

**AN EVALUATION OF MODERATORS' PERFORMANCE AND PERCEPTIONS ON
COVERAGE OF ISSUES IN 2013 PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE IN KENYA BY CITIZEN
TELEVISION**

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for academic award in any other university

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to my lovely mum, Anitter Kangahi, Rooney Ozigi, Anne Favour, Patience and my late dad Nathan Ozigi Oviyo. You gave me ample time to concentrate on this study.

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated performance of moderators and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. A consortium of major media houses in Kenya organized the 2013 televised presidential debate as an avenue for evaluation of presidential candidates by the voters to enable them have a deeper understanding of each political contestant's knowledge on various issues and characters hence making a meaningful decision in March 4, 2013 general election. However, moderators received criticism for their performance and coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate. The critics claimed that the debate was unbalanced and unfair. Critics emphasized that moderators focused on a few key issues facing Kenyans and the candidates were not given adequate opportunities to be assessed on the more pressing issues. Specific objectives of the study were: to assess the performance of moderators in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya, to ascertain the extent to which political scandals were covered with regard to each presidential aspirant and to analyze the perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. This study was guided by Agenda Setting theory by Mc combs & Shaw (1972) which postulate that mass media have the ability to transfer their salient issues on their news agenda to the public. The researcher used analytical research design. The population of study is journalists who were moderators in 2013 Kenyan presidential debate that was aired by Citizen Television and communication and journalism students who were drawn from Daystar University. The study used mixed sampling; Saturation and simple random sampling. Saturation sampling justifies the study of all elements. All four moderators who managed the debate and ten participants in FGD were studied. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data. Data was also analyzed by both quantitative and qualitative methods and presented in percentages and frequencies with assistance of SPSS computer software programme and narrative form respectively. The study revealed that Presidential candidates and issues received varied attention from the moderators. Candidates were subjected significantly to the same questions to stimulate variance among them. Moderators held candidates accountable to their remarks and highlighted the truth. However it was minimal. Moderators did not manage to give candidates strictly two minutes to respond to their questions on issues before rebuttals. The same level of scrutiny of scandals basing on the magnitude was not applied to all candidates since moderators gave more coverage to scandals they considered to be very critical. The debates addressed national issues that concern citizens. Variation in coverage of issues, scandals and attention accorded to candidates indicated unequal treatment in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. The outcome of this study may benefit the presidential debate steering committee as it highlights the strength and weakness of moderation of the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya that can be based on to improve future presidential debates. It can be instrumental to the researchers and academicians in the view of the fact that it will provoke more intellectual research in the findings. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will enrich the body of knowledge as well as addressing the main shortfalls in existing literature on the moderation and coverage of issues in the presidential debates.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

PD	Presidential debate
TPD	Televised presidential debate
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
C PC	Commission on Presidential Debates
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Issue: A subject of discussion or a topic.

Coverage of Issues: The range of information or topics included on television programme i.e. presidential debate. It can also mean the amount of information or the way television covers an event.

Presidential debate: A confrontation in equal and adequate time of matched political contestants on a stated proposition to gain an audience decision.

Scandal: Accusations of wrong-doing (illegal or immoral; not policy differences).

Perceptions: Viewers' opinion or point of view on an issue.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This study evaluated performance of moderators and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya by citizen television. In 2013 general election campaigns in Kenya, major media practitioners in a consortium organized the first ever televised presidential debate in Kenyan history. Debate was streamlined live locally on eight televisions and thirty four radio stations. The international media outlets like British broadcasting station, Cable News Network (CNN), Reuters and Al Jazeera covered the historic event. The first presidential debate was staged on 11th Feb 2013 and moderated by Julie Gichuru of Citizen Television and Linus Kaikai of NTV. The second and final one was held on 25th of the same month but moderated by Citizen Television's Uduak Amimo and KTN's Joe Ageyo. It is estimated that more than forty millions viewers and listeners across the globe accessed the debate (Muindi & Shiundu, 2013).

The purpose of this debate was to enable the voters to evaluate the presidential candidate's knowledge on various issues and character hence make a meaningful decision in March, 4th 2013 general election. However, moderators received criticism for their performance and coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate. The critics claimed that the debates were unbalanced and unfair. Critics emphasized that moderators focused on a few key issues facing Kenyans and the candidates were not given adequate opportunities to be assessed on the more pressing issues. Other concerns expressed by the critics were what they termed as inequality in attention on candidates as some were given wide coverage to the disadvantage of others. In addition, the moderators deliberately allowed other candidates to escape public scrutiny over various national scandals that have characterized their political careers and whereas the debate could have been deliberately constructed, the fallout remained amorphous. Furthermore, the debate organizers seemed to have centered more on achieving the event rather than managing it as a prism through which the nation and the world would be given a sense of each of the candidate's intellect and grasp of key national issues.

The main purpose of a presidential debate is to offer an opportunity to political competitors to market their policies competitively to the electorates with the overall hope of influencing undecided voters and ensuring all voters make informed decisions. But when the pundit raises concerns about the presentation of the debate it puts the role of moderators in doubts as to whether the debate was competently and fairly moderated. The moderators have a duty to influence decision through provisions of accurate, fair, balanced and objective moderation. Imbalanced and biased moderation would be a disservice to the voters as the debate will not serve its intended purpose but to provide voters with an unsatisfactory and shallow discourse that may not add more knowledge or understanding of the pertinent issues to voters. It is important therefore to find out how moderation was conducted. This study therefore focused on the role of journalist as moderators. It evaluated the performance of moderators and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate to gain an insight and make inference basing on the findings to provide a better understanding of moderation and coverage of issues in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. To fulfill the study's objective, researcher investigated the variation in treatment accorded to both candidates and topics covered by moderators as well as uncovering opinion of viewers as perceived on the programme.

Benoit, Hansen, and Verser (2003) point out that large amount of research has ignored media coverage and focused on the impact of presidential debates. The same is echoed by Pekka (2011) that most popular target of research concerning televised presidential debates has been their effect on voters. Available studies on presidential debate have used functional theory of campaign discourse developed by Benoit (2003; 2007), but research on moderation and coverage of political scandals has not been focused. This study therefore filled the gap by evaluating moderation and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues.

Television as a medium provides people with information to make decisions especially during election. However, the public views the media has having an inherent bias, and, thus, are much more skeptical of the media (Baron 2006). If the media shows an inherent bias and the public believes that bias exists, the influence of media is inconsistent with the open airing of issues that debates foster, since the public knows they cannot receive impartial information from them (Kashubski, 2010). During presidential debates, the moderator may treat candidates and issues in a manner that can be perceived as unbalanced or in favor of a certain candidate. On the one

hand, moderator could be motivated by an incentive to impact the electoral outcome and on the other hand, it could come from the desire to cater to major preferences of consumers in the media market.

A survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (1999 as cited in Baron, 2004) revealed that 78 percent of the public believed that there is bias in news reporting. However, there was little consensus on the nature and direction of the perceived bias (Baron, 2004). Television bias can have an important influence on voters during an election campaign. In a comparative, rhetorical analysis of television cross-examination programs in Norway before the 1999 local elections, assessing the treatment of two female politicians, one a Christian Democrat and government minister, the other the opposition Socialist Party leader, Sandvik found that the Christian Democrat was treated more negatively than the socialist politician (Sandvik, 2004).

The ensuing section provides a background on the genesis of the problem and the research gap. The pertinent issues will be addressed in the following sections: the role of presidential debates and television coverage of political campaign, televised presidential debate in America, Europe, Africa and East Africa. It will be followed by the statement of problem, research questions, objectives, scope and limitations, significance of the study as well as theoretical framework.

1.1.1 The Role of Presidential Debate and Television Coverage of Political Campaign

Television as a medium forms the backbone of democracy as they provide voters with political information which they use in electing their leaders. According to Dye and Ziegler, (1983 as cited in Wasswa, 2013), the mass media serves four political functions that include: news making, interpretation, socialization, persuasion and agenda setting. Through these functions, the mass media creates political issues they consider of importance to the public, define their meanings and consequences and ultimately cause the shift of public opinions and attitudes. In pursuance of this study the role of television as interpretation, persuasion and agenda setting was primarily focused.

Televised presidential debates are ‘media events’ (Dayan & Katz, 1995) which are essential parts of the presidential campaigns (Benoit, 2007). According to Holbrook (1996), the most important function of the debates is the supply of information, which is vast and on many different

dimensions of the candidates, which may eventually prove to be useful to voters. Debates serve significant information functions for candidates and voters alike. On one hand, the candidates have the opportunity to appeal to a vast audience of viewers, and on the other hand, voters get important information that might help in shaping or reinforcing their opinions about the candidates (Holbrook 1996). Debates are the central points of the election campaigns, providing citizens with easy and direct access to the candidates, which is not an opportunity all voters have, and an encapsulation of the campaign issues (McKinney & Carlin 2004). However, debates have been known to have effects such as increasing issue knowledge and issue salience in viewers (Blais & Perrella 2008), altering perceptions of candidates' character and can influence vote preferences (Lewis-Beck, Norpoth & Jacoby, 2008). While debates may not always change electoral outcomes they have been known to alter the trajectory of a candidates' support (Stimson, 2004).

Despite these advantages, pundits have criticized presidential debates, especially for how they're covered by the national media. The vast majority of post-debate coverage and spin from the campaigns focuses on the "horse-race" and how a particular phrase or gesture will ultimately affect the candidates' standing in the polls and electoral prospects. Comparatively little coverage focuses on the candidates' substantive answers to issue and policy questions. The current format of televised debates has also been criticized. It is now custom that the two candidates will engage in three 90-minute debates -- four-and-a-half hours total. There's a lot that needs to be covered in those four hours. Because so many topics need to be addressed, moderators generally allow for a maximum of 5-6 minutes of discussion on any given issue. This type of format rewards candidates for speaking in overly-simplistic sound-bites and punishes them if for thoughtful, nuanced discussion of the issues. Thus, the advantage often goes to the candidate whose staff can write the best "one-liners"(Knoll, 2012). Therefore the manner in which presidential debate committee organizes the debate and how moderators conduct it matters a lot. This is due to the fact that journalist packages different topics, which are discussed differently, upon which candidate give out varied views as solutions to the problem. Furthermore, the manner in which moderators conduct a debate may have an influence on the way people perceive, interpret and feel towards an issue.

The questions which topics address in presidential debates coverage of political campaigns are important one. Research has shown that the amount of coverage received by candidates, the tone of the coverage, and the amount of horse race coverage focusing on a candidate can influence voters' perceptions of candidates (Ross, 1992). In addition, Farnsworth and Lichter (2003) affirm that "Polls have repeatedly shown that voters have a very good idea which candidate is likely to win the presidency, but voters are less able to demonstrate their knowledge of issue stands" (p. 53). But issue knowledge is arguably what voters need most (Benoit, Compton & Phillips, 2013). Patterson and McClure (1976) note that "Of all the information voters obtain through the mass media during a presidential campaign, knowledge about where the candidates stand is most vital" (p. 49). Therefore, the nature or content of television coverage of the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya merits scholarly attention. This helps to uncover the characteristics of the coverage accorded to debate by the television.

Television coverage may influence election outcomes through the way in which they cover presidential debate campaigns. Esaiasson and Håkansson (2002) assert that journalist control over election campaign coverage has increased. Therefore, Political parties are now totally dependent on television managers, planners and journalists for the amount of television coverage each candidate receives and for the kind of treatment parties and candidates can expect on television (Haug, Koppang & Svennevig, 2010). How television portrays candidates and political issues can make a political aspirant elected or defeated. Television therefore can cast a political candidate in a favorable or unfavorable light depending on the journalist political orientation or media house policy. The manner in which a candidate is portrayed contributes to his victory or failure as the mode of presentation may influence how voters evaluate candidates and form judgments based on television representations.

