Original Article

The Role of Regulatory Frameworks in Enhancing Journalism Training and Media Practice in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

The Media Council of Tanzania report (2019) posits that there is lack of sound journalism practice is prevalent in the Tanzanian media environment. This state of affairs informs the gap that this study sought to investigate, in particular, trying to establish the role of supervisory bodies responsible for ensuring the quality of the courses offered by the various universities and colleges training Journalism in Tanzania and those responsible for enhancing media professionalism in the country. Specifically, the study investigated the role of the regulatory frameworks governing journalism training (TCU and NACTE) and media practice (TCRA and MCT) in enhancing the profession. Guided by two theories, Kolb's experiential learning theory, which insists on constant field training experience alongside classroom teaching, and Agenda setting theory which is concerned with the power that the media has over salience public opinion. The study adopted a mixed method approach using interviews with respective media trainers from St. Augustine University of Tanzania and a documentary review of the regulatory authorities responsible for media deployed to know their roles in enhancing media training and practice. An analysis of the roles was done and presented in narratives. The findings showed that there was a lack of a linked strategy between the training and practice regulatory frameworks that contributed to irresponsibility in governance. The study recommends that the policy that establishes the relevant authority should be reviewed to have a single regulator with departments that all collaborate to enhance the profession and consolidate the functions of all media-based entities from the training, research, media practice, and total quality assurance.

INTRODUCTION

The paper discusses the role of regulatory frameworks in enhancing journalism training and media practice in Tanzania. The manuscript is part of the PhD dissertation titled the Role of Journalism Training Institutions in the changing media dynamics of Tanzania. The paper is divided into five main sections: the background of the study, the literature review, the methodology, the discussion of results, conclusions, and recommendations.

Background of the Study

The plurality of media that is enjoyed in Tanzania as far as the Media ownership Monitor report -RSF (2018), Sturmer (1998) is concerned, offers an opportunity for scholars at tertiary and university institutions to enrol students in media programs to acquire journalism specialisations and media jobs. However, the problem as stated by Bazira and Uki (2019) in the state of media in Tanzania is that the performance of graduates joining the media industry is below the expected aptitude. The challenge is so evident as far as long-serving Tanzania senior editor Jesse Kwayu cited in Mwafisi (2021), confirms that "there is a diminishing quality of journalists entering the newsrooms" as they lack the skills and enthusiasm to work in the media (p.114). The situation is critical and it requires a turnaround in both the training and industry practice policy regulation according to Mmari, Kovacs and Kalman (2022).

The training of journalists and media professionals in Tanzania is done in the higher learning institutions regulated by the two educational bodies which are under the Ministry of Education and training – The Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) and the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE). The media practice, on the other hand is regulated by the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) – a civil society organisation, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory authority (TCRA), under the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Information Technology. The Ministry oversees and governs the media services and practices in its totality. The interesting part of this study was to investigate the role of these regulatory bodies in enhancing the overall media professional aptitude which comprises both the training and practice of media.

Journalism training institutions as used in this study refer to the accredited educational facilities designed to impart higher learner knowledge, skills, and attitude to achieve competency-based outcomes that may be applied in the journalism occupation. The National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) is a higher learning regulatory body in Tanzania that establishes, develops, and designs awards to assure quality education provision in tertiary training institutions and colleges- (NACTE website). The Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) is the statutory and regulatory organisation established by the Tanzanian government to oversee university education in Tanzania. It is the body whose recognition, approval

and accreditation are needed before any university can start (TCU website). This so far means that journalism training in Tanzania is controlled by these specific authorities that oversee and control it before the product is ready for the media market.

The resident issue on the cry for professionalism has been in almost all professions, but according to how Deuze (2005) expounds on the role of the media; - that the media is a powerful social tool with basic functions of information, education, entertainment, guidance and for steering public opinion for democracy and economic development. The author contends that the imperative of the profession is "much more than its modernist bias of telling people what they need to know" (Deuze 2005, p. 442). Journalists have an exclusive role and status in society. Studies that reflect the critical state of the journalism profession in the face of the changing communication technologies and the internet society are constantly done to uphold the profession, according to Heinonen (1999). The author critically views journalistic practices that had to adapt quickly to the revolution of communication technologies.

