

“Media’s Influence on Enhancing Water Use Efficiency and Climate Control: Community Capacity Building in Kenya”

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the global community has witnessed the increasing impacts of climate change, resulting in various environmental challenges, including water scarcity (Stringer et al., 2021). Developing countries like Kenya are particularly vulnerable to these changes due to their heavy reliance on agriculture and limited access to water resources (Maingey et al., 2022). Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving not only scientific and technological solutions but also community engagement and capacity building.

One vital aspect of this approach is the role of media in disseminating information and fostering awareness among communities. Media platforms, including television, radio, print, and digital media, possess the unique ability to reach a broad audience and convey messages that can drive positive behavior change (Bara et al., 2021). In Kenya, where access to information is growing but remains uneven, the media can be a powerful tool to educate and empower communities regarding water use efficiency and climate control (Wutich et al., 2023).

This study seeks to explore the significant role that media plays in facilitating community capacity building for enhancing water use efficiency and promoting climate control in Kenya. By examining how media channels communicate information, influence public perception, and stimulate local engagement, this research aims to uncover the various strategies employed by media to drive positive changes in water management practices and climate-conscious behaviors.

Through an in-depth analysis of media campaigns, coverage, and communication strategies, this study will contribute to a better understanding of how media can effectively shape perceptions, attitudes, and actions related to water conservation and climate resilience (Ali et al., 2023). The insights gained from this research could inform policy recommendations and practical interventions that leverage the power of media for sustainable community development in Kenya and potentially serve as a model for other regions facing similar challenges.

Keywords: Media, Behavior Change, Community Engagement, Water Use Efficiency, Climate Control

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Despite the critical importance of water use efficiency and climate control in Kenya’s context, there still needs to be a significant gap in understanding how media can effectively contribute to community capacity building in these areas (Kiptum et al., 2023). While media outlets have the potential to disseminate information and influence public perception, the extent to which they are currently utilized to drive positive

behavior change and enhance sustainable practices among communities needs to be well-documented (Muturi & Issaka, 2023; Monyenye et al., 2023) This research seeks to address this gap by investigating the following problem statement

It is imperative to note that the problem at hand is the need for more comprehensive Knowledge about the strategies, effectiveness, and impact of media-driven community capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving water use efficiency and promoting climate control practices in Kenya. This research seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by examining how media channels can be harnessed to effectively engage and empower communities, ultimately fostering a more resilient and environmentally conscious society in the face of escalating climate challenges.

Major Objective

The primary objective of the study was to assess the influence of media on behavior change and community engagement in the context of water use efficiency and climate control practices in Kenya.

Specific Objectives

1. Examine the impact of media on public awareness and Knowledge
2. Assess the media's role in behavior change and community engagement
3. Identify challenges and opportunities for media-driven community capacity building

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory is a fundamental concept in media and communication that offers valuable insights into how media exposure can gradually, yet significantly, shape individuals' perceptions and beliefs about the world (Ausat, 2023). This theory, pioneered by George Gerbner and his colleagues, underscores the enduring impact of consistent media consumption, mainly through television, but also applicable to various other media forms (Al-Qudah et al., 2023).

At its core, Cultivation Theory posits that cumulative and persistent exposure to particular types of media content can mold an individual's "cultivated" view of reality (Johnson, 2023). In essence, the content and recurring themes within the media can construct a framework through which individuals perceive and understand social issues, cultural values, and societal norms over an extended period.

In practical terms, Cultivation Theory suggests that individuals immersed in media content with specific portrayals or recurring messages may gradually adopt viewpoints and interpretations that align with what they continually encounter in the media (Owens, 2020). For instance, individuals exposed to a steady stream of television content depicting a violent world may, over time, come to perceive their actual surroundings as more dangerous or violent than they might be in reality.

This theory holds profound implications, emphasizing the decisive role that media plays in shaping public perception. It illustrates how media can influence people's sense of the world, respond to social issues, form opinions on cultural norms, and even develop attitudes toward various aspects of life (Kizgin et al., 2020). In the context of your research on the role of media in community capacity building for water use efficiency and climate control in Kenya, Cultivation Theory could provide valuable insights into how sustained exposure to media messages may cultivate a particular understanding of these critical issues among community members over time.

