

The Influence of Journalists' Remuneration and Trauma on News Content in Kenya

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Salary delays for journalists across the globe are a menace that has hurt the media industry for decades. In Kenya, for example, some journalists go for up to a year without pay. The situation is so dire that, at times, they spend their nights in offices due to rent arrears at home and even contemplate suicide. This has led to increasing cases of mental ill-health among journalists, forcing some to down their tools, others to resort to brown-envelope journalism, while some female journalists engage in prostitution and other unprofessional acts. **Keywords:** Patriarchy, oppression, resistance, radical feminism, male dominance, domestic labour, gender oppression, marriage. These behaviours have greatly affected the way journalists cover events and have significantly influenced the news content presented to audiences. Many studies have been conducted in this area; however, the majority of the research discusses violence, conflicts, death scenes, and protests as the main causes of mental torture and trauma among journalists, while the psychological impact of salary delays remains under-researched. This study aimed to fill that gap by assessing the extent of salary delays among journalists in Kenya, examining their effects on journalists' mental health, and determining their impact on news content. The study used a descriptive survey research design in which an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods approach was utilized for data collection. For the quantitative phase, 180 questionnaires were randomly distributed to journalists working for the Standard Group, Mediamax, and the Radio Africa Group. For the qualitative phase, 20 key informants drawn from media stakeholders and health experts were purposively interviewed using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) survey. The study was grounded in Albert Bandura's Cognitive Social Theory, developed in the 1960s. The study found that Kenyan journalists face grave salary delays, leading to mental ill-health among those struggling to cope with the situation. Finally, the circumstances have negatively impacted news content. Therefore, newsrooms should develop stronger policies on human resources, as well as economic and health welfare, as this will enhance performance and therefore promote democracy and social justice in society.

Keywords: Trauma, salary delay, depression, mental health, remuneration, news content.

Introduction

Salary delays for journalists globally have had a significant impact on their mental health. In Kenya, for example, where the cost of living is immensely high, salary delays for employees severely hurt their economic and social well-being. Consequently, delayed pay for journalists in this East African nation has negatively impacted newsroom operations. This situation has again forced many practitioners to down tools, pressuring their media houses to clear outstanding salary arrears.

For instance, journalists at the Standard Group in Nairobi held a meeting where they resolved to chase away other staff

who were reporting to work, according to Okubasu (2024, July 17). Okubasu reported that, in the process of removing these staff members, the irate journalists disrupted a live bulletin hosted by Jesse Rodgers, forcing the news anchor to take a short break at around 1:07 p.m. after presenting only one news item. Things worsened after revelations that the journalists had salary arrears dating back more than 12 months, subjecting them to trauma and inhumane treatment. Some affected journalists resorted to spending their nights either in offices or on the streets—a situation that has severely harmed their mental health.

Trauma has negatively impacted the media industry in Kenya, not only with regard

to human resource management but also in terms of the quality of content. It is important to note that salary delays are affecting not only journalists in newsrooms but also other employees in various departments—such as production, legal, and sales—who are crucial to news production. This situation has had a significant negative impact on the overall quality of news output.

Several attempts have been made by media stakeholders around the world to find a lasting solution to the problem, but these efforts have faced setbacks. Ssebami (2018) argued that although the issue has been discussed extensively at high-level media stakeholder meetings, little or no change has occurred. Journalists are therefore forced either to leave their jobs or to engage in unethical practices such as accepting bribes or even prostitution to eke out a living.

Although the paper discusses poor pay in relation to mental ill-health, it is critical to understand that the appalling salary situation has given rise to journalists' bribe-taking behaviour, in which news sources grease the scribes' palms to either publish stories or suppress them to serve personal or political interests—an unprofessional practice that largely emerged because of the unsatisfactory pay offered by newsrooms (Sanders, 2003).

Even though many studies have been conducted on journalists' mental health, most have examined the issue in the context of wars, protests, and accidents, while neglecting the human resource management aspect. This has led to challenges whereby media organisations and stakeholders address journalists' mental health from perspectives unrelated to the issue

of pay delays. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill this gap by assessing the extent of pay delays among journalists in Kenya, examining how these delays have affected their mental health, and determining how this situation has impacted news production and content quality.

Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey research design, where an explanatory sequential mixed research approach was utilised for data collection. In this approach, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. For quantitative data, through simple random sampling, 180 questionnaires were distributed to journalists working for the Standard Group, Mediamax, and the Radio Africa Group across all newsroom divisions—print, radio, digital, and television. The researcher distributed 60 questionnaires to each media house.

The three media houses were selected for this study because they are the major media organisations in Kenya that have faced financial constraints, according to Business Today (2019). The Standard Group owns two major television stations—KTN News and KTN Home, as well as several FM radio stations such as Radio Maisha. It also owns the Nairobi newspaper and the oldest newspaper in Kenya, The Standard. Mediamax owns The People Daily newspaper, K24 TV, and several radio stations. On the other hand, Radio Africa Group owns a number of FM radio stations in Kenya and The Star newspaper. All three media houses also have digital versions.

For qualitative data, through purposive sampling, 20 key informants drawn from media stakeholders, reporters, editors, human resource managers, and health experts were interviewed using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). CATI has been very critical in this kind of study, where questions were read to the respondents and responses entered directly into the computer. It is a recommended method of data collection when respondents are geographically dispersed and can easily be reached by phone (Development Research Initiative, 2023).

Study Objectives

The study answered the following three specific objectives:

1. To assess the extent of salary delays among journalists in Kenya.
2. To determine the effects of salary delays on journalists' mental health in Kenya.
3. To explore the impact of salary delays on the quality of news content in Kenya

Theoretical Framework

The Cognitive Social Theory of Psychology was identified for this study because of its relevance with regard to the psychological effects on human nature. This theory was developed in the 1960s by Canadian-American psychologist Albert Bandura. According to Cherry (2024), cognitive theory is based on the idea that behaviour is acquired through conditioning and explains how interactions with the environment can be utilized in teaching and shaping one's behaviour.

The theory argues that people's behaviour results from the external information they gather and how they interpret it, suggesting that the human mind functions like a computer influenced by the external environment (Hayes, 2025). David and Venezia (2016) observed that the theory emphasizes how thoughts and beliefs can trigger emotions, with certain thoughts likely to lead to disturbed emotions, while others promote healthy emotions and adaptive behaviour.

This theory, therefore, explains the behaviour of journalists as influenced by the harsh environment they face, such as salary delays, which negatively impact their mental health and can lead to trauma.

Literature Review

The Facet of Salary Delay in the Media Industry

It is important to understand that salary delays are a serious economic issue that has significantly affected and continues to affect many journalists across the world. These delays are mainly attributed to factors such as Covid-19, poor management of media organisations, and other issues. Sometimes the situation is so dire that it goes beyond simple salary delays. For example, Mah-jong (2023) observed that in some countries, such as Iran, those whose salaries are delayed, if paid, are in most cases not given their full arrears; instead, they are paid in piecemeal installments, a scenario that indeed rubs salt into an already existing wound.

Mah-jong further remarked that in Iran, journalists, regardless of the size of the media house, have faced salary delays of up to

one year, but if they are paid, it is done in fits and starts. The author provided an example of a journalist interviewed in a study. The study found that even though journalists in Iran have unstable jobs, those who are fortunate enough to secure substantive positions in newsrooms earn very little. Paying these small salaries also becomes a tall order. An Iranian journalist quipped, “Some publications either do not pay your fees for four months or pay only a pittance if they do... it is a particular problem for married journalists...” (Mah-jong, 2023, p. 2).

Journalists in many countries across Africa have also experienced this issue. One such example occurred in Ghana. A report compiled by the Communications Department of the University of Ghana and the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA, as reported in Modern Ghana, 2024) revealed that journalists’ salaries in Ghana were “woefully low: some do not have healthcare cover, while others go months without pay” (p. 12; para. 3). However, the report attributed this to the high cost of doing business, falling advertising budgets, the Covid-19 pandemic, and competition from digital media platforms (Modern Ghana, 2024).

In Uganda, Parliament was forced to appeal to owners of private media houses to make improvements to journalists’ pay to motivate quality work (Monitor, 2023). In its argument, the August House maintained that the meagre pay for the country’s journalists was likely to result in “poor work and sloppy news copies.”

This assertion was further emphasized during the 2023 World Press Day, when

Ugandan Parliament Speaker Anita Among revealed that she had received complaints from many journalists who had not been paid their salaries for more than a year. In Parliament’s view, such pay delays would negatively affect journalists and their families and compromise their professionalism: “In most cases they don’t do good reporting because they end up being compromised. Pay them their salaries and they do professional work” (Speaker in Wadero, 2023, p. 1).

