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## How Gender Portrayal Is Depicted by the Selected Editorial Cartoons

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### **Abstract:**

*Across the whole world scholars, policy makers as well as readers of newspapers and magazines point to one critical issue that the media have of late become conduits for gender stereotyping not only in Kenya but the world over. This is a fact that has been proven in the recent years by sporadic protests against some media houses following publication of cartoons that seemed offensive to sections of society. In a bid to calm the situation, affected media houses resorted to apologizing and even retracting as a strategy to remain afloat. This study is centered on the question: How is gender portrayal depicted by the selected editorial cartoons? This study is anchored on the relativist/interpretivist philosophical paradigm. Qualitative case study of the two newspapers namely Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers respectively was applied. Data was generated through a qualitative content analysis and observations of the selected cartoons in the two newspapers. It was complimented by semi-structured in- depth interviews targeting the cartoonists, human rights and gender activists from selected organizations in addition to the information from the published cartoons. A total of 252 cartoons were sampled through a six-week purposive sampling mechanism. Each week represented a month. The study highlights the inability of the two media houses to embrace gender sensitivity in the way cartoons portray both men and women in relation to reporting of issues and events in Kenya. Consequently, the study challenges the editors, reporters, cartoonists and columnists to embrace gender sensitivity in sourcing and packaging of news as this is critical in setting the agenda for national development. Investing in gender equality is a constitutional requirement as well as a human right ingredient for spurring inclusivity in national development. The study therefore recommends that media houses in Kenya adopt gender sensitivity reporting as a norm in order to accord equal opportunity to both men and women in their news-making responsibilities. Gender portrayal will change and so will the narrative if training institutions, press unions as well as the Government of Kenya specifically Gender and sports, Information and Technology, Education among others embrace gender sensitivity programming. It will be even more sustainable if the media deliberately and sustainably engages in gender sensitivity reporting. The study findings form a basis for reference in future by interested parties*

**Keywords:** Gender portrayal, editorial cartoon, Kenya

### **1. Background**

Lawate M Maghana (2012) argued, cartons are a critical form of communication because they convey a lot of information using simple illustrations coupled with few words. In so doing, cartoons express genuine emotions although harsh and sometimes exaggerated they nevertheless facilitate agenda setting especially to many important issues that generally affect the society. Now, gender depiction in media and more so in cartoons is an important issue that determines the extent the position of men and women is framed before the society. Negative portrayal of either gender in the media through cartoons has a significant contribution towards reinforcing gender stereotypes and discrimination. This ultimately leads to gender gap. Entrenched gender gap affects national cohesion and is an obvious affront to the national values and principles of good governance as spelled out in the constitution of Kenya (2010). Cartoons are serious forms of communication that deserve attention since they are intrinsic section of the editorial voice of every newspaper. Now, the editorial voice of the newspaper is basically the Media House official position or stand on a specific issue of concern affecting the society at a given time. The importance of cartoons in the media industry is perhaps as old as the many socio-political issues that have been affecting the world for many years. Although a number of researchers (for example, Hines, 1933; Johnson, 1937; Streicher, 1967; Harrison, 1981) have aimed to provide an account of the beginnings of caricature and cartoon, the most "celebrated essay" (Barm, 1975) on the history of caricature is "The Principles of Caricature" (1962) by Kris and Gombrich. Although their essay is concerned more with the caricature as an art form, it is important for this

discussion since "cartooning as we know it today is an outgrowth of caricature" (Johnson, 1937). Kris and Gombrich note that while caricature is as old as the graphic arts themselves, portrait caricature as an artistic style is a much more recent development, originating in Italy at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The authors are especially interested in uncovering why portrait caricature, which they define as "the deliberate distortion of the features of a person for the purpose of mockery" (1962), took so long to develop given that artists had for some time been well versed in many forms of comic art such as satirical illustrations and images of the grotesque. According to Kris and Gombrich, the development of caricature is closely tied to the complex change in the artist's role and position which occurred during the sixteenth century.

Each cartoon published has an underlying meaning which is either implicit or explicit or can be accorded connotative and denotative contexts based on the intentions of the cartoonist and the reader's interpretation of the cartoon itself and its relevance to his or her life. Tamplin (1999) argues that cartoons do share and demonstrate fundamental biases within the society they critique. These cartoons are tailored towards biased portrayal of the subject. Katz (2004) says cartoons are deliberately meant to be bias towards persuasion more than anything else. And the impact of such bias is felt at the tail end where the reader sits. As for Hawkesworth (2003), cartoons have the tendency to facilitate silencing, marginalizing, segregating and even discrediting certain individuals of society particularly women. That such discounting, stereotyping and patronizing tendencies found in some of the cartoons if unchecked could easily become express indicators of either gender or consistent negative portrayal of either gender in the newspapers and in the media as a whole.