In summary, Cultivation Theory highlights the enduring impact of media on individuals' worldviews and underscores the significance of media in framing public perceptions and beliefs about the world around them. It is a critical theoretical framework for understanding how media can influence individuals' interpretations and responses to various societal and cultural aspects.

METHODOLOGY

The research was qualitative. This approach was chosen to provide a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the role of media in community capacity building for water use efficiency and climate control in Kenya. The primary design element is the utilization of a cross-sectional study, which serves as the overarching framework for data collection and analysis. This cross-sectional design allowed the research to capture a snapshot of the current state of media-driven community capacity-building initiatives in Kenya. By employing qualitative methods, the study aimed to investigate not only the effectiveness of media messages but also the nuanced perspectives and experiences of community members.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of media messages, focus group discussions were conducted with community members. The discussions provided valuable insights into participants' perceptions of media messages, how these messages influenced their behaviors, and the barriers they encountered in adopting sustainable practices (Seyfi et al., 2021).

In parallel, the study collected a diverse sample of media content, including television programs, newspaper articles, and online content, all related to water use efficiency and climate control. Content analysis techniques were employed to systematically analyze this media content, aiming to identify common themes, messaging strategies, and the overall tone of media coverage.

Transcriptions of focus group discussions underwent rigorous coding to identify recurring themes, patterns, and critical concepts in participants' responses. These coded data were used to perform thematic analysis, enabling the research to derive meaningful insights from the qualitative data. This process captured the nuances in participants' perceptions and experiences regarding media-driven initiatives.

On the other hand, media content collected during the study was analyzed to assess key messaging, framing, and communication strategies employed in promoting water use efficiency and climate control (Akinyi et al., 2023). Through content analysis, the researcher identified familiar narratives and communication approaches utilized across various media platforms.

The study acknowledged potential limitations, which included the limited representation in focus group discussions, which may have yet to capture the full diversity of community perspectives. Additionally, the dynamic nature of media content meant that it could change over time, potentially impacting the findings.

FINDINGS

Impact of Media on Public Awareness and Knowledge

The first objective of the research was to investigate the extent to which media outlets in Kenya contribute to raising awareness and disseminating Knowledge among the public regarding water use efficiency and climate control practices. The researcher came up with the following findings:

Varied Media Strategies:

Media outlets in Kenya employ diverse strategies, including informational programs, interviews with

experts, and storytelling, to convey messages about water use efficiency and climate control.

Different platforms, such as television, newspapers, and digital media, are utilized to reach various population segments. It is essential to understand the multifaceted strategies and platforms that media outlets in Kenya employ to convey messages related to these critical issues.

Diverse Strategies for Message Dissemination:

Media outlets in Kenya employed a rich tapestry of strategies to disseminate messages about water use efficiency and climate control. These strategies encompassed a variety of content formats and communication methods aimed at engaging and educating the public.

1. **Informational Programs:** Media outlets often produced dedicated programs that served as a source of valuable information on water use efficiency and climate control. These programs included documentaries, news segments, and special reports that delved into the scientific, ecological, and practical aspects of these issues. They aimed to inform the audience about the importance of responsible water management and actions to mitigate climate change.
2. **Interviews with Experts:** Expert interviews were a common approach to leverage the Knowledge and insights of specialists in the field. Media outlets frequently engaged scientists, environmentalists, policymakers, and other subject matter experts to provide in-depth perspectives on water and climate-related topics. Such interviews helped to add credibility and depth to the content and provided the audience with authoritative information.
3. **Storytelling:** Storytelling is another powerful technique used by media to make complex issues relatable and emotionally engaging through narratives, personal anecdotes, and human-interest stories. Media outlets connected with their audience on a more profound level. These stories illustrated the real-world impact of water use efficiency and climate control practices, making them more accessible and inspiring to the public.

Utilization of Multiple Platforms:

Media outlets in Kenya recognized the importance of reaching diverse population segments through different communication channels. To ensure maximum impact, they utilized a range of media platforms, each with unique strengths and audience demographics.