The Journalism profession is all about the role journalists play in society. Journalists are products of their own society, according to Jamal and Awaisi (2012) and Donsbach (2009). These are people who also uphold societal values *vis a vis* their professional duty of informing, guiding, educating, and entertaining. This means journalists who are also socially bound to some personal choices and feelings towards a story may easily fall into the social personality trap, something which requires regulation. The role of regulatory frameworks is to ensure that every profession is upholding its rites well in its spheres of practice without harming or affecting another entity. Rioba (2012) highlights the doubt of a media self-regulatory body in Tanzania MCT in upholding the professional rites of journalism in the wake of media market forces and political influences in Tanzania. This study questions the role of regulatory frameworks in enhancing the media profession in Tanzania.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theories used in this study are the Kolb Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and McCombs' and Shaw Agenda Setting Theory. The importance of theory in a research study according to Maxwell (2005) is "to make assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support and inform the research (Maxwell 2005: p. 33)". The two theories overlap as they all deal with issues of both training and elements of practice in the media. As far as the regulatory frameworks guiding journalism training and media practice are concerned, the theories hold significant value in explaining the variables. The regulatory authorities - TCU, NACTE, TCRA, MCT and the Ministry all require guiding theories in planning their vision, mission, objectives, and activities.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

On the issue of how these regulatory frameworks enhance journalism training and media practice, Kolb (1984) outlines- the experiential learning cycle, whereby experiments are an explicit and necessary dimension of learning from experience. The theory posits that learning should be conceived as a process and not in terms of outcomes. The model explains a way of allowing for different learning styles and environments providing knowledge learning consistent with human cognition, growth, and development (Kolb, 1984; Ongalo, 2014).

The theory emphasises the central role that experiences play in the learning process - Kolb, Boyatzis and Mainemelis (2001). In supporting this theory, Healey and Jenkins (2007) contend that Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is one of the best-known educational theories in higher education. The theory presents a way of structuring a session or a whole course using a learning cycle. The different stages of the cycle are associated with distinct learning styles. Since individuals differ in their preferred learning styles recognising this is the first stage in raising students' awareness of the alternative approaches possible according to Healey and Jenkins (2007, p. 185). Education regulators ought to embrace the tenets of this theory to guide their actions in supervising education.

McCombs and Shaw Agenda setting Theory

Agenda setting is the process of the mass media presenting certain issues frequently and prominently with the result that large segments of

the public come to perceive those issues as more important than others; McCombs, Shaw, Weaver & Coleman (2008). However, in the current day media spaces, journalists do not necessarily have the total mandate of becoming agenda setters because according to the study by Zain (2014), agenda setting seems to be two-way traffic. This situation occupies a critical and analytical approach to journalism scholars and training institutions as it carries along a change in the paradigm of the theory. Regulatory bodies guiding media are bound to subject their policies in guiding regulation towards the achievement of what media status held before this paradigm shift by identifying and outlining all possible sources of media information and accrediting the same; so as to sustain the profession.

Empirical Literature Review

As far as the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) of 1977 is concerned, higher education is one of the matters falling under the Union sphere. Special institutions - the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) and Tanzania Commission for Universities - (TCU) were established with the main objective being to regulate, among other things, the quality assurance of education programs that are offered at all tertiary institutions and Universities. Audit of the education programs is done periodically. The audit includes the availability of teachers and their qualifications, curriculum and supportive facilities available in the institutions, Bazira and Uki (2019). Media regulation in Tanzania is so far made by the MCT, TCRA and the Ministry of Communication and information technology. The study identifies the roles of the regulatory frameworks governing overall media training and practice as follows:

TCU

The training of journalists and media professionals is done at tertiary colleges and university institutions in Tanzania. The Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) is the statutory and regulatory organisation established by the Tanzanian government to oversee university education in Tanzania. It is the body whose recognition, approval and accreditation are needed before any university can start. According to the (TCU website) under the background and core

functions button, the Council has three basic functions, which are:

The regulatory function: deals with conducting a regular and impromptu periodic evaluation of universities, their systems, and programs to regulate the quality assurance systems at new and established universities and in the process, institutions are registered and accredited to operate in Tanzania. The advisory function deals with advising the government and the public on matters related to higher education in Tanzania as well as international issues pertaining to higher education, including advice on program and policy formulation and other best practices.

