in a statement, the workers' and employers' representatives will be compelled to form their own joint pension scheme" (Kimanthi, 2018, p. 8).

The media has further highlighted stories surrounding the controversial NSSF projects, the recent being a colossal compensation claim from a Chinese firm for the stalled construction project in Nairobi's city centre. According to a report in the Daily Nation, the story reads;

Taxpayers are losing a whopping Sh. 20 million per week following stoppage of works after a suit was filed by troubled supermarket chain, Nakumatt (Owino, 2018).

A recent news story reported in The Star newspaper highlighted audit anomalies in housing projects of NSSF, with COTU confirming that senior managers had manipulated processes to loot funds. The lead of the story read as follows;

An audit report prepared by Ernst & Young has revealed that expected returns from the NSSF's Kshs. 6.7 billion Hazina Towers and Kshs. 1.6 billion Milimani executive apartments were hiked during the feasibility studies to make the project viable (Imende & Wasuna, 2018).

In an article in the Daily Nation regarding the hiring of the NSSF Managing Trustee, it was reported that the hiring process was facing political interference that had led to the delays in recruiting a new boss. It reads in part;

The search has been turned into a game of musical chairs as a senior politician pushes for the appointment of his ally. A source familiar with the delayed recruitment who spoke in confidence said that politicians see the fund as a cash cow. The Fund manages almost Sh200 billion and has had a controversial past with influential individuals accused of looting over the years (Menya, 2017).

With regard to the never-ending scandals, the Daily Nation listed an irregular tender by the Fund as one of the eleven mega scandals that had hit the Jubilee Government in its tenure. It reads in part;

Former labour Cabinet Secretary Kazungu Kambi and former NSSF Managing Trustee Richard Langat were sacked after investigations were opened against them by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission following their support and approval of a Sh5 billion tender awarded to a construction company, China Jiangxi International Kenya, for the development of the Tassia housing scheme. The award was made despite the fact that the board of trustees did not approve the upward review of the project cost from Sh3 billion (Otieno, 2017).

Relating to investment decisions that have put the Fund in bad light, the Standard newspaper covered a story suggesting losses in billions of shillings in workers money from several stalled projects. The story ran as follows;

The State pension fund had already paid Sh1.9 billion to the contractor at the time of constructing the Hazina Trade Centre and risk losing the said amount if the project is stopped indefinitely. In the report, the Auditor General also expressed fears that NSSF is likely to lose another Sh215 million and possible additional losses over the delayed completion of the Nyayo Estate Embakasi Phase 6. The Fund is also staring at another possible loss amounting to Sh115 million over what the Auditor General termed as illegal transfer of NSSF land in Upper Hill Nairobi (Kiragu, 2016).

Prudent investments of workers' pension contributions to the Fund has also been put under scrutiny by media reports. A few days after the transformation of the Fund to a pension scheme, the following is the introduction of how the Fund's image was framed on television;

The transformation of the National Social Security Fund from a provident to a pension fund inches ever closer, but with every step comes more questions than answers. And with questionable

investments made especially in land and real estate, is NSSF generating as much returns for workers? (KTN News Kenya, 2014).

The report continued as follows;

Private pension schemes control an estimated Sh511.5 billion whereas NSSF accounts for Sh122 billion, an indication that workers are not confident in saving their money in NSSF. The thinking by analysts is that the Fund has failed to demonstrate the desire to generate high returns for the workers. With the proposed increase of contributions to the Fund, the biggest question is why put money in a scheme that does not guarantee high returns for workers? (KTN News Kenya, 2014).

Concerning corruption issues, the Standard newspaper ran a story questioning the Fund's ability to manage huge amounts of money that was expected after the increased workers' contributions. The story was covered follows;

The ability of the National Social Security Fund to manage the Sh180 billion it will receive after Parliament raised workers' contributions to the Fund has come into focus. The figure is more than the assets NSSF has accumulated since its formation 48 years ago, and poor workers who can't afford to join private pension schemes will account for the bulk of the enhanced contributions. Allegations of mismanagement at the Fund – which also claimed the careers of immediate former executives Tom Odongo and Alex Kazongo – have been a source of concern for both workers and Parliament. Shady procurement deals relating to land, shares in listed companies and even construction have painted NSSF in a bad light, with billions in members' savings getting lost, while the intended beneficiaries wallowed in extreme poverty (Michira, 2013).

Another story that was covered relating to corruption was through an online blog;

A frustrated employee whistle blower working at the NSSF wrote to the Ombudsman, also called Commission on Administrative Justice, revealing how a number of EACC commissioners were bribed with houses and also got tenders to run the car parking lot in front of the Laico Regency (formerly Grand Regency). The Managing Trustee of NSSF, Mr Richard Langat, and his officers Gideon Kyengo, Mutemi Nzatu and Moses Cheseto conspired and gave Lulu East Africa Company Ltd to run the parking lot. They went further to offer consultancy services on environmental assessment, title subdivision and planning to Eco Plant, a company associated with one of the EACC commissioners (Kenya Today, 2015).

In general, media coverage of an organization can have a strong influence on the corporate reputation of that organization. "Ranging from reports on annual results

to investigations of corporate issues, media coverage often has an ‘amplifying’ effect on a company’s reputation when ‘good’ or ‘bad’ news is reported” (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 145).

General Literature Review

Media as a Source of Corporate Reputation

The media are the channels through which information is conveyed to the public in general (Gaur, 2014). They provide audiences with the news and information necessary for informed decision making. In addition to enabling interactions with corporate organizations, the media ensures that the public keep a finger on the pulse of perceptions, aligning similar concerns and is an indispensable component in the foundation of corporate organizations (Gamble & Gamble, 2013; Owusu & Poku, 2013). The media in all their diversity are economical means of communication in a modern society. They possess a multiplier effect which empowers a large number of individuals to obtain a message simultaneously (Wilcox, Cameron & Reber, 2015). Journalists and editors however make decisions to filter information which may not please everyone. Nevertheless, they are by and large perceived as more impartial than public relations practitioners who represent the interests of their clients or organizations. Center and Jackson (2003) tied the Agenda Setting role to the principle force of the media which in their opinion is information provision and awareness creation of organizations, its products, services, and ideas. This is a vital first step in evaluation since action is spurred only when there is adequate knowledge. In addition, the influence of the media increases and bears long-term effects particularly due to numerous media coverage over a period of years.

Describing media relations as one of the most critical areas within any corporate communication function, Argenti (2003) supported this claim by explaining that “the media is both a constituency and a conduit through which investors, suppliers, retailers and consumers receive information about and develop images of a company” (p. 101). He further stated that the information disseminator role of the media to a corporate’s key stakeholders has expanded substantially over the years. It is therefore vital to assess what the media says about an organization with a view to preserve and develop the organization’s reputation (Schultz & Werner, 2005). Owing to this vital role, nearly every organization has established a media relations department with the functions being carried out by either consultants or a group of experts (Argenti, 2003).

Newspapers as a source of media information has an advantage because of its wide reach and therefore are an essential mode of reaching various publics. According to Hassan (2013), a large number of newspapers always aim at “broad spectrum of readers, usually geographically defined” (p. 289). Newspapers therefore still remain a dominant force in influencing public agenda and outcomes of issues, and are the most trusted and credible source of media albeit no longer the immediate news medium for most people (Lattimore, 2008; Baran, 2013). According to Fleming, Hemmingway, Moore and Welford (2006), in as much as newspapers cannot match electronic forms of media in speed, most of their composition is in straightforward and simple language in order to appeal to a wide readership as possible.

According to Lattimore (2008), television is an effective force in young people’s lives and a key source of news for most audiences. In addition, it is ranked as the “most believable news source” (Baran, 2013, p. 240). Fleming et al. (2006) stated further that “the emphasis for news on television, is for moving pictures that

bring the story to life and live reports that stress its immediacy” (p. 17). Television news can be quick and emotional, particularly in covering events that lean towards visual images. Since it largely appeals to the subconscious emotions than print media, it potentially influences audiences other than just informing them (Baran, 2013; Hassan, 2013). It should therefore be noted that “because television is about images and personalities, it can make or break reputations in a single appearance” (Skinner, Kiuluku, Tikolo, & Yankah, 2012, p. 30). Hassan (2013), suggested that television facilitates visual evidence of events, which is extremely important in establishing credibility of news stories.

Radio, the apparent pervasive media, matters to different publics as well. It has endured the times and thrived by advancing how it relates with audiences (Baran, 2013). In as much it lacks imagery, the flexibility and renaissance of FM stations and vernacular stations has made radio to remain as “the most powerful tool of mass media in East Africa” (Skinner et. al, 2012, p. 30). According to Fleming, Hemmingway, Moore and Welford (2006), radio stations customize their news to the various audiences they serve. This they do through producing news that is relevant to audiences in the manner of selecting stories and how they are reported. A case in point is packaging short news bulletins over a music bed for younger audiences and long bulletins for older audiences conveyed in a more sober and quantified manner. “Radio is the listeners’ friend; it travels with them and talks to them personally” (Baran, 2013, p. 190). According to Hassan (2013), radio through its messages can reach diverse audiences such as the educated and the uneducated, it is fairly affordable by everyone and bears the capacity of delivering instant messages.

Magazines have proven to be a vital and a highly specialized medium “reaching specific target audiences” (Prithvi & Dash, 2013, p. 14). As far

as magazines are concerned, the biggest advantage lies on the possibility of classifying them under various topics such as education, business, entertainment and even in-house publications for organizations. Furthermore, magazines have been known to have a pass along rate of 4 similar adults on average, kept available for up to a period of 4 months and loyalty from readers. An important role played by magazines is providing information and education in various subjects specifically to targeted readers (Hassan, 2013; Baran, 2013). Magazines centre on stories with point by point and factual information and regularly report on a specific angle of a story that will be the most intriguing to audiences (Severin & Tankard, 2014). A typical reader of a magazine has been described as at least a high school graduate and in employment (Baran, 2013).

There is no doubt that the internet has brought about a revolution that specifically facilitates communication with an organization's publics, both internal and external (Skinner, Kiuluku, Tikolo, & Yankah, 2012). The internet has therefore fundamentally changed communication through multiple channels, decentralized and more democratic communication than what was provided by mainstream media (Severin & Tankard 2014). Ranging from internet search engines like google, social media networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, blogs, YouTube video channels and online news channels, audiences now have various options of accessing information and communication. The estimated number of internet users in Kenya was 8.69 million in 2011. In addition, it was reported that by June 2011, there were approximately 1.15 million Facebook users in Kenya, indicating a 2.7 percent penetration rate (Skinner et. al, 2012). The internet practically enables anyone to publish or broadcast worldwide, further puts immense power to audiences to obtain information previously not available and exercise control over the kind of messages to

be exposed to. Furthermore, the swift capability of disseminating news on the internet and the vast reach to a person connected on the web, has significantly increased the magnitude and diversity of news reports available online (Severin & Tankard 2014; Hassan, 2013).

Print and electronic media therefore strive to report fair, accurate and objective stories and events. In so doing, they execute a vital mandate of informing the public about news, stories and events globally thus creating a culture of public consciousness of issues (Hassan, 2013). Print media, other than being viewed as a credible source of information, specifically “allows the presentation of detailed information that can be processed at the reader’s own pace” (Prithvi & Dash, 2013, p. 14). Broadcast media on the other hand, has the advantage of disseminating information faster and farther due to its visibility. In addition, they are easily noticeable due to the aesthetic features of sight and sound (Owusu & Poku, 2013).