1. **Television:** Television remained one of the most influential and widespread media platforms in Kenya. It offered the advantage of combining audio and visual elements, making it a compelling tool for conveying messages about water use efficiency and climate control. It reached a broad cross-section of the population, from urban to rural areas.
2. **Newspaper:** Print media, such as newspapers, continued to be a vital source of information for many Kenyan communities. It provided in-depth coverage and analysis of water and climate-related issues, appealing to readers who prefer a more detailed examination.
3. **Digital Media:** With the proliferation of digital technology and internet access, online platforms gained prominence in Kenya. Digital media, including websites, social media, and online news outlets, offer real-time updates and interactive engagement opportunities. They were particularly effective in reaching tech-savvy and urban populations.

By recognizing these diverse strategies and platforms, the research could better appreciate the multifaceted efforts of media in Kenya to educate, engage, and empower the community in water use efficiency and climate control. This understanding aided in assessing the overall impact and effectiveness of media-driven community capacity building in the study.

Increased Awareness and Knowledge:

The research also found that media-driven initiatives contribute to increased awareness and Knowledge among community members regarding sustainable water management practices and climate control measures. The focus group discussions highlighted the specific topics or concepts that were effectively conveyed through media campaigns.

The research findings provided critical insights into the positive impacts of media-driven initiatives in Kenya concerning community capacity building for sustainable water management practices and climate control. These impacts were significant in fostering increased awareness and Knowledge among community members in various ways:

Raising Awareness and Disseminating Knowledge:

Media-driven initiatives have played a crucial role in raising awareness among community members in Kenya regarding the importance of sustainable water management practices and climate control measures. These initiatives act as a vital source of information, disseminating Knowledge about the challenges posed by water scarcity and climate change, as well as the practical steps that can be taken to address these issues. Through various media channels, individuals have been exposed to information, statistics, and expert insights, contributing to a deeper understanding of the challenges and potential solutions.

Effective Conveyance of Key Concepts:

The focus group discussions conducted as part of the research shed light on the specific topics and concepts that media campaigns have effectively conveyed to the community. This highlighted the strengths of media outlets in framing and communicating critical messages. Media content has successfully explained complex ideas and solutions related to water use efficiency and climate control in ways that resonate with the community. These critical concepts included:

- The importance of water conservation and responsible water use.
- The role of climate change in water resource management.
- Practical steps for water conservation at the individual and community levels.
- The impact of community engagement in achieving water and climate resilience.

Through compelling storytelling, expert interviews, and informative programs, media outlets managed to distill these complex concepts into digestible and relatable narratives, making them more accessible to a broader audience.

In summary, this research finding highlighted that media-driven initiatives have played a significant role in enhancing awareness and Knowledge within Kenyan communities. By effectively conveying critical concepts related to sustainable water management and climate control, media outlets empowered individuals to make informed decisions and take meaningful actions toward a more water-conscious and climate-resilient future. These insights emphasize the pivotal role of media in facilitating community capacity building and contributing to a more informed and engaged citizenry.

Media's Role in Behavior Change and Community Engagement

The second objective of the research was to analyze the influence of media campaigns and initiatives on shaping the behaviors and practices of community members concerning water conservation and climate resilience. The researcher came up with the following findings:

Positive Behavior Change:

Evidence of positive behavior change emerged, indicating that media exposure correlates with an increased adoption of water-saving techniques and environmentally conscious practices. Through the discussions, it was evident that exposure to relevant media messages would likely implement changes in their daily routines.

The research findings provided compelling evidence of the significant impact of media exposure on fostering positive behavior change among community members in Kenya. This positive behavior change was closely linked to the adoption of water-saving techniques and environmentally conscious practices, which could be attributed to the influence of media messages:

Correlation with Positive Behavior Change:

The research uncovered a strong correlation between media exposure and adopting water-saving techniques and environmentally conscious practices. It indicated that community members consistently exposed to relevant media messages were likelier to adopt sustainable behaviors daily. This positive behavior change manifested in various ways, including:

- **Reduced water consumption:** Media messages emphasizing the importance of water conservation and efficient water use led to decreased water wastage among community members.
- **Implementation of climate-resilient practices:** Exposure to media content highlighting climate change and its impacts motivated individuals to adopt practices that enhanced climate resilience, such as sustainable farming methods and waste reduction.