The significance of cartoons in other parts of the world offers a litmus test to the application of the same in other areas of the world today. Then the study delves in to the African context again bringing out how cartoons have been a critical yeast especially in the areas of democratization and the rule of law in Africa. A study conducted using a pragmatic approach indicated how editorial cartoons carry stereotypical beliefs towards various gender groups reflecting expectations and ideas that may not accurately reflect the reality (Kaviti, 2006). It is within the dimensions of this inaccuracy that I find solace in this study which explores the extent to which this inaccuracy is harmful and requires immediate attention with a solution. The study adequately covers the Kenyan context, where the rubber meets the road, the content within which the significance of cartoons in complementing news either hard or soft is equally important.

By all standards, a cartoon is the sternest and most satirical form of visual communication whose definition is based on a metaphorical codification with implicit meaning and satirical genre through which an artist informs, educates and entertains his or her readers (Adejuwon and Shini Alimi 2011). This partly explains why some of the cartoons are excessively satirical in demonstrating what characters are not other than what they are.

Throughout ages, cartoons have been used for propaganda and change. Cartoons can digest complex messages in to simple but meaningful metaphors that can easily be interpreted and understood by the readers. Poor or incorrect portrayal of society in cartoons can easily precipitate tensions. In recent years, some cartoons have fueled tension in society leading to killings. For example, in January 2015, 12 people were killed in Paris, France after weekly magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, published offensive cartoons targeting the Muslim community. Although the situation was later calmed, the effects of the work of the cartoonist remain a living scar among those who lost their dear ones. At the same time two African newspapers: *The Citizen* of South Africa and *The Star* of Kenya apologized profusely for publishing *Charlie Hebdo* cover belittling Muslim spiritual leader. The apology remains a living example of how incorrect or biased cartooning can bring havoc to the society.

Thus, some of the cartoonists are fond of overemphasizing certain aspects of what the characters appearing in the news did and said, hence complaints of exaggeration that have been witnessed in some sections of the readership, not only in Kenya but across the world. It is on record that Kevin Carter a renowned photojournalist committed suicide after he was criticized for being another predator because of having taken a photograph of a toddler who had collapsed on the way to the United Nations feeding centre as a vulture waited closely. That was in Ayod village South Sudan in 1993.

Carter was criticized for not helping the girl and that instead he was more interested in taking the picture of the helpless child. The picture had such huge impact that people were concerned about what could have happened to the child who badly needed food in an almost desolate areas affected by famine. Understandably, although Carter helped the toddler out of the situation, but the public imagination of what could have happened to the child kept fanning negative criticism against him. The photojournalist could not take in the critics and so he chose to terminate his own life as if to put everything to rest. Similarly, a photojournalist Richard Drew was equally criticized for having captured a man while falling from Twin Towers in New York during the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 in the United States of America. The picture that has come to be known as the *falling man* photograph was heavily criticized by many people across the globe for condemning the falling man to death even when actually he was destined for death. Basing on the two incidents that were captured in the photographs, it is evident that pictures have lasting impact to the viewers and the readers. To many readers, Carter was more concerned with his work of informing the world what was then happening in Sudan than helping the toddler. Equally, Richard was not kind enough to the falling man. Now if pictures have such impact in terms of memories, cartoons and illustrations too bear similar if not greater impact to the readers and the viewers. Thus, cartoons can elicit similar or even worse reactions depending on the characters depicted and how they are depicted to the readers.. Thus, the framing of characters and messages that are attributed to them hold critical message that if not well presented to the readers can easily cause havoc. On the other hand the importance of the *mascot* voice cannot be underestimated in adding more salt to the injury in a critical cartoon with a heavy message to the readers. That is why England, (2011) in examining the Disney princess movies found that gender representation in cartoons is just the same as it was many years ago. The traditional image of male and female characters is just the same. Male characters are always dominating and