In Kenya, the salary delay problem has forced journalists, through the Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ), to blame both national and county governments for not paying pending advertising bills owed to media houses. The Union has accused the government of using advertising as a blackmail tool to cripple the media after failing to clear these bills, which would enable media houses to meet their financial obligations.

Mwere (2023) revealed that the total advertising arrears that the government of Kenya owed media houses, as was revealed by Broadcast and Telecommunication Principal Secretary Edward Kisiangani, exceeded Kshs 332 million (approx. 2.5 million USD) by 2023. These are worrying figures for the affected media houses, after the State promised to clear the bills but still failed to honour the pledge. Even though paying off the arrears would save the affected media houses, the government introduced a policy likely to cripple the media industry, ordering all government agencies, independent commissions, and public universities to exclusively air their television and radio adverts through the state-owned media outlet—the Kenya Broadcasting

Corporation (KBC) (Mbuthia, 2024). Sadly, by 2024, as Kamau (2024) observed, the government was still owing the industry significant balances.

The impact of salary delay on journalists' mental health

Many studies, in the views of Smith et al. (2018), have revealed that between 80 percent and 100 percent of journalists have been exposed to traumatic events which indeed are work-related. Observations from these studies indicate that journalists, as first responders, are frequently exposed to distressing situations that eventually traumatize them (Frey, 2023).

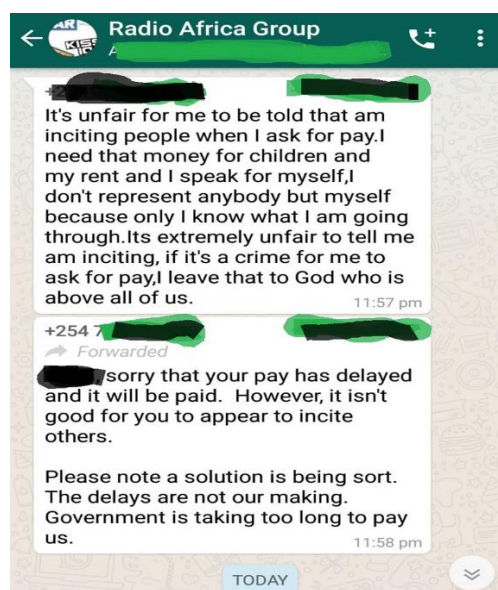
Reinhardy (2013) identified low perceived organisational support and insufficient income as some of the work-related factors affecting journalists' mental health. Such scenarios, according to studies in Greece, have led to "alarming levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout" among media professionals (Katsiroumpa, 2024, p. 3). For example, another study by Reinhardy (2013) observed that journalists experiencing low levels of organisational support had "high levels of fatigue compared to those who receive organisational support; lack of organisational understanding and support is related to higher stress levels" (Holton et al., 2023 in Katsiroumpa, 2024, p. 4).

The problem of salary delays automatically affects the way journalists operate, negatively impacting their mental health, which in turn interferes with news coverage. This, according to Powers (2024), has affected the role of media in promoting

democracy, good governance, and social justice. In the report from MakanDay Survey as cited in Tembo (2022), in Zimbabwe, poor working conditions, such as salary delays, have resulted in female journalists engaging in "white-collar prostitution to supplement their income" (para. 3).

In Kenya, as Business Today (2024) remarked, the issue of salary delays has tortured journalists, with some contemplating suicide. The problem has become so severe that the journalists most affected have gone public to express their frustrations. One example is the Radio Africa WhatsApp platform, where the contents show a tense argument between a female correspondent and senior editors (Business Today, June 14, 2019). In this suspected leaked conversation, the journalist asks about her salary. However, this was treated as inciting others against the media house management—though she desperately pleaded for her wages.

This scenario has made junior journalists appear desperate, literally begging for pay to feed their families and cover rent.



Source: Digital Business Today (June 14, 2019).

From the above WhatsApp conversation extracted from Business Today (June 14, 2019), a female journalist is seen being intimidated and humiliated by her boss after she questioned about salary arrears. This, as Nzomo (2024) observed, is common in Kenya, more so among journalists who question salary delays. Nzomo asserted that such intimidation and threats have led to numerous cases of trauma among journalists.