Implementing Changes in Daily Routines:

The focus group discussions conducted as part of the research provided valuable insights into how media exposure influences community members. It was evident that individuals exposed to relevant media messages were more inclined to implement changes in their daily routines. This signified the practical impact of media campaigns on individual behaviors and choices.

- **Water-saving habits:** Community members who had absorbed media messages on water conservation integrated water-saving practices into their daily routines. This included using water-efficient appliances, reducing shower times, or fixing leaks promptly.
- **Environmental consciousness:** Exposure to media content on climate control and environmental sustainability spurred individuals to adopt more eco-friendly behaviors, such as recycling, reducing energy consumption, and supporting conservation efforts.

These findings underscored the role of media as a powerful catalyst for behavior change. By presenting compelling narratives, expert advice, and practical solutions through various media channels, media outlets successfully motivated community members to make sustainable choices in their everyday lives. This positive behavior change contributed to a more environmentally responsible and climate-resilient community, aligning with the overarching goals of water use efficiency and climate control in Kenya.

In summary, the research provided robust evidence that media exposure has a direct and positive influence on behavior change among community members in Kenya. The findings indicate that media campaigns have effectively encouraged the adoption of water-saving techniques and environmentally conscious practices, thereby contributing to a more sustainable and climate-resilient community.

Community Empowerment:

The qualitative findings from the focus group discussions conducted in the research offered valuable insights into the transformative impact of media campaigns on community members in Kenya. These findings revealed that media initiatives not only raised awareness and prompted positive behavior change but also empowered individuals and instilled in them a sense of responsibility and advocacy for sustainable practices and climate resilience:

Empowerment through Media Campaigns:

The qualitative data underscores the empowering effect of media campaigns on community members. Through exposure to relevant and impactful media content, individuals gained a sense of empowerment and ownership over their water use habits and related sustainable practices. Here are some key observations from the qualitative findings:

- **Ownership of Water Use Habits:** Community members reported feeling more responsible for their water use habits due to media campaigns. They expressed a heightened awareness of the impact of their actions on water resources and the environment, which translated into a sense of ownership in managing water efficiently.
- **Advocacy for Sustainable Practices:** Media campaigns not only influenced personal behaviors but also inspired individuals to become advocates for sustainable practices. Participants in the focus group discussions revealed that they were more likely to share information about water conservation and climate resilience with friends and neighbors, effectively extending the reach of these initiatives within their communities.

Sense of Responsibility for Climate Resilience:

In addition to individual empowerment, the qualitative findings suggested that community members are more responsible for contributing to climate resilience efforts. The media played a pivotal role in fostering this sense of responsibility, as indicated by the following:

- **Community Engagement:** Participants in the discussions expressed a strong desire to engage with their communities to promote sustainable practices actively. This engagement included organizing awareness campaigns, participating in local conservation initiatives, and collaborating with community organizations to address water and climate-related challenges.
- **Collective Responsibility:** There was a notable shift towards a collective sense of responsibility for climate resilience. Community members recognized that addressing water scarcity and climate change required collaborative efforts, and they felt a shared commitment to safeguarding their environment for future generations.

These qualitative findings point to the transformative power of media campaigns not only in shaping individual behaviors but also in fostering a sense of empowerment, community engagement, and collective responsibility. The media's role extends beyond mere information dissemination; it has become a catalyst for positive social change, empowering community members to take an active role in building a more sustainable and climate-resilient future for their region.

Challenges and Opportunities for Media-Driven Community Capacity Building

The third objective of the research was to identify the challenges and barriers faced by media in effectively promoting water use efficiency and climate control in Kenya. The researcher, therefore, highlighted some of the opportunities and best practices for enhancing the role of media in fostering community capacity in these

crucial areas, focusing on inclusivity and tailored communication strategies, as shown below.