Given their trustworthiness, there is minimal reservation that a lot of value has been placed in media publicity. According to Seitel (2014), publicity is considered to be more credible than advertising. Seitel stated further that in order for corporate organizations to attract positive media publicity, it is quite necessary to form cordial working relationships with the media despite the media’s extensive belligerent tone. The view by Broom and Sha (2013) suggested that precision and impartiality in covering news stories does not necessarily result from the work of journalists alone. Instead, the authors added that eventually, the relationship between public relations professionals and journalists affects the quality of news coverage about corporates. The suggestion therefore is that the best approach for organizations and public relations experts is to regard media relations as an investment.

Past studies have consistently indicated that audiences have a tendency of responding to media depictions that conform to their comprehension of fundamental and unique characteristics of organizations. Other research bodies suggest that i) refracted images by way of the media form the different cues that people draw conclusions as they seek to create an understanding of what the corporates are and their values (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Morsing, 1999), and ii) images that seem objectionable or contrasting with individuals' comprehension of their organizations can elicit reactions aimed at counteracting these identity threatening activities (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Ginzler, Kramer & Sutton, 1993; Martins, 2005).

Whereas media coverage is not entirely responsible for an organization's reputation or even the manner in which various stakeholders view the organization, "it does have an impact in terms of highlighting an issue or increasing the already positive or negative view that people have about an organization" (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 146). Media coverage impacts on corporate reputation, regardless of whether the coverage contains news considered "good" or "bad". Deephouse (2000) stated news coverage as positive in the event that a company is commended for its work or is connected with deeds that increase its reputation, while negative coverage refers to media reporting of events that reduce or besmirch an organization's reputation. All news engagements of a media house have a direct impact on a corporate's reputation, which can either be positive or negative. In recent times characterized by increased consumerism, customers are more interested in dealing with organizations with a favorable reputation. The focus for organizations now is sustaining a good reputation in addition to satisfying customer needs (Owusu & Poku, 2013).

Theoretically, intensification of news media coverage and scrutiny of corporate organizations (Chouliaraki & Morsing, 2009; Kjær & Langer, 2005) point at

the need of refining understanding of media reporting on organizational image in order to obtain a better assessment of the cues needed to comprehend organizational functions by individuals.

Altogether, media coverage by news media may sometimes be positive and paint a favorable picture of an organization, which may reinforce its social reputation (Carroll, 2011; Rindova, Pollock & Hayward, 2006), as opposed to damaging its image. Different scholars have many times assumed that people's needs tend to be gratified when they associate with organizations regarded positively by the media (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman & Sloan, 1976). However, further studies need to be undertaken to investigate people's responses to favourable media coverage that potentially beautify an organization (Rindova et al., 2006), and also how this coverage influences any endeavours to redefine people's understandings of the corporate organization they identify with.

Corporate Reputation

A brand can be built and regulated by an organization, but a reputation is something that is accredited to it by others (Brady & Honey, 2007). Nothing is therefore more essential to an organization than its reputation. This is because without a favourable reputation, success is inhibited and an organization's longevity is thrown in question (Schultz & Werner, 2005). Reputation is fundamentally high impressions that individuals have regarding another person or an issue and is referred to as the aggregate values that the public assign to an organization's probity and performance, depending on their opinions and analysis of how the organization presents itself over time (Ingram, 2015; Schultz & Werner, 2005). Organizational reputation is therefore "arrived at by considering the sum total of images an individual has accumulated over

a period of time that help that individual form an opinion about an organization” (Tench & Yeomans, 2006, p. 254).

It is important to elucidate the difference between an organization’s reputation and image. According to Brady and Honey (2007), an organization’s image refers to the immediate outward perception whereas reputation is the past dimension of the organization’s image which is entrenched in the memory of all publics, and acts as a staging for expectations. Skinner, Kiuluku, Tikolo and Yankah (2012) stated further that “corporate image is simply the impression created of how you look, what you say and what you do” (p. 23). An organization’s image may be changed quickly through advertisements than the reputation which involves more time and persistent effort to establish across all stakeholders (Chun, 2005). Corporate reputation is considered to evolve over time by virtue of consistent performance, sustained by efficient and regular communication, whereas corporate image can be designed faster by well-organized communication plans (Cornelissen, 2011; Chun 2005).

Reputation essentially encompasses two main factors namely, perception – how the organization is perceived by all stakeholders; and reality – the veracity about an organization’s culture, systems, policies and performance (Schultz & Werner, 2005). In addition, the three fundamental elements of corporate reputation include; image – what the stakeholders think of the organization; identity – what the organization says it is or is about; and personality – how the organization desires the stakeholders to see them (Schultz & Werner, 2005; Chun, 2005).

Since corporate reputation perceptually represents an organization’s past activities and future plans that depict its overtures to critical stakeholders (Chun, 2005), the media, by which information is circulated to the public, is an essential

component in the formation of reputation. Corporate organizations can build a brand or an identity, but whether that identity or brand leads to favorable perceptions depend on efforts put in ensuring that the media positively portrays any coverage. Therefore media have an extensive impact on perceptions, boosting other's perceptions about various matters (Gaur, 2014) and can potentially influence a corporate organization's image which forms its reputation (Owusu & Poku, 2013).

The present enlightened organizations have come to understand that reputation is a resource that needs to be aggressively managed (Schultz & Werner, 2005). According to a study commissioned at the World Economic Forum in 2004, 59% of persons in strategic management who attended the conference responded that corporate reputation was a paramount measure of success than financial indicators such as performance in the stock exchange, net worth and rate of returns (Carroll, 2011). Out of another 10 respondents in the US, 9 stated that an organization's reputation plays a big part in the formation of perceptions of its brand; another 80% stated their alacrity in purchasing products and procuring services from a company with a notable record and practices, therefore making reputation a critical and paramount asset (Carroll, 2011; Schultz & Werner, 2005).

The fact however is that reputation, which requires significant time and persistent effort to develop (Chun, 2005), is not fixed but is very dynamic, constantly and advancing in light of the sort of information being publicized and how it is circulated (Owusu & Poku, 2013). According to Gaur (2014), this could be attributed to several reasons that come about into producing news to be more exciting than enlightening because of the business-driven motives of the media as opposed to working on educating the public. They consequently endeavour to keep up a harmony between civil service obligations against the desire for profits. Be that as it may, if the

equilibrium is absent, they subsequently influence the information to appear different than what it ought to have been. Media in some cases has concentrated more on individual atrocities and aspersions than giving a real picture of the situation prompting unfavourable reactions of the government according to the public. Owusu and Poku (2013) further stated that any adverse reportage by media practitioners significantly influences the brand and character of an organization and positive coverage can likewise strengthen the brand and character of the organization.

According to Schultz and Werner (2005), identity and image are the most essential elements of corporate reputation. Therefore NSSF as an organization needs to insulate its image and reputation from adverse media coverage that can be harmful. Across the board, the thinking in the corporate world in today's society indicates that the eventual fate of any organization basically relies upon how it is viewed by major stakeholders like investors, clients, employees and the general community in which the organization operates (Cornelissen, 2011). However, in as much as management cannot control how an organization is perceived by all its publics, it does have control over how the organization behaves and can influence the perceptions of its publics through this (Brady & Honey, 2007). It is worth observing that according to the NSSF customer satisfaction survey of 2014, 53.7 % of the Fund's stakeholders stated that the media (newspapers, TV, radio and internet) was their main source of knowledge of the NSSF Act in particular. In addition, 41.2% of the stakeholders stated that the media as listed above was their main source of knowledge on the Fund's matters.

Corporate reputation influences the manner by which different stakeholders relate with an organization, thereby affecting customer satisfaction and loyalty (Chun, 2005). Views and opinions of the various stakeholders of the Fund can therefore be affected by several reasons of which the media may be the most prominent. Gamble

and Gamble (2013), found out that both traditional mass media and the internet inform us and help us keep a watch on our world; they serve a surveillance function. Organizations have to “pay a great deal of attention to the image their publics hold of them because of the significance of media endorsement as a key source of influence” (Tench & Yeomans, 2006, p. 254).

It is therefore pertinent that NSSF endeavours to preserve favorable reputations with all its stakeholders particularly since reputation hinges a lot on past performance (Brady & Honey, 2007), and external perceptions is specifically essential in the service industry where customer interaction is crucial (Chun, 2005). Furthermore, NSSF being an organization in the public sector, reputation is necessary in order to maintain public trust (Brady & Honey, 2007) of its customers. According to the findings of a customer satisfaction survey carried out in 2014, some of the reasons provided by NSSF publics to establish whether they would continue dealing with the organization should they have an option were; (1) security and stability, (2) financial stability and (3) state-owned organization. In the same survey however, the reasons provided by NSSF publics to establish whether they would not continue dealing with the organization should they have an option were; (1) poor and delays in service delivery, (2) corruption and numerous scandals, (3) political interference from the Government and (4) information obtained from trade unions and employer representatives (NSSF Customer Satisfaction Survey, October, 2014). Reputation therefore dictates how individuals conduct themselves with organizations and where they put their trust (Brady & Honey, 2007).

Favourable or unfavourable wording in conclusion can affect attitudes and opinions within a certain context and the behavioural patterns that the publics can adopt in their interaction with the Fund. With a negatively framed news story, that is,

unfavourable wording of NSSF stories, the publics are likely to form an adverse opinion regarding the Fund which can change the way they interact with the institution, than in if the wording is favourable.

Perception

Perception is a psychological process by which we observe and understand experiences and stimuli around the environment (Wood, 2001). It entails the manner in which we see our general surroundings and adds significance to the knowledge accumulated by means of our senses (Broadbent, 1966). It also refers to the way people choose, sort and decipher sensory information into valuable mental portrayals of the environment (Sindabi & Omulema, 2001).

Generally, people always gather information about others in different situations which helps in shaping opinions. Specifically, customers will translate and store the information gathered about corporate organizations through the cues they receive from media attention given to corporate organizations. The same information is then used when interacting with corporate organizations and may result in influencing their perceptions. Therefore, communication from media outlets is likely to influence the perceptions of publics and situations (Wood, 2001). According to Buelens (2011), perception is about how individuals understand the information they receive or register using their eyes, nose, ears, fingertips or any other sensory organ. That information comes from somewhere. The state of nature is one thing, but more importantly, the information packages which arrive at the recipient or perceiver depends on how it gets to the recipient and therefore on both the sender and on the transmission.

Two types of influences on perception have been identified, namely structural and functional. Structural influences emanate from physical stimuli that directly affect a person's senses. Functional influences include physiological and psychological factors, which potentially can introduce subjectivity in the process. To explain further, the different physiological states of people such as stress or sickness can influence perceptions. Other factors like age, expectations, cultural background and attitude can also affect perceptions in different communication perspectives (Severin & Tankard 2014; Wood, 2001).

As a whole, we view our general surroundings divergently. These perceptions impact our present and subsequent actions. Buelens (2011), enumerated three factors that affect perception, namely; how a target is perceived, the setting of the perceiver and the perceived target, and the attributes of the perceiver. These three factors can be summarized to refer to interrelated processes involving selection, organization and interpretation (Wood, 2001).