rescue the female characters and female cartoon character is always portrayed as smart, beautiful and sexy. Likewise Jeanne & Debra (1996) argued that in most of the animated films, the male characters are usually projected as aggressive, terror-like, full of action and violent whilst female characters are proved to be passive and useless as well as sub-ordinate to man. During the last few years a number of studies have proved that in majority of animated cartoons, not only the females are portrayed stereotypically but the male characters as well are projected in a stereotypical manner in media all over the world. Moreover, Thompson, & Zerbinos, (1995) studied the animated cartoons in American television and found that the animated cartoon which were shown before 1980 on television had represented the male and female characters more stereotypically than which were produced after 1980. The male characters were more aggressive and stronger while female characters were more beautiful, smart with ideal prettiness in feminine characters. Moreover the male characters were outnumbered 2 ratios 1 to female characters in most of the animated cartoon films. Furthermore, male characters in animated cartoons, not only outnumbered the female characters but were portrayed in a variety of different roles and especially in characters of good occupations (Levinson, 1975). On the other hand the female are just represented in a few typical type of roles and characters of being a sex symbol or an assistant and house lady with very few characters of occupations like teacher, nurse, girlfriend or mother. Up until 1980, the gender portrayal has been the similar in more or less all of the kids' films and cartoons. Wiserna, (2011) found that from many years of history, the gender role portrayal has not progressed according to the equality of male and female in the social development in the society because media is not portraying the real images and balanced perspective about men and women. This perception obviously points to the main focus of this study. That is about time that more is revealed as to why the media has failed or refused to recognize the need to give equal limelight to both men and women in news and editorial cartoons in particular. Therefore it is the quest to find out why this is so that adds impetus to this study. And the search for mitigating measures in to this scenario is even more inspirational to this study.

In Kenya, cartoons have been used to question those in authority particularly whenever things go the wrong way to the disappointment of many. From the statistics available, most of the newspaper readers interact with the editorial pages of the newspapers where cartoons are mostly published with clear messages almost on daily basis. While most people begin reading newspapers from headlines on front moving on to inside pages, there is yet another group of readers who begin reading newspapers by first looking at the cartoons and more specifically those appearing on editorial pages before reaching out to the headlines of major stories then other stories that are published as fillers and captions. And still there is yet another category of readers who first look at the pictures, then headlines and finally inside stories. Another category s begin reading newspapers from politics, general issues of criminality or stories from courts, county news and sports pages to catch up with the betting options that are published on daily basis. Another group though may be small but significant catch up with news starting from the top stories on page one and straight in to business, advertisement, obituaries and finally sports perhaps for betting purpose.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Gender equality is always an integral part of development and every sector whether public or private has a moral responsibility to promote it. Article 10 of the constitution of Kenya (2010) categorically states the principles and values of good governance as that which envisages non-discrimination based on any reason be it gender, tribe, color or even race. Negative portrayal of either gender in the media through cartoons has a significant contribution towards reinforcing gender stereotypes and discrimination thereby leading to increased gender gap, specifically between men and women. Entrenched gender gap affects national cohesion and is an obvious affront to the national values and principles of good governance. Cartoons are serious forms of communication that deserve attention since they are intrinsic section of the editorial voice of every newspaper.

This study is founded in the gender and communication but is largely influenced by visual communication and semiotics. These two areas emphasize the importance of images and how they need to be understood first from the signifier and signified point of views and secondly from the denotative and connotative levels. This study was conducted in a liberalized media context where the freedom of the media is well protected by the constitution specifically articles 34 and 35 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010). This media fraternity has the full leverage of relevant institutions like the Media Council of Kenya, the Kenya Union of Journalists and the Law Society of Kenya institutions that can be described as drivers of progressive media today. The two dailies, *Nation* and the *Standard* are the largest in circulation in extension most influential among the readers. And be specific the *Nation* in particular boasts of a regional coverage spread across the East Africa and beyond with a daily circulation of 4, 379,400 readers compared to the *Daily Standard's* figure of 2,223,500 per day. The Geo Poll media measurement report of 2015 further revealed that the *Daily Nation* has a 40 per cent share of the readers nationwide while the *Standard* has a 20 per cent of the share in the whole country. These two dailies also have a comparative advantage of drawing further readership from the region which includes, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan. These figures would therefore mean that majority of Kenyans and a good portion of the East African population largely depends on the two dailies as a source of information, education and entertainment needs.

The literature reviewed revealed that a lot of academic research undertakings have previously focused on cartoons and politics leaving aside issues related to gender. In a recent study Siringi (2013) looked at the impact of cartoons on the politics of Kenya. Elsewhere, Omanga Duncan (2012) paid more attention to cartoons in relation to the war against terror. And as for the case of Akin Adejuwon and Shini Alimi (2011) the focus was directed towards the role of cartoons in the democratization of Nigeria. Lynette Mukhongo and Gakahu (2015) observed that there is deliberate gender bias in depicting women in the media focusing on the inside pages of the newspaper excluding the editorial page where cartoons on trending news are normally placed. Thus, the inside pages where most of the women related issues are covered and