Challenges and Barriers:

The research uncovered challenges and barriers communities face in implementing water use efficiency and climate control practices despite media exposure. The qualitative data shed light on factors such as limited resource access, cultural norms, and infrastructural constraints influencing behavior change.

The research findings provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and barriers that communities in Kenya encountered in their efforts to implement water use efficiency and climate control practices, even in the presence of media exposure. These challenges, as revealed by the qualitative data, encompassed a range of factors, including limited access to resources, cultural norms, and infrastructural constraints:

1. Limited Access to Resources:

- **Resource Scarcity:** One significant challenge identified is the scarcity of essential resources required to implement water-efficient and climate-resilient practices. For instance, communities may face challenges accessing water-saving technologies, such as efficient irrigation systems, water-conserving appliances, or drought-resistant agricultural seeds. Limited access to these resources can hinder their ability to adopt recommended practices.
- **Financial Barriers:** The cost of acquiring and implementing these resources can also be a barrier. Community members may find it challenging to invest in water-saving technologies or climate-resilient infrastructure due to financial constraints. This financial burden can impede their ability to make necessary changes.

2. Cultural Norms and Traditions:

- **Cultural Practices:** Cultural norms and traditions can play a significant role in shaping behavior within communities. Sometimes, traditional practices may need to align with modern water conservation and climate-resilience measures. For instance, agricultural methods passed down through generations may need to incorporate efficient water usage or sustainable techniques, making it challenging to shift away from these practices.
- **Social Perceptions:** Community members may also face social pressure to conform to existing cultural norms, which can discourage them from adopting new practices even if they know the benefits. Overcoming deeply ingrained customs and beliefs can be a complex and gradual process.

3. Infrastructural Constraints:

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Inadequate infrastructure, such as water supply systems, can present significant barriers. Community members may be willing to adopt water-efficient practices, but they need more reliable infrastructure for water storage, distribution, and management.
- **Education and Training:** Effective implementation of water and climate-resilience practices often requires knowledge and training. The lack of accessible educational resources and training programs can hinder community members' ability to apply these practices effectively.

Understanding these challenges and barriers was crucial in the research as it highlighted the complexities of promoting sustainable practices within communities. It underscored the need for comprehensive strategies that addressed not only awareness and behavior change but also the structural, cultural, and economic factors that influence the successful adoption of water use efficiency and climate control practices. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of tailored and context-specific approaches to overcoming these barriers and fostering long-lasting change within communities.

Media Influence on Policy:

Media-driven initiatives had implications for policy development and implementation. Findings suggest that media advocacy has the potential to shape public discourse and influence policy decisions related to water and climate.

The research findings underscore the far-reaching implications of media-driven initiatives in shaping policy development and implementation, particularly in water use efficiency and climate control. These findings highlight the significant role of media advocacy in influencing public discourse and policy decisions related to these critical issues:

1. Shaping Public Discourse:

Media campaigns play a pivotal role in shaping public discourse by:

- **Raising Public Awareness:** Media initiatives effectively raise public awareness about water use efficiency and climate control. By disseminating relevant information, expert insights, and compelling narratives, they engage the public in discussions on these topics.
- **Framing Key Issues:** Media content often frames critical issues, highlighting the urgency of addressing water scarcity and climate change. The media's ability to frame these issues as pressing concerns influences public perception and discourse.
- **Offering Multiple Perspectives:** Media outlets provide a platform for diverse voices and perspectives. This inclusivity fosters informed public discourse by presenting a range of opinions, scientific findings, and community experiences related to water and climate issues.

2. Influencing Policy Decisions:

Media advocacy extends its influence to the realm of policy development and implementation:

- **Raising Policy Awareness:** By consistently covering water and climate-related topics, the media brings these issues to the forefront of public consciousness. This, in turn, creates public demand for action and accountability from policymakers.
- **Building Public Support:** Media campaigns can build public support for policies aimed at water use efficiency and climate control. When individuals are informed and engaged, they are more likely to advocate for policies that promote sustainable practices.
- **Holding Decision-Makers Accountable:** The media can serve as a watchdog by holding policymakers accountable for their decisions and actions related to water and climate issues. Investigative journalism and reporting can highlight the effectiveness or shortcomings of policies.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Media outlets themselves may engage in advocacy by promoting specific policies and initiatives. They can use their influence to drive public support and push for policy changes that align with sustainable practices.

