

Solution Based Journalism in Communicating Climate Change: A Content Analysis of Print Media in Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to assess media approaches in communicating climate change. Solution- Oriented Journalism/ Reporting is a type of media coverage of events that focuses on solutions attempted in response to a crisis. Climate change is an ongoing crisis globally. In the recent past, Kenya has witnessed many diverse and unprecedented climatic conditions which are more erratic in terms of duration and time of occurrence. Rainy seasons have also led to increased flooding and landslides. Kenyan media sparsely provides evidenced and solution based alternatives in their reporting on this topical issue. Mostly coverage is influenced by events such as climate conferences and disasters instead of incorporating climate crisis impact on economies, health, food security, agriculture, etc. Solution-Based reporting of environmental issues, including climate change, has been markedly low. Through a qualitative approach, the study sought to answer the following question; What are the journalistic approaches adopted by the Kenyan media in reporting climate change? Data of this study consisted of all newspaper articles in the two local dailies *Daily Nation* and *Standard* newspapers for the period of one year (June 2022- May 2023). Data was collected through code sheets for content analysis. A purposive sampling was used to select articles for analysis. A total of 23 articles were analysed thematically. The findings of the study show that very few articles sampled used the solution –based approaches to reporting climate change. Key findings indicate that climate change impacts mitigation and adaptation, climate change conferences and policy, politics and projects were themes mostly covered in the two newspapers under review. Findings also indicate an increased coverage of both international and local climate change news. The study further, established that there is low awareness on solutions journalism, with only 6 stories on climate change taking a solutions approach. The study recommended that there is need to train journalists and editors on solutions journalism and crisis reporting. The government is implored to engage the media and other stakeholders on climate change communication in order to sensitize the public on the subject. The researcher suggested further investigation on whether other mediums such as radio, TV and online platforms incorporate solutions journalism in their reportage

Key words: Solution- Based journalism, Climate change, media coverage, crisis communication