Graber (1993) noted that media election coverage is characterized by an "inordinate amount of attention to campaign hoopla and the horse race aspects of the contests. They slight political, social, and economic problems facing the country and say little about the merits of the solutions proposed, unless these issues can be made exciting and visually dramatic." She concluded that 'voters receive relatively little help from the media in evaluating candidates on the basis of issues.' In the same way television may offer unbalanced coverage by not allotting equal space to

substantive issues and impartial coverage of scandals of the political candidates to escape public scrutiny.

It has been argued that the television has made politics into a spectacle because they focus more on image than on substantive issues. In televised presidential debates, Hellweg, Pfau and Brydon (1992) noted that “Television, because it places a higher premium on presentational factors in political communication, is responsible for the ascendancy of character as the dominant criteria for assessing communicators.” (Hellweg, Pfau and Brydon, 1992: 80). According to Lippmann (1965), the mass media actually defines public opinion, rather than the public expressing their own opinions. By creating the environment in which people think about politics, the mass media can create and manipulate how the general public will understand certain issues. Further, the media defines the standards by which different moral political dilemmas are portrayed by portraying an issue either negatively or positively. Therefore television has immense power over issues covered and the public’s perception of presidential candidates.

1.1.2. Presidential Debates in America and Europe.

This section looks at the role of the commission on presidential debates in America, presidential debates in America and other parts of Europe. It starts by focusing on role of the commission on presidential debates in America followed by televised debates held through television in the United States of America and other parts of Europe.

In a democratic society, elections are mostly the conventional means of promoting some citizens to positions of leadership in the republic. Presidential campaigns and elections are more vigorous as they determine who is selected as the head of state and to whom the majority of people would entrust guardianship of their sovereignty (Lindberg, 2006). Consequently, many countries have adopted presidential debates to be part of their presidential campaigns. American presidential debates are the most well-known political debates. They are also the most followed, viewed, controlled, and the most researched political television programmes (Pekka, 2011: 31). Americans are pioneers in presidential debates in political campaign process. In 1960, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon squared off in the first televised presidential debates in American history (Minow and Lamay, 2008).

The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) was established in 1987 in the United States to ensure the provision of the best possible information to voters. Its primary purpose is to sponsor and produce debates for the presidential and vice-presidential candidates and to undertake research and educational activities related to the debates. The Commission is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization and has so far, with the help of volunteers, prepared and sponsored the debates. Previously, the debates were sponsored by the League of Women Voters. The Commission is led by eminent experts for political science, the media and public relations, and by distinguished American public figures. All living former American presidents are the honorary members of the Commission. The Commission decides on who may take part in the debates on the basis of the candidates' realistic chances in the elections; whether a candidate is considered to be among the principal rivals for the Presidency is estimated on the basis of public opinion polls. In practice, these are usually the official candidates of two major American parties – the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Independent candidates appear much more seldom. The Commission decides on the rules, selects the moderators and the panelists (the journalists who participate in the debate), chooses the venue and compiles the questions for the participants, and so on. The Commission mediates between the candidates' campaign camps, hammers out the details, and runs the proceedings. Although the rules are improved and modified every year, they are similar to those used in the Kennedy-Nixon debates in 1960. The debates are organized in the standardized improvised studio on a university campus in front of a live audience who do not have any role in the questioning or the proceedings. The questions are compiled by experts, journalists, and voters. The rules are laid down to the tiniest details: from the set, the protocol of the candidates' entrance, their preparation and the rooms for the members of their staff, to the rules or the angles of shooting (Skoko, 2005)

The concept of televised presidential debates started in America and spread rapidly around the world with the development of democracies in Europe especially in France, Germany, and United Kingdom. In many countries, televised campaign debates are now regarded as major political campaign events, and television has been shown to have major effects on election outcomes (Plasser & Plasser, 2002).

There have been several researches done previously concerning presidential debates from different perspectives with varying results. One of them is a research done by Benoit; Glantz and

Airne (2013) who conducted a functional analysis of 2012 American presidential primary debates using content analysis of the 19 Republican presidential primary debates. Each theme's function was classified as acclaim, attacks and defenses. The topic of each theme was classified as policy and character. The result of this study show that debates were mostly positive: 67% acclaims, 30% attacks, and 3% defenses. Barack Obama was the target of most attacks at 43%. Other Republicans were the focus of 37% of the attacks with 20% directed at the status quo. Among the Republican candidates, Romney (87) and Gingrich (86) received the most attacks. Pawlenty, Johnson, Cain and Bachmann all received fewer than (10) attacks in these debates. Coverage on issues was 67% policy and 33% character discussion.

In another study in Finland, Pekka (2011) analyzed 2006 presidential debate using functional theory and Finnish political communication culture to evaluate the applicability of functional theory to the analysis of Finnish political debate. The study was comparative research. Utterances were classified by thematic function: acclaims, attacks, and defenses. He found out that most common turns were defenses (35% of turns), after that attacks (28%), and then acclaims (16%). Niinisto had nearly as many attacks (29%) as defenses, but Halonen had clearly fewer attacks (27%). Analyzing the topics discussed in a debate he found that one third was character topics and two thirds policy topics (Pekka, 2011).

Elsewhere in Ukraine, Benoit and Klyukovski (2006) performed a functional analysis of 2004 televised Ukrainian presidential debates using content analysis. The research revealed that policy was discussed more often than character. While the incumbent candidate acclaimed more and attacked less than the challenger, the incumbents focused on past deeds more often to acclaim and less to attack than the challengers. Also, general goals and ideals were employed more often for acclaims than attacks (Benoit & Klyukovski, 2006).

Having looked at the role of commission on presidential debate in America and researches on presidential debates across the world, it would be better now to focus on Africa to get the clear picture as debates in Africa could be different from those of Europe and America. The American and European political communication may be regarded as a different system design because the political culture, the media system and communication culture in general could be so different. Therefore, television coverage of presidential debates could differ in certain aspects.

1.1.3. Presidential Debates in Africa

Televised Presidential Debate (TPD) is taking shape in Africa with political candidates and campaign strategists embracing it to engage their supporters. Political actors have referred to it as the ‘Americanization’ of campaigns in Africa. According to Felicia (2010) voting in Africa is traditionally based on ethnicity and not on candidates’ policies. Presidential debates therefore are expected to alter age-old mentality of voting on the basis of ethnicity and inject policy and issue driven politics.

However, according to Mwiti (2012) many analysts agree that ‘the move by the continent towards live broadcast debates is positive and a huge step forward. But it should not be taken as an indicator of Africa’s rapidly maturing democracies. Only the most optimistic would say such debates will in any way sway the partisanship. Holding live debates in Africa currently makes for good television only; the continent is still a long way from issue-based politics’.

Ghana is the only West African country and the first one in Africa to have held Presidential debates back to back making it a historic feat and an attestation of maturing democracy in the country. To prepare for the debates in Ghana, the Institute of Economic Affairs, (IEA) board establishes a Presidential Debates Committee (PDC) made up of eminent Ghanaians who have excelled in various sectors of life, i.e., academia, business and public life. The PDC is usually chaired by a respected member of the clergy. The Committee is provided with a Terms of Reference which includes: assisting with the development of format and guidelines to govern the debates, reviewing, selecting and compiling questions received from various organizations for the debates, interviewing and selecting suitable moderators for the debates, collaborating with political parties, opinion leaders and security agencies to ensure a successful debate. Two moderators are selected to pose questions to the Candidates. To choose the moderators, the IEA Secretariat in consultation with the PDC compiles a list of about fifteen distinguished personalities from academia and the media. The list is submitted to the political parties, with a ranking form for short-listing. The first two persons with the highest marks are then selected as moderators. To assist the moderators in discharging their functions, guidelines are developed by the PDC. Notably, the Moderators are not to deviate from questions provided by the PDC but have the discretion to ask follow-up questions (Mensa, 2015).

The 2008 presidential debate in Ghana focused primarily on the economy, energy, governance and social issues (Spence, 2008). Whilst the 2012 debate tackled issues on good governance (peace and security, corruption, bureaucracy, the rule of law, as well as character and leadership), natural resource management (oil and gas, mining, forestry and environmental management), women and gender issues, children and youth, economy, agriculture, food security, housing, water, education, health, sports, job creation, infrastructural development, foreign policy, science and technology (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2012).

The concept of presidential debate in Africa is still young, therefore very little has been done to establish how moderators performs in such an important political communication event. Little studies seem to have been conducted on presidential debates in Africa as the phenomenon is still new. Temin, Jonathan, Smith and Daniel (2002, p.585) notes that media's role in elections is undisputed, although scholarship in this field in many African countries remains little as evidenced by the limited academic literature. Similarly, Wambui (2014) concluded in her study in *The Influence of Kenyan Presidential Debate on Voter's Choice: A case Study of 2013 General Election: International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* (2014) that:

Little knowledge existed concerning presidential debates mostly in the Kenyan context, as the phenomenon was new. As such, much information on the Kenyan presidential debate was sourced from newspapers; media prints, individual opinion pages and opinion poll analysis (Wambui, 2014:301).

This is a clear manifestation of lack of information on presidential debate in Kenya and Africa at large. It is worthwhile to note that presidential debates in Kenya and Africa at large are still young therefore African countries are catching up. Most available analyzed presidential debates are from America and Europe. This study therefore sheds light on how debates are moderated by journalist in Africa and particularly in Kenya.

After reviewing the situation in Africa about presidential debate, it is very imperative to narrow down to East Africa to get the clear picture as this is the geographical area where the study was conducted.

1.1.4. Presidential Debates in East Africa

Member states of east Africa are Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Among them, Kenya and Uganda are the only countries that have organized televised presidential debates during electioneering in the recent past. Televised presidential debates are gaining momentum in east Africa. In Uganda, the first ever televised presidential debate was held on the night of 15 January, 2016 and 13 February, 2016. The first edition focused on economy, unemployment, education, governance, accountability and healthcare (Kagumire, 2016) while the second one majorly focused on peace and security, foreign relations, East African integration, the Great Lakes region and terrorism(Semakula, 2016).

In Kenya, the 2013 TPD was the first ever pre-elections debate for the presidential candidates in Kenya and East Africa at large. Kenyan election campaigning took a novel turn in 2013 with the introduction of political debates. The two debates were widely celebrated as signaling a positive turn in Kenyan campaigning, from the politics of personality and ethnicity towards a more sober, issue-based form of electoral competition (Moss & O'Hare, 2014). The debates main objective was to use the media to create issue – based rhetoric, for the candidates to engage and show what really differentiates them from their competitors and allow the Kenyan voters to make informed decisions.

The 2013 presidential debate is the brainchild of a consortium of media practitioners. The debate was organized by major media house in the country. The participants in the debate were the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, Uhuru Kenyatta, Musalia Mudavadi, Martha Karua, James ole Kiyiapi, Peter Kenneth, Paul Muite, and Mohamed Abduda Dida. Candidates sought to convince over 14 million voters that they were best suited candidate to succeed President Kibaki after March 4, 2013 general election.

The presidential candidates engaged in two presidential debates. The first debate ran for three and half hours and the second one lasted for two hours and fifty eight minutes with the candidates answering questions from the moderators. The first presidential debate took place on 11th Feb 2013 while the second one on 25th Feb 2013. It is estimated that more than forty millions viewers and listeners across the globe accessed the debate. (Muindi & Shiundu, 2013).

The two debates therefore, form the basis of this research as they were analyzed to gain insight on how they were moderated and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues.

In order to determine the influence of the 2013 Kenyan televised presidential debate (TPD), some studies have been conducted. One of it is a study by Wambui (2014) who investigated the influence of Kenyan presidential debate on Voter's choice. The researcher employed exploratory research design in carrying out the study. The population of interest in this study was Nairobi county media consumers who are also registered voters. The researcher conducted telephone-based interviews. Multistage sampling design was employed to select the respondents. The researcher reveals that the presidential debate played different roles ranging from education, knowledge provision and other important aspects about the presidential candidates but on average it did not influence the voters' choice of candidates. However, its marginal impact cannot be fully ignored as it had a little impact on a few who claimed to be influenced. On average, the researcher concludes that Kenyan presidential debate was more of an educative tool but not an influential factor.