The supportive function: ensures the orderly conduct of university operations and management adherence to set standards and benchmarks by providing support to universities in terms of coordinating the admission of students, offering training and other sensitisation interventions in key areas like quality assurance, university leadership and management, fundraising and resources mobilisation, entrepreneurial skills, and gender mainstreaming.

Thus, in carrying out the regulatory function, the Commission has developed Quality Assurance General Guidelines and Minimum Standards for the Provision of University Education in Tanzania. The protocol serves to mandate curriculum quality review, creativity, growth and expansion of intellectual products, and autonomous academic standards approval alongside serving the national interest according to the (TCU website). The study will address these core functions amidst the poor professionalism claims in journalism.

NACTE

The National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) is a statutory body established by the Act of Parliament, Cap.129. To oversee and coordinate the provision of technical education and training provided by non-university tertiary institutions. Section 11 of the Act of Parliament empowers the Council to approve curricula, examinations, and awards for autonomous non-University technical institutions. Technical education in this context is defined as "*education and training undertaken by students to equip them to play roles requiring higher*

levels of skills, knowledge and understanding and in which they take responsibility for their areas of specialisation". NACTE is, thus, a multidisciplinary and multi-sectored body empowered to oversee and coordinate the provision of technical and vocational education and training in Tanzania.

The scope of NACTE covers all tertiary education and training institutions, other than Universities and their affiliated colleges, delivering courses at the technician, semi-professional and professional levels leading to awards of certificates, diplomas, degrees, and other related awards. Effective regulation and coordination of technical education and training in the country-mandated byte National Council for Technical Education and Training (NACTE) cannot be achieved if curricula for institutions do not address the needs of society. The reason is that curriculum plays a central role in the production of skilled, competent, and knowledgeable citizens to meet the demands of the country's social and economic development. According to the NACTE website, the mandate of the National Council for Technical Education is derived from Cap.129 are three-fold and may be summarised as Regulatory Function: to establish the regulatory framework for technical education and training, leading to quality-assured qualifications;

Quality Assurance Function: to assist technical institutions in improving and maintaining the quality of the education they provide and in ensuring that their programs meet labour market demand by guiding and monitoring their adherence to the regulatory framework; and Advisory Function: to advise both Government and technical institutions on the strategic development of technical education and training can be made.

These three aspects are interrelated and together make up the core functions of NACTE, a process leading to quality-assured qualifications in technical education and training in Tanzania. At this juncture, the study realises that there are similar but not equivalent functions of the two regulatory bodies responsible for journalism training in Tanzania.

The Media Practice Regulator

The Council of Europe report 2022 talks of the global media statistics outlining each media outlet in Europe with its specific regulator. Enjoying genuine independence in law and practice is a prerequisite for these authorities to be able to carry out their remit in an effective, transparent and accountable manner. Authors like Eberwin, Fengler and Karmasin (2019) talk about the fierce public discussions about the quality and responsibility of the media. The authors are of the opinion that self-regulation of the media calls for a new paradigm in outlining the truth of the political messages in European media. While the Council of Europe recognises the important role of independent regulatory authorities entrusted with responsibility for regulating the audio-visual sector at the national level as contributors towards fostering a favourable environment for freedom of expression; the Council still oversees a wide range of independent and autonomous media in the audio-visual media sector, and it is essential to provide for its adequate regulation according to Erberwin et al. (2019).