To elucidate the first factor, the qualities of observed phenomenon, people and situations are of significant importance in the development of perceptions. This is because the human mind can identify different phenomenon as logical and relevant as opposed to as independent packs of information. People pick the stimuli to which they will focus thus selectively pay attention to important issues that stand out and compel attention, thereby discarding others (Sindabi & Omulema, 2001). In addition, people give care to information that is salient. Salience refers to how much an issue attracts our attention in a specific context. This tendency where the perceptions of individuals are influenced by physiological needs, attitudes and physical factors is determined as selective perception. It further points out to a possibility that people react differently and in different ways to the same messages (Severin & Tankard, 2014). For instance,

Carroll (2011) stated that the second level of the Agenda Setting theory affirms that the measure of media coverage committed to a company's different traits will influence how much people in general review those traits or use them to portray the company's reputation. In as much as we can exercise control on the focus of our attention to some extent, certain features of stimuli may alter our attention like an abrupt change that attracts attention (Baron, 2003). This therefore points out to the possibility of people's perceptions of corporate organizations being influenced by media reportage and media branding (Owusu & Poku, 2013).

Secondly, the setting of the perceiver and the perceived target (i.e. person, object or event) also impacts on perception. An important reason is that perceived targets are not seen as detached. The interrelation between the target and background or setting also affects perception. Contrast effect better emphasizes this situation. A contrast effect refers to the propensity to identify a stimulus that contrasts possibilities that are discrepant as they truly are (Buelens, 2011). A person's behaviour is influenced not only by external factors but by an evaluation of those factors which are relative to their previous experiences (Baron, 2003). Another contextual factor distorting perceptions is the primacy effect. Primacy effect drives us to put more value on the initial information we receive about a person or an organization (Severin & Tankard, 2014). For example, if people translate the initial information they receive from or about organizations as positive, then a favourable first impression is formed and will influence how they respond to that organization as further interaction continues (Wood, 2001). In addition, if you meet an individual for the first time and he is accompanied by someone you admire, your judgement of that person will probably be positive. This perception will however be reversed when someone you dislike accompanies that person. Therefore negative interpretations of information can

contribute to the formation of negative first impressions. A case in point is where people trust and admire media sources as credible in news reporting. Consequently, people's perceptions can be influenced based on what is reported regarding corporate organizations. So the primacy effect is the effect by which the information first received often continues to colour later perceptions of individuals. This effect is closely related to the cognitive bias or decision bias known as anchoring (Buelens, 2011).

Thirdly, the attributes of the perceiver are equally paramount. According to Wood (2001) "attributions are a primary way we explain what we and others do" (p.45). Several aspects that are intrinsic to the perceiver are in some cases the fundamental reasons why the same issues are perceived in a different manner. Other than personality, gender could likewise contribute to the various perceptions (Buelens, 2011). For instance research suggests that men perceive things differently from women since they translate issues differently. Furthermore, a person's mood equally has an effect on perception (Severin & Tankard, 2014).

A perceiver's disposition can impact the way they feel about others. We think diversely on the basis of the mood, that is, happy or sad mood. When we are happy and an employee's task performance needs to be judged, we tend to assess this person's performance more positively than when we are in an unhappy state. In addition, past literature and exposure may affect the opinions formed about issues. We once in a while observe what we hope to see in view of past experiences. Therefore, shaped opinions are capable and equally resistant to unauthenticated information. In this way, people tend to look for and decipher information that substantiates actual beliefs. This tendency is called the confirmation bias (Buelens, 2011). Since people prefer to confirm their views, they therefore "tend to notice and remember mainly

information that lends support and confirms what they already believe” (Baron, 2003, p. 22).

Empirical Literature Review

A study done in Italy on corporate reputation and the news media focused on empirically testing the hypotheses suggested by Agenda Setting theory in the Italian setting. The study aimed at investigating the relationship between the extent and valence of media coverage of 33 organizations in Italy, and the perceptions held by a random sample of the Italian population of the same organizations. The following hypotheses guided the study;

Hypothesis 1. The more frequent the appearance of a company in the media (media visibility), the higher the top-of-mind awareness of the company among the general population.

Hypothesis 2. The higher the prominence in the media of a certain theme relating to a given company (media associations), the higher the prominence of the same theme in the way the company is perceived by the general population (corporate associations).

Hypothesis 3. The more favourable is the content of news about a company (media valence), the more favourable the perception of that company among the general population (corporate reputation).

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data gathered, it was discovered that public awareness of organizations does not concurrently vary with a higher visibility in the press. Secondly, the findings suggested that a correlation between higher media prominence of certain themes and public associations about an organization occurs when people primarily depend on the media due to lack of direct experience. Finally,

the findings supported the hypothesis that positive media reporting is correlated with the reputations of organizations among the general public (Carroll, 2011).

A further study carried out in Netherlands on news and corporate reputation sought to examine the influence of business news on corporate reputation. In the study, an analysis of media coverage was conducted on sampled companies by focusing on the tone of issues in news. The hypothesis that guided the study stated that; ‘The tone of success and failure news is positively related to reputation (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006).’

The findings of the study therefore suggested that the more the companies were in the news with notable successes, the better their reputations were, and vice versa. Therefore, the study concluded that news about organizational successes improved their reputations (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006).

More than 350 research studies conducted globally have created data that agrees with the central tenets of the Agenda Setting theory, that is, the capability of news media to establish an agenda and hence centre public attention on specific main public issues. An examination on corporate reputation and the new media in Greece appropriated Agenda Setting hypothesis to the arena of corporate communication and gathered proof of importance together from both Greek media stories and the corporate setting. Greek researchers had from time to time been worried about both agenda-setting and corporate reputation research. Accordingly, the mix of these concepts was essential since it planned to bridge a gap in the literature of both the media and corporate research in Greece. In spite of its worldwide consideration however, Agenda Setting theory had not been thoroughly studied in Greece (Zyglidopoulos, Georgiadis, Carroll & Siegel, 2012).

Different reasons spelt out for this academic disparity in media expertise was to a limited extent because of the Greek media industry being nascent and moderately inexperienced. From the study, only unfavourable reputation compared with the newspaper generated favourable relationships which were analytically substantial. In other instances, corporate organizations with good reputation correlated with media coverage yielded reverse relationship. More research is however needed in this field because the present outcomes infer that broad media prominence does not really prompt superior corporate reputation. Indeed, the inverse might be right (Zyglidopoulos, Georgiadis, Carroll & Siegel, 2012).

Another study of news media in United States and corporate reputation explored the correlation between two aspects of corporate reputation and media prominence of organizations. The study found out that prominence of the media was depicted by the amount of stories published on print and electronic media. The study also asserted that the interrelation between the prominence of an organization's focal media favourability as well as its public admiration was stronger for respondents with more knowledge of the organization than for those with less knowledge (Carroll, 2011).

A study on the correlation between corporate reputation and the visibility of media firms in Egypt found out that the more attention a firm got in Egyptian media, the greater it ranked in recognition in the minds of the public. With increased reportage of news stressing a particular aspect of an organization, audiences more likely defined the organization by that specific quality. The heavier positive or negative the news covered an attribute of an organization in the media in Egypt, the more favourable or unfavourable the public considered that attribute (Carroll, 2011).

Another study in Nigeria revealed two major findings on corporate reputation and news media. The first confirmed that the measure of news coverage obtained by a corporate organization connected affirmatively with the public's awareness of it. Secondly, the longer the media covered a particular trait from a favourable point of view, the greater individuals regarded these characteristics as positive (Amujo & Otubanjo, 2012).

In Kenya for example, the damaged corporate reputation of Chase Bank Ltd which led to its temporary closure was largely fuelled by information on social media. In as much as the bank's financial health was in turmoil, the stories and reports on social media forums aggravated the situation. It was therefore concluded that such platforms although useful in conveying information potentially posed a threat to the reputation of an organization and are further harmful especially where information relating to a corporate organization is sensitive. It was also concluded that stringent measures need to be employed by the Government with the aim of regulating dissemination of information on such platforms (Kithiand Company, 2016).

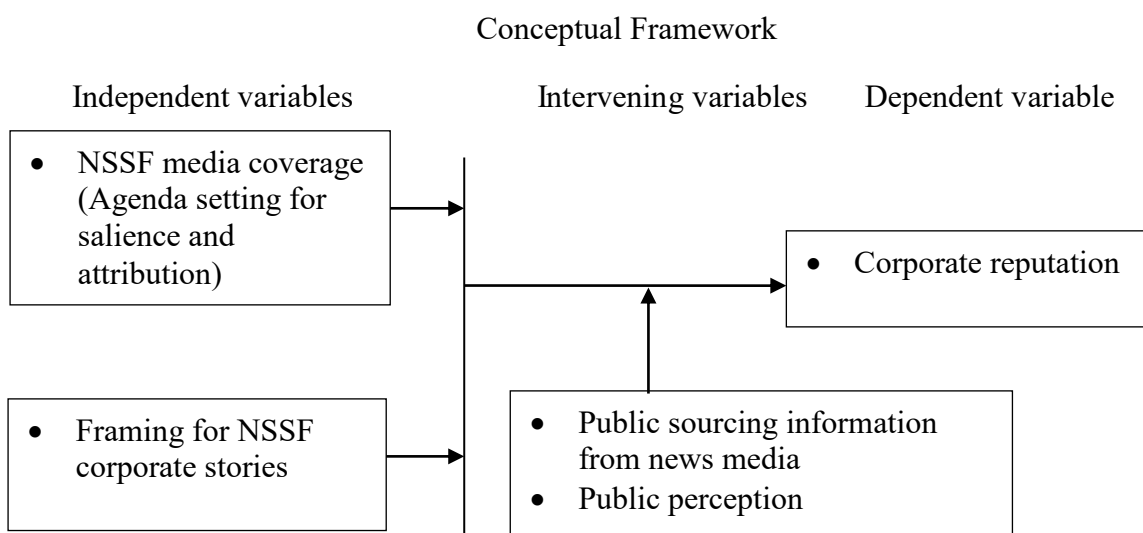


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Discussions

The essential concept behind Agenda Setting theory is that media organizations convey an abundance of information when reporting on corporate organizations. In so doing, they likewise notify their audiences on what issues are cardinal about these subjects. “Over time, and through repeated mention of the same issues, these issues may become lodged in the public’s mind. The public will use the input from the media to decide which issues are important” (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 146).

Level one of Agenda Setting theory identifies with the salience of an organization. In the case of NSSF, first-level Agenda Setting occurs when NSSF is the first pension organization that strikes a chord with the public because of high media attention than other pension organizations. The media covers stories on NSSF and in so doing reinforces the public’s recognition of the Fund and certain attributes and qualities about the Fund. Level two of Agenda Setting is easily noticed when audiences connect NSSF with a specific issue (e.g. corruption and mismanagement of funds) that has gotten much consideration from the media during a defined period. “The second-level Agenda Setting also suggests that news coverage not only reports facts and neutral observations, but also conveys feelings through its stance and tone on the issue” (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 147).

Framing theory concentrates on creation of messages in a manner that connect with the basic cognitive processes of how people decipher information and draw conclusions. “Framing in communication is important because it helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world and hence involves the processes of inclusion and exclusion of information in a message as well as emphasis” (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 148). Journalists and editors are therefore capable of selectively

portraying news on NSSF with an end goal to expound news and ideas regarding the Fund in simple terms for a more extensive audience. Because of their different interests, journalists and editors in different media houses may frame the same decision, issue or event in completely different ways.

The corporate reputation of NSSF is affected by media coverage which is determined by consumption of information from the media and perception of the institution developed over time. In summary, “the higher the level of media favourability, the higher the level of an organization’s reputation” (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 147).

Summary

Chapter two has covered literature review by analysing different articles that are relevant to the research objectives. The chapter further featured different research studies that were previously conducted to determine the connection between media coverage and corporate reputation. The summary of the study’s conceptual framework is that media coverage of NSSF through heightened attention of various stories and the way they are framed has an effect on the corporate reputation, through the perceptions formed by the publics. The following chapter examined the research methodology that guided the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter covered literature review. This chapter details the research design and methodology adopted in the study. A further comprehensive process of obtaining the sample size and the sampling techniques involved, data collection methods and procedures were outlined. Data analysis including presentation methods, and ethical considerations were also described.