Another study is by Moss & O'Hare (2014) who examined the role of the 2013 Kenyan TPD in staging democracy in Kenya. This study approach emphasizes the theatrical nature of the performances and the deliberate way in which they were designed to present a portrait of Kenya's maturing democracy. The researcher argues that the debates were staged as part of the media's broader project of 'peace promotion'. The actual debate between the candidates was of secondary importance to the spectacle of having all eight candidates amicably share the debate floor. The study concludes by situating these media spectacles within what is perceived to be a broader trend in Kenya whereby seductive images of the nation's future are produced and projected, thereby distracting from present realities.

As illustrated above, little conducted studies have concentrated on the roles and effects of 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. Moderation and perceptions on coverage of issues in 2013 Kenyan presidential debate therefore deserved scholarly attention. My study therefore focused on the moderation and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate.

1.2 Statement of problem

A consortium of major media practitioners in Kenya organized the 2013 televised presidential debate as an avenue for evaluation of presidential candidates by the voters to enable them have a deeper understanding of each political contestant's knowledge on various issues and characters hence making a meaningful decision in March 4, 2013 general election. However, moderators received criticism for their performance and coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate. The critics claimed that the debates were unbalanced and unfair. Critics emphasized that moderators focused on a few key issues facing Kenyans and the candidates were not given adequate opportunities to be assessed on the more pressing issues. Other concerns expressed by the critics were what they termed as inequality in attention on candidates that some were given wide coverage to the disadvantage of others. In addition, moderators deliberately allowed other candidates to escape public scrutiny over various national scandals that have characterized their political careers and whereas the debate could have been deliberately constructed, the fallout remained amorphous. Further, the debate organizers seemed to have centered more on achieving the event rather than managing it as a prism through which the nation and the world would be given a sense of each of the candidate's intellect and grasp of key national issues.

The main purpose of a presidential debate is to offer an opportunity to political competitors to market their policies competitively to the voters with the overall hope of influencing undecided voters and ensuring all voters make informed decisions. But when the critic raises concerns about the presentation of the debate it puts the role of moderators in doubts as to whether the debate was competently and fairly moderated. The moderators have a duty to influence decision through provisions of accurate, fair, balanced and objective moderation. Imbalanced and biased moderation would be a disservice to the voters as the debate will not serve its intended purpose but to provide voters with an unsatisfactory and shallow discourse that may not add more knowledge or understanding of the pertinent issues to voters. It is important therefore to find out how moderation was conducted. This study therefore will evaluate the performance of moderators who are journalist and perceptions on coverage of issues in 2013 Kenyan presidential debate.

1.3 Questions of the Study

1. How did moderators perform in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya?
2. To what extent did moderators covered political scandals with regard to each presidential aspirant in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya?
3. What were the perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues by the moderators in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to evaluate performance of moderators and perceptions on coverage of issues in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. The study was underpinned by the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the performance of moderators in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya by citizen television.
2. To ascertain the extent to which political scandals were covered by the moderators with regard to each presidential aspirant in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya.
3. To analyze the perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues by the moderators in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study may benefit the presidential debate steering committee as it highlights the strength and weakness of moderation of 2013 presidential debate in Kenya that can be based on to improve future presidential debates in terms of organizing, moderating and coverage. It can be instrumental to the researchers and academicians in the view of the fact that it will provoke more intellectual research in the findings. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will enrich the body of knowledge as well as addressing the main shortfalls in existing literature on the moderation and coverage of issues in the presidential debates.

By highlighting the role played by the debate in increasing the issue knowledge on voters, this study can also be significantly important to the policy makers especially those concerned with Sustainable Development Goals and Kenya's Vision 2030 such as the Ministry of State for

Planning and Devolution, National Development and Vision 2030 and other stakeholder groups. It can help them recognize the important role played by the media in educating and informing the public and how it can be used to encourage the public's effective participation and responsiveness towards attaining the desired goals such as transforming voters to make voting decision basing mainly on issues and policy of a political candidate rather than tribal lines.

1.6 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused on evaluation of performance of moderators and perceptions on coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. The scope of the study was limited to content analysis of citizen television programme known as the 2013 presidential debate and the perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues excluding pre and post-debate discussions. Primary data was collected by analyzing two debates of the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate. Limitations encountered during this study are; auditory problem due to poor pronunciation by some of the presidential candidates during transcription of debate videos. Despite the challenges the researcher replayed the video to get words clearly. Other predicaments were time consumption and attending fatigue as well as inadequate finance which was solved by borrowing.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by agenda setting theory by Mc Combs and Shaw (1972) to evaluate the performance of moderators and perceptions on coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya.

1.7.1 Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda setting theory as propagated by Mc Combs and Shaw (1972) states that the mass media have the ability to transfer their salient issues on their news agenda to the public. Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. The main concept associated with the agenda setting theory is gate keeping. Gate keeping controls over the selection of content discussed in the media. News media decides what events to admit through media gates on ground of newsworthiness. Media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. One of the most critical aspects in the concept of an agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time

frame for this phenomenon. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently the audience will regard the issue as more important. According to McCombs and Shaw (2010) “news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues” (McQuail 2010:512). In fact Mc Combs and Shaw (1972) affirm that “what we know about the world is largely based on what the media decides to tell us”. More specifically, the result of this mediated view of the world is the priorities of media.

There are three basic types of agenda setting according to Mc Combs and Shaw (1972) these are public, media and policy agenda setting. Public agenda setting focuses on the audience’s agenda which reflects that media simply reflects public concerns that already exist. Media agenda setting focuses on the influence of the mass media on the audience. This is the ability to have the public rely on media to get to know what salient issues are in the public domain. Policy agenda setting is where media represents policies emanating primarily from policy makers and politicians.

This theory also has levels of agenda setting that is first level and second level. First level states that media uses objects or issues to influence what people should think. Whilst second level postulates that media focuses on the character of issues how people should think about.

In production of a presidential debate, media set agenda by selecting topics of discussion they consider to be very important to the public, particularly the voter. A set of topics are hierarchically arranged and accorded space according to their importance with the aims of informing and influencing the voting intentions. Questions to be answered by the political candidates are drawn from the topics and some issues which are seen to be very important are emphasized by priming while less important ones are downplayed. These topics are used in evaluating candidates and political parties.

By focusing on public agenda, the moderators evaluates presidential candidates’ past deeds and present deeds to make voters to have a deeper understanding of character and issues of presidential aspirants. Television as media strongly influences the priorities of the public. Elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind.

The debate moderators are decision makers in the presidential debate as they stand a better chance of determining how to frame questions as postulated by the second level agenda. In

relation to my study, agenda setting theory elucidate sufficiently all aspect of my study on moderation and coverage of issues in a presidential debate.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the review of relevant literature and studies that have been previously carried out. It is organized under different themes that seek to address the research questions and problem of the study by developing a framework that would help to understand and investigate.

2.2 Moderation of Presidential Debates

The debate moderators play a very big role in managing the presidential debate since they are in control and oversee the debate. Moderators are in charge of asking the candidates questions, ensuring candidates receive equal amount of time to respond to questions, and keeping the debate civilized and fair or balanced. This study assessed moderators' performance in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya by looking at how the moderators managed the event. It was done by investigating what amount of attention was allotted to presidential candidates on various issues and attention on issues covered. The researcher also looked at balancing of questions, follow-up questions for clarification and when candidates meander, interjection and fact-checking.

According to Benoit (2007) voting is a comparative act that when voters are making the decision who to vote for in the election, they are doing this by comparing the candidates to one another and then giving their vote to the candidate who seems most preferable compared to the other candidates. In order to win the elections, candidates must distinguish themselves from the other candidates. Therefore debate moderators are suppose to moderate the event in a manner in which voters will be able to compare political candidates and come up with their preferred candidate. Benoit (2007) noted that it is natural for candidates to agree on some issues, for example their stance on national security or the need to develop the economy. However, for a candidate to seem preferable to others there must also be differences. According to Benoit, candidates can differentiate themselves from one another either by discussing character or by discussing policies. To differentiate themselves, candidates can either highlight their own strengths or attempt to point out the weaknesses of their contenders. Candidates use political campaign messages to distinguish themselves. Once a candidate has decided what message they want to

convey to the audience, they must deliver that message to the voters; to reach this goal, they use political campaign messages. Candidates establish preferability through attacking, acclaiming, and defending. Campaign discourse occurs on two topics: policy (issues) and character (image). Policy utterances are defined to include “governmental action (past, current or future) and problems amenable to governmental action” (Benoit, 2007), whereas character utterances include issues concerning “characteristics, traits, abilities or attributes of the candidates” (Benoit, 2007). Moderators should give an opportunity to candidates to express freely their point of view on issues so as to create preferability and should focus on past, current and future issues as part of topics of discussion.

The specific feature of political campaign debates is that candidates meet face-to-face in a formal debate exchange. Most of the times the debate stage or forum is the only campaign event where candidates appear side by side, allowing viewers of these frequently televised events to compare candidates and their messages. This encounter is typically structured by different rules of engagement and interaction with opponents, journalist or even a selected public and the main purposes of this form of campaign communication is to produce a more informed electorate and to convince the voters in matters related to politics.

According to the present rules (Commission on Presidential Debate, 2012), the American presidential debates last 90 minutes, the candidates stand behind separate podiums facing the audience and the moderator, or sit at a table with the moderator. A coin toss before the debate determines the order in which the candidates respond to the questions. After the first turn, the candidate alternate turns. Each candidate receives two minutes to reply to the moderator’s questions and they are not to be disrupted at any point of those two minutes. After which the opposing candidate can rebuttal in a one-minute turn, to which the moderator can at their discretion add an additional 30 seconds and a maximum of two minutes for the closing statement; the moderator has the discretionary right of discussion extensions of one minute if the statements or the discussion are exceptionally interesting. In the beginning of the broadcast, the audience members are told not to clap, laugh or make any kinds of sounds during the debate (Commission on presidential debate, 2012). According to Griner (2016) moderators in debates should give context to provocative questions to candidates, guide the conversation politely but firmly and should not let speakers evade direct questions.

A limited amount of empirical work has evaluated the performance of moderators in debates. However there are some related studies to my study which have tested on relationships between debate format and candidates' messages content finding that debate format matters in several important ways, especially in what concerns the type of message delivered by the participants. The most systematic analysis regarding possible format effects in general-election presidential debates is the research conducted by Carlin, Howard, Stanfield and Reynolds (1991) and Carlin, Morris and Smith (2001) (as cited by Barbaros, 2013). The authors examined the influence of debate format on candidate clash and the main findings of their analysis were that particular format features influence candidates to engage in such clashes, for instance, when candidates offer analysis of their issue positions versus opponents' positions, through direct attack of opponents' positions and direct comparison of issue positions. Carlin et al. (1991) through a comparative content analysis of the presidential debates in 1960, 1976, 1980, 1984 and 1988 found that candidate clash is limited when format design limits rebuttal times or when the same or similar questions are not posed to both candidates. According to a study conducted by Carlin et al (2001), the type of questions asked influences candidate clash. There are some discursive interventions such as comparative questions generate obviously more clash than do less comparative questions.