This may sound like an advanced priority of media regulation practised efficiently in the European Union. However, according to Rudin and Ibboston (2022) in the UK, all aspects of newspaper and magazine journalism and production, and radio and television journalism and production, are regulated and given advice by government-appointed and independent advisory bodies, which seek to ensure a balance between ethical and legal considerations. There is a similar but slightly different case in African media regulation. In Africa, media regulation has always been in the conflict between press freedoms and controlling access to information according to Brosse and Frere (2012). In many cases, this tendency had left the regulator with no grip control over the profession such that it may seem as if the media regulator was against the media itself. The authors contend that media regulators were government appointees who preserved political power interests against media performance.

TCRA

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) performs the designated regulatory role of media structuring and output

control in Tanzania. The regulator records its performance on the licensing of physical media structures; and just a little or nothing to do with content production and regulation. The TCRA prides itself in ensuring licenses for media outlets. The authority report that the current number of radio stations operating legally in Tanzania is 158, while the number of TV stations in the country increased from 46 in 2016 to 48 in the 2017 TCRA report (2020). With such a body as a media regulator, the issue of upholding professional rites in journalism practice is still orphaned.

Media Council of Tanzania (MCT)

The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) is an independent, voluntary, non-statutory self-regulatory body established by the media fraternity on June 30, 1995 at the Journalists and Stakeholders' Convention that was held in Dar es Salaam. The Council envisions creating an environment that enables a strong and ethical media that contributes towards a more democratic and just society (MCT website). Among the many objectives of this body, an essential element that upholds professionalism in journalism is paramount.

The MCT website records the objectives of the Council to be concerned with the promotion, assistance, safeguarding and defending media freedom and allied forms of public communication in the country. Moreover, the other basic objective is to oversee those journalists, editors, broadcasters, producers, directors, proprietors, and all those involved in the media industry adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards. The Council also receives and conciliates, mediates, and or arbitrates upon complaints from the public and the media inter see the infringements of the code of ethics. Furthermore, the Council also encourages the development of the media profession in Tanzania by undertaking activities including but not limited to training journalists, overseeing press clubs' development, conduct various media freedom campaigns, seminars, workshops, and symposia.

The MCT's many other objectives go on to maintain a register of developments that are likely to restrict the supply of information of public interest and importance. It also investigates the conduct and attitude of persons, corporations, and governmental bodies at all levels towards media and makes public

the reports on such investigations and many other similar works of the Council which make it more of a friendly regulator or free media practitioner. However, having a body like this is important in the profession but again, it does not guarantee the performance of journalists in the media. The Council serves as an intern body between the media and the public, and since it is a voluntary body composed and made up of the media stakeholders, not much can be anticipated from a body with no biting teeth.

Ministry of Information, Communication, and Information Technology

The Ministry is meant to formulate and monitor the implementation of policies on information and communication technologies and Postal services. It is envisaged to drive the digital transformation agenda in Tanzania amid the fourth global phase of the industrial revolution. It is mandated to formulate and monitor the implementation of Policies on Information, Information Technology, Telecommunications and Postal. The Ministry is also responsible for ICT broadband Back-Borne; Performance Improvement and Development of Human resources; extra-Ministerial Departments, Parastatal Organisations; Agencies and Projects under this Ministry.

The Ministry's focus in the communication sector is basically on technologies. According to the Ministry's strategic plan 2021/22- 2025/26, the ministry's motto derives from the ruling party manifesto, which "acknowledges the importance of the communication sector as an "enabler" of other sectors in the contribution to robust economic growth" (MCIT 2021/22 – 2025/26, p. 7). The government of the United Republic of Tanzania, under this ministry had enacted four Acts concerning the control of freedom and regulation of media in the country. These are The Cybercrimes Act, 2015; the Statistics Act, 2015; the Media Services Act, 2016; and The Access to Information Act, 2015 – Mulinda (2021). All these aims at limiting the media space, especially control of alternative political thoughts.