3. The Power of Public Opinion:

The research findings suggest that public opinion, influenced by media advocacy, can be a driving force behind policy decisions. Policymakers are often responsive to public sentiment and the demands of their constituents. Media advocacy plays a crucial role in shaping and mobilizing this sentiment.

4. Media as an Information Bridge:

Media serves as a bridge between scientific research and the general public. It translates complex scientific findings and policy proposals into accessible, relatable information. This information bridge is essential for

informed decision-making at both the individual and policy levels.

In summary, the research findings demonstrate that media-driven initiatives have the potential to influence policy development and implementation significantly. By shaping public discourse, building public support, and advocating for specific policies, media outlets contribute to the collective effort to address water use efficiency and climate control. Their influence extends beyond awareness-building to policy advocacy, holding decision-makers accountable, and ultimately driving change at the policy level. Understanding the symbiotic relationship between media, the public, and policymaking is essential for advancing sustainable practices in water and climate management.

Summary

The research on the impact of media in Kenya has revealed that media outlets employ diverse strategies and platforms, including informational programs, expert interviews, and storytelling through television, newspapers, and digital media, to convey messages about water use efficiency and climate control. This multifaceted approach ensures the broad dissemination of information to reach various population segments. Furthermore, the research found that media-driven initiatives significantly increase awareness and Knowledge among community members about sustainable water management practices and climate control measures. The focus group discussions highlighted the effective communication of critical concepts, empowering individuals to make informed decisions and adopt water-conscious and climate-resilient practices, underlining the vital role of media in both educating and engaging the public.

The research on media-driven community capacity building in Kenya reveals a complex landscape of challenges, opportunities, and influence. On the one hand, the study highlights the barriers communities face in adopting water use efficiency and climate control practices, including limited access to resources, entrenched cultural norms, infrastructural constraints, and communication gaps. On the other hand, it emphasizes the potential of media advocacy to shape public discourse and policy decisions. Media outlets utilize a wide range of strategies and platforms to disseminate messages, fostering awareness and Knowledge among the public. This dynamic interaction between media, communities, and policymakers underscores the importance of tailored and context-specific approaches to address the complexities of sustainable practices. Media acts as a crucial information bridge, translating complex issues for the public and driving change both at the individual and policy levels. The findings highlight the vital role of media in advancing sustainable practices and influencing policy decisions in the realm of water use efficiency and climate control.

The research on the role of media in behavior change and community engagement in Kenya provided compelling evidence of the transformative impact of media campaigns. It revealed that media exposure correlates with positive behavior change among community members, leading to the adopting of water-saving techniques and environmentally conscious practices. The research findings emphasize the practical impact of media messages on individual behaviors, manifesting in reduced water consumption, climate-resilient practices, and the integration of sustainability into daily routines. Furthermore, the research highlights that media campaigns empower community members by instilling a sense of responsibility and advocacy for sustainable practices. Participants in focus group discussions expressed a heightened awareness of the impact of their actions on water resources and the environment, leading to a sense of ownership in managing water efficiently. They also demonstrated a strong desire for community engagement and collective responsibility in addressing water and climate-related challenges. Overall, the research underscores the influential role of media in promoting behavior change and community empowerment, contributing to a more sustainable and climate-resilient society.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research in Kenya has shed light on the instrumental role of media in addressing the

critical issues of water use efficiency and climate control. Through diverse strategies and platforms, media outlets have successfully disseminated information, empowered individuals to make sustainable choices, and influenced policy decisions. Media has not only raised awareness and prompted positive behavior change but also instilled a sense of responsibility and advocacy among community members. While challenges such as limited resources and cultural norms persist, media-driven initiatives have proven their potential to drive community capacity building, fostering a more water-conscious, climate-resilient, and socially engaged society. This research underscores the indispensable contribution of media in promoting sustainable practices and shaping a more informed and responsible citizenry in Kenya.

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