Scholars have invested considerable effort into understanding coverage of political campaigns issues. In a study, Benoit, Compton & Phillips (2013) investigated newspaper coverage of prime minister Elections in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Categorical content analysis was employed to describe the content of news stories. Benoit's Functional Theory (Benoit, 2007) was used. They used the codebook developed by Benoit, Stein, & Hansen, (2005). The first research question concerned topic of news coverage. In all three samples, horse race was the most frequent topic: Australia 53%, Canada 46%, and U.K. 39%.The second research question asked whether newspaper campaign coverage would focus more on policy than character. This was the case in Canadian (30% to 17%) and British (37% to 20%) newspapers; however, Australian news stories discussed policy more than character (21% to 13%). In Australian news articles, campaign strategy was the most common topic (59%); in Canadian and British newspapers, polls were the most common form of coverage (48% in each country). Overall, reports on campaign events were the second most common topic of horse race (24%).The

researcher concluded that in each of the three countries newspaper articles emphasized character more, and policy less, than the candidates did in the debates. My study will borrow from this study by developing a code sheets that shall be used to collect data as well as looking at issues or topics.

Similarly, Stein and Jeounghoon Oh (2007) investigated the newspaper coverage of two of South Korea's most prominent newspapers *Han-Kyoreh Shinbum* and *Dongailbo* during its 2007 presidential election campaign. Applying Benoit, Stein, and Hansen's (2005) typology of campaign news coverage, the study examined the Korean coverage based on newspaper type, candidate in focus, voice, tone, and topic. A content analysis of coverage from the week prior to the South Korean election revealed that the most common topic of campaign coverage was horse race (37%), followed closely by character (23%) and policy (20%). The most frequently addressed horse race topic was opinion poll (43%), followed by campaign strategy (29%). The predominant tone was neutral (53%). The study concluded that there were many unique features of the South Korean campaign that distinguish it from scholarship typically directed toward the United States and that these features are directly influenced by the Korean electoral process as well as the cultural customs guiding public perceptions of the campaign. This study borrowed from these findings to provide the theoretical basis for understanding how issues in the debate can be researched to arrive at the required information.

2.3 Scrutiny of Political Scandals in Presidential Debates

Events concerning the malfeasance of public officials are not mostly available to the public. Politicians may wish to communicate directly with voters about certain matters, such as popular policy decisions, but they clearly have no incentive to advertise their wrongdoings. As a result, the mass media have the potential to play a crucial role as watchdogs, informing citizens about any improper conduct by those in power. Of course, in practice the media might or might not serve as faithful watchdogs. In particular, according to the agenda-setting" theory of mass media, editors and journalists enjoy considerable freedom in deciding what is newsworthy and what is not, and these choices affect the perception of citizens about which issues are relevant and to what extent (Puglisi, 2008).

As pointed out by Lippmann (1922), events regarding public affairs would be “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind” for citizens if the media happen not to cover them. The debate moderator and organizers can offer a slanting coverage of scandals and leaning towards certain direction. This study investigated the extent of political scandals coverage to uncover each candidate’s scandals mentioned in the debate. This helped in determining the extent to which candidates were scrutinized on alleged scandals that have characterize their political career.

One issue debated in the political science and communications literatures is whether the mass media act as efficient watchdogs in their coverage of political scandals, or whether they instead inject an excessive dose of sensationalism, making the public skeptical and ultimately cynical and unresponsive (Bennett and Serrin , 2005). One of important aspect in my study is the explicit focus of analysis whether the coverage of scandals is partisan or balanced. Pertaining this question, the closest contribution to this study is the historical analysis by Gentzkow, Glaeser and Goldin (2006) on how United States newspapers covered the Credit Mobilier scandal in the early 1870s and the Teapot Dome scandal in the 1920s. The study establishes that the coverage of the Credit Mobilier scandal was more biased than the coverage of Teapot Dome. It also unearthed some evidence that the coverage of the Credit Mobilier scandal was less biased for newspapers with higher circulation (Francke, 1995).

Media outlets may have an incentive to slant coverage even if consumers are purely information-seeking (Puglisi, 2008). Gentzkow and Shapiro (2006) affirm that media outlets will tend to report news in a manner consistent with their readers' prior beliefs in order to build and maintain a reputation for high-quality journalism (Antweiler and Frank, 2005). In the same way debate moderator can slant coverage of scandals pertaining certain political contestant to have favorable coverage that will enable him to win the debate and finally general election.

Entman (2012) argues that partisan media cover scandals differently. Partisan media are motivated to diffuse information that favors their fellow partisans and denigrates opponents. An opposing politician’s private moral failing will be framed as a reflection on incompetence, political immorality, untrustworthiness, or “broken promises” (Sabato, 2000). For example, the impeachment of Bill Clinton reflected these reframing dimensions, as Republicans linked Clinton’s sexual dalliances and other transgressions to Nixon and the Watergate affair (Marion

2010). Partisan and/or new investigative journalists contribute to what Davis (2006) has termed the “gotcha politics” of the scandal machine which diverts attention away from more substantive debates. News media with different partisan leanings cover scandals in line with the partisan slant of their editorials (Puglisi and Snyder 2011) and readers (Thurman and Schifferes 2012).

American research points to concurrence on what is news in the mainstream press (Sabato 1991), print and broadcast news may differ in the visual images, personalization and sensationalism of their coverage. Television news tends to contain more visuals, personalization and sensationalism than newspapers (Graber 2010; Rosenstiel, Just, Belt, Pertilla, Dean, Chinni, 2007). Recent comparative research revealed that criteria of newsworthiness vary across nations based on differences in national interest, national journalistic culture and editorial policy (Archetti 2010). Constant stream of sensational stories makes the audience jaded and uninterested in news altogether (Patterson 2000). Plethora of scandal stories and the ways in which politics are covered makes citizens cynical and “weaken public regard” for political institutions (Schudson 2011). In light of the impact of muckraking journalism and historical icons of watchdog reporting, such as Watergate, some scholars see scandal news as a potentiators of political reform (Thompson 2000).

2.4 Perceptions of Viewers on Coverage of Issues in a Presidential Debate

According to Farah, (2011) issues that are discussed in presidential debates generally fall into four categories. These are fundamental issues, transient issues, systemic issues and narrow issues. Fundamental issues are confronted almost in every debate. Issues such as tax plans, leadership experience and health care falls under fundamental aspect. Transient issues are relevant only to a particular time periods. Examples of such issues include tobacco lawsuits and Watergate scandals. The systemic issues implicate the integrity of the democratic process itself rather than a particular policy, human rights and foreign policy. Narrow issues are targeted towards very specific voting population a point in case is farm subsidies. Presidential debate has increasingly consisted of fundamental issues and narrow issues at the expense of systemic issues focused on democratic process. Presidential debate has allowed only perfunctory discussion of vital questions that face the country. More important issues are addressed in presidential debate ignoring less significant one. The topics discussed in the debate are often the most controversial

issues of the time, and arguably elections have been nearly decided by these debates. The nationally televised presidential debates should address a broad range of national issues that most concern citizens—especially issues that the major party candidates typically ignore when left to their own devices (Farah, 2011).

Baumgartner and Jones (2006) produces a considerable body of work on arrangement of important topics in political science and public policy as macroeconomics, civil rights, healthcare, agriculture and fisheries, labour, education, environment, energy, immigration, transportation, crime and law, social affairs, housing & community development, banking and finance, defense, space/science and technology and communications, foreign trade, international affairs and foreign aid, public lands and water management. My study borrowed from this topic to investigate the issues covered in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya.

According to Benoit, Stein, and Hansen (2005) news coverage of campaigns can address six general topics: policy, character, horse race, voter reactions, scandal, and election information. In addition, they suggest that horse race coverage can be divided into eight sub-categories: strategy, campaign events, polls, predictions, endorsements, vote choice, fund raising, and campaign spending (Benoit, Stein, & Hansen, 2005). In Kenya, various issues have come to dominate political discourses. The issues of political parties, land grabbing, governance, corruption, violence, related issues of justice (the International Criminal Court (ICC) and, reconciliation, unemployment and high rate of inflation, and ethnicity among others have come to occupy national socio-political discourses (Nyabuga, 2009).

Presidential debate as a campaign discourse occurs on two topics: policy (issue) and character (image) (Benoit, 2003). However, issues constitute the major element of debates (Kaid, McKinnon, & Tedesco, 2000). According to Zhu, Milavsky, & Biswas, (1994) televised debates are meant to contribute positively to the democratic process. Debates make negative contributions to this process when they result in audiences learning more about the candidate's personalities than about their issue positions (Zhu, Milavsky, & Biswas, 1994).

According to Boydston, Glazier and Phillips (2013) debates give candidates an important opportunity to communicate their messages; however, these messages are dependent on the context of the campaign and the public's demands. If candidates prudently put emphasis on the

topics that are most advantageous and show that they also share the public's concerns, then they have a good chance to prime, inform and persuade the public. In most elections the topic that is the most seminal one is the economy, and thus, clarifying candidates are drawn to steer the agenda towards this topic. However, it is generally a good strategy for candidates to play to the crowd; because, despite of the economic conditions, the public might be concerned about other topics, which candidates can focus on.

It has in fact been found, by Capella and Taylor (1992), when they researched Senate campaigns from 1986 to 1990 that negative campaigns that focus on issues rather than image, have greater success rates. Therefore, discussion of policy is a greater factor for winning votes than discussion of opponents (Benoit 2003).

Fridkin, Kim, Patrick, Kenney, Sarah, and Gina (2008) affirms that the news media have the ability to set the agenda on issues –agenda-setting, to make certain issues more prominent than others, and to frame issues for voters, and therefore to influence voters' opinions on various issues. The topics that are discussed by the people who define the agenda are the topics of that agenda (Boydston et al. 2013). The candidates in debates are limited to the questions that are posed to them. They focus their agenda on topics that are the most advantageous to them while they avoid the ones that can favour their opponents (Vavreck, 2009). In presidential debate, the economy is the most salient topic and in these cases clarifying candidates have particular incentives to steer the agenda toward salient economic issues (Boydston, Glazier, Pietryka, 2012)

All topics have numerous dimensions of interpretation; therefore a candidate has the ability to decide the best way to present every topic that comes up in a debate. By putting emphasis on the topic that is most advantageous or the topic that concerns the public most. Even though the candidates have to talk about the topic of the question that is posed to them by the moderator or the audience, they have some freedom over how to talk about the topic (Boydston et al. 2013).

In a study Amponsah (2012) investigated the *Daily Graphic newspaper* coverage of presidential campaigns in Ghana from 1992-2004 using quantitative content analysis method. This study applied the functional theory of political campaign discourse to analyze newspaper content. With a codebook as a guide the researcher and a trained second coder reduced the news texts into themes for analysis as source, topic, tone, and subject. The results showed that advocacy (41%)

was overall the most frequent topic. Discussions of policies (30%) and candidates' character (18%). This study used newspaper platform of media, however my study used television to analyze the content of presidential debate in order to uncover the issues covered. The scholar used quantitative content analysis and my study used both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

In another study, Benoit, Hemmer, and Stein (2010) analyzed *New York Times'* coverage of presidential primary campaigns from 1952-2004 using functional theory (Beinot, 2007). Overall, horse race coverage was the most common topic (66%), followed by character (16%) and then policy positions (12%). Horse race coverage was comprised mainly of campaign strategy (45%), polls (11%), campaign events (9%), predictions (8%), endorsements (7%), and outcomes. News coverage stressed character more, and policy less, than candidate messages. My study also investigated topics covered in the presidential debate and which topics the moderator stressed although it did not use functional theory but agenda setting theory.

Furthermore, Benoit, Glantz, Goode, Rill and Phillip (2014) investigated news coverage of the 2008 presidential primary campaign. The study replicates the methods used in the study of *New York Times* coverage of presidential primary campaign news (Benoit et al. 2010). Categorical content analysis was employed; a codebook was developed with definitions and examples of all categories (Benoit et al. 2005). Coders unitized the texts into themes, which are the smallest units of discourse capable of expressing an idea. The sample included multiple outlets from three kinds of news outlets: national newspapers, local newspapers, and national television news. The most common horse race topics were campaign strategy, campaign events, public opinion polls, and predictions. Newspapers, both national and local, devoted more themes to character than policy. Surprisingly, in this sample of national television news policy was more common than character. Borrowing from this study, my study investigated coverage of issues in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya using content analysis method. Categorical content analysis and code sheets were also developed in my study.

