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SENSATIONALISM IN NEWS REPORTING ON HUSBAND BATTERING IN NYERI COUNTY, KENYA

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A Research Project Submitted to the graduate school in partial fulfillment for the Award of the Degree of Master of Journalism and Mass Communication of Egerton University

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

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RECOMMENDATION

This research project has been submitted for examination with our recommendation and approval as university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my Husband Barrack Okello, my daughter Sasha, my Son Ryan and my family for their endless support throughout my studies and the project. I love you all and may the almighty God bless you.

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My special appreciation goes to the Almighty God for granting me life, grace and knowledge through out the study.Thank you God.

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God Bless You All

ABSTRACT

Sensationalism is an approach to content dealing mainly with soft news and appeals to human interest stories mostly exposing wrong doings and appealing for Justice. Publications are under more pressure than ever to increase their circulation in order to attract profits and stay in business for long. Hence, media houses are adopting sensational reporting. Husband battering is an exceptional issue in the patriarchal society. In the recent past, mainstream Newspapers (Nation and Standard) have sensationalized husband battering as with the case in Nyeri County. Studies have been conducted about sensationalism among the general public however this study focused on Husband battering in Nyeri County reported between February 2012 and April 2012. This study was guided by the Agenda setting theory and Critical Discourse Analysis Theory. This research adopted a qualitative approach specifically an Ex-post facto research design with a prospective orientation. Data was obtained from primary sources through interviews and content Analysis. The study population was all texts covering husband battering in Nyeri County and all Male and Female respondents chosen to represent readers of Daily Nation and the Standard Newspapers. This study was guided by three objectives. It identified the features of sensationalism on the stories on husband battering in Nyeri County, analyzed power and ideology from discourse data and determined the role of agenda setting in news reportage. The findings of this study indicated that sensationalism is on the increase and news must be packaged in a manner that is going to attract the readers. Sensationalistic feature included vivid storytelling, tabloid packaging and Vivid Story telling which were the techniques used the make husband battering stories sensational. Explanatory research towards this and other possible clarifications has not been done yet. There is also little known about what is happening during the production process of sensational news. How sensationalism in newspapers initiates and at which moment writers decide to use sensationalism should be looked at in future.

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ACRONYMS /ABBREVIATIONS

DNA-Daily Nation

S.R-Social Representation

MYW-Maendeleo Ya Wanaume

LC4MP- Limited Capacity Model of Motivated Mediated

AST-Agenda Setting Theory

CDA Critical Discourse Analysis

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Sensationalism is a contemporary phenomenon, which assumes a golden era of Reliable Journalism and gives an approach to content as well as format on News. Media sensationalism has been a topic of research with respect to areas as diverse as crime, marriage, divorce, and hormonal replacement research (Macdonald, 2005). It is an unquestionable fact that the nature of sensationalism as presented in the media is a distorted image of reality in which events take place. Sensationalism has been warped by the profits reaped from reporting informative content to the hungry public whose interest for sensational news is ostensibly high. Sensational reporting is merely done to increase media houses' sales and grab the attention of the reader.

In the previous research, a great variety of definitions of sensationalism have been used. Uribe and Gaunter (2007) describe sensationalism as "a characteristic of the news packaging process that places emphasis upon those elements that could provoke an effect on the human sensory system." Most of the descriptions that are used in previous research are included in the definitions of sensationalism. For example, sensationalism is a theoretical concept that encompasses those features of journalistic products that are capable of attracting the attention of the audience.

The concept of sensationalism is often connected to theoretical notions about human evolution. Shoemaker (2001), analyses that a characteristic of humans is that they monitor the world around them. They routinely survey their environment for deviant or unusual things because they pose potential threats. Television news is one of the sources that fulfill people's innate desire to detect these threats, which can mostly be defined as sensational (Shoemaker, 2001; Davis & McLeod, 2003). The human brain has adapted to the task of scanning for information for potential threats as a result of biological and cultural evolution. Therefore sensational news stories attract humans.

According to Davis & Macleod (2003), humans may have evolved to value sensational news. They question the assumption that sensational news reflects a lack of moral standards and suggested instead that it is human evolutionary adaptive functioning that draws us into sensational news. Topics such as "altruism, reputation, cheater detection, violence, reproductive strategies, and the treatment of offspring", are those that humans have depended on for their success. Research has shown that sensationalism may have a positive function. Sensationalism attracts consumers by allowing them to quickly sift through information that does not directly benefit them so they may instead focus on information they find more relevant. Focused information processing may, therefore, be seen as a positive functional attribute of sensationalism. However, sensationalism would not be a problem if it did not influence how people view emerging issues in their community. Unlike our physical abilities, our perception is "limitless," and it is the one thing we can change and develop. Perception includes senses, feelings, ideas, thoughts, and theories." Concept is its "final point" that allows you to see differences; It is "your ability to understand the difference" (Romanov, 2006).

Humans are captivated by sensational news because of its ability to inform, arouse their feelings and stir their senses. The fact that the media may exaggerate sensitivity of the people is something that has been in existence for a long time. The public is therefore not confident with the journalism of today and this is based on its history since the early 18th century on the penny press issue and "yellow journalism" of the nineteenth century. Without complete information and detail, for example, crime statistics, members of the public are left to their interpretations of what little they are told. Thus, the public reacts in a manner that exaggerates an actual crime problem partly because of lack of sufficient or appropriate reporting which would otherwise put the statistics into a more meaningful context.

Today, the debate surrounding journalism and sensationalism is complex because publications are under more pressure than ever to increase their circulation in order to attract consumers and make profits. A publication that has no readers may not stay in business for long. Because it appeals to slightly unhealthy tendencies, sensational content

iii. What is the role of agenda setting on husband battering stories among selected respondents in Nyeri County?

1.5 Significance of Study

Through the findings of this study, the academic world and the journalist community will have a better understanding of sensationalism and the role the media plays in creating perceptions through sensationalistic reporting and may be able to prevent it from distracting the news consumers and attach them with news stories. The findings may also be useful as reference materials in guiding future researchers interested in studying husband battering in other communities.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the study

The study was carried out in Nyeri County. Readers of the Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers were interviewed since they were in a strategic position to provide information sought. The study was confined to examining the effects of sensationalism in news reporting on husband battering carried by mainstream newspapers in Kenya, between February and April 2012. The researcher experienced a challenge in getting the right information due to respondents timing as the residents of the study site were farmers. The researcher countered these problems by scheduling the interview in the evening.

1.7 Operational definition of Terms

Agenda Setting: It is the argument that the media has the ability to affect what the public is thinking as well as how the public thinks about certain issues through its coverage.

Gender: is defined as a social, symbolic construct that varies across cultures, over time within a given culture, over the course of individuals' life spans, and in relation to the other gender.

Husband Battery: Any abusive, violent, coercive, forceful, or threatening act or word inflicted by one member of a family (husband) and can constitute domestic violence.

Ideology: Ideologies are systems of beliefs. These systems of beliefs are shared by members of a social group. Groups also share other beliefs, such as knowledge and attitudes. The beliefs shared by a group will be called 'social representations' (SRs). Ideologies are the organizing, 'basic' beliefs of these SRs. Groups not only have their 'own', ideologically based, "knowledge" (often called "beliefs" by other groups), but also share in more general, consensual, culturally shared knowledge, which may be called (cultural) 'common ground.

Power: Here, power is defined in terms of control over resources and what is frequently referred to as ''social power,'' which highlights an individual's capacity to influence and control the behavior of others. It has a number of important psychological consequences. For example, power increases a person's likelihood of engaging in approach-type behaviors such as expressing more confidence in their own ideas taking risks and taking action to accomplish their goals.

Sensationalism: It is a characteristic of the news packaging process that places emphasis upon those elements that could provoke an effect on the human sensory system.

Tabloidization: This refers to the increase in entertainment news, focus on celebrities, personal issues and increase in sensationalism coinciding with decrease of public affairs focus on politics international news and overall reduction in the length and complexity of news stories.

Yellow Journalism: This is also called yellow press, it is a type of journalism that presents little or no legitimate well-researched news and instead uses eye-catching headlines to sell more newspapers. It uses Techniques which may include exaggerations of news events, scandal-mongering, or sensationalism. By extension, the term *yellow journalism* is used today as a negative to criticize any journalism that treats news in an unprofessional or unethical fashion. The term was extensively used to describe certain major newspapers about 1900 as they battled for circulation.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed available literature, theoretical and empirical literature on effects of sensationalism on husband battering. The main attention was on how sensationalism in news helped in creating attention in the readers. The effect of husband battering news was also assessed, how it changed the perception of readers and how it increased the circulation of newspapers as clearly shown by Agenda Setting Theory, which guided this study.

2.1.1 Sensationalism

Uribe and Gaunter (2007), describe sensationalism as "a characteristic of the news packaging process that places emphasis upon those elements that could provoke an effect on the human sensory system." Sensationalism aims to generate public interest with the object of galvanizing public attention. Sensationalism is the mass Medias response to the routines and predictabilities of everyday life. The media has been so saturated with pseudo-events; the result that the line between fact and fiction, reality and illusion has been erased. Mcquail (2000) argues that sensationalism is at one level an everyday word for all aspects of media content that is likely to attract attention, excite or inflame emotions. It is thus related to commercialization and tabloidization.