The argument is similar to what Luqiu (2020) observed. Luqiu remarked that harassment and intimidation have long-term negative effects on journalists' mental health. The scholar further argued that, just like traumatic experiences, "experience with hostility and harassment associated specifically with one's professional role and identity are equally pressing" (Miller, 2021, p. 13) and, as the author added, can also affect their performance.

Impact of salary delay: trauma, 'brown envelope', and the distorted news content

While journalists are affected, what matters most is how these effects influence their work. Once a person experiences trauma, their work performance tends to decline. When trauma results from financial difficulties, journalists have learned to "perch safely," a phrase that reflects their cautious approach to reporting under economic strain.

This study found that delayed salaries among Kenyan journalists have influenced how they cover news. The majority of them have joined the "brown envelope" bandwagon. Economically disadvantaged journalists often

seek alternative sources of income; some resign, while others experience mental strain, as revealed by this study. Accepting bribes from sources to run or suppress stories is one such means of financial survival—a practice that began many decades ago.

Some scholars argue that it originated in the United Kingdom (Skjeradal, 2010); others contend that it began in Ghana (Bamiro, 1997), while another group traces its roots to Nigeria (Uko, 2004). But how has this practice persisted in contemporary journalism? From interviews and secondary literature, this paper revealed that salary delays have bred a culture of corruption—what scholars commonly call the giving of "brown envelopes." This situation heavily affects news gathering and, consequently, news content.

The euphemism "brown envelope" describes the bribery of journalists to influence news writing and content. As Ekenkevwe (2009) observed, the brown envelope syndrome has crept into journalism in many countries across the globe. While discussing "brown envelope journalism" in Nigeria, Ekenkevwe defined it as "a situation whereby journalists demand bribes or other forms of gratification before they cover any event or even publish stories from such events" (p. 131).

Skjeradal and Ludamo (2009) remarked that poor salaries and pay delays were the main causes of bribery among journalists across the continent. They depict an unethical and desperate scenario: "For low-paid journalists across Africa, however, even a free lunch could represent a rather attractive contribution to their sustenance. Thus, the term 'buffet journalists' is used in Ethiopia to describe

journalists who frequently appear at reception centres and luxury hotels to enjoy free food and drinks...” (p. 140).

At a workshop in Nigeria, Oji and Omerugha (2010) noted that journalists openly admitted taking bribes to either run or suppress stories to survive. The two authors reported that participants asked, “...how could they do otherwise when they receive poor, irregular salaries; some media houses do not have a salary system at all?” (p. 132). The argument is that Nigerian society is generally corrupt, and media houses also complain of the high cost of news production, making it difficult to pay journalists adequately (Okoro & Blessing, 2013).

In Ethiopia, Skjeradal and Ludamo (2010), in their research *Freebies and Brown Envelopes in Ethiopian Journalism*, found that even though journalists are well aware that accepting “brown envelopes” is unethical, they still do so, justifying it by citing low salaries and poor journalistic training.

Salary delays have also affected news content in Kenya. They have promoted “brown envelope” journalism, especially among lower-cadre scribes—reporters, and correspondents (Ssebwami, 2018). This situation explains the frequent disregard for professional ethics, severely affecting news reporting. Moreover, it goes beyond accepting bribes to include tampering with stories. Sometimes, journalists cannot follow up on a story because they lack resources; at other times, they are depressed, which significantly affects news gathering and writing.

Results and Discussions

The salary delay for journalists in Kenya

The results indicated in the table below are from questionnaires administered to 180 journalists from the Standard Group, Mediamax, and Radio Africa. The table also contains results from 20 key informants who were drawn from media stakeholders, psychologists and medical practitioners.

Table 1: Responses on salary delay for Kenyan journalists

Questionnaires/Key Informants	Respondents (There is a salary delay for journalists)	Respondents (No salary delays for journalists)
Questionnaires (180)	180 (100%)	0 (0%)
Key Informants (20)	20 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total Respondents (200)	200 (100%)	0 (0%)

Source: Field Data (2025).

From the table above, the questionnaires administered indicated that all 180 (100%) respondents agreed that journalists in Kenya have experienced salary delays. This was further supported by the responses of all 20 key informants, who also agreed that salary delays have been a thorn in the flesh for journalists in Kenya.