Furthermore, Boydston, Glazier & Phillips (2013) investigated candidate agenda- control in 2008 presidential debates in America using quantitative content analysis. A full debate transcript was collected and coded from each of the three presidential debates between John McCain and Barack Obama. The question and response topics were coded based on the *Policy Agendas*

Topics Codebook (Baumgartner & Jones, 2006), containing 19 major policy topic codes. Agenda setting theory was applied. The study revealed that both Obama and McCain used tone to draw the line of conflict in their favour. Mr. Obama used a negative tone 41% of the time to McCain's 36%. Obama was generally more negative than McCain when discussing substance, while McCain was significantly more negative than Obama when talking about his opponent. McCain spoke about Obama with a negative tone of an average of 75% of the time across the three debates, with the percentage of negative statements increasing with every debate. By comparison, approximately 53% of Obama's statements about McCain were negative. Borrowing from this research my study also made a full transcript of the debate and coded them from each of the two debates. *Policy Agendas Topics Codebook* and agenda setting theory was also used in my study.

2.4 Conclusion

The chapter has reviewed the literature related to the study topic. By providing empirical evidence that show how the media cover election campaign and presidential debate, the reviewed literature has provided the study with an academic background upon which arguments can henceforth be built. It has also highlighted the need to research on how the presidential debate moderators performs in order to establish the nurture of moderation as well as perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in a debate. The literature has pointed out certain areas clearly and not others. For instance studies on topics of coverage are generalized by the use of the functional theory (Benoit, 2007) which does not talk about sub-categories of topics under the issues. There are no studies that investigate performance of moderators in presidential debate. Most of the studies on coverage are on newspaper platform. Yet my study is on televised presidential debate. An indication of scanty literature on television coverage of presidential debate as most of studies uses functional theory. Scandals of presidential candidates are not mentioned in presidential debates. This study therefore will fill the gaps on the scrutiny of the scandals of presidential candidates and performance of journalist moderators in a presidential debate by using agenda-setting theory (Mc Combs and Shaw, 1972).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the research design, study area, study population, sampling procedure and sample size, data collection methods, reliability and validity of instruments, data presentation and analysis, as well as research ethics.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted analytical research design to help it achieve its objectives. Analytical research describes and interprets the past or recent past from selected sources. The sources may be documents preserved in collections, and/or participants' oral testimonies (oral histories) (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001). Analytical design involves critical thinking skills and the evaluation of facts and information relative to the research being conducted. Within analytical research articles, data and other important facts that pertain to a project is compiled; after the information is collected and evaluated, the sources are used to prove a hypothesis or support an idea. Using critical thinking skills (a method of thinking that involves identifying a claim or assumption and deciding if it is true or false) a person is able to effectively pull out small details to form greater assumptions about the material. According to Kalpesh (2013) analytical approach concentrates on the process of the final result rather giving importance to the result. Analytical approach stands applicable in all stages of research, right from the articulation of thesis to the formulation of arguments on the issues mentioned in the research. Grouping methods of analytical approach are based on classification and grouping of the variables in an experiment based on their discriminate values and characteristics. Therefore this design enabled the researcher to analyze the content of the 2013 presidential debate and described the characteristics of moderation and coverage of issue in the presidential debate in Kenya.

3.3 Study Area

This study was carried out at Daystar University. This is one of the recognized universities in East Africa not only in Kenya. It has sent out majority of professional journalists in Kenya and top ranking journalists in Kenya have come from it (Okoth, 2014). The researcher selected this

institution because in the media circles, Daystar University School of Journalism is ranked as the best journalism training institution. The institution is a reputable institution and leader in the art of producing professionals in the communication industry (Anami, 2012). The researcher targeted students from this institution who are pursuing journalism and communication to assess their perceptions on 2013 Kenyan presidential debate through focus group discussion. Having acquired wide knowledge in journalism and communication would give easily preferred views on the programme.

This study was also based on content analysis of a television programme known as the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate that was run by the Citizen television. Citizen television was selected because it is a leading television in Kenya with the highest ratings in terms of viewership (Githua, 2015).

3.4 Study Population

The populations for this study were both practicing journalist and students studying journalism and communication at Daystar University. Practicing journalists who were appointed by the presidential debate steering committee to moderate the two 2013 presidential debates in Kenya forms partial population for this study. A total of four journalists were appointed to oversee moderation and they were drawn from different major media practitioners. These journalists performed the role of moderator which is the basis of this study.

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample size

Mixed sampling was used to determine the population for this study. Saturation sampling and simple random sampling were adopted. Saturation sampling was used to determine the population of debate moderators who are journalist. This method allows inclusion of all elements of a given population with the characteristics in which the researcher is interested (Rajamanickam, 2001). The study used a total of four journalists who moderated the presidential debate.

Simple random sampling was used to determine the population for study that was involved in focus group discussion. This sampling procedure provides equal opportunity of selection for each element of population. It is a procedure in which all the individuals in the defined

population have an equal and independent chance of being selected and sample yield research data that can be generalized to a larger population (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The researcher selected fourth year's students studying journalism and communication since they have covered a lot of units and therefore they are more knowledgeable than lower classes. Using a random number table, the researcher was able to draw participants. The researcher adhered to the principle laid down by Krueger (2002) that the number of participants in a focus group discussion is between five and ten. Therefore the researcher used ten participants.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were applied. Quantitative content analysis and focus group discussion were used to collect primary data. Scheduled focus group discussion was used to generate qualitative data from the programme viewers whereas a content analysis provided quantitative data. The videos of the 2013 televised presidential debate programme that took place on 11th Feb and 25th Feb 2013 were used. The original debate videos were purchased from the Royal media service library for the purpose of this study. The original videos that contain all broadcast content were suitable for this study since they give what actually transpired in the debates. Content analysis was adopted as it is (Holsti, 1968 as cited in Macnamara, 2005) a technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages. This technique was deemed useful for analyzing the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate since the researcher was interested in the discovering the attributes or nature of the debate by measuring variables so as to conduct assessment of performance of moderators in 2013 presidential debates and scrutiny of political scandals. The study borrowed partially from code sheet system used by Fridkin, Kenney, Gershon, and Woodall (2008). Coding sheets that are in line with the objectives of the study was designed and used to conduct content analysis so as to gather quantitative data. Coding sheet was employed to reduce content into units and categories that are consistent with the objectives of the research. Categories and thematic functions were designed to answer research questions associated with this particular study and were classified as attention on issues, attention on candidates and scandals. The categories and tallying sheets were used to group the coded information.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also employed to collect qualitative data since its strength relies on the researcher's focus as the ability to produce concentrated amounts of data on precisely the topic of interest. This strength is clear in comparison to participant observation because focus groups not only give access to reports on a wide range of topics that may not be observable but also ensure that the data will be directly targeted to the researcher's interests. This strength is one source of focus groups' reputation for being quick and easy. The other source of this reputation is their relative efficiency in comparison to individual interviews, at least in terms of gathering equivalent amounts of data (Morgan, 1997). Therefore the researcher used focus group purposefully to explore the responses of the participants to gather more and deeper information by probing deeply the participants to get more in-depth information on perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate. The principles of focus group set out by Krueger (2002) were used whereby a group shall be composing 5-10 participants and should be relatively homogeneous. The study used focus group discussion drawing participants from Daystar University who are studying communication and journalism. Students from Daystar University were selected because Daystar University School of Journalism has been known to be the best journalism training institution (Anami, 2012).

3.7 Data Presentation and Analysis

The study used content analysis to analyze the collected data as proposed by McQuail (2010:362). This is because it helps in describing how the moderator treated issues and candidates in 2013 Kenyan presidential debate by systematically and objectively identifying specified characters within the texts, with the aim of making conclusion on performance of moderators and coverage of issues. Emerging categories or themes were checked. It was done by the help of code sheets and tally sheets. Quantitative data was keyed into the computer for further analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented in the form of descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and the tables were used to summarize the data. Quantitative data were compared to ascertain the variation in treatment given to issues covered and political candidates to determine the performance of the moderators.

The study has also employed the use of qualitative content analysis approach in data analysis. This technique involves the search for patterns in the data, as well as for ideas that which help to

interpret meaningful themes. Qualitative data collected using FGD were analyzed using a qualitative data analysis technique and presented in narrative form and the findings in a text discussion.

3.8 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

In order to establish the reliability of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted using the 2012 American presidential debates between Mr. Barack Obama and Mr. Mitt Romney with the instruments that have the same characteristics as the one targeted in the study. Pilot study was conducted to test whether the aims of the study could be achieved. The videos of presidential debate were downloaded from the You Tube. Data was collected using content analysis approach where code sheets and tally sheets were employed and areas which were not clear were fine tuned to ensure that research objectives were appropriately addressed. The researcher also organized and moderated focus group discussion where participants were asked questions that were intended for this study and the question that were deemed ambiguous for the study were rectified and verified to capture all that was needed.

Validity of the instruments was achieved through thorough understanding of research objectives and questions. The questions in the FGD schedule and themes and categories in the code sheets were counter checked against the objectives to ensure they respond to the issues under investigation and are clearly defined. This enabled well-coordinated questions, categories and themes that are mutually exclusive, accurately and exhaustively measures the ideas and items that are sought to be measured in line with research objectives in order to achieve the desired outcome.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was acquired from the ministry of education, science and technology. Maseno university ethics and guideline for research were adhered to. The researcher also adhered to copyright law by correctly acknowledging and citing sources of information used in the study in the way they appear. The data was objectively and honestly analyzed and presented so that realization of the desired information could be achieved. The researcher was not aligning to any presidential candidate or party preference. The researcher confirmed to the

participants that the study was for academic purpose only and nothing else whatsoever. Anonymity of the respondents in the study was guaranteed

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data used in this study, the analysis of data and discussion of findings. The data presented is categorized according to objectives which are: performance of the moderators in 2013 Kenyan presidential debate, scrutiny of political scandals and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues. Explanations on features of the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate are also made.

4.2 Performance of moderators in 2013 Kenyan Presidential Debate.

In order to assess the performance of moderators in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya, the researcher investigated the variation in amount of coverage of issues, attention on candidates and issues, balancing of questions, follow-up questions for clarification and when candidate meandered, rebuttals, fact-checking, interjections and when the candidate was added more time by the moderator as captured in the following sections.

4.2.1 The Amount of Coverage Devoted to Each Issue in 2013 Kenyan presidential Debate

The distribution of coverage of issue displayed in table 1 reveals that land received the largest proportion of coverage 18.9 % followed by corruption 8.9 % and ethnicity 8.7 % respectively. The 2007 general election was 8.2 %, education 8.1 %, international criminal court 7.2 %, health care 7.1 %, economy 6.7 %, domestic and regional security 5.5 %, party politics 3.8 %, peaceful elections in 2013 3.0 %. The least covered issue was national security with the smallest proportion of space 1.7 %. It is clear from these data that issues were not allotted the same amount of space. Some issues were given more prominence than others. This can be linked to agenda setting in connection with editorial policies that offer guidance on what should be considered most important issue and given more space. Hence there was unbalanced allocation of space on issues covered. These results supports Fridkin et al (2008)'s suggestion that the news media have the ability to set the agenda on issues (agenda-setting), to make certain issues more prominent than others.