The concept of sensationalism can be divided into three categories, which can be used by journalists in order to attract people's attention. As the use of sensationalism was for a long time only conceived in terms of story content (Hakanen & Slattery, 1994), the first category of sensationalism refers to the content of a message. In recent studies this aspect is defined as the arousing content or the 'basic needs content' (Hakanen & Slattery, 1994). It refers to stories that contain information with survival value, and it is therefore closely connected to notions about human evolution. Examples include messages about crimes, violence, and disasters. Also a sexual content is closely related to evolution and

survival and may be considered a characteristic of the arousing content too (Kahneman & Tversky, 2000).

Sensationalism and human interest stories together referred to news coverage of "crime, violence, natural disasters, accidents, and fires, along with amusing, heartwarming, shocking, or curious articles" about people in the area. In other words, Williams did not distinguish between sensational and human-interest stories as representing media houses that appeal to emotion over reason. Hakanen & Slattery (1994) argues that sensationalism may not be a dichotomous concept. They replicated a content analysis of local TV news using William Adam's definition of sensationalism. An analysis of media stations revealed that news organizations devoted significantly more time to sensational and human-interest stories. In addition, they discovered that even hard news stories could be depicted in a sensational way, which Slattery and Hakanen (1994) referred to as "embedding sensationalism". In various countries, market-driven journalism has been identified as the cause of sensationalized news. Sparks and Tulloch (2000) have argued that there are several marketplaces in which media standards are lowered in order to increase media profit. Davis & McLeod (2003) further contended that the generality of sensational news extends to places as well as time.

Over the past decades, the concept of sensationalism has evolved in a broader sense. Kahneman, and Tversky (2000) analyse that not only the content, but also the form of a message can attract the attention of the audience. They and other researchers have used cognitive psychological theories (Shoemaker, 2001; Davis & McLeod, 2003). One of the main models in this context is the Limited Capacity Model, which is used to investigate the way in which mediated messages like television news are processed (Bernett, 2004). The main point is that the ability of viewers to process information is limited. Too much information can result in an overload with failure of the information process as a consequence. This makes it important to find out how exactly viewers select information

Sensationalism has an impact on the social environment. However, historical studies on sensationalism are limited to an examination of subject matter because attitudes of media

audiences of earlier times cannot be measured. Sensationalism has been used by the media industry to mean news that create and stimulate emotions. The concept of sensationalism is often connected to theoretical notions about human evolution. A characteristic of humans is that they monitor the world around them; they routinely survey their environment for deviant or unusual things, because they pose potential threats (Shoemaker, 2001). The concept of sensationalism is to be approached through series of news categories, which have intrinsic human interest appeal and which the press has historically exploited or dramatized.

News and fiction stories about crime are prominent in all media. While there is evidence of increasing attention to crime in some parts of the media, overall this fascination has been constant throughout media history. The stories concentrate overwhelmingly on serious violent crimes against individuals, although with some variations according to medium and market. There is a clear correlation between media and crime, this relationship holds even when a variety of controls are imposed (Wartella, 1995). However the negative effects of the media exposure seem to be small compared to other features in the social experience of offenders. Wartella (1995) argues that the question is not whether media violence has an effect, but rather how important that effect has been in bringing out major changes.

Brown (2003) adds that what has been an issue is the will of pure media effect. The implicit model was of the media as hypodermic syringe, injecting ideas and values into passive recipients of cultural fixes. Audiences are not passive recipients, but active interpreters in a complex process of interaction with other cultural and social practices (Caribbean, 2002)

2.1.2 Yellow Journalism

According to Campbell (2001) Sensationalism can be traced back to Yellow journalism, sometimes called 'sensationalist journalism'. This is a term often used about New York newspapers around 1900. As the papers fought for dominance, they featured huge headlines designed to grab readers' attention with sensationalised news and scare-tactics.

Yellow Journalism is now used to describe similar 'news' papers or magazines, and is often a derogatory term.

The term came from a popular cartoon character in newspapers called "The Yellow Kid." The kid was a baldheaded kid that wore a yellow night shirt. Yellow Kid cartoons had a lot going on in one panel. The kid was in the corner somewhere and the message on his night shirt brought the all the action together. But it is not a cartoon that the era was remembered for. Some publishers became quite sensational and bold in their news coverage. Papers were not above conducting hoaxes to trip up their competitors and doing almost anything to build circulation. Reporters would act as detectives and solve crimes ahead of police so that they could be the first to report the news

Yellow journalism is not presenting the news in an unbiased manner, but rather spinning and reworking it to make it as dramatic and urgent as possible in an effort to boost demand and consumption. When Newspaper are accused of yellow journalism, it means they have ignored real news-worthy topics in favor of sensationalized headlines and stories that are strictly designed to sell the magazine or paper in that, instead of focusing on hard news they rub stories on crimes and celebrities. Yellow journalism is truly considered to be more negative than positive according to today's journalist standards.

Often times, sensationalism is connected with accusations that are not fact-based, sources that may or may not be credible, and major self-promotion. An American historian and journalist Frank Luther Mott uses five criteria for defining yellow journalism: Massive headlines designed to attract individuals into purchasing the newspaper or magazine when often the news is in fact, minor; overuse of images or drawings; the utilization of false interviews, headlines designed to mislead readers, pseudo-science or input from several 'experts' which may or may not be valid; emphasis on full-color Sunday supplements, including comic strips; sympathetic angle depicting an 'underdog' fighting against the system (Campbell, 2001).

Credible news sources are accused of yellow journalism, and this may be because they have gone with a sensational story. While the general public often criticizes modern mainstream media for promoting sensational content, journalism and sensationalism have been liked for many years. Yellow journalism, the practice of trying to promote biased opinion as objective fact, often involved sensationalism. Newspapers would run minor news stories with huge, overly dramatic headlines and the lavish use of attention-getting pictures or drawings. Stories would often be misleading and feature pseudo-science or quotes from faked interviews.

2.1.3 Jazz Age Journalism

Campbell (2001) asserts that this was another colorful strain of journalism. Jazz Age journalism was the precursor to tabloid journalism/sensational writing and left perhaps the most enduring stereotype of journalists in American's minds as Ill-educated, hard drinking slobs who would do anything to get a story, even make it up. The stereotype comes mostly from a play that was written in the late 1920s, "The Front Page." The play was made into a movie at least four times --including an interesting modern adaptation of the story happening at a television station rather than at a newspaper. The beginning of jazz journalism was in 1919 when the New York Daily News and its owner, Joseph Medill Paterson, gave the first starting points of this kind of journalism. This was followed by William Rodolph Hearst's New York Daily Mirror. In 1920 Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer extended yellow journalism into tabloid journalism, emphasizing sex, violence, murder and celebrity affairs. Papers such as the New York Daily used big headlines, large photos and short punchy text. It was a New York Daily News reporter that secretly took a photo of Ruth Snyder as she was being electrocuted at Sing prison in1928 and that was the real beginning of the jazz journalism. The original tabloids put a heavy emphasis on blood and gore. When supermarket sales became major outlet, this was replaced by emotional stories and various bizarre accounts. According to Kaid (2006) advertisements were an important part of these newspapers and were usually for soaps and various crèmes, ointments and tonics. This era has enjoyed a short, but lively reign and it sprang up in New York City.

Papers employing this technique were tabloids printed on a page half the size of a normal newspaper and richly illustrated with photographs. It is important to note that this era began shortly after the end of World War I, and heightened in the "roaring twenties". Such journalism covered Hollywood, the airplane, Prohibition and Al Capon in the 1920s more and more photographs were being used, some in place of text. Bernett (2004) argues that 'the pioneering Jazz Age papers, acting as early multimedia screens', used photographic elements to communicate information in novel ways, contributing to the undermining of the analytical power of the written word. Elite criticism of these newspapers evinces nothing more than a class-based contempt for popular cultural forms, while examination of the contemporary New York Times shows that, by the mid-1920s, the paper was already paralleling many of the visual and content-based choices selected by its jazz journalism counter parts. It is also important to note that USA Today and the New York Times are prime examples of present day jazz journalism in the secondary form; the photograph emphasis

2.1.4 Consumption of News

Sensationalism has had an increased use over time, and as a result questions about the effects of sensation on the receiver have risen. Research into the consumption of sensational news has increased. In the last decennia many consumption studies were done and it was found that too much sensation could result in cognitive overload, as the Limited Capacity Model predicts. Kaid (2006) agrees that consumption of sensational use is on the increase. There are reasons as to why media houses prefer to use vivid storytelling and the effects for productions per day effect. Lang et al. (1999) studied the effects of production pacing, defined as the number of cuts in a message, and arousing content on the information processing of newspaper messages.

The earlier explained Limited Capacity Model was used as basic framework for this study. Lang et al. (1999) found that fast pace and arousing content results in physical reactions like skin conductance (pace) and a decrease in heart rate (arousing content). This implies that the allocation of processing resources to messages has increased. Lang et al. (1999) also found that a combination of fast pace and arousing content overloads

the processing system, resulting in less recognition and recall. Kaid (2006) made a comparison between calm and arousing news and tested the influence of form and content of both kinds of news on information processing and on the evaluations of the news by the viewer. They found that a sensational form and content attracts the attention and that it had a positive influence on recognition, cued recall and free recall for calm news.