A key informant, participant K, an editor, revealed that they are in the offices because they have nowhere else to go. She argued that the salary delay issue is hurting, “and we do not have the morale to work. If we can find a place where we are paid salaries promptly, even if small, we would resign.” In some cases, the arrears were paid in piecemeal installments, which again affected the journalists heavily. For example, one key informant, participant B, argued that even when a media house decides to pay, it does not clear the arrears, “they pay in piecemeal,

worsening the situation for us. Why can't they give us our arrears in full so that we can plan accordingly?"

In a candid interview with a Standard Group journalist, Tuko (2023) averred that in cases where arrears were paid, they were settled gradually, "Some staff members disclosed that they had not received salaries from May 2023 to November 2023, and even before that, whatever they received was not their full pay."

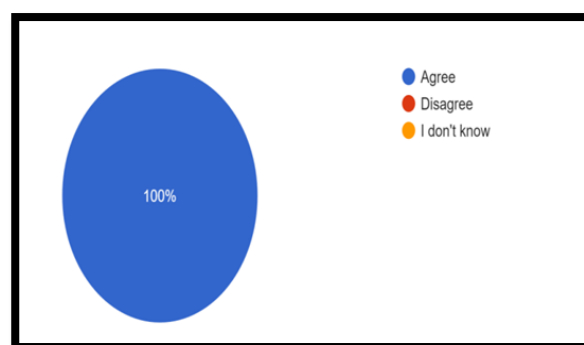
A female journalist, participant J, who had worked with one of the media houses under this study, argued that the salary delays were so hurtful that she had to resign from work and look for whatever she could do to earn a living in Nairobi, 'I decided to start a fish business to bring up my family. Some of us families that entirely depend on us. Our parents back at home look up to us. And then your employer takes months with your salary; how do you even work, and go back home?' The scenario was also observed by the Star newspaper journalists. According to Nyakundi (2017), Radio Africa Group, which owns the Star has embarrassed its staff, 'more than 47 journalists of the Star newspaper have raised alarm over delayed pay for three months....'

Much literatures have indicated that in Kenya, the salary delay for journalists has become deep, and in a way tortures the journalists' mental wellbeing. Business Today (2024) remarked, the issue of salary delay has affected Kenyan journalists to the extent that some of these scribes have contemplated committing suicide.

Effects of Salary Delay on Journalists' Mental Health

The figure below gives the findings from questionnaire respondents who were interviewed about the impact of salary delay on journalists' mental health.

Figure 1: Responses on the impact of salary delay on journalists' mental health



Source: Field Data (2025).

According to the figure above, out of 180 journalists quantitatively interviewed, all of them (100%) agreed that salary delay affects their mental health. This response was similar to that of key informants' data that was qualitatively collected. A total of 20 key informants were interviewed, and all of them (100%) agreed that salary delay among journalists in Kenya has led to mental ill-health. Generally, delays with salaries were found to be affecting journalists mentally.

These findings agree with the argument of Smith & Newman (2009) in Kocan (2023), that journalists have been exposed to work-related traumatic events, putting them at a higher risk compared to the general population 'of developing various disorders, such as PTSD, depression, anxiety and substance use disorders'(p.10).

One editor, participant C, revealed that salary delay for journalists has affected

their mental wellbeing and quite a number have gone into depression, affecting their dignity, and quality of their work has gone down, 'this is the only source of income for most journalists and when their pay delays for months, it affects them directly, mentally. We saved a colleague who was contemplating committing suicide.'

The argument of this editor corroborates what Reinardy (2013) found out that when a media organisation does not highly support its journalists, it affects their morale and work performance; that, that when these organisations do not help their employees well financially, the employees develop high levels of stress and fatigue-leading to 'alarming levels of stress, anxiety and burnout' (Katsiroumpa, 2024; p. 4).

In another interview, participant M, who is a correspondent reporter, averred that salary delay has forced some journalists to go into silly drinking, and suddenly stop going to work. He remarked that, 'colleagues have passed through hell in the newsrooms; it is a series of depression, and you sympathize with a colleague more than you do to with yourself. Some have decided to drink silly, and not reporting report to work. And not that they have found alternative sources of income, no. They are just tired and psychologically tortured.' This finding is similar to what other studies have found out in the recent past.