Although not stipulated in the Ministry's five-year strategic plan, the importance of the media in the democratic process and national development has

always been appreciated globally. The global declaration of human rights (UDHR) Article 19 states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers. The aspect of media regulation is not highlighted in the ministry's programs, nor is it stated anywhere in the ministerial departments. The United Republic of Tanzania constitution (URT -1999) higher education and learning policy in Tanzania refers the higher learning institutions as research centres for enhancing professional excellence - This study comes as an eye opener to both media and education regulatory bodies to suggest better ways of supporting the profession amidst the poor professionalism claims.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This was an exploratory study; situated under the interpretive paradigm using a mixed-method approach. Klaus and Jankwoski (2002) talk of an interpretive approach in social sciences as an attempt to understand a social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), an interpretive paradigm "is a paradigm based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective, but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology), and is, therefore, best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology)" (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p.35). The desire for the choice of this particular approach for this study derives from the belief that exploring all the factors surrounding the problem, as explained in the state of the media in Tanzania report by Bazira and Uki (2019) may yield adequate inferences that offer proper explanations of the journalists' experiences from their perspectives – social contexts.

The objective of this study was to see the role of regulatory frameworks in enhancing journalism training and media practice in Tanzania. As policies issue, the manner in which the study tries to explain the regulation segments in the policy framework

that affect both the training and practice of media. When a study addresses policy issues according to Creswell (2012), it has to be grounded in its approach, i.e., gather information from natural perspectives. Data gained from this type of approach is rich and may correctly inform decisions for change. This type of approach also enables a policy researcher to understand complex phenomena qualitatively as well as to explain the phenomena by numbers, charts, and basic statistical analyses. According to Rossman and Wilson (1985), a multi-method approach to policy research holds the potential for understanding the complex phenomena of the social world, seeing this world through multiple lenses, and using eclectic methodologies that better respond to the multiple stakeholders of policy issues than a single method or approach to research.

Research Design

The study sought mostly qualitative inferences derived from interviews and documented information from the official websites of the regulatory authorities. The interviews were carried out with the receivers of the services provided by the media and education regulatory bodies. Here the interviewees were the education and training personnel at the university and editors of the media houses. Tight (2019) defines a document as written, printed, photographed, or recorded material that can be used to provide information or evidence. He further says that documents may be virtual, published, or unpublished texts that reside in public, private, or virtual domains. The study used both published and unpublished documents obtained from the official websites of the ministry of communication and information technology, the Media Council of Tanzania, the Tanzania Communications regulatory authority, the Tanzania Commission of Universities and the National Council of Technical and Vocational Education Training.

Population and Sampling

The reason for the target population according to Lavrakas (2008), is to substantiate a clear direction on the scope and objective of the research and data types, define the characteristic variables of the individuals who qualify for the study and provide

the scope of the total population or universe for determining sample size. The study targeted the editors of media houses, journalism graduates, and Journalism lecturers in Tanzania. In-depth interviews were carried out with the respective media trainers, news editors and journalism graduates on the state of the media in Tanzania. The units that this study unveiled were concerned mainly with how the TCU and NACTE guidelines for education supervision aided the adaptation of journalism learners in the media market. The role of the researcher here was to connect the patterns in the learning and patterns in the media practices to assess how they realign with each other. The study participants from each group (the journalism students, editors, lecturers and working journalists) demonstrate a high level of understanding of the problem of poor professionalism in the media practice. This meant that the study was essential.

The study further determined the sample by non-probability purposive sampling techniques. Robinson (2014) defines purposive sampling as an intentional selection of informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon. A purposive sampling procedure was used to obtain particular respondents for the interview- these were four journalism lecturers from St. Augustine University of Tanzania, which is an institution that is owing to the types of curricula provided, i.e., certificate, Diploma, and degree level journalism courses- subscribe to both educational, supervisory bodies TCU and NACTE. The study also purposively sampled interviews with four editors of two prominent media houses in Tanzania-Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) –a public broadcaster, and Mwananchi communications –a private print media house.

The study used two distinct data collection methods that supplemented each other in obtaining lucrative information: interviews and documentary reviews. Denzin and Lincoln (2002) note that "multiple methods or triangulation reflects the attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin and Lincoln 2002: p.7).