Research Design

Roberts, Hutter and Bailey (2010) define research design as a mapping strategy. The research design used for this study was chosen with an aim of giving directions to make sure that the objectives of this research are met. Research design “is the blueprint for fulfilling objectives and answering questions” (Cooper & Schindler, 2006, p. 71). “The design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data” (Kothari & Garg, 2014, p. 29).

The study adopted a descriptive research design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches of data collection, in order to identify the perceptions of the publics towards NSSF’s corporate image. Descriptive research design is concerned “with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present” (Kothari & Garg, 2014, pp. 35-36). Through the descriptive research design, the researcher’s objectives were specified with sufficient precision to ensure that the

data collected was relevant. The independent variable for this research study was media coverage with the intervening variable being the perceptions of the Fund's publics. The dependent variable was corporate reputation. Descriptive statistical analysis was applied to the first and second objectives of the research to identify the relationship between media coverage and the corporate reputation of NSSF.

Population

Kothari and Garg (2014) explained that the study population is the number of objects or people which are the focus of the research and they "have a common observable characteristic" (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012, p. 9). The population therefore composed of 690 NSSF contributors from FKE, COTU and AEA and their affiliated unions, who secure adequate and effective representation of employers' and employees' interests in the management of NSSF.

Employers in Kenya are mainly represented by the umbrella body known as the FKE and its affiliate unions. Currently, FKE has 15 affiliate unions under it, who also represent their members on labour related issues, policy formulation and legislation. All the affiliate unions convene together under FKE for purposes of negotiation and championing the interests of its members on the board of NSSF, where the Executive Director is the employers' representative (Nyangute, 2002).

The main functions of AEA is championing employers' interests and representation of members to management board of FKE and the standing committee meetings of Rural Employers. The administration of NSSF forms part of the discussion items in these forums. The interests of the members under AEA are represented through FKE. Currently, AEA has 93 members and 5 associate members under it ("Agricultural Employers' Association", 2017).

COTU on the other hand, has 34 affiliate unions under it that provide effective representation to employees. The affiliate unions converge under the umbrella of COTU, who represent them on the board of NSSF where the Secretary General is the workers' representative in facilitating achievement of workers' rights and enhancing social protection (Tubey, Rotich & Bundotich, 2015).

Target Population

The target population is described as that population that a researcher identifies in the research and in which the obtained results are to be generalized (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The target population for this study consisted of 103 NSSF contributors from COTU, FKE and AEA, as the main representatives of employees and employers in the republic of Kenya. This entailed 60 contributors from FKE, 37 contributors from COTU and 6 contributors from AEA respectively. This therefore excluded all the affiliate unions under the three bodies.

Sample Size

For this study, the sample size was 103 respondents ($N = 103$) from COTU, FKE and AEA, which was the entire target population. The desired sample size was decided through census, to obtain responses from all the respondents in the participating organizations. Census is a study of every unit, everyone or everything in a population and is known as a complete enumeration that is a complete count (Kothari & Garg, 2014). A census sample was necessary since the target population was a small one, was of a manageable size and further assisted in providing good coverage of the target population for the survey (Kothari & Garg, 2014; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

Sampling Techniques

Kothari and Garg (2014) defined a sampling procedure as the technique which the researcher adopts in the “selection of some parts of an aggregate or totality on the basis of which a judgment or inference about the aggregate or totality is made” (p. 147). Two sampling methods that were therefore used in the study.

Purposive sampling procedure was used to sample the participating organizations that represented contributors to the Fund. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), “purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of his or her study” (p. 50). The choice of COTU was based on their representation of workers’ interests in the board of NSSF through the Secretary General. COTU is also the largest and main workers’ representative body in Kenya. FKE was selected on the basis of representing employers’ interests in the board of NSSF through the Executive Director. FKE is the largest and also the main employers’ representative body in Kenya. AEA was selected on the basis of having a significant influence over employers in the agricultural sector. The selection of AEA was also important given that agriculture is the mainstay of the Kenyan economy and a source of livelihood for many employees.

A sample of 17 participants was picked using purposive sampling for the Focus Group discussion, from the 103 respondents who also filled the questionnaire. FKE was chosen as a representative of employers and 9 participants from the Industrial Relations and Legal departments working in Nairobi County participated in the Focus Group discussion. The choice of these departments was based on their potency in representing member organizations in negotiations and human resource

aspects that include remittances of NSSF contributions. COTU was chosen as a representative of employees and 8 participants from the Industrial Relations department who are based in Nairobi County participated in the Focus Group discussion. The Industrial Relations department handles collective disputes from workers in issues relating to employment and is also involved in negotiations of remittances such as NSSF contributions and subsequent implementations.

The respondents for the study which was the entire 103 respondents in the target population were drawn using census sampling technique. This was suitable for the study since the target population was not vast and a higher degree of data accuracy was required to meet the research objectives (Kothari & Garg, 2014; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

Data Collection Instruments

Kothari and Garg (2014) defined data collection as the gathering of information aimed at proving or disproving facts. For this research, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed.

Quantitative data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The requirements for the respondents were based on their active contributorship to NSSF and therefore issues such as age and gender were not significant to the study. The questionnaire had four sections as follows; - Section one that collected demographic data of the respondents such as gender, age, level of education, organization, job category, terms of service and length of service in employment. Section two collected information regarding media information and consumption from the respondents. Section three aimed at seeking responses on the reputation of NSSF using a 5-Point Likert Scale designed on a continuum arranged from (score 1) strongly agree to

(score 5) strongly disagree. This section also incorporated open-ended questions with an aim of collecting more information and details. Finally, the last section sought responses on the significance of media coverage of NSSF, also using a 5-Point Likert Scale designed on a continuum arranged from (score 1) strongly agree to (score 5) strongly disagree. This section also included open-ended questions in order to understand the respondents' feelings and attitudes of the subject.

Qualitative data was collected using Focus Group discussions. This is “the simultaneous involvement of a small number of research participants who interact at the direction of a moderator in order to generate data on a particular issue or topic” (Cooper and Schindler, 2006, p. 716). An interview protocol with structured questions was used for the discussion. The questions were based on the research objectives and opened up with questions relating to media information from the participants such as media access and consumption. The next series of questions sought to establish participants' responses on the reputation of NSSF. The final set of questions sought to identify the perceptions of the participants arising from media coverage. Several probing questions were used to elicit further responses from the participants as the discussions continued.

Types of Data

Questionnaire and Focus Group discussions were used to collect primary data. Data collected using these methods were more precise for the study and analyses were made with a wider range of statistics. Chapter two of literature review partially provided the secondary data.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedure describes how the data will be collected. To carry

out this research the following procedure was followed; the research study was forwarded to the Daystar University Ethics Review Board for approval. The research permit was then obtained through an application to NACOSTI.

The researcher contacted NSSF through a formal request in writing to obtain authority and permission since the research findings may have impacted negatively on its corporate reputation. Upon obtaining the relevant approvals, a formal letter was written and hand-delivered to the Chief Executive Officers of COTU, FKE and AEA by the researcher, inviting them of their participation in good time and their authority sought in obtaining data from their employees who were the respondents. A follow-up on the same was further made by the researcher through physical visits to their main offices.

A total of 4 research assistants were recruited, appraised and trained for a period of 5 days before being dispatched to the field to collect data. The researcher conducted a brief with the research assistants to educate them on the purpose and objectives of the study, and the ethical considerations to take note of. In addition, they read and signed the privacy and confidentiality form before they commenced on the exercise. They then administered the questionnaire and the interview protocol through the contact persons in the companies participating in the study and clear instructions were provided on how to move through all the sections. The consent forms were attached and disbursed with each questionnaire. The instructions clearly indicated how to answer the questions and how to progress until completion. The contact persons provided in the companies participating in the study subsequently distributed the questionnaire to all the respondents. The research assistants consistently made follow-ups through personal visits and phone calls in order to be able to achieve a high response rate and to obtain the completed questionnaire. After obtaining the

filled questionnaire from the respondents, the researcher carried out a briefing session with the research assistants on their experiences and to analyse the results and findings that arose.

The research assistants prepared a schedule to carry out the Focus Group discussion with the participants. COTU offices were accessed in Nairobi County. FKE offices were visited in Nairobi and in their branches in Kisumu, Nakuru and Mombasa Counties. AEA offices were visited in Nakuru County. The research assistants enumerated the responses from the participants that were used during analysis.

Pre-testing Research Instrument

Pre-testing is “the assessment of questions and instruments before the start of a study and an established practice for discovering errors in questions, question sequencing, instructions and skip directions” (Cooper & Schindler, 2006, p. 722). The pre-test was a way of giving feedback to the researcher with a view of maximizing the reliability, validity, credibility, and authenticity of the data collected. The questionnaire and the interview protocol were revised based on the results of the pre-test. The aim was to observe the quality of responses, clarify concerns and areas of confusion, and address completed responses through discussions of specific issues encountered in the conduct of the exercise.

The questionnaire developed was therefore pre-tested among 12 respondents from Kenya Coffee Growers’ and Employers’ Association (KCGEA) and Kenya Electrical Trades Allied Workers Union (KETAWU) in Nairobi County, who are active contributors to NSSF and were respondents from union bodies like the type of respondents who participated in the main survey. However, the respondents from these organizations on which the questionnaire was pre-tested were not part of the

selected sample.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) also stated that “the internal consistency of data is determined from scores obtained from a single test administered by the researcher to a sample of subjects” (p.99). Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was therefore computed as a way of ascertaining how the various items in the questionnaire correlate among themselves. According to Panayides (2013), “reliabilities of 0.70 or better (but not much beyond than 0.80) is recommended for basic research” (p. 689). The reliability test performed on the questionnaire yielded the following results; a value of 0.7024 was observed on the demographic information of the study. 0.7754 value on the section regarding media information. 0.711 value on the section of NSSF reputation and finally a value of 0.6548 of the section dealing with significance of media coverage. The values were therefore deemed reliable since values of more than 0.5 are considered satisfactory (Ven & Ferry, 1980).

The interview protocol used for the Focus Group discussions was pre-tested among 5 participants from KCGEA in Nairobi County, who are active contributors to NSSF and had similar characteristics of the type of respondents who participated in the main survey. This organization did not also give the actual data in the main survey.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis plays an important role in research and through the findings the research will be easily understood. Quantitative data collected in the form of a questionnaire was collected and inspected to ensure that they were complete, consistent and then coded. After checking on errors, the raw data was captured using Microsoft Excel 2013 and coded in Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) programme. These data was tabulated to generate the frequency and percentages of

responses to the questions with tables showing the descriptive statistics. The data gathered was analysed using measures of central tendency (mean and mode), cross tabulation and chi-square tests.

Through Focus Group discussions, the qualitative data obtained was analysed interpretatively and presented in accordance to the research objectives. The data was also sorted with a view of choosing which data to pay most attention to. The data was then organized into categories and coded. Coding involved selecting items in the data to be revisited through the use of predetermined coding themes. Finally, a thematic analysis was conducted based on the research objectives.

Ethical Considerations

During the conduct of the study, several issues were taken into consideration in order to maintain high ethical standards. This was as follows;

Permission to carry out research: before the data collection exercise was carried out, permission was sought from the relevant authorities to conduct the research. This included obtaining an ethics clearance report from Daystar University Ethics Review Board, a research authorization letter and research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI), permission from the head of department (HOD) of the communication department at Daystar University and the research approval in writing from NSSF. Formal requests were put in writing to the participating organizations to inform them in advance on the content and objectives of the study.