Many scholars have argued that reporters get into drinking because of work stress. Seely's (2019) study revealed how some reporters get into drinking alcohol to try to cope up with stress matters that are related to their work. In their argument in regards to this,

Feinsten et al., (2002; in McDonald & Nahisha, n.d) observed that journalists bury their heads into in drinking instead of seeking help elsewhere since they fear 'being perceived as weak and unable to cope' (p.7). In fact, McDonald & Nahisha (n.d) have observed that alcohol is the substance used by journalists mostly to cope up with stress and that war journalists are 'more likely to drink excessively compared to non-war journalists' (p.10).

In a discussion with a psychologist, participant N, who works for a Non-Governmental Organisation in Kenya, about the psychological effect of salary delays on employees, she argued that pay overdue affects employees massively and holistically; leading to acute 'depression and trauma that finally affects family members, and can lead to divorce and separations in marriages.'

This argument is supported by the response of one of the journalists, participant J, who is a photojournalist with one of the affected media houses under the study. He remarked that, 'people are soon running mad in these newsrooms; our production department staff just collapsed in the office after several complaints about salary delay; our driver left work without resigning. He just stopped coming to work. One male colleague ran away from his family and is now staying with some rich woman here in Nairobi. Marriages have broken up; some journalists spend two to three nights in the newsroom because houses have been locked over rent arrears. It is indeed traumatic.'

The mental ill-health cases have been so numerous in the media industry in Kenya

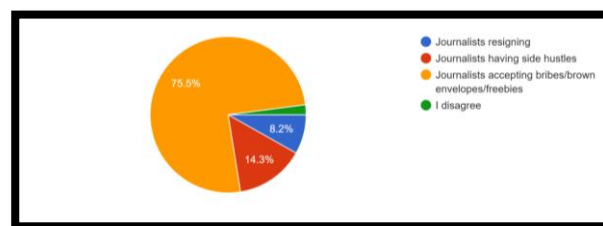
that the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) had to conduct a study, the State of Mental Health in Kenyan Media (2021) that also found out that work environment and poor pay were some of the factors that affected journalists mentally, '5.8% of the participants cited work pressure/work environment as being the main causes of mental health issues for their colleagues arising from working as a journalist' (p.14). Apart from the MCK effort, other media bodies such as the Kenyan Correspondents Association (KCA), Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ), among others have appealed to the media houses to consider guidance and counselling sessions to for the affected journalists in the newsrooms. Kenya Correspondent Association has organised counselling sessions for many journalists across the country.

Therefore, these findings have answered the objective two of this research that which questioned about the impact of salary delay on the mental health of journalists. From the study, it is clear that salary delay affects journalists mentally and thus should be looked into by all the stakeholders. Further, on the side of the theoretical framework, the study has proved the relevant use of cognitive social theory of psychology, which argues that external environmental factors, such as the salary delay for this study, can have mental effect on the affected people.

Impact of Salary Delay on News Content

The figures below provide responses of the respondents on salary delay vis-à-vis journalists' behaviour in news gathering, and also salary delay vis-à-vis news content.

Figure 2: Responses on salary delay vis-à-vis journalists' behaviour in news gathering

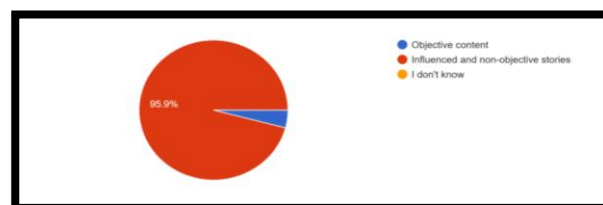


In the above figure, journalists argued that salary delay has led to some of them resigning from their work (8.2 %), others having side jobs (14.3%), while the biggest population of 75.5% agreed that the situation would make them accept bribes/brown envelopes/freebies.

This resonates with the response of the key informants. The results from the key informants indicate that 80% (16) agreed that salary delay is an act that has made majority of journalists accept bribes, while 15% (3) agreed that some journalists would get into side jobs, and the remaining 1 (5%) key informants said journalists would resign.

Bribery (the act of brown envelope) would automatically influence the news contents, as this study further revealed. In the tables below, the respondents agreed that bribery influences news in the media.

Table 3: Responses on the effect of salary delay on news contents in Kenya



From the two figures above (2 & 3), it was revealed that salary delay affects the way of news gathering as journalists seek bribes to

either run a story or kill it. 85.9% of journalists interviewed agreed that salary delays tamper with news content. When key informants were interviewed, results for the above questions were similar. All the key informants (100%) agreed that salary delay influences news coverage and news content.