However, the information processing system is overburden if sensational form and content were applied to arousing news contents. This means that too much sensation has a negative effect on recognition and recall. With regard to the evaluation, viewers evaluate stories with dramatic features as less objective and believable than stories without these features (Kaid, 2006). The audience pays differential attention to certain aspects of an item. As a consequence, most of the information in the item gets lost. Viewers reconstruct the information by, for instance, guessing based on the general impression of the item or the details on which is focused. This results in recall errors. The use of emotional pictures in the media has a negative effect on the recall of television news items (Surette, 1998). Zillmann and Brosius (2000) summarised studies on the use of exemplification. Exemplification refers to the use of cases to make an abstract issue more concrete. This means that issues become more personal and vivid. News media thrive on exemplification, which could be seen as risky. The use of exemplification results in more attention on the examples and by doing so less on the general information in the news item. This implies that exemplification distracts the attention of the viewers and makes them sensitive for only certain parts of a news story. As a consequence, exemplification could distort the issue perception of the viewer.

In sum, researches in the field of the consumption of news have shown that there are two main effects of sensationalism; cognitive overload of the receiver (referred to the effects of news) and selective attention by the receiver (referred to the uses of news). Both could be seen as worrisome, because the informative function of television news could be negatively influenced.

2.1.5 Readers Interest

The extent and nature of crime as presented in the media is a distorted image of reality in which crime is ubiquitous and most often violent (Hamilton, 2004). This image has been warped by the interest that the public has in sensational news. This would not be a problem if it did not influence how people perceived crime in their community. Such reporting is not a new phenomenon and in a world populated with rational updaters, such a long sequence of signals would lead public opinion to converge to the truth. However, we do not live in such a world and the public's beliefs seem to be severely distorted towards the image presented by the media. What is more, there is evidence that people's distorted beliefs lead them. Hamilton (2004) argues that what information becomes news depends on ; who cares about a particular piece of information; what are they willing to pay to read it, or what are others willing to pay to reach them; where can media outlets or advertisers reach these people; when is it profitable to provide the information, and why is it profitable.

The greater the sensation contained within the package, the greater the enjoyment people will derive from consuming it, the larger will be the audience share of the provider and the greater will be advertisers' willingness to pay to advertise alongside the stories. What makes an event newsworthy is how sensational the story is. Nowhere is this more true than in crime reporting. Succinctly put, deviance is the quintessential element of newsworthiness (Reiner, 2003).This leads news providers to report exceptional, unusual and violent crimes because these stories sell newspapers (Chermak, 1994).

Of the many influences on how we view men and women, media are the most pervasive and one of the most powerful. Woven throughout our daily lives, media insinuate their messages into our consciousness at every turn. According to (Wood, 1994) all forms of media communicate images of the sexes, many of which perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical, and limiting perceptions. Three themes describe how media represent gender. First, women are underrepresented, which falsely implies that men are the cultural standard and women are unimportant or invisible. Second, men and women are portrayed in stereotypical ways that reflect and sustain socially endorsed views of gender.

Third, depictions of relationships between men and women emphasise traditional roles and normalize violence against women.

2.1.6 Gender and Sensationalism

Much of the research on overall interest in news topics suggests that differences exist between the sexes. Mills (1990) suggests that although the general assumption about gender differences with regard to news preferences may be questionable, news preferences among women generally include the four "F's": family, food, fashion, and furnishing. Also, Klein (2003) found that women, regardless of their age, were less interested in violent television news content. Furthermore, a study examining the relationships between sensation seeking and gender role orientations found that men reported higher levels of overall sensation-seeking than women. Sensation-seeking has been conceptualized as involving self-exposure to various novel and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks to engage in them. Sensation-seeking scales contain five dimensions, including thrill and adventure seeking, dis-inhibition, experience seeking, and susceptibility to boredom. Wood (1994) found that gender was an important predictor of lifetime sensation-seeking and that men were more likely to engage in sensation seeking behavior than women.

2.1.7 Power and ideology

Ideology simply refers to attitudes, set of beliefs, values and doctrines with reference to religious, political, social and economic life, which shape the individual's and group's perception and through which reality is constructed and interpreted. No news report is ideologically neutral, transparent or 'innocent'. According to van Dijk (2001) ideology, informed critical social theory throughout the twentieth century emerged in the work of Karl Marx and Engels. Here, ideology refers to the ways in which society as a whole adopts the ideas and interests of the dominant economic class. Marx's model of ideology rests upon a historical-materialist perspective, which asserts that material reality is the foundation of social consciousness. Material reality sets boundaries on the ideas that may emerge as important, or even acceptable, in a given social setting. However, it is through the dominant ideologies of capitalism that the working classes take for granted their

exploitation within economic structures of inequality. Mcquail (2000) stresses that the defined and delimited set of statements that constitute a discourse are themselves expressive of, and organized by a specific ideology. Language, therefore, can never appear by itself - it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves reflect the prevailing discursive and ideological systems.

2.1.8 Agenda Setting and sensationalism

The two terms are closely linked. The mainstream media is responsible for increased attention to entertainment media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Research into second level agenda setting suggest that coverage would inform media users of sensational news and the amount of information and content in which the reader can have maximum effect of the media and give importance to the issues discussed (Conboy, 2004; Sheafer 2007). However, audience demands and profits may be the driving force behind entertainment news inclusion in the mainstream media.

2.1.9 Selective Reporting

Media house has the power to carry out events selectively. Bernett (2004) cites Galtung and Ruge's selective gate keeping theory that suggests that news from around the world is evaluated using news values to determine their newsworthiness. This kind of selective reporting is exactly what content analysis studies of crime in the media have shown. The pattern of reporting in the media is perhaps best summarised as "the law of opposites" (Surette (1998). The pattern we observe in media reports seems to be the inverse of that suggested by social statistics in at least two ways that are important for our purposes. Media reporting concentrates overwhelmingly on serious, violent crimes against individuals, neglecting acquisitive crimes and the demographic profile of victims in the media is older and higher status (Reiner, 2007).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Agenda Setting and Critical Discourse Analysis theories. Agenda setting operates through two components of priming and framing of news. Agenda setting theory holds that the mass media creates what the public think is

important hence shape public opinion. The theory traces its roots back in 1922 when newspaper columnist Walter Lipmann was concerned with the power of the media to present images which shaped public debate and thus public opinion on issues of public importance. McCombs and Shaw say Agenda setting is a creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Media will concentrate on a few issues and subjects and lead the public to perceive those issues as more important than others (Tan & Weaver, 2007). The theory uses one of the techniques used to set the agenda which is repetition of events over a long period of time hence registering in peoples mind. This will also depend on the angle taken by the media in bringing to light these issues. The media can highlight a story by placement. If the story is placed in a prime page then it will gain mileage.

In Kenya, today, the leading dailies, the Daily Nation, and The Standard, determine issues that shape public debate on various matters. When they choose and display the news, the newsroom staff is playing an important part in shaping reality. Readers learn about issues and the importance to attach to those issues (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006).

2.2.1 Agenda Setting and Gate Keeping

The term was coined by Kurt Lewin in 1947 to describe the people who decide which messages go through the gates that control information flow to reach the consumers (Wood & Edwards, 1999). A gatekeeper decides on the information to be published and by so doing they are able to control the public's knowledge of actual events. According to Tan & Weaver (2007) gate keeping looks at the various stages a news item goes through in a newsroom before it is finally published. The source, the reporter, the sub-editor and the editors are in their own rights gate keepers since they determine what ends up as news. Factors of political interference, personal interests, media law and ethics may determine the amount of gate keeping, an exercise that can be both useful and dangerous. It is useful if it shields audiences from harmful information and dangerous if it shields the public from the truth.

This theory is important in the study in the sense that only issues that are perceived to be of importance by the gate keepers are let out to the public domain. This means only a few of the information material can get to the pages. These messages will shape people's perception of events and people in connection with how Nyeri women are portrayed. One enduring principle of media effects is that through choosing what stories to cover and how to cover them, gatekeepers generally shape how the media set the agenda influencing the public and policy makers to pay attention to what the gatekeepers feel are the important issues of the day, though not generally dictating how the public or policy makers should think about the issues. Issue framing is particularly relevant for understanding Husband battering and media coverage (Tulloch & Sparks, 2002). Agenda setting theory has two main pillars, priming and framing of news.

2.2.2 Framing and Priming of News

Framing and the concept of framing bias suggests on how something is presented (the "frame") influences the choices people make. According to this theory, people always strive to make the most rational choices possible. Thus, rational choosers should always make the same decision when given the same data. George Lakoff, a professor at Berkeley University points out about frames and framing noting that: "Communication itself comes with a frame. The elements of the Communication Frame include: A message, an audience, a messenger, a medium, images, a context, and especially, higher-level moral and conceptual frames" (Kahneman & Tversky, 2000; Goffman, 2009). The choice of language is, of course, vital, but it is vital because language evokes frames moral and conceptual frames.

2.2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis theory

Wodak (2001) argued "critical" means not taking things for granted, opening up complexity, challenging reductionism, dogmatism, and dichotomies being self-reflective. Critical Discourse Analysis is superficially called as a non-traditional linguistic because it does not study language on its surface structures like language grammar or language system only, linguistically speaking it studies language and context (Johnson & Christiansen, 2012). Wodak and Meyer (2001:15) stated that context is about the

relationship between language and society. Then, context is broadly meant by situation, condition, institution, power and ideology. It means language will always get involved with the situation, condition, power and ideology that a language use is functioned without leaving particular purposes of the speakers or the authors to convince people to believe, acknowledge, and follow the discourse makers Ideology or social practice to reach their goal in society. Ideology, for CDA, is seen as an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. Ideologies are closely linked to language, because using language is one of the most effective ways to build certain ideologies.