Data Analysis

Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe data analysis as a process of eliciting meaning and gaining understanding. The first step was to align the data set and design themes. The formation of themes derived from the specific objectives which were coded to know the role of regulatory authorities in enhancing journalism training and media practice. The data required by the study was specific so the interviews held with three specific groups — lecturers, journalism graduates and news editors— offered qualitative inferences which are explained in the narrative. Diagrams and figures were also used to show the connection between the theory and the variables of the study.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations derive from the values that Iphofen and Tolich (2018) describe as "things of importance" that matter and are worth upholding and preserving (Iphofen and Tolich 2018: p. 2). Furthermore, Creswell and Hanson (2007) note that "regardless of the approach to qualitative inquiry, a qualitative researcher faces many ethical issues that surface during field data collection and in the data analysis and dissemination of the qualitative reports" (Creswell and Hanson 2007 p. 141). With all these observed the basic disclosure requirements for obtaining informed consent, presentation and analysis were adhered to.

To ensure the credibility of this study and to respect the dignity and interests of those participating, it was vital to put consideration of the four-common key ethical principles discussed in Halai (2006). The principles include: (a) informed and voluntary consent, (b) confidentiality of the information shared, (c) anonymity of research participants, and (d) benefit or at least no harm to participants (Halai, 2006, p.8-9). The study tools used were the interview guide which was developed in a pilot study done earlier and proved to be trustworthy for all stakeholders wishing to bank on the findings for the improvement of the profession.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study objective that guided this paper was to investigate the role of regulatory frameworks in

enhancing journalism training and media practice in Tanzania. An investigation is a thorough search for facts, especially those that are hidden or need to be sorted out in a complex situation. The goal of an investigation is usually to determine how or why something happened. Thematic data was derived from the interviews held with the six (6) journalism graduates working in the media houses of TBC and Mwananchi Communications and their respective news Editors and Four (4) SAUT journalism lecturers. A documentary review sought insights for the investigation of the regulatory framework. The study took place between November 2021 andApril2022.

The study enquired to know what generally affects training provision and whether there are policy guidelines that affect performance in the discipline. Lecturers responded by exposing a myriad of challenges with regulatory guidelines when they said:

> *"The lack of inter-disciplinarily of lecturers of journalism studies; is a huge problem since training a journalist requires us to be extra knowledgeable beyond just having the craft of writing texts and airing broadcasts*" (Interview- December 09 2021)

The mentors of journalism are faced with restrictions due to some policies of the Tanzania Commission for Universities. For example, there is a policy that requires all journalism lecturers to bear journalism credentials from a bachelor's degree onwards to a postgraduate degree in order to train journalists:

> *"This has negative effects on a crosscutting profession like journalism and by far, this policy diminishes the professional vibrancy because we miss out on some very important skills that are required in a multi-faceted profession"* (Field interview- December 09 2021).

The lecturers feel that the training curriculum should expose students to a variety of people from different disciplines since the media functions across all professions in reporting societal issues. For a journalist to report on health or law issues, they ought to be exposed to practitioners who can mentor them in their specific language and use of

terminologies. This is building specialists in the media profession. TCU policy requires only journalism scholars to teach journalists something that hinders competency and vibrancy in journalism training and practice.

Journalism is an artistic profession according to Maniou, Stark and Touwen (2020) and Deuze (2001) that requires beyond classroom teaching and a journalist with a variety/mixture of knowledge to give the communicator a competitive advantage while informing the public. The basics of the profession are inbounding in the practice of communication itself. Having the broad knowledge in a variety of disciplines is what decorates the art of communication of a journalist.

On a second note, the constant changes in the policy of different disciplines that are not directly updated in the journalism training curriculum make the trained scholar unaware of the changes and therefore their exposure to new ideas in the field. Journalism lecturers interviewed upon this claimed to labour a huge task of dealing with an amplified enrolment of students in the universities something which deprives them also the extra time to obtain current media expositions to share with their students. This is also a regulatory matter as it was confirmed when they say:

> *"It is challenging to teach close to four hundred students and ensure you have adequate time to read their stories and listen to their broadcast clips and correct them*" (Interview- December 09 2021).