placed point to deliberate efforts especially in the print media to sideline women. The same concerns were raised by the UN report of 2015, on women and the media having concluded that despite being more than half of the world population, only a small fraction of the same are either seen, heard or read about in the media. This makes it difficult for the female gender to raise their visibility in the media and to the public in general. Similar concerns were raised by the Media Council of Kenya in a report *Gender Agenda* published in 2015 and in which it was observed that most of the issues that were published had a lot to do with the male gender. And that news was skewed towards the elite and leadership category consisting of politicians, area experts and opinion leaders leaving out the women and those who were considered to belong to the low class. On the other hand, Robi Koki Ochieng, Teddy Eugene Otieno and Rosetta Mutie directed their study towards Gender stereotypes in Kenya; the *Representative codes of women in print media*. But more specifically, they focused on the impact of messages in print media advertisement with focus on the attitude towards women and their role in society.

### 1.2. Research Objective of the Study

The aim of the study was to establish how is gender portrayal depicted by the selected editorial cartoons?

### 1.3. Research Question

How is gender portrayal depicted by the selected editorial cartoons?

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The Agenda setting theory as coined by McCombs and Shaw (1972,1973) is critical in describing how the media puts premium on certain issues that ultimately affect the thinking and sometimes action by some of the audience. Lazarsfeld (1944) in McQuail 2000:455) called it "the power to structure issues," just like politicians, from their individual and party standpoints go out of way to convince voters what the most important things or issues are. This attempt is what finally makes it possible for some politicians to win and others to lose elections. According to this theory, there seem to be clear connection between the order of importance given to the media issues and the order of importance and significance to the same issues by the public and the politicians. That in the agenda setting environment there is connection between the priority of the media, that of the public and the priority of the policy makers. But even more importantly, is the fact that it is the media that attaches priority to issues by highlighting them in order for the public to watch, read and listen to them. And as the media constantly attach importance to the same, the policy makers find it necessary to pick them up, elevate them to more important issues that require specific actions. Although the public may not necessarily share same values about news events as highlighted by the media, it never the less get influenced by the same in the final end. That is why scholars argue that the media may necessarily make people to change, but will make them think about change. Therefore, in agenda setting framework, which is a process by which awareness and attribution of significance. In this regard, the prime responsibility of the media is to make it possible for the public to begin debating on the issues that have been identified as important and deserve attention.

Dearing and Rogers (1996: 15) in McQuail (2000:456) say that agenda setting is connected to other media effects theories such as bandwagon, spiral of silence, diffusion of news and media gate keeping responsibilities. Take for example the bandwagon perspective, where majority of the people would follow opinion leaders as long as the issue attracting them has been approved by the same. They further argue that different media tend to agree about the relative salience that seem to be priority. And that media agenda does not closely match real world indicators. Thus, in the agenda setting arena, the media attaches importance to certain issues that seem to make sense to real world of the audience. And as the media does this, there is also a section of the public who would only be convinced to take certain action based on what their friends and contemporaries have decided to do, hence the bandwagon framework that makes people do only what others are doing.

In agenda setting, public debate is represented by a set of salient issues. This agenda originates from the public opinion and proposal of the political class. In this regard, mass media selects issues for a certain level of attention whether full attention or otherwise. But even as the media boasts of agenda setting, the main question that lingers is who actually owns the media. In reality, the media is owned and controlled by largely powerful individuals and businessmen and women. For example, in the US, the entire information is owned and controlled by media conglomerates. Ultimately the media may rarely cause changing independently, but they in most cases provide channels, the means and the platform for playing out of events in which many actors and interests are actively involved in competition with each other. Specific organized groups, elites and even influential minorities as well as opinion leaders and professionals constantly engage in debate either using television, radio and even the social media. Such engagement is all that is needed to make the public attach importance to some of the salient issues that inform the public debate.

Fishman (1980) in McQuail 2000, argues that most researchers assume that news either reflects or distorts reality. And that reality is made up of facts and events which exist independently of how news workers think of them and treat them in the news production process. To the contrary, although to some extent news is manufactured by reporters and editors based on the way they treat them, it is almost impossible to think of fiction in news. In other words, even when treatment may be exaggerated in favor of certain truths, it is unlikely that facts and events can be created to suit news. In other words, it is upon the reporter and editor to ensure that news that reach the audience is as authentic as possible in order to remain alive with the realities of fairness and objectivity, which sometimes are so elusive to some media practitioners and by extension their organizations.