Table 1: Distribution of length in seconds and percentage of the issues covered

Issues	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tribalism/Ethnicity	1863	8.7	8.7	8.7
International Criminal court	1538	7.2	7.2	15.9
Party Politics	817	3.8	3.8	19.7
National Security	355	1.7	1.7	21.4
Domestic & regional security	1170	5.5	5.5	26.9
Peaceful elections in 2013	647	3.0	3.0	29.9
Education	1731	8.1	8.1	38.0
Health care	1509	7.1	7.1	45.1
Economy	1433	6.7	6.7	51.8
corruption	1904	8.9	8.9	60.7
The 2007 elections	1753	8.2	8.2	68.9
Land	4056	18.9	18.9	87.8
Debate Formalities & Pleasantries	2617	12.2	12.2	100.0
Total Duration in Seconds / %	21393	100.0	100.0	

The current study results reveal that land was the major covered issue followed by corruption. These findings are in contrast with Boydston, Glazier, Pietrykas (2012) who claims that economy is the most salient topic in a presidential debate. Economy did not seem to be the single most important issue in the race for presidency in Kenya during the 2013 general election as it was not allocated substantial portion of coverage. The analysis suggests that due to priming of land issue viewers got much informed about it than other issues covered in the debate.

The 2013 televised presidential debates in Kenya addressed national issues that concern citizens. The debate provided issue oriented voter's information with which to make an informed choice. Farah (2011) affirms that topics discussed in the debate are often the most controversial issues of

the time. Therefore the above covered issues were contentious issues during the 2013 general election campaigns in Kenya.

Most of the issues covered by the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya are similar to those found in policy agenda topic codebook designed by Baumgartner and Jones (2006). However there are some issues which were not considered and my study has revealed them. These issues are ethnicity, corruption, party politics and peaceful elections. This is because situation or controversial issues in Kenya may not be exactly the same as those in America and Europe. Therefore this implies that media coverage of an event may vary between countries, depending on the policies of each country.

4.2.2 Variation in the attention accorded to each presidential candidate on issues

Attention on issues covered had to be captured so as to find out what amount of attention on each issue was given to each political competitor by the moderator. Table 2 reveals that presidential candidates were accorded varied attention in all issues apart from economy which the candidates were allocated either the same or slightly different. Overall, Odinga received much attention on issues compared to other candidates with 17.5%, followed narrowly by Uhuru with 16.8%. Martha Karua was the third highest candidate with 12.5% of total attention. She was followed by Dida who received 11.6%, Kenneth 10.9 %, Musalia 10.8 % and Muite 10.7 % respectively. Kiyiapi received the least attention from the debate moderators (9%). In comparison, this analysis reveals that presidential candidates were not accorded equal attention on issues by the moderators; some political candidates were given more attention than others. For instance Martha Karua, Musalia, Kenneth, Muite, Dida and Kiyiapi were accorded almost the same amount of attention but significantly lower compared to other candidates; Raila and Uhuru. Kiyiapi received the least attention on issues covered. This analysis proposes that the main focus of presidential debate was on Raila and Uhuru. Other candidates were less potential that is why the debate moderator gave them less attention compared to Raila and Uhuru. Perhaps it could be due to the political might or supremacy they had shown before the presidential debate in the opinion polls. In the view of the results, in a debate with many political contestants, the moderator accords more attention to potential political candidates and downplay less potential candidates.

Table 2: Distribution of frequency and percentage of attention accorded to each candidate on each issue.

Candidate	Raila		Uhuru		Musalia		Karua		Kenneth		Kiyiapi		Dida		Muite		Total Freq
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq
Ethnicity	370	22.8	335	20.6	141	8.7	203	12.5	138	8.5	143	8.9	129	7.9	167	10.3	1626
International Criminal court	247	17.2	384	26.8	128	8.9	237	16.6	103	7.2	89	6.2	58	4.1	186	13	1432
Party politics	112	16.7	67	10	62	9.2	92	13.8	79	11.8	67	10	146	21.8	46	6.9	671
National Security	46	15.5	43	14.5	35	11.8	51	17.2	23	7.7	22	7.4	12	4	65	21.9	297
Domestic & Regional Security	125	12.9	129	13.4	121	12.5	143	14.8	146	15.1	110	11.4	133	13.8	59	6.1	966
Peaceful Election in 2013	116	19.1	72	11.9	66	10.9	57	9.4	76	12.5	62	10.2	108	17.8	49	8	606
Education	246	18.2	170	12.6	123	9.1	193	14.3	173	12.9	143	10.6	175	13	123	9.1	1346
Health Care	190	15.7	195	16	144	11.9	147	12.1	109	9	102	8.4	208	17.1	118	9.7	1213
Economy	158	13.3	158	13.3	150	12.6	134	11.3	134	11.3	153	12.9	146	12.3	153	12.9	1186
Corruption	358	21	285	16.8	253	14.9	183	10.8	119	7	138	8.1	148	8.7	216	12.7	1700
2007 general Election	227	15.4	127	8.6	158	10.7	287	19.4	179	12.1	119	8	204	13.8	175	11.9	1476
Land	585	17.4	699	20.8	340	10.1	262	7.8	458	13.6	285	8.5	379	11.3	349	10.4	3357
Total length in seconds on issues	2780		2664		1721		1989		1737		1433		1846		1706		15876
Overall percentage	17.5		16.8		10.8		12.5		10.9		9.0		11.6		10.7		99.8

The tendency of moderator focusing on more potential candidates and ignoring less prospective ones implies that more potential candidates have more time to inform the voters about their policies and what they meant and convince them hence influencing the voting intentions in an election. While the less potential candidates have less time to present their policies and may not have a great positive influence on voting intentions. Substantial portion of attention results into greater impacts and vice versa. It can also be suggested that ranking of presidential candidates' performance in the debate basing on their policies was attributed to attention received from the moderator that enable them to explain in details their policies.

This study supports Barbaros (2013) findings that in a presidential debate the small party world-views and ideologies are ignored even if they might be interesting for certain segments of the electorate. For instance in 2013 Kenyan presidential debate moderators concentrated on top two front-runners noticeably ignoring the less potential candidates. Front-runners received commensurately more time than the other competitors.

4.2.3 Balancing of Questions by Moderators on Issues

Table 3 shows that the moderators asked candidates the same questions on 66.7 % of issues discussed and in 25 % of issues which all questions were not the same, but most of questions from them were the same. However 8.3 % of topics discussed candidates were asked different questions and this was on corruption issue which each candidate had different alleged scandals that caused the differences in questioning depending with the nature of it. This finding reveals that the moderator subjected candidates significantly on the same questions to stimulate variance among the candidates on their policy on various issues thereby giving voters an opportunity to compare candidate's views on the same issues. The moderators' choice of questions was significantly balanced to enable cross-examination of candidates on the same issues.

Table 3: Balancing of Questions by Moderators on Issues

Similar Questions	Most Questions similar	Different Questions
Economy	International criminal case	Corruption
Health	2007 General election	
Education	Land	
Party Politics		
Party Politics		
Domestic and Regional Security		
Ethnicity		
Peaceful General Election in 2013		
Total no. of issues	08	03
Percentage %	66.7	25
		8.3

4.2.4 Rebuttals and when Candidate was Pressed to give Required Response when he Meandered

The table 4 reveals that most of rebuttals occurred on corruption (41.7%) since most of candidates attacked each other on the alleged scandals to portray their competitors in a negative limelight so as to shift the votes on their side.

For example when Raila says that he pushed members of parliament to support local tribunal on matters pertaining international criminal case, Karua challenges him and says:

“I just wanted to disapprove that the two principals actually pushed for the local tribunal. I was the minister for justice then the entire cabinet passed the bill but when I reached the parliament, they left me with the baby. The two principals in spite of my plea to them,

failed to come to persuade the members. ... so put the record straight, the two principals did not stand in parliament and persuade their troops to vote for local tribunal.”

Table 4: Distribution of Frequencies of Rebuttals and when Candidate was Pressed to give Required Response when he Meandered

Rebuttals			Meander	
Issue	Freq.	percentage	Freq.	percentage
Land	08	16.7	00	00
Corruption	20	41.7	01	8.3
Health	01	2.1	00	00
Education	04	8.3	00	00
Party Politics	00	00	01	8.3
International criminal case	11	22.9	02	16.7
Domestic and Regional Security	00	00	04	33.3
Ethnicity	00	00	04	33.3
2007 General Election	03	6.3	00	00
National Security	01	2.1	00	00
Total	48	100	12	99.9

However those candidates portrayed unfavorably, strived to clear up the allegations leveled against them. Benoit & Hartcock 1999; Benoit et al.2003; Benoit 2007 affirms that Candidates may attack their opponents by addressing an opponent’s undesirable character or policy position. A successful attack increases the attacker’s net favorability by reducing the desirability of an opponent. If a candidate decides to respond to attacks, he or she will mount a defense. It attempts to restore or prevent additional damage to a candidate’s perceived preferability. This explains

why political candidate in 2013 presidential debate reacted to statements against their opponents. The finding reveals that the moderator gave candidates an opportunity to engage each other. Meandering of candidates' response on issues occurred mostly on domestic and regional security and ethnicity. Candidates who did not give directly required response and wasted allocated time giving undesired reactions were pressed by the moderators to deliver what is expected.

4.2.5 Distribution of Follow-up Questions and Fact-Checking Questions

As shown on table 5 most of clarification occurred on domestic and regional security (22.7%) followed by land and corruption of which both scored 13.6 %. It is evidenced that the moderator played the role of clarifying certain issues offered by the candidates so that voters could understand the candidate easily. However it was too minimal. On issues which the candidates gave incorrect information the moderator fact-checked them by asking a clarification questions from the candidate to establish the truth rather than leaving it uncorrected. For instance in the argument Raila says that James Orengo was a presidential candidate in 1992 general election but is corrected by the moderator by saying that was in 2002 general election and not 1992 general election. The moderator therefore played the role of holding candidates accountable to their remarks and highlighting the truth.

Table 5: Distribution of Follow-up Questions and Fact-checking Questions

Clarification			Fact-checking	
Issue	Freq.	percentage	Freq.	percentage
Land	06	13.6	01	50
Corruption	06	13.6	01	50
Health	05	11.5	00	00
Education	05	11.5	00	00
Party Politics	04	9.0	00	00
International criminal case	04	9.0	00	00
Domestic and Regional Security	10	22.7	00	00
Ethnicity	03	6.8	00	00
Economy	01	2.3	00	00
Total	44	100	02	100

4.2.6 Moderators' Interjection when Time is over and when Candidates were added

Time at their Discretion

Table 6 shows that candidates were interjected mainly on the issue of economy (23.5%) followed by corruption and domestic and regional security which scored the same percentage (14.7%). This finding indicate that the moderator attempt to give candidates strictly two minutes to present their policies on issues by stopping those who would have extended. However this is too minimal, most of time the moderator made no attempt to stop the candidates when their allocated time was over instead they left them to proceed without even telling them that they had been added more time.

Table 6: Distribution of Moderators' Interjection when time is over and when Candidates were added time at their Discretion

Interjection	Added more			
	time at		discretion	
Issue	Freq.	percentage	Freq.	percentage
Land	03	8.8	00	00
Corruption	05	14.7	01	10
Health	04	11.8	01	10
Education	03	8.8	01	10
Party Politics	02	5.9	02	20
International criminal case	03	8.8	01	10
Domestic and Regional Security	05	14.7	00	00
Ethnicity	00	00	03	30
Economy	08	23.5	01	10
2007 General Election	01	2.9	00	00
Total	34	99.9	10	100

For example on ethnicity Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta is left to continue talking when his time is over. Sometime the moderator could stop them by thanking or telling them their duration was over but candidates would forcefully continue discussing their policies. For instance Mr. Peter Kenneth is interjected by the moderator on domestic and regional security but he continues talking.

4.3 Political Scandals Covered With Regard to Each Presidential Aspirant and Amount of Coverage Devoted to each in 2013 Kenyan Presidential Debate.