Informed consent: “a researcher must confirm to the principle of voluntary consent where the respondents willingly participate in research. A subject must also be told the truth and be given all the facts about the research in order to make an

informed decision about participating or not” (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012, p. 192). The researcher sought voluntary participation from the respondents in writing that included the right to withdraw at any point during the research.

Privacy and confidentiality: “respondents should be protected by keeping the information they give confidential, especially if confidentiality has been promised” (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012, p. 191). In order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents, the research study did not collect identifying information of individual subjects like names, address and email address. The questionnaire did not also link individual responses with participants’ identities. Further permission for taping responses for purposes of transcribing was sort during the Focus Group discussions.

Conflict of interest: in order to eliminate bias and subjectivity in the data collection exercise, research assistants were employed by the researcher, who is an employee of NSSF. The research assistants assisted in administering and collecting the questionnaire, and facilitating the interview protocol to the participants in the 2 organizations that participated.

Stipend or benefits in participating: there were no monetary benefits to the respondents arising from the research study other than financial compensation that was provided to the research assistants. The researcher also provided water and lunch to the respondents participating in the Focus Group discussions. However, the study is useful to the policy makers in the participating companies, Government and NSSF as an institution, to inform future policy formulation and decision making.

Risks and protection of participants from harm: a researcher should never undertake research that may cause physical or psychological harm (Mugenda &

Mugenda, 2012). The researcher made an assessment of the potential risks to the respondents' involvement in the study. These included informational risks such as sharing personal opinions about NSSF which may have led to victimization. There were also the risks of non-compliance with NSSF that may have arisen from engagements with the participating organizations. In the introductory stage, the researcher who is an employee of NSSF, may have discovered offences such as non-payment of contributions and penalties relating to payments, which was a risk to the participating organizations. To mitigate these risks, the researcher engaged research assistants in administering and collecting the questionnaire from the respondents, and facilitating the interview protocol to the participants with a pledge of confidentiality from disclosure. In addition, a consent form and a privacy and confidentiality form were issued to the respondents and research assistants respectively in order to safeguard the information and responses received.

Debriefing: according to Cooper and Schindler (2006), “even when the research does not deceive the participants, it is a good practice to offer them follow-up information. This retains the goodwill of the participant and providing an incentive to participate in future projects” (p. 120). The research participants therefore were debriefed through formal communication to the participating organizations. This entailed elucidating the goal and objective of the research and appreciating their participation through the information provided in the questionnaire. The researcher further provided contact information to allow for further engagements and queries from the respondents.

Dissemination of research: it is unethical to conceal research findings after completion of research (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The results will be disseminated as follows; a hard copy will be provided to the Daystar University

library to act as a reference for any institution requiring the research findings. Two other hard copies and soft copies in portable document format (pdf) will be issued to NACOSTI and NSSF as stipulated in their research regulations. The researcher also intends to publish the results of the research study in a peer-reviewed journal.

Summary

This chapter adequately described the research methodology that was used for this study, the explanation of the sample selection, procedure applied in the design of the instrument and data collection, and explanation of the data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

Chapter four presents findings of the study. The analysis in form of tables and graphs and the interpretations have also been made. The findings have been reported in accordance to the objectives of the study. The study objectives were to; identify the extent to which NSSF's publics depend on the media as a source of information, identify the perceptions of the publics towards the corporate reputation of NSSF and examine the extent to which media coverage of NSSF stories influence the corporate reputation. The research adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

The data obtained from the questionnaire was cross-tabulated and the frequency tables generated. The presentation has been made in the form of tables, figures and also in a summarized narrative form. Responses from the Focus Group discussions have been summarized and others stated in direct speech. The responses have been grouped under the key themes related to the study objectives.

Findings

The questionnaire was administered to a total of 103 respondents. The actual data was collected from 74 respondents as follows; 43 from FKE, 25 from COTU and 5 from AEA. Twenty nine (29) respondents were therefore unresponsive since they did not return the questionnaire. This represents a response rate of 72%. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2012), a response rate of 50% is considered for analysis and reporting, 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is very good. Given that

the response rate for the research was 72%, the data collected was sufficient for analysis and testing of the hypothesis.

Seventeen participants took part in the Focus Group discussions (FGDs) which comprised of 9 employees from FKE and 8 from COTU. Responses of Focus Group discussions with participants from COTU and FKE are abbreviated as *RC* and *RF* respectively.

Demographic information

This section of the questionnaire covered the respondents' gender, age, level of education, job category, organization, terms and length of service in employment. Though not pivotal to the study, the demographic information helped contextualize the findings and the formulation of appropriate recommendations in improving the corporate reputation of NSSF.

Gender of Respondents

The number of female respondents was slightly more than that of the male respondents. The female respondents were 58%, while that of the male respondents was 42%. This indicated that the research study was able to achieve a fair gender representation of the respondents.

Age of Respondents

The majority of the respondents (39%) were aged between 28-37 years, 27% were aged between 48-57 years, 19% were aged between 38-47 years, 11% were aged between 18-27 years and the least age group of the respondents were aged above 58 years representing only 4%. There was therefore representation across all age groups with the majority between 28-37 years of age. The sample was further heterogeneous with reference to the spread of the age of the respondents.

Level of Education of Respondents

The majority of the respondents (46%) had Bachelor's degree, 22% had diploma and 15% had Master's degree. Therefore 62% of the respondents surveyed had attained a Bachelor's degree and higher. 11% of respondents had secondary level of education, 5% had certificate while only 1% had PhD.

Distribution of Respondents by Job Cadre

According to the different levels of management of the respondents surveyed, majority were in middle level management (54%) as shown in Figure 4.1 below. This was followed by Heads of Department at 19%, Support staff at 15%, Unionizable at 8% with Top management accounting for only 1%.

Level of Management

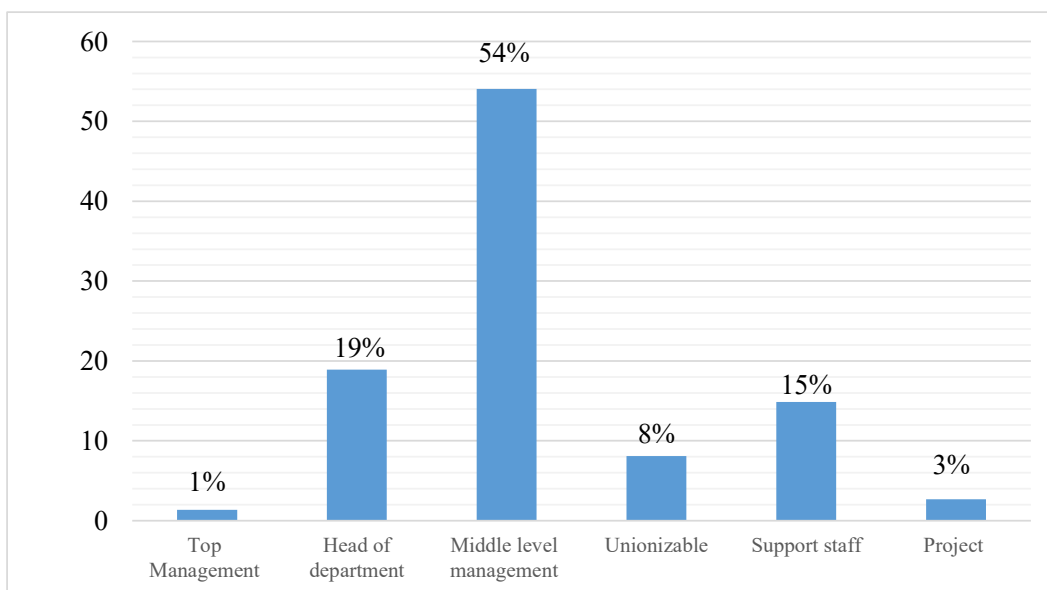


Figure 4. 1: Management Level

Terms of Service of Respondents

The terms of service of the majority (85%) of the respondents were permanent and 15% of the respondents were on contract terms of service.

Length of Service of Respondents

Majority of the respondents (45%) indicated that they had worked in their respective organizations for a period ranging between 1–2 years, 39% for a period ranging between 3-4 years, 9% of the respondents for more than 6 years and only 7% for a period between 5–6 years. This translated to 84% of the respondents who had worked between 1–4 years. Therefore, the respondents who participated had not worked in their respective organizations for a significantly long period.

Information on the media

To be able to measure the first objective of the research, which was to identify the extent to which NSSF's publics depend on the media as a source of information, the researcher sought to gather data through a series of questions.

The Type of Media the Respondents had access to

Regarding the type of media the respondents had access to; the findings are presented in Table 4.1 below. This table shows that the majority (85%) of the respondents had frequent access to television on a daily basis as a means of obtaining information, followed by 73% who had access to radio and newspapers as well, 66 had access to the internet, 51% to social media platforms and the least (31%) to magazines.

Table 4. 1: Media access

Type of media access	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	54	73%
Television	63	85%
Newspapers	54	73%
Magazines	23	31%
Internet	49	66%
Social Media	38	51%
Total	74	100%

The participants from the Focus Group discussions were also asked to mention the media channels they had access to in seeking information. According to the discussions held, television was the most common channel among the participants. The findings of the Focus Group discussions are enumerated as follows;

We have access to different media such as television, newspapers and internet, particularly websites. The prominent ones for the organization are newspapers and television which we access on a daily basis. (RF)

Television, newspapers, radio and internet. We have access to newspapers and television much more on a daily basis. (RC)

Common source of information about NSSF

The respondents were then asked to state their most common source of information about NSSF. Table 4.2 below indicates that 45% which was the highest, stated that they rely on internal publications followed by 31% on the media, 13% on the NSSF website and 11% on NSSF publications.

Table 4. 2: Most common source of information about NSSF

Common source of information about NSSF	Frequency	Percentage
Media	23	31%
NSSF publications	8	11%
Internal publications	33	45%
NSSF website	10	13%
Total	74	100%

Through the discussions held in the Focus Groups, the participants drawn from the 2 organizations held different views as follows:

From NSSF directly since we form part of the management and through internal publications of our organization. (RF)

From the media. Specifically television and newspapers. (RC)

When the respondents depend most on the media as a source of information about NSSF

The findings from Table 4.3 below established that the majority (66%) of the respondents depended most on the media for general updates, 20% only when there is a major scandal and 14% during a crisis.

Table 4. 3: Dependency on the media as a source of information about NSSF

Dependency on the media as a source of Information about NSSF	Frequency	Percentage
For general updates	49	66%
When there's a crisis	10	14%
When there's a major scandal	15	20%
Total	74	100%

During the Focus Group discussions, the researcher probed the participants further to understand their dependency on the media as a source of information. The responses were however varied and divergent. They are presented as follows:

To obtain information on NSSF and receive updates such as new products, new laws and to know the happenings of NSSF such as scandals, abuse of resources and workers' pension. (RC)

Obviously when there is a crisis/scandal or when NSSF has been mentioned either positively or negatively. We also depend on the media in situations involving management. (RF)

Reputation of NSSF

According to Brady and Honey (2007), reputation of an organization is affected by its policies, culture and performance, but fundamentally it is the stakeholders who determine what the reputation of the organization really is. To therefore establish the perceptions of the publics towards the corporate reputation of NSSF, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the

listed attributes in Table 4.4 regarding the reputation of NSSF. The 10 attributes were rated on a five-point Likert scale.