This theory is relevant to the current study because in adopting the agenda setting theory, this research is of the view that whatever is published in the newspapers becomes the gospel truth especially to the keen readers, viewers and listeners of news. Indeed, it holds the view that what is published, or find its way to the editorial pages of the newspapers or Television screen must be important and relevant to the lives of those targeted as readers or audience. Therefore, in the context of the gender portrayal research, the framing of the key character of characters highlighted in the editorial pages of the two newspapers carries a lot of weight and makes indelible sense to the reader. That such framing is what makes it easy for the readers to either admire or hate the character in question. And in the context of the questions of this study, such framing is critical in either accelerating gender stereotypes or minimizing the same. Therefore, agenda setting theory gives this research a theoretical strength in the sense that it does confirm that what is on the editorial pages of the newspapers is indeed urgent and important to the readers and that is why it is being highlighted. Once it is highlighted, it is bound to impact either negatively or positively to the readers.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

The study adopted the qualitative approach to conduct the study. The qualitative approach is a process of inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomenon or happenings in individuals or society and is more inclined towards revealing why things happening in the way they do. The approach was instrumental in my study because it allowed me to interact with the specific samples of secondary data in this case sampled cartoons that were published in the two selected newspapers. Furthermore, it also gave me a chance to adduce meanings from such samples and helped to interpret themes, frames and possible messages that each cartoon carried to the reader. It is this research approach that made it possible to understand why some cartoons were biased or skewed towards certain gender while others stood out as relatively objective.

The research approach of this study is qualitative in nature and has effectively utilised specific analysis of the sampled cartoons based on the six-week purposive sampling. Further information has been adduced from the key informant interviews with two cartoons and a total of five representatives drawn from gender focused institutions at the national level.

The advantages of doing qualitative research include; flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during research and explore processes effectively; sensitivity to contextual factors; ability to study symbolic dimensions and social meaning; increased opportunities to develop empirically supported new ideas and theories; for in-depth and longitudinal explorations of leadership phenomena; and for more relevance and interest for practitioners (Alvesson, 1996). The use of Relativist paradigm allowed the researcher to collect both qualitative data at the same time during the study and then integrated the information in the interpretation of the overall results.

#### 3.2. Sampling Procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting a sample size from the population for investigation purposes. A sampling frame is a list, directory or index of cases, that enables realization of a representative sample (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). A sample is a section of a large populace, which is used for research study or investigation. The sample size is a representative of the large population (Bryman, 2012). This research has utilised convenient or purposive sampling technique, which according to Silverman (2008a) in Juan and Ong'ondo (2011), calls for critical thinking about the parameters of the population under study. Appropriate parameters offered the framework in which purposive or convenient sampling was done. For this reason, I settled for the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard Newspaper* on the account of popularity, the coverage and the general circulation that each carry to the audience. The research has utilised the constructed week sampling which according to Caburnay and Cohen (2011) is more efficient than anything else. A sample size of, six weeks per year formed the basis for analysing the newspapers for the three years (2012, 2013 and 2014). Song and Chang (2012) argue that constructed week sampling is more advantageous than the simple random sampling in the account for news variation. It therefore becomes strategic enough to propose six-week sampling as the basis for data access and generation. A total of .252 cartoons were sampled for analysis during the study period. I chose six weeks per year as a representative sample to enable me derive tendencies and consistencies of the editorial cartoon coverage of the issues that were highlighted in the media. In this case, a representative sample would suffice since some of the subject matters were repetitively highlighted in the news and the cartoons in particular. The number of cartoons were a good size that could be analysed one by one to enable me draw conclusions based on the research questions that were set out in chapter one. As for the study period, 2012 was basically a build-up year for Kenya's political cycle. As was expected, indeed many political activities took place and ultimately many issues came up making it the basis for the editorial cartoon. As for 2013, it was an election year that was characterised by intense and hyper political activities. Against many issues around land, corruption and politics took the centre stage of the news coverage during the year. On the other hand, 2014 was carefully chosen to reflect what could happen in post-election period. The attendant news stories were equally important to demonstrate how the country reacted to the outcomes of the 2013 general election.

#### 3.3. Data Collection

Content analysis of the specific cartoons appearing within the sampled weeks of the study was undertaken. The study was more inclined towards analysing the framing of the cartoons, the content of the cartoons particularly paying attention to the way they depict and represent gender in relation to the roles assigned to them. Specific characters in each

of the sampled cartoons were observed with a keen eye on the roles that were given to each gender whether it is single gender or both gender in the same cartoon. Thus, gender of the characters in the cartoons were also identified and noted for reference in the analysis. Furthermore, messages whether single or multiple attached to the gender were also identified for each cartoon that was sampled. In addition, the *mascot* voice-the little voice of what looks like a mouse or cat normally situated at the bottom of the cartoon was also considered to determine the possible embedded meaning that is attached to the cartoon.