The majority of both questionnaire interviewees and key informants agreed that salary delays hurt news content.

For example, participant L, a member of the Kenya Correspondent Association, observed that such a situation of salary delays would affect the news coverage and contents. He argued that there is no content in the Kenyan media to be trusted because journalists take bribes and are traumatised, 'there is no content to be trusted here in Kenya. Most journalists would utilise the slightest opportunity available to take bribes. Others are doing other things for income and have decided to make journalism work a side hustle.'

Bribe taking has become so rampant in Kenya's media industry that journalists don't regret about it. For example, one reporter, participant D, who agreed that journalism in Kenya has been massively affected by the situations of salary delays, has no regret engaging in other unethical activities to earn a living, 'why do I have to regret if the employer is not worried. I cannot take medicine for a disease that is not affecting me. I am 90% my own boss here in the field and will only go for events where fat VAT is given regardless of the weight of the story.' But what is VAT?

From data collected for this paper, it was revealed that even though the term 'brown envelope' has been used universally, in some countries such as Kenya, different terminologies have been coined for the act.

For example, the term 'mboga', which is a Swahili word for 'vegetable', is used to mean that such bribes are like food that keeps journalists going in the field. Another common term that this study found is commonly used by journalists in Kenya to describe bribe taking is 'VAT'-the the Value Added Tax. This, journalists argued, has been developed since, to them, the source is 'taxed' to get favour in the media. Importantly, the act can be monetary or non-monetary.

The 'mboga' syndrome has led to cases where news audiences in Kenya consume products of corruption; a so manipulated content that no one may know the truth. This behaviour has sunk journalism too low to the point that the people's social, political, cultural, and economic understanding has been highly distorted.

The findings in this study are similar to the results of a study by Kioko Ileri between 2012 and 2013 as cited in Ugungu et al, (2022). According to Ugungu et al (2022), a national survey that Ileri conducted that corruption is widespread in Kenyan journalism; 74% believed corruption is rife in Kenyan media that 'cash (40%) is the most common form of corruption and politicians are the top bribe givers to local journalists, followed by business people.' The study further found out that over 77% of journalists agreed that the corruption in the media industry compromises objective journalism (Ugungu, 2022; pp.2).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study found that journalists in Kenya face pathetic salary delays even though unions and associations are trying to fix the matter. This delay has had its toll on journalism, causing trauma, forcing some journalists to resign, and promoting bribery in the industry. The mental ill-health and the act of brown envelope (bribery) were found to be huge influencers on the behaviour of journalists, thus interfering with news content that gets aired and or published.

Recommendations

The study has recommended that media houses should find alternative ways of raising funds apart from depending almost entirely on advertisements, especially government adverts. Alternative sources of income will enable the news organisations to promptly pay their workers instead of only waiting for advertisers to clear their arrears first. This has been witnessed in the world's leading media houses that have diversified their income sources beyond traditional advertising and newspaper sales to remain sustainable. These can be digital subscriptions, branded content, events, affiliate marketing, and training programmes. The study further recommended that trainings, seminars, and workshops should be organised for journalists on matters of trauma and other mental ill-health issues. Media houses on the other hand should up their games on human resource management to know how to handle employees in all the time, but more so in times of crisis. This should include media house

management trainings for the senior managers in the newsrooms.

APENDICES

Appendix 1



Appendix 2



THE STANDARD GROUP PLC
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Media Release

The Standard Group Business Update

November 9, 2023

Despite the harsh operating environment, made worse by the current economic crisis facing the country, the Standard Group PLC has stayed focused on its product innovation and diversification agenda aimed at driving revenue generation and ensuring business profitability.

In all this, our highly professional staff have remained committed despite the challenges, and continue to produce competitive media content to serve our customers.

A key challenge for the business has been the significant outstanding debts (pending bills) owed to the company and this has, regrettably, affected some of our operational timelines, including timely payment of staff salaries. This issue remains a top priority for the company and is being addressed accordingly.

The company is undertaking various initiatives, including a major cost reduction and efficiency enhancement drive, as well as a restructuring of the business, to conform to current economic realities.

We are making great strides in this regard and continue to walk the path of progress towards continued growth and service to the public and all our stakeholders, including, importantly, our staff.

We thank our customers and remain committed to serving you.

Corporate Affairs Department

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