The essence of CDA relates to the efforts to unveil and comprehend the structural transparent relationship of dominance and inequality occurred in the society through the language use in discourse (Wodak & Fairclough, 1997). Wodak and Meyer (2001) stated that CDA might be defined as fundamentally concern3ed with language analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in language. It implies that language can be used as a powerful tool to influence, persuade, convince and hegemonise others without coercion, if it is used by the powerful people in society. Wodak and Meyer (2001) stated "power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in short and long term".

Furthermore, Van Dijk (2001) states that an important perspective in CDA is that texts are produced by any person or group. In texts, discursive differences are negotiated in which texts are legitimized by many various interests and power differences. Therefore, texts and talks in everyday life must be accepted their reliability from many aspects not only who the discourse maker is, but also what the intent of the discourse maker is. Van Dijk (1998) holds that texts are not used just to inform us some realities. Wodak (2001) also stated that texts are based on the ideological standpoints of the person, organization, etc. involved in their production, construct the reality. One of the main tenets of CDA, then, is to reveal the sources of dominance and inequality observed in the society by

analyzing texts (written or spoken). It is to find the discursive strategies employed by the speakers to construct or maintain such inequality or bias in different contexts.

2.2.4 Wodak's Approach

In Critical Discourse Analysis, Wodak sees language as social practice (Wodak & Fairclough, 1997) and combines the socio-cognitive model proposed by van Dijk with the history concept she has used and developed recent days. The discourse-historical approach should be seen as an extension of van Dijk's socio-cognitive model (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). It attempts to incorporate historical-political and affective levels. The distinctive feature of this theoretical and methodological approach is the attempt to integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of many layers of text (Wodak & Meyer 2001).

One of the most salient features of the discourse-historical approach is that to investigate a specific discourse phenomenon, it follows the principle of triangulation by combining different interdisciplinary, methodological and source-specific approaches and on the basis of various data and background information (Wodak 2001). In exploring the derogation and euphemisation, discourse-historical analysts distinguish certain discursive strategies into five parts Referential/Nomination; Predication; Argumentation; Perspectivisation, framing or discourse representation and Intensification; Mitigation. This study will focus on Perspectivisation, framing or discourse representation and intensification strategy used to express involvement of positioning speaker's point of view particularly pointing to the conviction of the media in constructing the in-group and the out-group and providing a description that reflects to the out-group focusing on the story on husband battering in Nyeri County.

2.2.5 Critique of the Theory

The main objective of the agenda setting theory is the assumption that the media through its productive processes and gate keeping functions gives importance to certain socio-political issues while neglecting others of similar importance. The two proponents of this theory McCombs and Shaw in (1972) argued that the media makes certain political,

economic, and social salient issues in the society. Two strategies used are media agenda setting: framing and priming. Framing was used to analyze how the media presents issues to the public. Framing is the quality form of communication that leads others to accept one meaning over another. It is a skill that most successful leaders possess yet one that is not often taught. The importance and interpretations people attach to potential items on the public agenda are strongly influenced by how the media presents stories (McManus, 1994). The media in an indirect and unconscious way position our minds whether we like it or not. The minds of the audience are directed on specific issues we tend to discuss or ponder about for hours, days or even years. Some of these issues of less importance are given much attention while others fall by the wayside.

The media adapts certain methods or techniques which are used to draw the attention of the audience on the issues under discussion or forthcoming issues .Some of these issues provide the audience with a 'window' of viewing the "world" or" reality". These" eye catching "issues which are mostly captured in headlines and on front pages sometimes do not have any connection with the main articles or content of the newsletter. Pictures attached to these headlines are very disturbing especially in most private owned newspapers and magazines. The human mind tends to store most of the things the eyes are exposed to .The agenda setting theory in recent times is viewed as having latent reasons aside its main function.

CHAPTER THREE
RESARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that was used to conduct the study It includes the research design, location of study, study population, sampling procedure, sample size, instrumentation, data collection and procedures, validity of data collection instruments, reliability of the data collection instruments, questionnaire and qualitative interviews.

3.2 Research Design

The study relied on Ex Post facto research with a prospective orientation, a descriptive research design. It attempted to explore existing conditions through. Kerlinger (1983) states that ex post facto is a systematic, empirical inquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred. In this study Husband battering had occurred by the time the data was collected. Newman (2006) points the only limitation to ex post facto design as inability to establish cause and effect. However, this did not affect my study because it was not a cause and effect study.

3.3 Research Population

The study populations was made up of all texts on husband Battering in Nyeri County from the Daily Nation and Standard Newspapers and all Male and Female respondents chosen to represent readers of Daily Nation and the Standard Newspapers.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The researcher used purposive sampling to select texts from the two mainstream newspapers between the beginning of February 2012 and the end of April 2012. All the data was obtained from the library archives as the primary discourse data. The researcher also purposively selected 10 women and 10 men in Mihuti Village who represented Standard and the Daily Nation readers. The researcher chose this village because there were reported cases in the village from the two mainstream media on husband battering.

The researcher also sought to have a wide range of variation in gender and also because the study units happened to be available at the time of data collection.

3.4.1 Sampling Procedure

The researcher sampled text from the two mainstream newspapers between the beginning of February 2012 and April 2012 to be included in the study; she then prepared a shortlist of prospective participants from Mihuti village after initial contacts were arranged using the provincial administration network and researchers personal relationship. The researcher asked them in person about their willingness to participate in the research. The researcher then selected 2 women and 2 men who were readers of the two mainstream newspapers on a day to day basis for an interview which began by showing them the newspaper cuttings. Each participant was asked to refer their mates with similar exposure for interview, each time making sure that they were all readers of the two dailies and that each gender was considered up to a total of 10 women and 10 men were sampled. The total sample size was therefore 20 informants 10 per group which suffices the sample size requirement in general qualitative studies.

3.5 Research Instruments

Data was collected from participants using interviews schedules. Interviews were used because of their advantages over other data collection instruments, especially in investigating in-depth experiences of the respondents. All questions were open-ended. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the information they provided. The items in the interview schedule were crafted in a way that they fulfilled the objectives of the study.

3.5.1 Reliability of Research Instruments

In order to check reliability, the interview schedule was pilot tested. A pre-test was conducted in a different location in the neighboring Mukurweini town. Six informants were used for the pre-test. The results of the pre-test survey helped in restructuring the questionnaires by incorporating the missing information, omitting irrelevant questions and paraphrasing ambiguous questions.

3.5.2 Validity of Research Instruments.

The researcher went through the instruments and compared them with the set objectives and ensured that the items would help the researcher fulfill the study objectives. The supervisors also scrutinized the relevance of the interview schedule items against the set objectives of the study. The researcher enlisted the views and comments of the research supervisors who verified the appropriateness of the items in the Interview schedule. This ensures invalid items are eliminated and any appropriate item not covered was included (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Suitable adjustments were made in order to ensure the items were well constructed to avoid misconstruction or misreading by the respondents. In the end, the researcher had valid instrument capable of effectively measuring the variables to accomplish the study aims.

3.6 Data Collection

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Egerton University along with Consent to conduct the research. The researcher also obtained a go-ahead to carry out the research in Mihuti Village form the Nyeri District Commissioners office. She then visited the Village to organize with the Village elders the appropriate day and time to administer the Interview. The elders were requested to confirm the list of prospective informants obtained earlier from provincial administration network and personal relationships. The role of the researcher was to elicit information, during the interview. The researcher was the interviewer assisted by an interpreter, the researcher and her assistant maintained open-mindedness and skills in eliciting information, and the participants were interviewed one at a time to ensure productivity as well as comfort in disclosing information. The interviews were conducted for 10 days between 10th April 2013 and 20th April 2013. The researcher interviewed two informants per day. All interviews were scheduled between 9am-to 10 am and 3pm to 4pm to ensure that informants did not have any fatigue and thereby avoiding transient bias. Questions were asked inductively, proceeding from general to specific using open ended questions in the interview schedules prepared before the session about the newspaper cuttings on husband battering

stories. The interviews were transcribed and the transcripts stored. The researcher also used the tape recorder in preparation for the interview to boost her confidence.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher comprehended, synthesized and theorized it to determine the correlation of data. The researcher then made sense of that data by reading in order to get used to the significant statements that pertain to the experience under investigation. This was extracted and used to formulate meaning. The statements were then organized into categories which were clustered into themes to provide full description of sensationalism, power, ideology and agenda setting in the themes and analyzed the views of interviewees on husband battering in Nyeri County. It was then presented in form of tables and their respective interpretations so as to answer the research questions.

3.8 Ethical issues

The researcher gave assurance to the respondents that all information would be treated with the highest level of confidentiality, anonymity and only for the purpose of the study. The respondents were not required to provide their names and other personal details. Participation in the study was on voluntary basis. The respondents were also given freedom to ignore items that they did not wish to respond to.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the participants interviewed from Nyeri County. It consists of descriptive analysis, Content and critical discourse analysis from discourse data, interview transcripts and Newspaper cuttings on Husband battering stories carried by the media between January and April 2012 as discussed in chapter three,. The study sought to look at sensationalism in news reporting on husband battering in Nyeri, Kenya. This chapter is divided into sub-headings which include: participant's profile, age of participants, educational level of participants, choice of newspaper read and finally discussion of study findings. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate

The study interviewed 20 participants from Mihuti village in Nyeri County, 10 males and 10 females. All the twenty interviews were carried out with the help of a research assistant who interpreted the questions in Kiswahili for the thirteen participants who hardly understood English. After sorting the researcher found that all were valid representing 100% response rate and this was achieved because the researcher administered the interview carefully in person and was writing down the response from the participants thus ensuring that the sample size as earlier indicated was maintained.