The key informant interviews with the representatives from the gender focused institutions was used to demonstrate the likely varied perception and concern of the various readers over the way gender was portrayed in editorial cartoons in Kenya. Thus, institutions with the quest for gender equity were identified and at least one official from each organisation was interviewed to complement the data that was adduced from the sampled cartoons. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the Gender and Equality Commission, the Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA) and the Media Council of Kenya were considered in this regard. Efforts to get a representative from the National Cohesion and Integration Commission prove futile.

The key informant interviews were more inclined towards revealing the inherent beliefs and possible motivation informing their way of presenting cartoons to the audience or readers. These interviews were directed to informants considered to be knowledgeable about gender related issues and also accessible and willing to provide information relevant to the study. The respondents were perceived to have adequate information on the issue of gender portrayal in caricature and cartoon works. Information collected was qualitative in nature.

It would have been extremely impossible to analyse all the contents of the sampled newspapers for a longitudinal study of three years as proposed in the study. Consequently, sampling was done on the selected newspapers to identify representative editions, days and cartoons running through the three years.

In this case, a day's edition of newspaper represented the strata of homogeneity. This is due to the fact that daily newspapers vary in size and editions with days of the week. Furthermore, there is a tendency that is adopted in the respective media houses to have some issues commonly covered on the specific days of the week. For example, there is a tendency for the newspapers to cover financial and economic issues in the mid-week than they would on a Friday and in the weekend where social issues and soft news is mostly covered. However, in terms of intense political bickering, newspaper stories would be driven towards politics which seem to gain momentum towards electioneering period. Furthermore, politics seem to be occupying most of the days of the week and even overlapping in to the weekends as leaders converge in social events which include parties, weddings, funerals and school functions among others. Thus, constructed weeks sampling has been accepted by scholars as superior than other techniques in analysing newspaper content especially a longitudinal study. Stratified sampling is also superior in increasing representativeness of sample and the number of units in a study, especially if the types of units make up a small proportion of the population. The proportionate sampling use knowledge about distribution of units to avoid oversampling or under sampling that can occur through simple random sampling hence increasing the representativeness of sample (Riffe *et al.*, 1993).

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis was done based on the thematic areas. Cartoons were identified and analysed based on the overall theme communicated by the cartoonist. In this regard, themes that were identified were: corruption, bribery, leadership and integrity, governance, sports, land grabbing. Others were examination cheating which was also linked to electoral cheating, election malpractice. Then were significant others including science and innovations and individual achievement in life. The voice of the mascot was another area that was keenly observed as to determine the message the mascot always brought out whether it was mere riddle, challenge or a question that is meant to challenge the readers and the news makers. These themes were critically observed and analysed in relation to the gender portrayal. Thus, keen interest and emphasis was laid on how gender was framed and presented to the readers in relation to the themes. This enabled the study to break down the necessary key areas of the research findings based on the research objective and research questions. In further observation and analysis of the selected cartoons, it was mandatory to highlight type of gender that was presented to the readers in each cartoon. Furthermore, the role that was assigned to the identified gender was also highlighted. Another detail was about the frequency. In other words, how many times the identified get covered by the cartoonist same month or year. Another significant detail was about the placement of the cartoon in regard to how visible or not visible and prominence or otherwise. That the placement was all about finding out the prominence that was given to the gender. Just like pictures receive prominence based on how large or small they appear in the newspaper, so are the cartoons and the characters that are highlighted. These areas were so critical in understanding and linking up every cartoon that was published by the two dailies in the study period. The analysis of the cartoons was also determined by the data that was raised which included among others, issues in focus, the appearance of the cartoons, the type of gender, messages that was depicted. Issues that formed the basis for the analysis included corruption, sexual morality, land grabbing, leadership and governance as well as the specific message from the mascot voice or the small almost silent message that is given by the small mouse below the editorial cartoon. Furthermore, every sampled cartoon was categorised whether it was meant to cause change in the society or was drawn with the intention to hurt and demean the characters that were involved. This kind of framework would later become useful in determining the extent to which the cartoonist was fair in the appropriation of the characters that were highlighted in the cartoons. A seven point reference was used to dissect the selected cartoons for easy of understanding and extracting information that was necessary in responding to the three questions that were set out in the study namely determining the nature of gender portrayal, how gender was depicted, what accounted for such portrayal and whether there were any traces of stereotypical approach in

developing editorial cartoons. Units of analysis for the sampled cartoons were based on the following areas of considerations.