From the findings illustrated in Table 4.4, majority of the respondents (64.9%) indicated that contributions towards NSSF are secure. In as much as 43.2% of the respondents agreed that NSSF is well managed, 36.5% indicated that the management is not trustworthy. 40.5% agreed that NSSF pays benefits on time. 51.4% of the respondents agreed that the public view of NSSF is poor. However, 44.6% disagreed that NSSF wisely invests workers' contributions. 47.3% further disagreed that NSSF is playing a role in ridding corruption. 52.7% also disagreed that NSSF is transparent in its operations.

Table 4. 4: Information on NSSF reputation

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
NSSF is well managed	No. %	6 8.1	26 35.1	17 23.0	20 27.0	5 6.8
Members contributions are secure under NSSF custody	No. %	13 17.6	35 47.3	13 17.6	10 13.5	3 4.1
NSSF is wisely investing workers contributions	No. %	5 6.8	20 27.0	16 21.6	22 29.7	11 14.9
NSSF has played a role in getting rid of corruption	No. %	3 4.1	10 13.5	26 35.1	19 25.7	16 21.6
NSSF can efficiently manage the new rates of contributions	No. %	8 10.8	18 24.3	24 32.4	17 23.0	6 8.1
NSSF is transparent in its operations	No. %	3 4.1	17 23.0	15 20.3	31 41.9	8 10.8
The management of NSSF is not trustworthy	No. %	8 10.8	24 32.4	14 18.9	21 28.4	6 8.1
NSSF pays workers' benefits on time	No. %	10 13.5	20 27.0	23 31.1	20 27.0	1 1.4
NSSF interest on contributions is good compared to other pension schemes	No. %	8 10.8	12 16.2	16 21.6	31 41.9	7 9.5
The public's view of NSSF is poor	No. %	13 17.6	25 33.8	8 10.8	19 25.7	8 10.8

During the Focus Group discussions, the researcher probed the participants to discuss and provide their views on any news stories or articles on NSSF that they had read, heard or seen in the different media. They are enumerated as follows:

Some of the issues we have seen reported on television include scandals, abuse of workers' pension leading to losses, low interest rates and frequent turnover of management. (RC)

FKE is part of the management of NSSF. However, we have noted that the media has highlighted several issues concerning leadership structure, corrupt dealings and poor investment decisions. NSSF however, must be accountable and responsible in its actions and decisions. (RF)

Role of NSSF in the Provision of Social Security to its Members

The study purposed to find out from the respondents the role that NSSF plays in provision of social security. 59.5% of the respondents indicated that NSSF performs the role of registration, 51.4% payments of benefits, 43.2% collection of contributions, 20.3% management of workers fund while 10.8% governance and leadership. Therefore the majority (59.5%) felt that the major role of NSSF was registration while the least (10.8%) was governance and leadership.

During the Focus Group discussions, the researcher probed the participants to comment on their own experiences or from people they know regarding the services offered by NSSF. The responses are summarized as follows:

Registration services and payment of benefits has improved. (RC)

There has been a lot of improvement by NSSF in offering services to its members. However, there has to be a concerted effort by all stakeholders to ensure that there is innovation in product development. (RF)

Significance of Media Coverage on NSSF

In order to establish the significance of media coverage of NSSF, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with the following aspects on a five-point Likert scale. Eight attributes were rated as shown Table 4.5. 90.5% of the respondents indicated that positive media coverage has improved NSSF's reputation. 86.5% of the respondents agreed that the media is important in safeguarding transparency of the management and helped in exposing malpractices in NSSF. 85.2% further agreed that the media is important in safeguarding the

transparency in the management and 83.7% that the media is a powerful tool in forming the reputation of NSSF. However, 47.3% of the respondents disagreed that the media is biased in reporting stories about NSSF.

Table 4. 5: Information on significance of media coverage on NSSF

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The media is powerful tool in forming the reputation of NSSF	No. %	28 37.8	34 45.9	4 5.4	6 8.1	2 2.7
The media is important in safeguarding the transparency of the management of NSSF	No. %	26 35.1	38 51.4	1 1.4	8 10.8	1 1.4
The media is biased in reporting NSSF stories	No. %	3 4.1	6 8.1	30 40.5	23 31.1	12 16.2
The media plays an important role in shaping opinions about NSSF	No. %	25 33.8	38 51.4	6 8.1	4 5.4	1 1.4
The confidence among NSSFs members has reduced because of negative media reporting	No. %	15 20.3	29 39.2	15 20.3	11 14.9	4 5.4
Positive media coverage of NSSF stories has improved its reputation	No. %	30 40.5	37 50.0	3 4.1	2 2.7	1 1.4
Negative NSSF coverage by the media has negatively impacted its reputation	No. %	15 20.3	44 59.5	4 5.4	8 10.8	3 4.1
The media has helped in exposing malpractices in NSSF	No. %	45 60.8	19 25.7	4 5.4	5 6.8	1 1.4

During the Focus Group discussions, majority of the participants affirmed the role that the media plays in highlighting NSSF's stories through the following responses:

Yes the media is indeed powerful. This is because NSSF has to rely on the media to highlight its products, advertise and create awareness. The media is therefore central to the operations of NSSF. (RF)

Yes. The media is important in highlighting the evils happening at NSSF to the public which is necessary for the stakeholders. (RC)

The participants were further asked to discuss and state how they felt about the way the media reports stories on NSSF. There responses are listed as follows:

The media are right to report any story on NSSF. However, they need to research more so that they report impartially and with all the facts. (RF)

The media reports are important and true. The media should not stop but continue to report on anything that will require the attention of the stakeholders and the workers in general. (RC)

The researcher further sought to establish from the participants in the Focus Group discussions, some of the issues that had affected public confidence due to the manner in which the media reported stories on NSSF. The following were their observations:

Issues such as corruption, wrong leadership practices and wrong investments have affected the way the public perceives NSSF. This has also led to apathy and disbelief that NSSF can deliver its mandate. (RF)

There have been very minimal reforms at NSSF in specific, leadership and management. The investment policy is also weak which has led to poor and low interest being issued to workers. The public has therefore lost confidence in NSSF and COTU may be forced to reconsider reviewing its support. (RC)

Analysis of Hypothesis

The study purposed to find out if there was any standing relationship between negative media coverage and the reputation of NSSF.

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between negative media coverage of

NSSF stories and corporate reputation which may result in unfavourable perceptions among publics (H_0).

Alternative hypothesis. Negative media coverage of NSSF stories decreases corporate reputation which may result in unfavourable perceptions among publics (H_1).

Chi-square test on media coverage and corporate reputation

Chi-square tests were used to test the dependency of corporate reputation and the variables influencing corporate reputation through media coverage. Testing of the two variables was therefore important in determining significance of the given variables. Following the chi-square test performed at 95% confidence interval giving only 5% to chance and error, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) accepted for variables that yielded a *p-value* greater than 0.05. Table 4.6 below provides the results as follows.

Table 4.6: Dependency test of corporate reputation and variables influencing corporate reputation

Variables influencing corporate reputation	Chi-square	P value
i. The media is important in safeguarding the transparency of management of NSSF	38.07	0.001
ii. The media is biased when reporting stories about NSSF	45.03	0.650
iii. The media plays an important role in shaping opinions about NSSF	43.76	0.875
iv. The public confidence among NSSF's members has reduced because of negative reporting from the media	34.87	0.564
v. The media is a powerful tool in forming the reputation of NSSF	45	0.61
vi. The media has helped in exposing malpractices in NSSF like corruption	33.74	0.003

The variable regarding media bias in reporting stories about NSSF yielded a *p-value* was 0.650 and a chi-square value of 45.03. This implies that there is a dependency between corporate reputation and media bias in reporting NSSF stories.

The variable regarding importance of the media in shaping stories on NSSF yielded a *p-value* of 0.875 and a chi-square of 43.76. With the *p-value* being greater than 0.05, the conclusion therefore is that there is statistically significant dependency between corporate reputation and the media's importance in shaping stories on NSSF.

The variable seeking to measure the dependency between corporate reputation and whether the confidence of NSSF members had reduced because of negative media reporting yielded a *p-value* of 0.564 and a chi-square of 34.87. In addition, the variable measuring the media being a powerful tool in forming the reputation of NSSF yielded a *p-value* of 0.61 and a chi-square value of 45. Both variables therefore indicate dependency with corporate reputation, since the respective *p-values* were greater than 0.05.

The chi-square tests however revealed that 2 variables were independent with corporate reputation. The variable seeking to establish the media's importance in safeguarding transparency of NSSF's management yielded a *p-value* of 0.001, which was less than 0.05 and a chi-square value of 38.07. This therefore implies that there was no significant dependency between corporate reputation and the media safeguarding the transparency of NSSF management. The other variable seeking to establish whether the media had assisted in exposing malpractices in NSSF like corruption indicated a *p-value* of 0.003 and a chi-square of 33.74. This further implied that corporate reputation and media exposing malpractices in NSSF were statistically independent. Since these 2 variables touched on the management of NSSF, the results

can point to bias of the respondents in data collection since they form part of the management of NSSF and are key stakeholders in the information being divulged to the public by the media. However, the overall tests indicated that there is statistical dependency between negative media coverage and corporate reputation of NSSF.

Regression Analysis Test on Media Coverage and Corporate Reputation

Regression analysis test was carried out to confirm the statistical relationship between negative media coverage and NSSF's corporate reputation. Corporate reputation which was the dependent variable was tested against the independent variables on media coverage. Following the regression analysis test performed at 95% confidence interval giving only 5% to chance and error, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) accepted for variables that yielded a *p-value* less than 0.05. Table 4.7 provides the results as follows.

Table 4.7: Regression analysis between the dependent variable (corporate reputation) and independent variables of media coverage

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean of Squares	Number of observations			
				F(7, 59)	67.00		
					6.62		
Model	31.07	7.00	4.44	Prob > F	0.03		
Residual	39.56	59.00	0.67	R-squared	0.44		
				Adjusted R-squared	0.77		
Total	70.63	66.00	1.07	Root MSE	0.82		
Independent variables	Coefficient	Std. Err.	t	P > t	[95% Conf. Interval]		
The media is important in safeguarding the transparency of management of NSSF	0.19	0.13	1.51	0.14	(0.06)	0.44	
The media is biased when reporting stories about NSSF	(0.02)	0.11	(0.22)	0.03	(0.24)	0.19	
The media plays an important role in shaping opinions about NSSF	0.31	0.16	1.95	0.05	(0.01)	0.63	
The public confidence among NSSF's members has reduced because of negative reporting from the media	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.01	(0.23)	0.26	
The media is a powerful tool in forming the reputation of NSSF	0.35	0.14	2.49	0.02	0.07	0.63	
The media has helped in exposing malpractices in NSSF like corruption	0.14	0.14	1.00	0.32	(0.14)	0.41	
Constant	0.27	0.51	0.53	0.60	(0.74)	1.28	

From the Table 4.7 above, the adjusted R-squared is given by 0.77. This implies that the mode's independent variables explain the changes in dependent

variable by 77%. Statistically, this is above average and therefore explains the dependent variables confidently. The coefficients explain the extent to which independent variables react to the movement of dependent variables in the regression equation. The following are the coefficient values observed for the independent variables;

The independent variable on media bias when reporting stories about NSSF yielded a coefficient value of (0.02). The *p-value* of the variable was 0.03, which is less than 0.05. This therefore shows a statistically significant correlation between negative media coverage and bias in reporting news stories.