4.3 Participants Profile

This discusses the participant's age, educational level, the choice of newspaper that they read and the relationship that exist between the newspaper readership and age.

4.3.1 Age of participants

The participants were asked to say their age during the interview, age factor was important as is shows the relationship between age and sensational news readership. The age were distributed as follows

Table 1: Age of participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-30 years	6	30.0
31-43 years	8	40.0
44-56 years	3	15.0
57-69 Years	3	15.0
Total	**20**	**100.0**

The results indicate that majority (40%) of participants were between 31-43 years. (15%) were between 44-56 years, (15%) between 57-69 years and (30%) between 18-30 years. The result suggests that most of the married couples are between ages 31-43 years.

4.3.2 Educational Level of Participants

Sensational news stories require people who know how to read and interpret it; it uses pictures that engage the audience who can then interpret it as being sensational as compared to issues of politics business and sports. Sensational news is widely used by media houses and it is what the readers want either to get information or to entertain them. Sensational stories like the one on husband battering allows people learn of the wrong doings in the society as the media unveils these evils in which the stories are retained in people's minds for a long time this requires some knowledge therefore the researcher saw the need of establishing the educational level of the participants as illustrated in the table 2.

Table 2: Educational Level of Participants

	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	13	65.0
University graduate	6	30.0
Postgraduate	1	5.0
Total	**20**	**100.0**

Majority (65%) of the participants had only completed their primary school.30% were University Graduates, only 5% had postgraduate qualification. Thus the results suggests that majority of married couples in Mihuti village had only attained primary education.

4.3.3 Choice of newspaper read

There are two mainstream newspapers which are read by the majority of people in Mihuti village. These were the Daily Nation and the Standard. The participants believed that these two dailies gave them information that they believed in. This study sought to find out whether they read these two dailies so that they can handle the problem under study. The choice of newspaper read is presented in the table below

Table 3: Choice of newspaper read

	Frequency	Percentage
Standard	7	35.0
Nation	11	55.0
Both	2	10.0
Total	**20**	**100.0**

55 % of participants read Nation newspaper, 35% read Standard Newspaper, while 10 % read both, and this suggests that Nation newspaper is read more by people from Nyeri County.

4.3.4 Age of participants and Choice of newspaper read

There exists a great relationship between the age of the participants and the kind of newspaper that they read. Most readers read one newspaper in a day and the findings are indicated in the table below

Table 4: Cross tabulation Age and Choice of media

		Choice of newspaper read			Total
		Standard	Nation	Both	
Age of participants	18-30 years	2	3	1	6
	31-43 years	3	5	0	8
	44-56 years	2	1	0	3
	57-69 Years	0	2	1	3
Total		**7**	**11**	**2**	**20**

Participants from age bracket 31-43 years read newspaper more. (3 out of 8) 37.5% are standard newspaper readers and (5 out of 8) 67.5% Nation Newspaper Readers.

4.4 Research Information

In order to analyze discourse data for this study, the researcher designed seven separate categories, which were then grouped into three thematic areas to answer the research questions. The researcher grouped the categories "Arousing Content, Tabloid Packaging and Vivid Storytelling" into a one theme "features of sensationalism". The researcher also analyzed the extent to which the participants supported the theme. The following is a table of the categories.

Table 5: Category labels

Category	Label	Words	Percentage (%)
Category 1	Arousing Content	15/21	11
Category 2	Tabloid packaging	17/23	13
Category 3	Vivid Storytelling	13/26	10.1
Category 4	Power	18/28	14.2
Category 5	Ideology	14/21	11.1
Category 6	Framing	18/20	14.3
Category 7	Priming	19/20	15.1
Total words: 126			**100**

4.5 Features of sensationalism

. The features are categorized into three parts which include: Arousing content, Tabloid packaging and vivid story telling. These features when combined bring out the sensational feeling of the story and give the readers an issue to discuss through repetition

4.5.1 Arousing Content

11% (15 out of 126) words were found to fit in the category "arousing content" this included words like "real-life", "exaggerated", "repeated", "domestic violence",. Readers of the two dailies were able to describe the stories on husband battering because of the way the stories were reported. The story on husband battering portrayed an unusual form of violence which was a paradigm shift in cultural norms of the society. According to the participants most husbands being battered were drunkards and were termed as a weaker sex at the time of crime and so they could not defend themselves as it is the case with other men in a normal setting.

The reasons for the crimes were basically because they could not be there when their wives needed them and so many wives were stressed at the time of violence, they said men failed to provide. According to the results Husband battering stories were repeated over time in the two mainstream newspapers. The participants clearly stated that the one

event that occurred from Mihuti village sparked other stories which had occurred initially like the one reported in the Daily nation 11th February 2012 from Muhuri village also in Mukurwe-ini. On the same paper it had indicated that a day earlier another man from Nyeri County was battered by people allegedly hired by his wife at Skuta village. The result also suggests that Most of the victims were known by the community, so to them this was a "real-life story" stories that arouse emotions.

4.5.2 Tabloid Packaging

13% (17 out of 126) words were found to fit in the category "tabloid packaging" these included words like "cartoons used", "surprise", "shocking", "comical", "disgusting pictures", The results indicate that news on husband battering was packaged in a way that the people from Mihuti village did not expect. Pictures were used to illustrate how the battered men had suffered and how some of them had been taken to hospital especially those with deep cuts from the pangas used by their wives like Simon Kiguta who had maintained deep panga cuts from his wife Ms Julia Wairimu. The results indicate that the Pictures had been edited by the media to show how cuts had been dressed, the pictures appeared shocking, and the extent of damage the crime caused was unexpected to the participants. Participants described that it was disgusting to look at and comical too the way a man's face has been "sewn like a gunny bag"

4.5.3 Vivid Story Telling

Three aspects of vivid storytelling were distinguished: personalization, laypersons speaking and use of pictures.10.1% (13 out of 126) words fit the category "vivid storytelling" which included words like "true pictures", "I Know", "it happened", "Involvement of MYW", "MP's Discussed" "police are investigating", "Horrific", "badly Injured", "Mended faces", "Impressive", " Amazing". Participants indicated that people from Mihuti Village could remember the news vividly as some of these victims were known to them they described them using words like "I know" "it happened" that some of the battered men had not even fully recovered, the recent happening in Nyeri made the stories even more memorable as it reminded the readers of the extra ordinary things that had happened in Nyeri County. Most participants could clearly identify the names of the women who appeared on the Daily Nation newspaper on 19th February 2012

who were protesting over increased alcohol consumption in the area, they claimed that men had abandoned their families for liquor The participants also indicate that Comments made by *Maendeleo ya Wanaume* chairman and how politicians discussed the story could not be forgotten.

Table 6: Degree of Support of features of sensationalism

Degree of Support of The issue				
Theme		**Support**	**Opposes**	**Uncommitted**
Features of Sensationalism		**Frequency and (Percentage)**		
A.	Arousing Content	15 (75%)	4 (20%)	1 (5%)
B.	Tabloid Packaging	16 (80%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)
C.	Vivid Story Telling	17 (85%)	3 (15%)	0

From the results of table 6, it suggests that most participants (80%) Supported the theme that media reported husband battering stories in a sensationalistic manner, only a few (15%) were opposed while two (5%) remained uncommitted.

4.6 Power and Ideology

14.2% (18 out of 126) words fit in the category power these included words like "Powerful" ,"Ground Breakers" "Protectors", "Unquestionable", "Defenders", "head", "breadwinner" "Provider" , thus the use of language is involved in situations of defining social power and describing unequal power relations of Dominance, Control and Inequalities. While 11.1% (14 out of 126) words fit the category Ideology. These include words like "fighter", "our" ,"They", "harsh" "Silent killers" ,"helpers", "caretakers", "submissive" "Child-bearer", and "housewife" thus the use of language is seen as an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power and ideological relations.

Table 7: Power and ideology

Theme		Frequency and (percentage)
Power and Ideology		
A.	Dominance	8 (40%)
B.	Control	8 (40 %)
C.	Predication	2 (10 %)
D.	Nomination	2 (10%)

4.7 Agenda setting

14.3% (18 out of 126) words fit the category priming which included words like "front page" "top page". Thus the readers were exposed to content which endured for a relatively short time but which affects their behavior or judgment related to the content they processed. 15.1 % (19 out of 126) words fit the category Framing, which included words like "big Space", "whole page" "Half a page" thus the results show that readers were offered an open platform to make rational choices on the content by the media.

Table 8: Agenda Setting

	Degree of Support of The issue		
Theme	**Support**	**Opposes**	**Uncommitted**
Agenda Setting	**Frequency and (Percentage)**		
A. Priming	14 (70%)	6 (30%)	0
B. Framing	13 (65%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)

The results indicate that majority (70%) of the stories on husband battering were placed on top pages, while (65%) of the stories were given enough space between the months of January to April 2012 the stories on husband battering were appearing so often and the amount of space given was large enough to allow readers have a follow up of the stories.