#### 4. Key Findings

Cartoons like any other news is a reflection of what happens in the society highlighted in the print or electronic media. This means that cartoonists derive their themes from the various issues that are covered in the news. The more the issues we have in the media, the more likely such issues will be reflected in the editorial cartoons depending on how serious the issues are to the public and policy makers in particular. Indeed, this is the more reason this study lays the emphasis on the gender portrayal in the editorial cartoons. The role of the cartoonist is reflected in the manner they construct what has happened in the news and accord it the satirical and metaphorical touch. In fact, it is such satirical and metaphorical touch of the news that make the readers resonate with what has happened in the society. But it is critical to understand how the cartoonists accord the importance to each occurrence that happen in the society. It is true for a fact that not every news that happen in the society warrants a cartoon. Only certain news deserves to generate a cartoon and that is why this study becomes extremely an important step towards understanding what informs such treatment by the cartoonists.

Politics played a significant role in cartooning to the extent that most of the cartoonists focused on politics as a centre of news. This is attributed to the amount of activities that politicians are engaged in as they influence the public life. Accordingly, the male gender was actively involved in making news in politics. In other words, in most of the editorial cartoons whose theme was politics the male was a dominant gender. Surprisingly, the sampled cartoons revealed that the male gender was majorly associated with negative attributes of lying, being selfish and was behind oppression of the voiceless or marginalized group within the circles of politics. The case in point is a cartoon that depicted a civil servant upon retirement is convicted to join politics. But then he is faced with a disturbing scenario where he is advised to resort to using youths to hurl stones at the opponents as one strategy that would enable him win the election. The cartoonist underscores the murky political waters where perhaps the male gender can swim more comfortably than the female gender. The male gender was also portrayed as selfish and irresponsible to matters leadership. Associated with politics were such cases as bribery of voters, stone throwing, intimidation and incitements, all being attributed to the male gender. To the contrary, the female gender was less actively involved in politics and in cases where women were actively involved, the cartoonist provided a stereotypical portrayal of a studiously passive character. But whenever she was cited, the cartoonists framed the female gender as more reliable and trustworthy than the male gender.

The other thematic area that dominated the sampled cartoons was corruption. Now, in matters corruption which also extent to issues of land grabbing and stealing of votes as for the case of elections, the men were the dominant gender not as victims but as aggressors and therefore responsible to the vice. The media reports on the major scandals that have rocked Kenya in the recent past such as the Goldenberg, National Youth Service (NYS), the Eurobond and recently the Ruraka Land scam among others have had key actors mostly from the male gender. most of the sampled cartoons portrayed women as weak and vulnerable characters in society. Although the sampled cartoons seemed to offer the narrative that the male gender is generally corrupt, there are incidents where the female gender was equally involved in the scams such as the NYS scandal. Although the male gender was predominantly portrayed as the responsible for the major scandals that have rocked Kenya, it has also emerged that the female gender played a significant role in some of the scams like the National Youth Service.

Another thematic area that received attention of the media was insecurity or security. This included ethnic violence as well as terrorism. In this regard, the male gender received premium publicity as the architectures of insecurity. The case in point was Tana Delta conflict pitting the Orma and Pokomo communities against each other. The vultures of bad politics and ethnicity seem to have taken responsibility for the eruption and escalation of the violence. The two appear in the form of vultures facing off Tana River pitch. It would appear that at the time the clashes broke out between the two communities, politicians from the two groups were accusing each other. They ignore most of the peace meetings that were called and even when they attended, they ensured the resolutions could not be implemented to the betterment of the two communities. And that although the male gender was painted the opposite of this, nevertheless, they were evil and always associated with wrong doing. Consequently, the female received the least attention in the cartoons that were analyzed. But in the in the few cartoons where the female gender was reflected, they were portrayed as more reliable and trusted than the male gender in regard to politics and leadership. But the then the question that goes begging is whether some women who have been in leadership have never been associated with negative attributes that would make them be just as bad as their male counterparts.