The study found out that many of these lecturers did their journalism training during their time of studies too as part of the field apprenticeship. Furthermore, one of the lecturers suggested upon the contextualisation of the course to reflect the African/ Tanzanian reality of things- a touch of culture, tradition, ethics, and values of Tanzania when they said:

> *"Sometimes our journalism training seems irrelevant simply because we expect scholars to address fellow scholars and we grade them by doing so instead of ensuring they touch their standing ground" For example, expecting them to write news in English when in actual fact they are going to broadcast in Kiswahili or even*

another vernacular of community radio" (Field Interview Date December 09 2021).

The graduate journalists also interviewed about their training versus the practice all affirmed that their training did not expose them to multimedia journalism practice. They affirm to have faced first-hand intimidation from fellow workmates who do not have relevant degrees but can simply perform better than them. They insisted that apprenticeship should be enhanced in the training curriculum to help journalism students adapt well to the media. The editors commenting upon this inference said:

"Honestly, yes recently, we have had graduates who need training in order to perform in the newsroom. We wonder what they have been doing in colleges for the years they have been taking their subjects. The situation is worse

when they are required to go to the field, say the courtroom and get a story – first, they do not grasp what is newsworthy in that story, and second, they can hardly put up all the facts required. This leaves a lot to be desired"! (Interview date18/11/2021)

On another note, Bazira and Uki (2019) firmly talk of the incapacitated training facilities in many journalism training institutions countrywide. The situation calls for a reprimand from the curriculum regulatory authorities, specifically NACTE and TCU. Although the situation is slightly different from the responses obtained in this study, some effort still needs to be engineered by education regulators; *Figure 1*. Below illustrates the responses about campus training facilities at SAUT and how relevant they are to current journalism training:

Figure 1: Campus training facilities
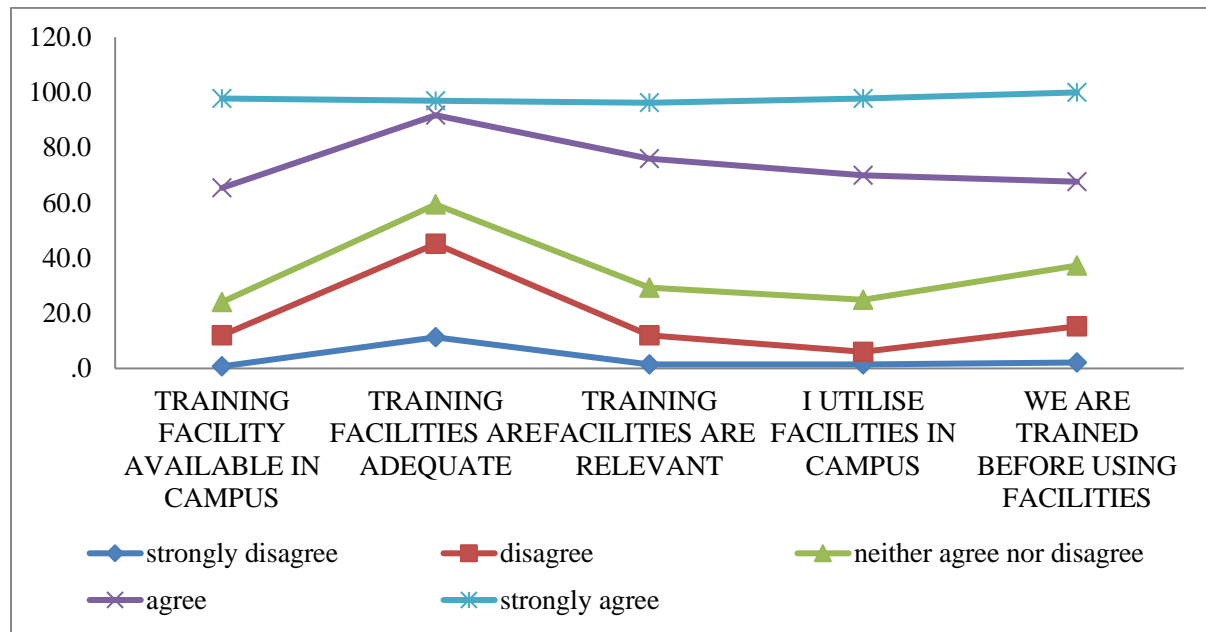
Source: Field Data (November 2021)