Table 9: No of Publications

MONTH	DAILY NATION	THE STANDARD
January	5	6
February	7	7
March	4	3
April	5	4

4.8 Reliability Analysis

Table 10: Reliability Statistics

The results of reliability show an r of 0.802 much greater than the recommended r of 0.7 which therefore suggests consistency between the coders and thus reliability of data collection instruments.

4.9 Discussion of findings

The findings were discussed based on the processed data above. Features of sensationalism, power and ideology and Agenda setting were the main issues discussed at length.

4.9.1 features of sensationalism

According to the first objective of this study the researcher sought to find out the features of sensationalism in husband battering stories in Nyeri County, Kenya. Majority of the people are interested in the news that tells more about the society and more especially on the wrong doings. Such stories touch on the human sensory system and people in Nyeri County were interested in this news as it was happening in their area. Media repeatedly reported these stories to tap into people's innate desire to so often detect threats or deviant behavior around them. This agrees with (Shoemaker, 2001; Davis & McLeod, 2003) who maintains that sensational news stories attract humans in a repeated manner. Most of the victims were known by the community.

The respondents discussed that there had been many crimes like theft, murders, and rapes which had not been focused on by the media however the story on husband battering was a paradigm shift to cultural norms, an emotive story, shocking and amazing as was described by participants that could do nothing but endure in the society and the public. This fits with (Kaid, 2006) that stories that include information with survival value are indicators of sensationalist news.

Arousing content agree with the studies of Lang et al. (1999) and Kaid (2006) that consumption of sensational content is on the increase. Lang et al. (1999) found that fast pace and arousing content results in physical reactions like skin conductance (pace) and a decrease in heart rate (arousing content). This implies that the allocation of processing resources to messages has increased. Lang et al. (1999) also found that a combination of fast pace and arousing content overloads the processing system, resulting in less recognition and recall (Kaid, 2006).

This study discussed arousing content and its effect on emotion which led to sensationalism not only provides thrills but also fascinates in a morbid way thus sensationalism has a potential to emotionally and psychologically arouse the readers (Kaid, 2006). Tabloid news "emphasizes style over substance," and is "punctuated by structural features, such as quick-paced editing, dramatic pictures, rapid-fire narration, and extravagant graphic effects," in contrast to standard news that focuses on substance (Azeez, 2009).

This explained Limited Capacity Model, which was used as basic framework for this study. Kaid (2006) made a comparison between calm and arousing news and tested the influence of form and content of both kinds of news on information processing and on the evaluations of the news by the viewer. They found that a sensational form and content attracts the attention and that it had a positive influence on recognition, cued recall and free recall for calm news. However, the information processing system is overburden if sensational form and content were applied to arousing news contents. This means that too much sensation has a negative effect on recognition and recall. With regard to the

evaluation, viewers evaluate stories with dramatic features as less objective and believable than stories without these features (Kaid, 2006).

In sum, researches in the field of the consumption of news have shown that there are two main effects of sensationalism: cognitive overload of the receiver (referred to the effects of news) and selective attention by the receiver (referred to the uses of news). Both could be seen as worrisome, because the informative function of newspaper news could be negatively influenced.

Cognitive theories in psychology have provided a basis for a theoretical network concerning arousing news. In particular, the Limited Capacity Model of Motivated Mediated Message Processing (LC4MP) predicts that arousing news characteristics are able to provoke fluctuations in arousal and attention during newspaper reading (Lang, 1999). This model has two major assumptions. First, readers are information processors that perceive stimuli, turn them into mental representations, do mental work on those representations, and reproduce them. Second, readers' ability to process information is limited, because readers only have a limited pool of mental resources (Lang, 1999).

Although the LC4MP acknowledges that readers to some extent control the allocation of resources to the various cognitive tasks in information processing, it especially stresses the automatic allocation to the cognitive system. This automatic process is controlled by the characteristics of the message through the elicitation of orienting responses in readers. When an orienting response occurs, a reader's sensory receptors will be oriented towards the stimulus, resulting in a set of physiological responses such as an increase in skin conductance (indicative for the elicitation of arousal) and a decrease in heart rhythm, indicative for attention reactions (Lang, 1999). Two major types of stimuli elicit orienting responses in readers. First, stimuli that Contain information relevant to the goals and needs of the individual elicit orienting responses. Examples include news stories about violence, crime, and death.

These can be seen as examples of negative story content. Second, stimuli that represent change or unexpected occurrence in the environment elicit orienting responses (Lang,

1999). In a television news story, examples are a high number of (abrupt) changes in the picture material, decorative editing techniques such as Zoom in and zoom out (Kaid, 2006). As the LC4MP states that arousing news characteristics affect viewers in an intentional and cognitive sense, there are reasons to assume that arousing news have an influence on preferences for, information processing of, and perceptions of media performance regarding this news.

Arousing content was be in line with the need of the media role of informing the audience with higher educated young viewers had a better recognition for arousing content than for neutral content, implying that arousing content enhanced their information processing. However, lower educated young viewers did not benefit from arousing news in terms of information processing. We also found that compared with young women, male young viewers processed arousing content stories better. Therefore journalist inserted arousing characteristics in the news when the goal is to inform young people, as some of them (the high educated ones and men) take advantage of arousing news, while the others (the low educated ones and women) experience no adverse effects from arousing news.

To achieve sensationalism, husband battering stories had an element of exaggeration. This is a representation of something in an excessive manner. Exaggeration adds a sensational quality to news items and has a high attention-grabbing capacity, using grisly pictures and packaging the tabloid in such a way to fortify reader's attention and gain a high intensity and therefore being memorable. These findings therefore suggest strongly that husband battering news in Nyeri county was a classic example of stories with high survival value and therefore sensational. News content which "appeals to our basic needs and instincts" and tabloid packaging techniques that "automatically elicit viewers' orienting responses with novelty or change" may universally attract viewers' attention. In addition, they added vividness and proximity of news as two additional characteristics of sensationalism.

Vividness refers to vivid effects generated from "stimulating imagination, attracting and holding attentions, and retaining better in memory." Proximity refers to geographic

proximity (domestic News vs. foreign news) and sensual proximity (pictorial information vs. Verbal information). While the first two features appear to be more universal, the latter two are more limited to culturally specific characteristics. Thus this study found that these conceptualizations and definitions of sensationalism in news, both as content and formal features, tend to grab viewers' attention and arouse their emotions. Three aspects of vivid storytelling were distinguished: personalization, laypersons speaking and close-ups of the human face

Personalization

Zillmann and Brosius (2000) described that personalization was one of the examples of vividness. News stories that contain personalization were stories in which laypersons were introduced by a name or nametag, as being involved in the issue, or as eyewitnesses. The Daily Nation on February 9th 2012 reported that the Chairman of the *Maendeleo Ya Wanaume* stated clearly that men should be respected and that women were suffering from superiority complex. The newspapers reported that the issue of husband battering could trace its roots to the high handed female colonial chief *Wangu Wa Makeri* who reigned in Muranga with an iron fist and was particularly hard on men. This issue was reported just after several men had been battered in Nyeri County although few cases had attracted the media's attention. According to the findings husband battering was also attributed to the background of the victims. Some of the emerging reasons were that men were spending a lot of time drinking instead of helping at home, some of them were not providing for the family, and others were involved in extra marital affairs.

Laypersons speaking

It is believed that comments by laypersons that were introduced may be considered as concrete and vivid. There were laypersons who commented on the husband battering (Iyengar & Kinder, 2000). The media also seems to have focused on confrontational issues. They have highlighted more on groups, activists and organizations opposed to battering of men. The chairman Nderitu Njoka is quoted to have said that this is not an issue of poverty anymore but women's supremacy as they want to dominate men (reported on 12th February 2012).

Close-up of the human face

The last aspect of vivid storytelling referred to (extreme) close-ups. Pan and Korsicki (2001) described that a close-up is an obvious example of proximity and therefore useful to measure vivid storytelling. A close-up referred to a shot that was framed to include the human face in a close-up, only the section between the forehead and the neck was visible (Kaid, 2006). The stories on husband battering had pictures which were taken at a closer range and because of the new technology the pictures appeared real thus vivid storytelling.

The media's role was argued to be the watchdog of the society that unveils the wrong doings, dispenses information and highlights societal issues. Through the media husband battering was exposed to other people in Nyeri and to the society at large. The results indicate that husband battering had been going on for some time before it was exposed. The issue of husband battering was considered to be private because they were domestic violence and it only concerned husbands and wives.

4.9.2 Power and ideology

The second objective of this study was to know the power and ideology that existed in the stories on husband battering in Nyeri Kenya. From the discourse data analyzed it is evident how language has been used to express dominance of men over women. Instance; Men are "unquestionable" women are "child bearer" So men are considered powerful over women, they are seen to control resources and to dominate and discriminate. This agrees with Wodak and Meyer (2001) who asserts that there is a structural transparent relationship of dominance and inequality which occurs in the society through the language use in discourse.

The labeling of social actors less positively and deprecatorily was clearly noted in these findings where for example women were viewed as "silent killers" and "fighter's " this term was seen as a predicative metaphor used to describe women who are supposed to be home takers but end up hurting their husbands. The findings also show the use of

collectives. Words like "our" women were mainly used or "we" the Nyeri women among others were used, this suggests a way of representing social actors as groups by the discourse maker who intends to either naturalize or depersonalize the social representation. Wodak (2001) describes this as the strategy that deals with how one constructs and represents in-groups and out-groups. It means language will always get involved with power and ideology that a language use is functioned without leaving particular purposes of the speakers to convince people to believe, acknowledge, and follow the discourse makers ideology or social practice to reach their goal in society. According to the findings Women were socially represented as "helpers" "Submissive" which is an ideology that is seen as an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. According to Wodak and Fairclough (1997) ideologies are closely linked to language, because using language is one of the most effective ways to build certain ideologies.