Other issues that were covered in the news included impunity and terrorism, land and education among others. Just like in the case of politics, the male gender took the centre stage dominating most of the sampled cartoons. The analysis revealed that the male gender was portrayed in active terms. However, it was also revealed that in the case of violence, the male gender was depicted as perpetrators or simply characters that were responsible for the increased menace in society. For example, whenever the media or the cartoonist wanted to depict glutton, robbery and terror attacks, it was always easy to draw a man as responsible. The gluttonous and land grabbers as well and most corrupt were given the male gender tag or face. Those with big bellies and masked faces would always be the male gender. That is the bias that was revealed in the cartoon therefore rising very fundamental questions whether looting of the public coffers, cases of land grabbing, abductions and execution of heinous attacks that have been witnessed in Kenya and perhaps across Africa has to do with gender. Which means that they only affect the male gender as the responsible to the mess. Media reports point to somehow different scenario acknowledging the fact that the female gender is equally involved in the vices

that were highlighted. In some related cartoons though, some of the male characters were portrayed as sympathizers of those involved in insecurity and terrorism. In fact, some of the men or people of the male gender were depicted as catalysts of the incidents of violence that was captured in the media. To the contrary the female gender was least covered or mentioned in cases that related with violence as perpetrators. Instead, in incidents of violence, the female gender was always portrayed as the victim or victimized. In some of the critical pieces that were highlighted, the female gender was more seen in the light of weakness and vulnerability. The female gender was also captured as a voice of reason in such cases.

According to the Monrma (2002) gender imbalance in the society have inherently been reflected in the institution of media. This is reflected in the editorial content by either commission in the stories that are never covered or commission by the way the stories are covered. (Media Council 2015 Report on gender; page 3). It is important to understand that gender equality is not about men and women being the same or equal but it is about their treatment in relation to their rights, responsibilities and access to the opportunities that come their way. In regard to the media in Kenya, this study has noted that there is no equal treatment of both gender in relation to the way they are portrayed in the newspapers particularly through cartoons. This is confirmed by the Media Council Report on Gender agenda 2015 which states that there still exists a serious gap in the representation of both men and women as men continue to dominate newsrooms and the news sources and actors thereby placing women on the periphery. It is therefore this dominance that eventually played out in the cartooning whether it was in the positive or negative form. For example, looking at all the sample cartoons that were analyzed, majority of the issues that each cartoon brought out had a connection with the male gender in one way or another.

The other element that was brought out in the cartoons is the issue of stereotypes. Now stereotypes in the media tend to “undervalue women as a whole and diminish them to sexual objects and passive human beings. UNESCO also notes that media (newspapers, radio, television and the new technology) are part of culture and society. It is widely accepted that media are transmitters of culture and engines behind globalizing culture” Now if this globalizing culture has more to do with the male gender then the overall culture will be skewed towards enhancing the male gender culture and socialization than that of the female gender.

The samples of the cartoons that formed the basis of this study were subjected to serious analytical framework that helped to identify issues or themes and matched them with the people of characters who were involved in the cartoon. Furthermore, key adjectives and description of the characters in the cartoons helped to link the theme with the gender portrayal. Furthermore, aspects of exaggeration in other words how characters are framed was equally utilized to determine the extent of positive and negative connotative to each gender that was highlighted. Labelling was also considered as part of the critical issue that helped to understand the cartoon. It was necessary that such framework is adopted to facilitate practical analysis and understanding of the cartoons from the gender perspective.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

When dealing with matters of corruption and embezzlement of public funds as captured in the media, it would be fair and objective to portray both gender as causes and victims of the vice. In a related cartoon, appearing in the *Daily Standard* of March 13, 2014, a man sits in a swimming pool with three women basking and smoking. He talks about the wage bill and subsidies as a part in the air. The man is not only relaxing He is drinking and smoking as well in a manner suggesting that money he is spending actually belongs to the public. And so, the issue of the wage bill does not strike his sensual chord at all and if it does it is mere hot air. He is in company of three women ostensibly to satisfy his desires. Again, the cartoon portrays the male gender as corrupt and irresponsibly wasting public funds on lavish lifestyle. The male gender is the cause of the suffering. But on the other hand, the cartoonist depicts the female gender as agents of beauty and satisfaction for the male gender. The cartoonist paints both the male and the female gender in a stereotypical manner. The male gender is superior and loaded with money while the female gender is there to simply satisfy the male sexual needs. In similar circumstances, a county governor sitting at the centre is surrounded by the Members of the County Assembly wearing animals' masks threatening to impeach the governor. The MCAs are represented by the male gender. They confirm the fact that the male gender is at the centre of abuse of office and corruption in the society. The MCAs want to impeach the governor because of refusing to approve their allowance. In related cartoon appearing on in *Daily Nation* of 2013, a senior Government official on what was later called *Shuttle Diplomacy* is captured while in flight with a number of female hostess massaging him as he talks on phone. Again, the manner in which the official is sleeping and the way the hostess is busy massaging, a clear demonstration that the male gender is corrupt and irresponsible in handling public funds. The cartoon also reduced the Shuttle diplomacy as mere public relations exercise and waste of public funds. The hostess is representative of the female gender seen in the light of sexual objects and mere satisfaction agents for the male gender.

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