The presidential candidate's scandals were mentioned mainly on Corruption, followed by land and international criminal issues. The Jubilee presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta was apportioned 59.81 % of total coverage devoted to scandals. The international criminal case was allocated 32.32 % of the space, land grabbing 26.30 % and clerical error in the national budget 1.20 %. This shows that moderators devoted a significant proportion of their coverage of scandals to Uhuru. This means that scandals allegedly associated with Uhuru were very critical at that time and due to the public demand the moderator had to a portion them substantial coverage so that the public get informed. The second most covered candidate on scandals is Raila Odinga with 10.47 % proportion of the total scandals covered by the television and the highest number of mentioned scandals adding up to four, though some of the issues were allotted a small space. The scandals he was allegedly associated with are acquisition of molasses plant in Kisumu taking 4.57 % of the space, 'kazi kwa vijana' programme 3.13%, maize scandal 0.82 % and national hospital insurance funds 1.96%. Scandals allegedly associated with Raila seemed trivial and not in the public domain as they were not allocated substantial proportion of coverage compared to Uhuru.

Martha Karua was the third presidential candidate with the highest amount of coverage on scandals taking 9.23% of the total coverage of scandals. Her scandals were allegedly on negligence in tackling corruption and rule of law (4.10 %) and going against the agreement that was to allow the opposition to cooperate with the government to appoint electoral commission in 2007 when she was a minister for justice and constitutional affairs (5.13%).

Musalia Mudavadi's scrutiny on allegedly scandals took 6.92 % of the total coverage on scandals covered. Golden berg scandal had 4.64 %, cemetery land scandal 1.37 % and Anglo- leasing contract scandal 0.90%.

Paul Muite was questioned on Goldenberg scandal which occupied 6.16% of the total coverage on scandals. Paul Muite was questioned over the allegations that he had received twenty millions shillings to cover up the Goldenberg case facing businessman Kamlesh Pattni in 1992 when he was the counsel of Law society of Kenya.

Table 7: Political Scandals Covered With Regard to Each Presidential Aspirant and Amount of Coverage

candidate	Issue	Political scandal	Length of coverage in seconds	Percentage (%) per scandal	Overall Percent age (%)
Uhuru Kenyatta	International criminal court	Suspected of crime against humanity in International criminal court	1537	32.32	59.81
	Land	Land grabbing	1251	26.30	
	Corruption	Typing error or clerical error in the national budget	57	1.20	
Raila Odinga	Corruption	Acquisition of molasses plant in Kisumu	217	4.56	10.47
		'Kazi kwa vijana' programme	149	3.13	
		Maize scandal	39	0.82	
		National hospital insurance funds scandal	93	1.96	
Musalia Mudavadi	Corruption	Golden berg scandal	221	4.64	6.92
		Cemetery land scandal	65	1.37	
		Anglo leasing contract scandal	43	0.90	
Martha Karua	Corruption	Negligence in tackling corruption and rule of law as justice and constitutional affair minister	195	4.10	9.23
		Went against the agreement that was to allow the opposition to cooperate with the government to appoint electoral commission in 2007 when she was a minister for justice and constitutional affairs.	244	5.13	
Paul Muite	Corruption	Received a bribe of kshs 20 million to cover up the Goldenberg scandal case that was facing Kamlesh Pattini in 1992 when he was the counsel of Law society of Kenya.	293	6.16	6.16
Peter Kenneth	Corruption	Wealth acquisition	69	1.45	2.04
		Acquisition of a house from Kenya reinsurance cooperation limited	28	0.59	
James Ole Kiyapi	Corruption	Suspected to have improperly terminated the contract of the supplier and court order to be paid kshs 700 millions when he was the permanent secretary for the ministry of education	81	1.70	1.70
Mohammed Dida	Corruption	Own employment agency that sent workers in Middle East and yet Kenyans who work there are subjected to psychological and physical torture	174	3.66	3.66
Total length of coverage of scandals			4756	99.99	99.99

Peter Kenneth was grilled on allegedly wealth acquisition and acquisition of a house from Kenya reinsurance cooperation limited which was shortly covered with a percentage of 2.04%. James Ole Kiyiapi was questioned for being suspected of allegedly having improperly terminated the contract of the supplier when he was the permanent secretary for the ministry of education. Kiyiapi was the least covered candidate on scandals with allotment of 1.70% amount of coverage devoted to scandals. Mohammed Dida was questioned on his employment agency that sent workers to Middle and this was a portioned 3.66 % of total coverage on scandals.

The analysis reveals a significant difference in coverage of the scandals. It is surprising that Uhuru's proportion on scandal coverage (59.81%) is more than half of the total coverage devoted to the scandals. In comparison the rest of candidates occupied (40.19 %); a significant difference. Puglisi (2008) contend that in particular, according to the 'agenda-setting' theory of mass media, editors and journalists enjoy considerable freedom in deciding what is newsworthy and what is not, and these choices affect the perception of citizens about which issues are relevant and to what extent (Puglisi, 2008). This explains why Uhuru was the most covered candidate on scandals.

Discrepancies in scandal coverage clearly indicate that the same level of treatment on scandals was not applied to all candidates. Therefore television coverage was imbalanced. This indicates that moderators do not give balance coverage to scandals of presidential candidates in a televised presidential debate but they give more coverage to scandals they consider to be very important and those that associate with potential candidate. However, unbalanced coverage of scandals of the political candidates makes them to escape public scrutiny on scandals hence diminishing significantly the probative and informative value of debate. Moreover viewers get less informed about less covered scandals.

4.4 Perceptions of Viewers on Coverage of Issues in 2013 Presidential Debate in Kenya.

It was important to understand how viewers perceived the issues covered in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. To assess the perceptions of viewers, participants of the focus group discussion were asked questions and they gave responses captured in the later sections.

4.4.1 Importance of Topics Discussed in the Presidential Debate.

Majority of participants perceived the topics discussed in the programme to be very important to the Kenyans since they highlighted on what is happening to the people. For instance one participant is said:

For sure the topics discussed in this programme are very instrumental and contemporary to Kenyan people. In fact they are touching on challenges that face Kenyans in their daily lives for example poor health care services, corruption and economy. We need leaders who will address high cost of living and high level of inflation which the government has failed to contain. Insecurity is just a problem too.

Very few participants were of contrary opinion that not everything covered was the most important that there are other issues that would have been covered instead of them for instance one respondent said:

Personally I do feel that there are other serious issues that would have been raised instead of some in the debate for example complains about Migingo Island are not a big issue. Insecurity and terrorism posed by Alshabab is worrying. Many lives have been lost following the attacks from terrorist. Candidates would have been questioned on how they will deal with his menaces.

These findings indicate that television covered the issues that concerns the citizens and are in the public domain. This is in support of Mc Comb and Shaw (1972) that media simply reflects public concerns that already exist.

4.4.2 Other Topics Wished by Viewers to be covered in the Presidential debate

Despite moderators' efforts to cover the topics they considered important, the Participants felt that there were still other areas which they would have discussed in the presidential debate. They cited them to be unemployment, poverty eradication, agriculture, environment, labour, industrialization, energy, transport and crime and law. For example one of the responded said:

Kenyan universities are churning out graduates every year. There are no jobs for these graduates. There is also this problem of poverty which is facing millions of Kenyans. So many people are languishing in poverty. I would like to hear debate talking about them.

Another one said:

Kenya is one of the third world countries. It is not industrialized. Economic growth is still low and yet its vision is to be industrialized by 2030. Candidates would have been put to task to explain how they will achieve it.

The finding shows that the moderators focused on a few key issues facing Kenyans. There are other issues of great concerns to Kenyans which were ignored. Perhaps it could be due to inadequate time. But issue knowledge is arguably what voters need most (Benoit, Compton & Phillips, 2013). Farnsworth and Lichter (2003) affirm that “Polls have repeatedly shown that voters have a very good idea which candidate is likely to win the presidency, but voters are less able to demonstrate their knowledge of issue stands.

4.4.3 Duration Accorded to Each Topic in the Presidential Debate

Participants agreed that there was variation in amount of time accorded to each issue in the debate. Some of the topics were given more time than others. However the duration allotted to each issue was not sufficient enough for candidates to discuss issues in detail. One participants account illustrates the point:

I do agree with her that duration was too short to discuss everything in details. Some of the candidates were interjected by the moderators to stop talking because their time was over when they would wish to continue informing the public their policies in details.

The analysis reveals that the candidates were not given adequate opportunities to discuss their views on the more pressing issues so as to convince the voters thereby shifting votes to their side. It can also be said that due to limited time there was no enough interrogation of the candidates on various issues. According to Boydston, Glazier and Phillips (2013) debates give candidates an

important opportunity to communicate their messages; however, these messages are dependent on the context of the campaign and the public's demands. If candidates prudently put emphasis on the topics that are most advantageous and show that they also share the public's concerns, then they have a good chance to prime, inform and persuade the public. Contrary, when candidates are not given that sufficient opportunity to communicate their messages to the voters, then they will not inform and persuaded the voters adequately.

4.4.4 Improvements on Coverage of Issues in the Presidential Debate

It was felt by the participants that the number of presidential candidates participating in the televised presidential debate should be limited to the top two or three basing on the opinion polls to make it more practical and productive. The fewer candidates there would be more time for each to answer the questions in the greater detail and explain their stand on issues elaborative. The moderators and viewers would also have time to ask follower up questions for clarification. One member of a discussion group illustrates that:

My suggestion is to have a restriction of participants in the presidential debate to be two or three basing on the opinion polls so as to have a meaningful discussion instead of having all candidates getting involved whereby others have no possibility of winning an election at all. It is just wastage of time to have such candidates on the stage.

These findings reveal that viewer's meaningful evaluation of political candidates might have been compromise due to a large number of participants in the debate. According to Holbrook (1996), the most important function of the debates is the supply of information, which is vast and on many different dimensions of the candidates, which may eventually prove to be useful to voters. But if candidates don't get enough time to explain their policies voters will not learn much from the debate.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of findings, conclusion and recommendation arising from the findings and areas suggested for further research. The chapter presents the summary of the analysis of evaluation of moderators' performance and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The main aim of this study was to evaluate performance of moderators and perceptions on coverage of issues in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. The objectives of the study were: to assess the performance of moderators in 2013 presidential debate, to ascertain the extent to which political scandals were covered by the moderators with regard to each presidential aspirant in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya and to analyze the perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues by the moderators in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya.

5.2.1 Major Findings of the Study

Issues were not allotted the same amount of space. Some issues were given more prominence than others. This can be linked to agenda setting in connection with editorial policies that offer guidance on what should be considered most important issue and given more space.

The predominant covered issue was land followed by corruption and ethnicity respectively. These findings are in contrast with Boydston, Glazier, Pietrykas (2012) who claims that economy is the most salient topic in a presidential debate. Economy did not seem to be the single most important issue in the race for presidency in Kenya during the 2013 general election as it was not allocated substantial portion of coverage. The analysis suggested that due to priming of land issue viewers got much informed about it than other issues covered in the debate. The debate was an educative tool as it played a role of providing knowledge to the voters. The 2013 televised presidential debates in Kenya addressed a range of national issues that concern citizens. The debate provided issue oriented voter's information with which to make an informed choice.

Presidential candidates received varied attention from the debate moderator in all issues apart from economy which the candidates were allocated either the same or slightly different. Raila received much attention on issues compared to other candidates followed narrowly by Uhuru. Karua, Musalia, Kenneth, Muite, Dida and Kiyiapi received almost the same amount of attention but significantly lower compared to Raila and Uhuru. Kiyiapi received the least attention compared to the rest of the candidates. The analysis revealed that presidential candidates received disproportionate attention on issues as some were given more space than others. The main focus of presidential debate was on Raila and Uhuru (Front-runners) who received commensurately more attention than the other competitors.