The basic claim of CDA is that all human usage encodes ideological patterns, language is not just a transparent medium of communication about the objective world, but a constantly operative part of the social process (CDA) therefore, analyses discourse to find the hidden meanings (Wodak, 2001). In most interactions, users bring with them different dispositions towards language, which are closely related to their social positioning. The defined and delimited set of statements that constitute a discourse are themselves expressive of, and organized by a specific ideology. Language, therefore, can never appear by itself – it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves reflect the prevailing discursive and ideological systems.

It was observed that the use of speech as headlines is very significant. Since news is woven around personalities, the speeches of these personalities matter to the press because they can be used for sensational news. Sometimes, they are paraphrased and used to arouse negative feelings towards the people. The words used by leaders like the *Maendeleo Ya Wanaume* chairman made a lot of sense to the media and the reporters picked interest in his comments. Sensationalism is sometimes carried to the extent of

revealing in clear terms the writer's angle of judgment to an issue and also reflects how he wants the reader to see the issue.

There are usually at least two views to most issues: the views of those whose interests are being served and that of those whose interests are being undermined. This is reflected clearly in most of the headlines, where the former, clamour for continuity and the latter, for a change in policies. This ideological division brings in power relations, where the two parties involved are depicted as either powerful or powerless. For instance, the men in Nyeri count are considered powerless while the women are powerful. The government discussed the issues especially the members of parliament who were against husband battering strongly.

4.9.3 Agenda setting

The third objective focuses on agenda setting theory as used by the mainstream newspapers focusing on the stories on husband battering in Nyeri County. This was meant to test the position that the press is successful in telling readers what to think about (Overbeck & Park, 2001). The findings indicate strongly that newspapers used priming and framing techniques which are the pillars of agenda setting. The media is successful in telling readers what to think about according to many scholars. Generally speaking, media impact is limited to some specific issues in which they can influence the public Salience. Tan and Weaver. (2007) analyse that salience is the degree to which an issue on the media agenda is perceived as relatively important by the audience.

The Agenda-Setting Function of Media" offered empirical evidence that in many ways refuted Lazarsfeld's and Hovland's work of the '40s, '50s, and '60s that pointed to a limited-effects model of media Based on their belief that most of the public's contact with politicians was through mediated settings, (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Their research established a near perfect correlation between the issues that the public deemed most important and the issues that media were making most salient. Agenda-setting theory (AST) has since provided an unparalleled foundation for both media house and the readers on the news.

Agenda-setting theory can be subdivided into three components; Media agenda-setting, public agenda-setting, and policy agenda-setting (Tan & Weaver, 2007). As the names suggest, media agenda-setting is dependent on the mass media news agenda, public agenda-setting is dependent on topics in the public agenda, and policy-agenda setting is a response of sorts to the collective agendas of the media and the public (Tan & Weaver, 2007). The natural and probable result of media agenda-setting is an end effect on policy because a policy maker's only interaction with the public may be through a mediated setting such as observation of news stories, letters to the editor, etc. This end result of media agenda-setting was borne out by Tan and Weaver (2007).

Media set the Agenda for the people to discuss these stories and even informed the society on other cases of husband battering in the area and give people an idea to discuss an issue for a long. The stories increased the survival of the media houses by increased demand in circulation of the newspapers, especially the Daily Nation which is widely read by the people from Nyeri County.

Agenda setting worked closely with priming and framing of news. This is why AST works hand in hand with the two elements and as many scholars agree, priming and framing are synonymous with agenda setting. The reasoning behind their decision to use the three theories together lies in the fact that many scholars consider priming and framing to be synonymous with AST. Priming is considered by some scholars to be an extension of agenda-setting. According to Scheufele (1999), "priming occurs when news content suggests to news audiences that they ought to use specific issues as benchmarks for evaluating the performance of news stories" The reason priming is often considered an extension of agenda-setting theory is because they are both "memory-based models of information processing" (Scheufele, 1999). According to Scheufele these models assume that people form attitudes based on the considerations that are most salient when they make decisions. Therefore the people from Mihuti village considered the issue on husband battering noticeable because of the fact that the stories were mostly on top pages of the two mainstream newspapers and other appeared on second and third page.

The stories made use of bold headlines and big pictures on top page which had faces of husbands battered in Nyeri County. These pictures were still memorable to the participant's and the real names of the victims were known. The issues were still discussed at large especially considering that news from Nyeri has been making headlines since then. The stories on husbands battering occupied a lot of space in the mainstream newspaper for example on 20th February 2012 the stories covered from page 1-5 therefore the stories were given a lot of prominence thus setting the agenda for the people in Nyeri County.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the summary of the finding, conclusions made after the findings and the recommendation for further studies.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Respondents profile

Majority 40% of participants were between 31-43 years. Majority (65%) of the participants had only completed their primary school.30% were University Graduates, only 5% had postgraduate qualification. 55 % of participants read Nation newspaper, 35% read Standard Newspaper, while 10 % read both, this suggests that nation media is read more by people from Mihuti Village. Participants from age bracket 31-43 years read newspaper more. 3 out of 8 (37.5%) of the readers read the Standard newspaper readers while 5 out of 8 (67.5%) of the Daily Nation Newspaper Readers. Age bracket 31-43 are interested in reading news despite their educational level. This may mean they have time in their hands to read the newspapers therefore making an ideal target for readership by the two dailies. This suggests that majority of married couples in Mihuti village had only attained primary education.

5.2.2 Sensationalistic News

Regarding sensational news content, with regard to the first objective, 11% (15 out of 126) words were found to fit in the category "arousing content" this included words like "real-life", "exaggerated", "repeated", "domestic violence". 13% (17 out of 126) words were found to fit in the category "tabloid packaging" these included words like "cartoons used", "surprise", "shocking", "comical", "disgusting pictures", "emotive" 10.1% (13 out of 126) words fit the category description "vivid storytelling" included words like "true pictures", "I Know", "it happened", "Involvement of MYW", "MP's Discussed", "Horrific", "badly Injured", "Mended faces", "Impressive", " Amazing". Thus the readers of the two dailies were stimulated and provoked to read the stories on husband

battering, visual production techniques was used by the media to present the readers with immediate variations of information and the media expressed stories well known to the participants, they used tie-up stories from lobby groups like the Maendeleo ya wanaume and politicians and made sure the story was arousing, memorable and vivid. The researcher grouped the categories "Arousing Content, Tabloid Packaging and Vivid Storytelling" into a one theme "features of sensationalism". Most participants interviewed (80%) Support that husband battering stories were sensational, only a few (16.67%) think otherwise and two (3.33%) remained uncommitted.

5.2.3 Power and Ideology

In terms of power and ideology, as in the second objective of the study, the study results found that 14.2% (18 out of 126) words fit in the category power these included words like "Powerful" ,"Ground Breakers" "Protectors", "Unquestionable", "Defenders", "head", "breadwinner" "Provider" , "fighter", "our" ,"They", "harsh" "Silent killers" thus the use of language is involved in situations of defining social power and describing unequal power relations of Dominance, Control and Inequalities, while 11.1% (14 out of 126) words fit the category Ideology. These include words like "helpers", "caretakers", "submissive" "Child-bearer", and "housewife" thus the use of language is seen as an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. All participants in their discourse expressed some form of power in the language they used, 40% expressed dominance, 40% control, 20% Euphemization and 100% ideology (social practice).

5.2.4 Agenda Setting

As for the third objective of the study, the results also showed that 14.3% (18 out of 126) words fit the category priming which included words like "front page" "top page". Thus readers were exposed to content which endured for a relatively short time but also that affected their behavior or judgment related to the content they processed. 15.1 % (19 out of 126) words fit the category Framing, which included words like "big Space", "whole page" "Half a page" revealed that readers were offered an open platform to make rational

choices on the content by the media. Majority (67.5%) of the stories on husband battering were placed on top pages.

5.3 Conclusions

The researcher arrived at conclusion that media is the watch dog of the society and the happenings which are mostly touching on the five senses must be published these happenings are sensational in nature and newspaper readers especially male readers are interested in these. The sensational stories have a high retention value in that by the mention of the word husband battering everything could be remembered clearly including the names of the victims and where they were and all the necessary details required. Media houses know when a dog bites a man its news therefore when a wife batters a husband which contradicts the patriarchal society, it is absolutely news.

This paper has reviewed literature on sensationalism and its use in the husband battering stories in Nyeri County. It has also described the categories of sensationalism that was seen in the stories and interpreted it by use of content analysis in Mihuti Village Nyeri County. It has also given matters arising due to power and ideology as indicated in the traditional setting .The conclusions and recommendations are therefore based on both literature survey and empirical analysis. The conclusions there fore are:

i. For a story to be sensational it must have three main features that is Vivid story telling, Tabloid packaging and arousing content.
ii. Power and ideology can be seen in the husband battering stories characterized by Dominance, Control Predication and Nomination.
iii. Agenda setting can either be from the media house or from the public. Media houses use priming and framing to set the agenda

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the results obtained in the study, the researcher made the following three recommendations:

i. When journalists want to anticipate on the desires of particular viewer categories they need to know how to use arousing characteristics in news stories properly and stick to the traditional roles of the media.

ii. In order to gain and maintain audience attention, the general advice is to include arousing content characteristics in news stories

iii. Media houses should be aware that the language used can construe a particular audience negatively, and therefore they need to moderate.