The independent variable on media playing an important role in shaping opinions about NSSF yielded a coefficient value of 0.31 and a *p-value* of 0.05. This also indicates a statistically significant correlation between negative media coverage and the media's role in shaping opinions about NSSF.

The independent variable on whether the confidence of NSSF's members had reduced because of negative reporting from the media yielded a coefficient value of 0.11 and a *p-value* of 0.01. This indicates that for every increase by one unit in negative media coverage the public's confidence rose up by 0.11 units. The *p-value* therefore suggests that there is a strong relationship between negative media coverage and public confidence.

The independent variable on the media being a powerful tool in forming the reputation of NSSF yielded a coefficient value of 0.35 and a *p-value* of 0.02. This indicates that an increase in one unit of negative media coverage led to an increase by 0.35 with the media as a powerful tool in forming reputation. With a *p-value* of 0.02, there is statistically significant relationship since the *p-value* is less than 0.05.

Two independent variables however yielded inconsistent results of correlation between negative media coverage and corporate reputation. Media safeguarding transparency of the management of NSSF yielded a coefficient value of 0.19 and a *p-value* of 0.14. Media assisting in exposing malpractices in NSSF like corruption yielded a coefficient value of 0.14 and a *p-value* of 0.32. Since the *p-values* of these 2 variables were greater than 0.05, it shows that there is no correlation with the reputation of NSSF. These results were found consistent with the chi-square tests and may be further attributed to bias of the respondents since they are part of the management of NSSF.

However, the overall *p-value* of the regression analysis model is given as 0.03. Most of the variables tested indicated a statistical correlation between negative media coverage and reputation of NSSF. It can be concluded that there is a statistical significant correlation between negative media coverage and the reputation of NSSF. The alternative hypothesis therefore holds.

Key Summary

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents depend on their organizations' internal publications for general updates as a source of information about NSSF. Dependency on the media as a source of information was also observed with television identified as the major source followed by radio and newspapers.

The findings further indicated that majority of the respondents had negative perceptions on the reputation of NSSF. The conclusions were drawn following a correlation done on the reputation of NSSF and media coverage on the NSSF attributes. It is important to note that for a situation where stakeholders have diverse perspectives of the same organization, a negative reputation might taint a positive

reputation (Chun, 2005).

In as far as significance of media coverage on NSSF is concerned, majority of the respondents agreed that the media is a powerful tool and plays an important role in forming the reputation of NSSF. The media was therefore seen as an important tool in shaping the opinions of NSSF and that positive media coverage of NSSF stories is likely to improve its reputation.

The analysis of the hypothesis further indicated that negative media coverage of NSSF stories decreased corporate reputation which resulted in unfavourable perceptions among publics. This therefore agreed with the findings of the research on Agenda Setting effects as stated by Carroll (2011), that the more negative media coverage is for a particular attribute, the more negatively will members of the public perceive that attribute.

Based on the findings of this study, media coverage has a great impact on the end reputation of an organization. It also has the power of changing a negative image to a positive one. NSSF should therefore engage with the media effectively since it consequently supports the success of corporate reputation.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the quantitative and qualitative findings based on the data collected. The analysis was conducted from the questionnaire and responses from the Focus Group discussions. The findings have been examined together with the research objectives. The next chapter has provided an analysis of the findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations. It has also identified and highlighted areas for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides discussions that relate to the study findings relative to the research objective. The purpose of the study was to explore how media coverage influences the corporate reputation of NSSF, with a view of obtaining the perceptions of NSSF's publics. The specific objectives of the study have been discussed based on the research findings to be able to draw conclusions and make recommendations accordingly.

Discussion of the Key Findings

Objective 1: Extent to which the publics depend on the media as a source of information

The first objective was to identify the extent to which the publics depend on the media as a source of information. The key finding observed was that 45% of the respondents stated that they rely on their organizations' internal publications as their source of information on NSSF. This therefore confirmed what was stated by Carroll (2011) that despite the fact that most of the information acquired by audiences on public affairs is from the media, their effects are limited since audiences do not passively wait to be programmed by the media.

From the study findings, 31% of the respondents stated that they depend on the media as a source of information on NSSF stories. This confirmed that information must be accessible to be influential (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997). In addition, the findings were consistent with obtrusiveness in Agenda Setting. The concept suggests that people heavily rely on news media for information on obtrusive

issues which they have indirect experience and high media coverage raises attention and public recognition of an organization's attributes (Severin & Tankard, 2014). The findings further confirmed a previous study carried out in Nigeria which indicated that the measure of news coverage obtained by an organization connected affirmatively with the public's awareness of it (Amujo & Otubanjo, 2012).

From the study findings, 85% of the respondents identified television as the main media source, followed by 73% for both radio and newspapers. Television therefore stood out as the most accessible media channel on a daily basis by the respondents. These findings can be tied to Agenda Setting component investigating the length for media content to have an effect on the publics' subjective rankings, which indicated a strong correlation between media agenda and public agenda (Severin & Tankard, 2014). In addition, media presence has the capacity to create awareness thus stimulating changes in opinions from audiences and perceptions of reputation (Carroll, 2011).

According to Owusu and Poku (2013), "both print and electronic media have a way to persuade or influence their respective audiences" (p. 19). In a study done in Ghana to examine the ways in which news coverage by journalists and the various media houses have an influence on corporate reputation of an organization, 40 of the respondents representing 77.5% said that electronic media can influence the reputation of an organization (Owusu & Poku, 2013). This therefore clearly indicates media's potential to influence the reputation of an organization. To emphasize the importance and role of television, which stood out as the most accessible channel, Fleming, Hemmingway, Moore and Welford (2006) stated that:

Television news is important not only because it is the medium through which most people get their news, but also because it can enhance the

reputation of television companies by showing them providing a public service through their provision of accurate and up-to-the-minute reports. (p. 17)

According to Tench and Yeomans (2006), “the more you are in the news, the more you should expect to become a media target” (p. 319). From the foregoing, NSSF should pay a keen interest in the stories highlighted in the media, specifically television because of its ability to “potentially stimulate more widespread public discussion of issues” (Hassan, 2013, p. 333). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) mentioned that the “more attention television news pays to a particular issue – the more frequently an issue is primed – the more viewers should incorporate what they know about that issue into their overall judgment of an organization” (p. 65). Furthermore, Agenda Setting effects for television was found in audiences after six days and diminished after eleven days. The effects for newspapers was seen after eight days but lasted longer, disappearing after 85 days (Severin and Tankard, 2014).

The other media channels identified as most accessible by the respondents, namely, radio and newspapers also play an important role in influencing opinions. People love listening to radio because “it is an essential part of their daily lives” to know what’s happening where they reside. Even with unpleasant things, “people will listen because they want to know about it” (Fleming, Hemmingway, Moore & Welford, 2006, p. 12). Owusu and Poku (2013) furthermore stated that with newspapers, the readers can retain, reminisce and occasionally process the news and information obtained and likewise refer to them every now and then at their own comfort. The Agenda Setting examination done to test the concept of media exposure and importance of issues revealed that “the more exposure individuals had to the news media, the more they tended to be concerned about the issues receiving heavy media coverage” (Severin and Tankard, 2014, p. 230).

With the majority of the respondents, 66% stating that they depend most on the media for general updates, the functions and the role of the media were underscored. The findings were consistent with previous research indicating that reliance on the news media increases as well as the need to seek information when people have minimal direct learning of events (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna & Kinsey, 2005). According to Severin and Tankard (2014), in executing the function of surveillance of informing and providing news, media provides information “essential to the economy, the public and society” (p. 321). In addition, journalists, who repeatedly represent the public, are obligated to report on issues that affect the wider population which might otherwise go unrecorded as far as NSSF is concerned (Tench & Yeomans, 2006).

Objective 2: Publics' Perception towards the Corporate Reputation of NSSF

The second objective was to identify the publics' perception towards the corporate reputation of NSSF. Perception can be closely identified with image projected by an organization (Schultz & Werner, 2005). From the study findings, majority of the respondents had negative perceptions on the corporate reputation of NSSF. According to the findings, 44.6% disagreed that NSSF wisely invests workers' contributions, 47.3% disagreed that NSSF has played a role in getting rid of corruption and 52.7% disagreed on transparency of its operations. These findings therefore confirmed the 'cause and effect' relationship between media coverage and audience perception of salient issues. The concept of framing indicates that how issues are presented to audiences influences their choices about how to process that information (Severin & Tankard, 2014; Guth & Marsh, 2007). In addition, the findings confirmed the theory put forth that the effect of messages is in the manner of presentation and not the content (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The concept of

priming in Agenda Setting suggests that the media raises attention to some issues and not others and in so doing change the criteria by which individuals evaluate institutions (Severin & Tankard, 2014). Issues surrounding corruption in NSSF and poor investments of workers' contributions have dominated news coverage, which emerged to be the salient issues of the public regarding NSSF. Therefore, the increased coverage of such issues indeed carried over to influence the perceptions of the respondents in the overall evaluation of NSSF. Framing theory further suggests that the concepts associated with messages are interrelated in the minds of audiences during the process of opinion-formation, which will eventually influence attitudes and behaviours (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

In a study done in Ghana to examine the ways in which news coverage by journalists and the various media houses have an influence on corporate reputation of an organization, the respondents were asked to state their thoughts on whether news content had an impact on corporate reputation of an organization. Eight respondents constituting 80% stated that news content had an impact on corporate reputation of an organization. A similar study done in Egypt indicated that the heavier negative news covered an organization's attributes, the more unfavourable the public considered those attributes (Carroll, 2011). It can be concluded therefore that indeed news content has an impact on the perceptions of individuals in as far as the corporate reputation of an organization is concerned.

Objective 3: Extent to which media coverage of NSSF Stories Influences the Corporate Reputation

The third objective was to examine the extent to which media coverage of NSSF stories influences the corporate reputation. The research findings revealed that media coverage indeed influences corporate reputation. 83.7% agreed that media is powerful in the formation of NSSF's reputation and further plays an important role in shaping opinions about the organization. According to Cornelissen (2011), "the second level of Agenda Setting suggests that news coverage not only reports facts and neutral observations but also, it conveys feelings through its stance and tone on the issue" (p.147). The research findings confirmed the second-level of Agenda Setting theory which suggests that the higher the level of media favourability, the higher the level of an organization's performance. The hypothesis set out for the study further confirmed that negative media coverage of NSSF stories reduces corporate reputation which may result in unfavourable perceptions among publics.

The findings of this study further confirmed the study done in Egypt which revealed that the heavier positive or negative the news covered an attribute of an organization in the media in Egypt, the more favourable or unfavourable the public considered that attribute (Carroll, 2011). Another study seeking to examine the ways in which news coverage by journalists and the various media houses have an influence on corporate reputation of an organization concluded that the manner in which news or stories are reported had "an effect either negatively or positively on reputation of a corporate organization" (Owusu & Poku, 2013, p. 27).

In summary, the hypothesis tests confirmed dependency and statistically significant correlation between negative media coverage and corporate reputation of NSSF.

Conclusions of the Study

Arising from the analyses performed in relation to the research objectives, it can be concluded that the media indeed for the most part are viewed as an essential setting for the formation and portrayal of corporate reputation, and plays a major role in enhancing corporate governance. News media has a powerful effect on the audiences' perception of corporate reputation and can further legitimize organizations (Carroll, 2011). Heightened exposure through media coverage plays an important role in building the corporate reputation of an organization. In this era of urbanization "where consumerism is on the rise, organizations must strive not only to satisfy the needs of customers but also to build and maintain good reputations, since customers will only want to be associated with an organization with good reputation " (Owusu & Poku, 2013, p. 27). Therefore media coverage and its influence on corporate reputation are reported to have significant impact. This highly influences the decisions of the public who have been mandated to incorporate the pension scheme offered by the NSSF body in ensuring that they contribute a certain amount. Media coverage is reported to be a guiding factor on how the media will disseminate various NSSF information and ensuring that the impact does not alter the NSSF reputation. With everything taken into account, the connection between negative coverage and reputation loss is significantly strong since negativism, more frequently than positive reporting corresponds with increased coverage (Carroll, 2011).