The moderator subjected candidates significantly on the same questions to stimulate variance among the candidates on their policy on various issues thereby giving voters an opportunity to compare candidate's views on the same issues. The moderators' choice of questions was balanced to enable cross-examination of candidates on the same issues. The political candidates were given an opportunity to rebuttal thus engaging each other. Meandering of candidates' response on issues occurred mostly on domestic and regional security and ethnicity and candidates who meandered were pressed by the moderators to deliver what is expected so that they don't waste time.

It is evidenced that the moderator played the role of clarifying certain issues offered by the candidates so that voters could understand the candidate easily. However it was too minimal. On issues which the candidates gave incorrect information the moderator fact-checked them by asking a clarification questions from the candidate to establish the truth rather than leaving it uncorrected. The moderator therefore played the role of holding candidates accountable to their remarks and highlighting the truth.

The moderator attempted to give candidates strictly two minutes to present their policies on issues by interjecting those who wanted to extend. However it was too minimal, most of the time the moderator made no attempt to stop the candidates when their allocated time was over instead they left them to proceed without even telling them that they had been added more time.

Sometime the moderator would stop them by thanking or telling them their duration was over but some candidates would forcefully continue discussing their policies.

The study revealed that, the Jubilee presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta was the most covered candidate on alleged scandals. The second most covered candidate on alleged scandals was Raila Odinga with the highest number of the scandals mentioned. Martha Karua was the third presidential candidate with the highest amount of coverage on alleged scandals. Musalia's and Muite's scandals were fairly covered while Kenneth, Kiyiapi and Dida were shortly covered on alleged scandals. The study revealed a significant difference in coverage of the alleged scandals. Discrepancies in alleged scandal coverage clearly indicate that the same level of treatment on scandals was not applied to all candidates as moderators don't give balance coverage to scandals of presidential candidates in a televised presidential debate. They only give more coverage to scandals they consider to be very critical at that time and those that are associated with more potential candidates. However, unbalanced coverage of scandals of the political candidates makes them to escape public scrutiny on scandals hence diminishing significantly the probative and informative values of debate as viewers get less informed about less covered scandals.

The moderators covered issues that concern citizens and were in the public domain. However, there are other areas that would have been discussed in the presidential debate and these are unemployment, poverty eradication, agriculture, environment, industrialization, energy, transport and crime and law. The finding shows that the moderators focused on a few key issues facing Kenyans as there are other issues of great concerns to Kenyans which were ignored. However the duration allotted to each issue was not sufficient enough for candidates to discuss issues in details. Political candidates were not given adequate opportunities to discuss their views on the more pressing issues so as to convince the voters thereby shifting votes to their side. Due to limited time there was no sufficient interrogation of the candidates on various issues. Viewer's meaningful evaluation of political candidates might have been compromise due to large number of participants in the presidential debate that limited more probing questions on issues.

5.3 Conclusion

The study was set to evaluate performance of moderator and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues which were covered in the 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. In the view of the above summary, the study gives some insight into how a presidential debate was moderated and perceived by viewers in Kenya. It is evident that the moderator treated political candidates and issues differently due to emphasis on particular aspects. Largest proportion of coverage of issues was dedicated to land followed by corruption and ethnicity respectively. Presidential candidates received varied attention in all issues covered apart from economy which the candidates received either the same or slightly different. Raila received much attention on issues followed narrowly by Uhuru. Karua, Musalia, Kenneth, Muite, Dida and Kiyiapi received almost the same amount of attention but significantly lower compared to Raila and Uhuru as the main focus of presidential debate was on the two (Raila and Uhuru).

The moderator subjected candidates significantly on the same questions to stimulate variance among the candidates on their policy on various issues thereby giving voters an opportunity to compare candidate's views on the same issues. The political candidates were given an opportunity to rebuttal thus engaging each other. Candidates who meandered were pressed by the moderators to deliver what is expected so that they don't waste time.

The moderators played the role of holding candidates accountable to their remarks and highlighting the truth. It is evidenced that the moderators played the role of clarifying uncertain issues offered by the candidates so that voters could understand the candidate easily. However it was too minimal. On issues which the candidates gave incorrect information the moderator fact-checked them by asking a clarification questions from the candidate to establish the truth rather than leaving it uncorrected.

In managing the debate, the moderators attempted to give candidates strictly two minutes to present their policies on issues before rebuttals by interjecting those who wanted to extend. However it was too minimal, most of the time the moderator made no attempt to stop the candidates when their allocated time was over instead they left them to proceed without even telling them that they had been added more time. Sometimes the moderators would stop them by

thanking or telling them their duration was over but some candidates would forcefully continue discussing their policies.

The same level of scrutiny of alleged scandals was not applied to all candidates. Variation in coverage of alleged scandals was revealed. Uhuru was the most covered candidate on alleged scandals. Raila had the highest number of alleged scandals mentioned. Other candidates were allotted either little or fair coverage of scandals. These indicate that moderators don't give balance coverage to scandals of presidential candidates in a televised presidential debate; they only give more coverage to scandals they consider to be very critical at the moment and those that are associated with more potential candidates. Imbalance coverage of scandals of the political candidates makes them escape public scrutiny hence diminishing significantly the probative and informative value of debate.

The moderators covered issues that concern citizens and were in the public domain. However, there are other areas that would have been discussed in the presidential debate. The moderators focused on a few key issues facing Kenyans as there are other issues of great concerns to Kenyans which were ignored and the duration allotted to each issue was not sufficient enough for candidates to discuss issues in details. There was no sufficient interrogation of the candidates on various issues. Viewer's meaningful evaluation of political candidates might have been compromise due to large number of participants in the presidential debate that limited more probing questions on issues.

Basing on variation in coverage of issues, scandals and attention accorded to candidates, moderators treated candidates, scandals and issues disproportionately in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. This is due to agenda setting role of media where prominence is given to some aspects considered to be salient.

5.4 Recommendation

After carrying out the current study, it is realized that for Kenyan presidential debate to attain their best, certain recommendation have to be observed. There is a need for:

1. Moderators to improve in managing the candidates on the stage so that equal attention can be given to all candidates.
2. Scrutiny of scandals should be balanced basing on their magnitude and given more time for probing.
3. Presidential debate steering committee should reduce the number of participants in the debate for effective scrutiny and evaluation of candidates. They can be two or three.
4. Presidential debate steering committee should organize at least three presidential debates during election campaigns to enable voters to scrutinize presidential candidates fully on various issues that concern citizens.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Study

1. Since the study targeted moderators performance and perceptions of viewers on coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya, similar study can be conducted but on newspaper outlet form of media.
2. Another study can be conducted on effects of presidential debates and the media on character perception of the candidates by viewers.
3. Analysis of the presidential debate using Benoit's (2007) functional theory.
4. Investigate media bias in the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Coding Sheets

A. Quick Reference code list

Issues of discussion; topics/themes

	Issues
1	Macroeconomics
2	Civil Rights
3	Healthcare
4	Agriculture & Fisheries
5	Labour
6	Education
7	Environment
8	Energy
9	Immigration
10	Transport

11	Crime & law
12	Social Affairs
13	Banking & Finance
14	Defence
15	Housing and community development
16	Space, Science, Technology & communication
17	Foreign Trade
18	International Affairs & Foreign Aids
19	Public Lands & Water Management

Characters

1. Raila Odinga
2. Uhuru Kenyatta
3. Musalia Mudavadi
4. Peter Kenneth
5. Martha Karua
6. James ole Kiyapi
7. Paul Muite
8. Mohamed Dida

An evaluation of performance of moderators in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya.

B. Amount of coverage devoted to each issue/topic

Theme /Issue	Measuring length		Duration
	Start	End	

C. Attention given to candidates on each issue

Candidate	Issue	Measuring Length		Duration
		Start	End	

D. Balancing of Questions by Moderators on Issues.

Issue	Raila	Uhuru	Musalia	Matha	Dida	Kenneth	Muite	Kiyiapi

E. Rebuttals and when candidate was pressed to give required response when he meandered

Theme /Issue	Rebuttal	Meandered

F. Distribution of follow-up questions and fact-checking questions

Theme /Issue	Follow- Questions	Fact-checking Questions

G. Moderators' Interjection when Time is over and when Candidates were added Time at their Discretion

Theme /Issue	Interjection by moderator	Addition of time to candidates by moderator

H. Political scandals covered by television with regards to each presidential aspirant in the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate.

Candidate/Character	Scandal	Measuring length		Duration
		Start	End	

Appendix 2: Tally sheets

A. Amount of coverage devoted to each issue/topic

Theme /Issue	Time in seconds
Total	

B. Attention given to candidates on each issue

Candidate	Theme /Issue	Time in seconds

C. Balancing of Questions on Issues by the moderators

Theme /Issue	Same Questions	Most question the same	Different Questions	Most questions Different

D. Rebuttals and when candidate was pressed to give required response when he meandered

Theme /Issue	Rebuttal	Frequency	Meandered	Frequency

E. Distribution of follow-up questions and fact-checking questions

Theme /Issue	Follow- up Questions	Frequency	Fact-checking Questions	Frequency

F. Moderators’ Interjection when Time is over and when Candidates were added Time at their Discretion

Theme /Issue	Interjection by moderator	Frequency	Addition of time to candidates by moderator	Frequency

G. Political scandals covered by television with regards to each presidential aspirant in the 2013 Kenyan presidential debate.

Candidate/Character	Scandal	Time allocated in seconds/ Duration

Appendix 3: Consent Form Template

Focus Group Purpose: To discuss the perceptions on coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya.

I agree to take part in *An Evaluation of Performance and Perceptions of Viewers on Coverage of Issues in 2013 Presidential Debate in Kenya* by *Citizen Television* research project. I have read and understand the study purpose as described above. I understand that accepting to take part means that I am willing to get involved and allowing the focus group to be audio-taped. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalized. I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the focus group for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics of participants.

Participant's name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Appendix 4: Script Template for Focus Group Discussion

Opening of the discussion

“Good morning? Welcome to this session. My name is Macdonald Oviyo. I am student from Maseno University pursuing Master of Arts in communication and media studies. Assisting me is Henry Odhiambo- an assistant moderator and Beatrice Egeiza – a technician. I would like to have a conversation with you about the perception of viewers on coverage of issues in 2013 presidential debate in Kenya. The discussion on this topic will be after we have watched the videos of 2013 Kenyan presidential since the content of the debate is what the discussion is all about. Kindly let’s introduce ourselves.”

(Participants introduces themselves)

“Let’s have rules to govern our discussion. First, let’s all turn off our mobile phones so that we are not interrupted. We need keep tracking of what participants are saying, remembering that we have one person talking at a time. Please do not interrupt someone when is talking. You are allowed to agree or disagree with each other on an issue. There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Keep in mind that we are interested in negative comments as well as positive comments. My technician is tape recording the session because we cannot afford to miss any of your comments as we cannot write faster enough to get them all down. Everything you tell us today will be kept completely confidential. My major role today as the moderator is to facilitate this discussion to ensure that our goals are achieved. This discussion is meant for academic purpose nothing else whatsoever. Please feel free to discuss. Is there any question?”

(Respond to participant questions.)

“Let’s begin watching the programme after which we shall start immediately our discussions”

Questions

1. Question

Prompt: How important are topics discussed in the programme?

Probe: What are your perceptions on issues covered in the programme?

2. Question

Prompt: What are your opinions or views about the duration accorded to each topic in the debate?

Probe: Was the duration short or enough for discussion of each issue in the debate

3. Question

Prompt: What other topics would you wish the debate to cover?

Probe: Why would you want debate to cover the topics you have mentioned?

4. Question

Prompt: Of the topics you have mentioned which ones are very critical?

Probe: Why are you considering them to be critical?

5. Question

Prompt: How would you like this programme to be improved?

Probe: What would you like the organizers of this programe to look at so that it can have greater impact on viewers?

Closure of the discussion

“Is there any final question? (*Respond to questions*). Thank you so much for participating in this discussion today. We are excited to learn what you think about the topic of discussion.