5.5 Suggestions for further Research

i. This research was limited to description of the state of affairs as they existed, the study however does not reveal how sensationalism in newspapers initiates and at which moment writers decide to use sensationalism, little is also known about what happens during the production process of sensational news therefore this study proposes that explanatory research be done.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction to the Participants

Dorcas Kebenei

BOX 3615, NAKURU

Cell: 0723602253

Email:dorchep2000@yahoo.com

Dear Respondent

I am a postgraduate student in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences currently undertaking research on the topic "**SENSATIONALISM IN NEWS REPORTING ON HUSBAND BATTERING IN NYERI COUNTY, KENYA".** The study is purely academic and the data you provide will be used only for scientific research and will help in gaining a better understanding of Sensationalism and perception on news reportage particularly on husband battering in Nyeri Town. Your response will be kept strictly confidential. Only members of the research team will have access to the data you give and the completed structured questionnaires will not be made available to anyone other than the research team. Your kind cooperation in this research is very much appreciated .Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

Dorcas Kebenei

Appendix 2: Readers Schedule

The information you provide will be kept confidential. Please feel free to provide all the required information. Do not write your name.

Part A: General Information

Please put a tick (√) in the appropriate box.

i. What is your gender? Male ( ) Female ( )

ii. What is your age? _____

iii. What is your level of education

College certificate ☐ University graduate ☐ Postgraduate studies ☐

Others Specify.....

iv. What is your favorite Newspaper? Nation [ ] Standard [ ]

Part B: Features of Sensationalism

1. In your own opinion what is the role of media?.....
2. What kind of news interests you?.....
3. How was the news on husband battering about your community reported by the newspapers?
4. What is your opinion on the news coverage on husband battering by the newspapers?
5. How were the pictures on Husband Battering portrayed?.....
6. Is the News on Husband Battering still memorable to you.....
7. Was the story on Husband battering real?.....
8. What happened to the victims?.....
9. Were you satisfied with the public response on the husband battering stories?

Part C: Power and Ideology

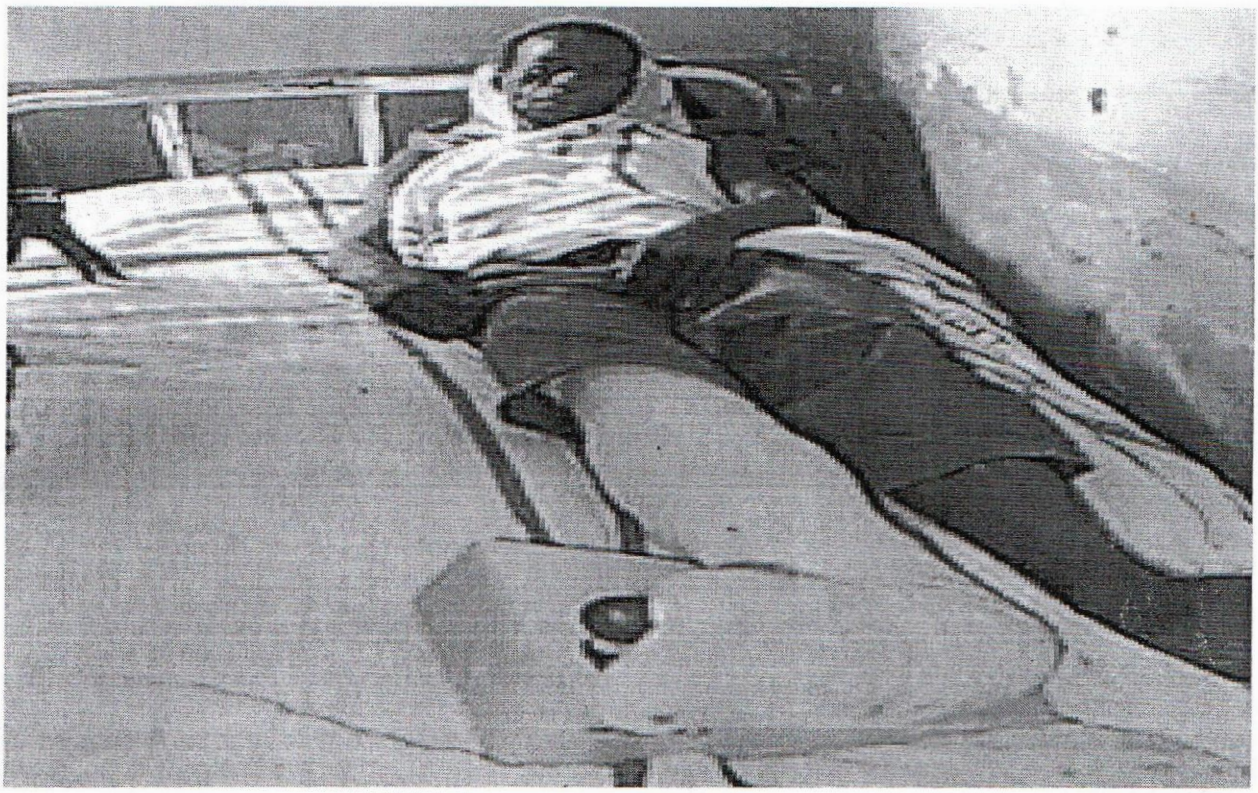
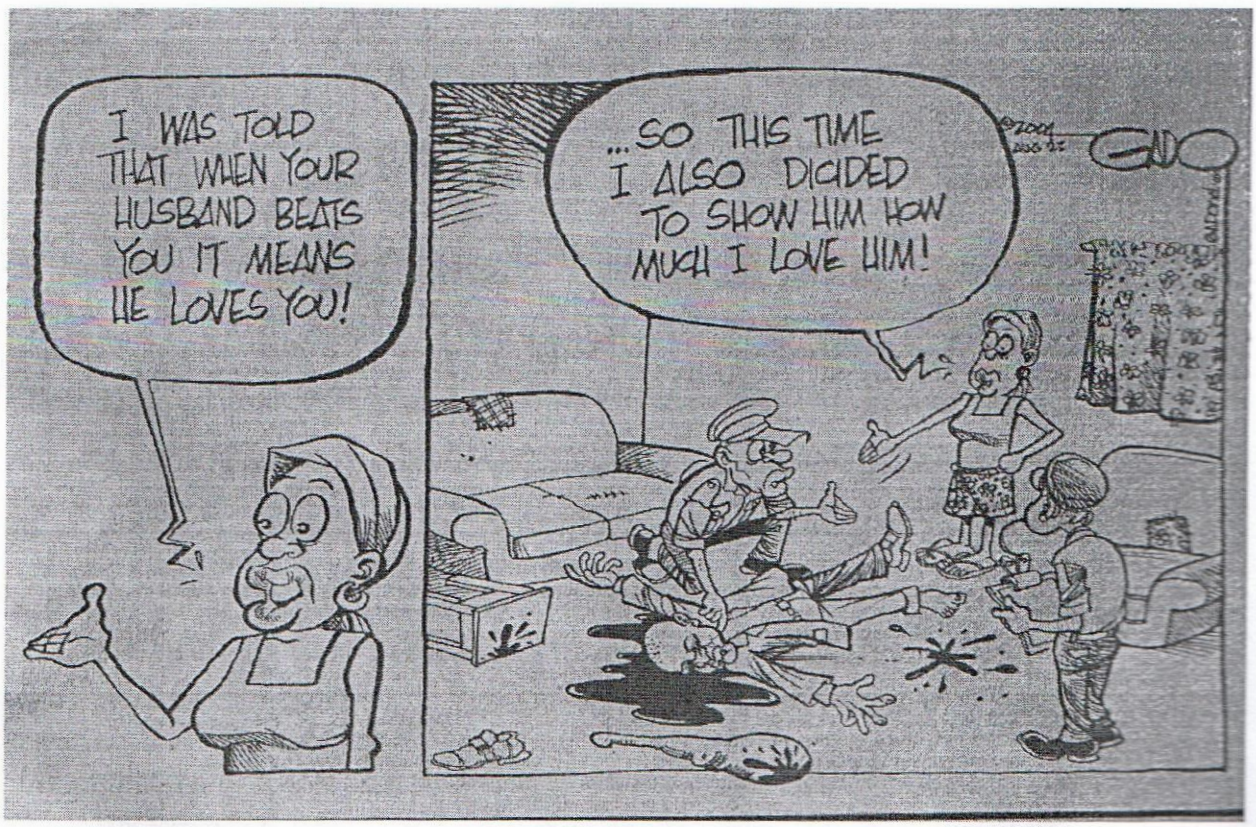
1. What is the role of men in the society?.....
2. What place does the woman hold in the traditional and modern society?.....
3. How does the story on husband battering portray Nyeri women?.....

Appendix 3: Images of Husband Battering

PICTURE ONE Daily Nation 11th Feb, 2012

PICTURE TWO Daily Nation 19th Feb, 2012

PICTURE THREE Standard media 16th February 2012



PICTURE FOUR Daily Nation 25th March, 2012