Recommendations

1. The study recommends that NSSF should strive to use the media creatively in order to repair and build its corporate reputation. This can be done by using innovative angles and means to ensure that its core functions and operations

are publicized and covered effectively in the media. Some examples include producing documentaries, publishing news articles, editorials and newspaper supplements, developing interactive website and conducting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities.

2. NSSF needs to embark on sound media relations with a view to manage relationships with the media, specifically gatekeepers. According to Tench and Yeomans (2006), the significance of media relations can be explained by several trends such as the rise of consumer power and proliferation of the media. This involves trying to gain editorial advantage in reputable programmes in television, radio and publications aimed at “enhancing the reputation of an organization and its products, and to influence and inform the target audience” (p. 315). However, the management of NSSF needs to ensure that media relations are not centred only on the news the organization wants to see in the public domain.
3. NSSF should be able to engage in regular and periodical media monitoring, evaluation and research owing to the influence that the media has on audiences. Media monitoring can be a useful instrument in informing policies and regulations that will guide operations of NSSF and specifically in relating with key stakeholders. This will eliminate bias and ensure that the use of frames in the media or news positively influences perceptions of the audiences.
4. It is also recommended that NSSF establishes programmes and sound processes that will enable it to proactively manage its reputation since the achievement of its objectives and service delivery depends on it.

5. NSSF should develop a crisis response and communication plan aimed at divulging adequate and important information to its stakeholders. It is not in doubt that negative media reporting can lead to a crisis within an organization. Immediate and adequate responses from the management of NSSF will ensure that credibility of its reputation is maintained. According to Schultz and Werner (2005), at the point when bad news is reported, critical stakeholders have expectations of an organization's capacity to effectively respond.
6. The study finally recommends that NSSF needs to proactively utilize computer mediated platforms in communicating to its relevant publics. This includes divulging of timely information in platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and the website. Owing to the instancy of information being shared electronically, the internet which is now being used for opinion forming (blogging), can be an adequate tool to counteract false news and rumours. "Reputations depend on stakeholder perceptions and truth is often a victim of sensationalism" (Brady & Honey, 2007, p. 31).

Areas for Further Research

The focus of this study was on the perceptions of respondents from representative bodies of employers and employees. It would therefore be equally important to examine the perceptions of individual contributors to the NSSF pension scheme in a different study. This can be done through engaging contributors in employer organizations or from self-employed contributors.

A further study can additionally be conducted to determine perceptions of NSSF employees, the internal stakeholders "whose behaviour and communication both contribute to the corporate identity and project it to external stakeholders"

(Tench & Yeomans, 2006, p. 337). The attitudes and opinions of external publics is dependent on the perceptions exhibited by an organization's employees. According to Schultz and Werner (2005), employees and customers can be viewed as the two most essential stakeholders in reputation management.

Finally, it is recommended that future research should aim at examining the perceptions of other critical publics and persons in strategic management. This includes Central Government, County Governments and relevant State departments. Such a study would further support the findings in this study and inform policy formulation and decision making.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student at Daystar University carrying out a research study titled *A correlation study on the relationship between media coverage and the corporate reputation of NSSF*. As part of the fulfilment of my M.A degree in Corporate Communication, I am conducting the research as approved by the University for the Award of the Degree.

I am therefore requesting you to participate by taking a few minutes to answer the enclosed questionnaire. The information is purely for academic purposes and all responses obtained will be treated with utmost confidence and discretion. You are further requested to participate voluntarily in accordance to the attached privacy and confidentiality form.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O. Ogonji.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION. Tick (✓) where appropriate

1. Gender:

- Male
 Female

2. Age:

- 18 - 27 years
 28 - 37 years
 38 - 47 years
 48 - 57 years
 58 years and above

3. Highest level of education:

- Primary
 Secondary
 Certificate
 Diploma
 Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree
 PhD
 Others, (specify).....

4. What organization do you work for?

.....

5. Job category:

Top management

Head of Department

Middle level management

Unionizable

Support staff

Others, (specify).....

6. Terms of service:

Permanent

Contract

Casual

Others, (specify).....

7. Length of service in employment:

..... year(s) and/or month(s)

SECTION B: MEDIA INFORMATION. Tick (✓) where appropriate

8. Which type of media do you have access to?

Radio

Television

Newspapers

Magazines

Internet

Social Media (specify).....

Others, (specify).....

9. How often do you access the media?

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Others, (specify).....

10. What is your most common source of information about the National Social Security Fund (NSSF)?

My organization's internal publications

NSSF website

NSSF publications

The media (specify).....

Other sources

11. When do you depend most on the media as a source of information about NSSF?

For general updates

- When there's a crisis
- When there's a major scandal
- Others,
(specify).....

SECTION C: NSSF REPUTATION. Tick (✓) where appropriate

Please tick if you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD) with the following statements.

STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD
12. NSSF is well managed					
13. Members' contributions are secure under the custody of NSSF					
14. NSSF is wisely investing workers' contributions					
15. NSSF has played its role effectively in getting rid of corruption					
16. NSSF can efficiently manage the new rates of contributions					
17. NSSF is transparent in its operations					
18. The management of NSSF is not trustworthy					
19. NSSF pays workers' benefits on time					
20. NSSF interest on contributions is good compared to other pension schemes					
21. The public's view of NSSF is poor					

22. As far as your organization is concerned, what role has NSSF played towards providing social security to its members?

- Registration
- Collection of contributions
- Management of workers' funds
- Benefits payments
- Governance and leadership
- Others, (specify).....

23. Briefly comment on your experience from the answer(s) provided above.

.....

.....

24. In your opinion, what are some issues that have affected the reputation of NSSF?

.....

SECTION D: SIGNIFICANCE OF MEDIA COVERAGE ON NSSF

Please tick if you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD) with the following statements.

STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD
25. The media is a powerful tool in forming the reputation of NSSF					
26. The media is important in safeguarding transparency in the management of NSSF					
27. The media is biased when reporting stories about NSSF					
28. The media plays an important role in shaping opinions about NSSF					
29. The public confidence among NSSF's members has reduced because of negative reporting from the media					
30. Positive media coverage of NSSF stories may improve its reputation					
31. Negative coverage of NSSF by the media has negatively impacted its reputation					
32. The media has helped in exposing malpractices in NSSF like corruption					

33. How can NSSF improve its reputation through media coverage?

.....

.....
.....
.....

The end

Appendix II: Interview Protocol for Focus Group Discussion

1. Name of organization.....
2. What are some of the media that you have access to and how often do you access them?
3. Where do you commonly get information about the National Social Security Fund (NSSF)?
4. When do you depend most on the media as a source of information about NSSF?
5. What are some of the issues concerning the management of NSSF that you have seen or heard reported in the media?
6. What do you think of the services offered by NSSF?
7. How has been your experience or the experience of someone you know in dealing with NSSF through the services offered?
8. Do you agree that the media is a powerful tool in forming the reputation of NSSF?
9. How do you feel about the way the media reports stories on NSSF?
10. What do you think are some of the issues that have affected public confidence because of media reporting?
11. How can NSSF improve its reputation through media coverage?

Appendix III: Consent Form

Study title: *A correlation study on the relationship between media coverage and the corporate reputation of NSSF*

Greetings,

I, Billy Ogonji, am carrying out a research on the influence of media coverage on the corporate reputation of NSSF. In this study, I want to find out the perceptions of NSSF's publics arising from media coverage.

I am asking for your permission to participate in the research. Your involvement will be to fill a questionnaire that will be distributed to your organization. Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you will not be penalized or victimized if you refuse to participate or discontinue participation at any stage. Efforts will be made to keep personal information and opinions strictly confidential. The questionnaire will not link your individual responses with your identity and information concerning your personal details like your name, address and email address will not be disclosed.

If you agree to participate, you will be given a signed copy of this document together with the questionnaire.

I understand what my involvement in the study means and I voluntarily agree to participate.

Signature of the Participant

Date

Signature of the Witness

Date

Appendix IV: Privacy and Confidentiality Form for Research Assistants

Study title – *A correlation study on the relationship between media coverage and the corporate reputation of NSSF*

I _____, the research assistant, have been hired to conduct this survey through administering questionnaire to respondents.

I agree to -

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the Researcher.
2. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.
3. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the Researcher when I have completed the research tasks.
4. After consulting with the Researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Researcher

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Daystar University Ethics Review Board. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Review Ethics Office at 020 2723 002(3) (4).

Appendix V: Ethics Clearance Report

DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY
Daystar University, Daystar University, Daystar University

Daystar University Ethics Review Board

Our Ref. DU-ERB/07/11/ 2017 /00072

Date: 07-10-2017

Billy Ogonji
Dear Billy,

RE: AN EVALUATION OF MEDIA COVERAGE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CORPORATE REPUTATION: A PERCEPTION OF NSSF'S PUBLICS.

Reference is made to your request dated 31-08-2017 for ethical approval of your proposal by Daystar University Ethics Review Board.

We are pleased to inform you that ethical review has been done and approval granted. In line with the research projects policy, you will be required to submit a copy of the final research findings to the Board for records.

Before proceeding to the next stage, ensure the following attached comments are addressed to the satisfaction of your supervisor. Note that it's an offence to proceed without addressing the concerns of ERB.

This approval is valid for a year from 07-11-2017


This approval does not exempt you from obtaining a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

Yours sincerely,


Mrs. Purty Kiambi,
Secretary, Daystar University Ethics Review Board

"...will the day dawn and the daystar
arise in your hearts"
2 Peter 1:19 KJV

Appendix VI: Research Authorization



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219430
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: da@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

9th Floor, Uthuli House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/17/85852/17320** Date: **24th May, 2017**

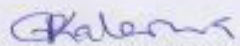
Billy Odhiambo Ogonji
Daystar University
P.O. Box 44400-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Media coverage and its influence on corporate reputation a perception of NSSF publics,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kericho, Nairobi and Nakuru Counties** for the period ending **23rd May, 2018.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioners and the County Directors of Education, Kericho, Nairobi and Nakuru Counties** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kericho County.

The County Director of Education
Kericho County.

Appendix VII: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT: **Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/85852/17320**

MR. BILLY ODHIAMBO OGONJI **Date Of Issue : 24th May,2017**

of DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY, 0-200 **Fee Received :Ksh 1000**

NAIROBI, has been permitted to conduct

research in Kericho, Nairobi, Nakuru

Counties

on the topic: MEDIA COVERAGE AND ITS


INFLUENCE ON CORPORATE

REPUTATION A PERCEPTION OF NSSF

PUBLICS

for the period ending:

23rd May,2018



Applicant's Signature

Director General

National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

Appendix VIII: Anti-Plagiarism Report

Billy Ogonji Thesis

by Billy Ogonji

Submission date: 16-Aug-2018 02:00PM (UTC+0300)
Submission ID: 990399547
File name: Billy_Ogonji_Thesis.doc (396.5K)
Word count: 22379
Character count: 123154

Billy Ogonji Thesis

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10% SIMILARITY INDEX	7% INTERNET SOURCES	2% PUBLICATIONS	5% STUDENT PAPERS
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