On a general observation, the figure depicts the average availability, adequacy, relevance, and utility of journalism training facilities at SAUT; however, there is a challenge to the modernity of the equipment to suit the current multimedia flow. The study learns that passing the benchmark of having facilities is not a guarantee of professionalism or

media suitability – but more practice in the changing dynamics and skills is something commendable.

Investigating the roles of the TCU and NACTE, the study found that all bodies have quality assurance as one of their major responsibilities. The issue with the availability of adequate training facilities in the educational setting is one of the quality assurance

categories of the education regulator which goes hand in hand with the use of facilities and the modernity of facilities. The following response from the editors shows a typical lack of practical experiences of the students:

"La kwanza tatizo ni kusoma kwa vitendo baadhi ya walimu wanafundisha theory no practical let say anakwambia 'fade out'. Fade in without showing yeye anazungumzia lakini usikute hajui practical ikoje just anasomesha through makaratasi. [The problem with most teaching is that it is more theoretical and has no practical orientation. A teacher may be teaching about a concept such as fade out or fade in without practically showing what that means. Such concepts cannot be taught only through paper".](Field interview- December 09 2021).

A reflection on the NACTE guidelines on journalism training curriculum NTA level 5 the study learns that what is claimed by the media editors as journalism students failing to practice is revealed in the outlined course modules. The aspect of field practical assessment requires that the supervisor/ employer of the media house keep a daily track record of the trainee as they perform in the field. This does not happen and it is not possible as far as the media editors are concerned as they confessed there are fewer editors in the newsroom who are quite busy and have timely deadlines to deliver news and allied services.

> *"We want journalists who can work independently with minimal supervision because the media is so busy and vibrant and it wants timely quality products because of the stiff competition in the media market—breaking news items are all over the place from international media as well as from social media, a journalist has to be able to grasp from every corner of what has happened and have an informed story – it requires an independent action"* (Source: interview date18/11/2021).

The news editors' concern tallies with what the SAUT lecturers said that *"media houses do not accept students for field practices"* – a concern as to whose responsibility to ensure students are guided and what measure is taken when such responsibility is left unchecked. In Mfumbusa (2010), Josephi (2010), and Adaja (2012), a contention is made that

journalists being exposed to journalistic values in schools contradicts the industry realities.

The UNESCO model for journalism training provides that the media should foster democracy and nation-building. The model gives nations provisions to customise programs according to the countries needs. Since journalists are products of their own society, the curriculum should be tailored to cater for the communication needs of the Tanzanian community parse.

The lecturers highlight some elements in the curriculum that although they are of global concern and relevant, do not directly benefit the common Tanzanian audience. A particular example is when the curriculum insists on online journalism which is currently a global issue, but in reality, the common villager in the remote areas of the country does not even own a device for accessing online content, let alone have the finances to purchase bundles, but still needs the media for information. The media regulator TCRA has a focus on digitalisation while huge gaps in the communication community still abound.

TCRA's Msimamizi Quarterly Newsletter (2022) talks of the government's emphasis on stirring the digital economy by establishing special digital schools across the country in a bid to explore opportunities in the digital world. An excerpt from the story says:

"Miongoni mwa masuala yaliyo jadiliwa na kukubaliwa ni umuhimu wa kuanzisha shule maalum za TEHAMA, kuhamasisha Tanzania kidijitali" (Msimamizi 2022 p. 8). ["Among the issues that were deliberated and agreed upon was the importance of establishing special ICT schools to stir and encourage students on matters of the digital economy alongside the construction of necessary infrastructure in support of the same so that Tanzania changes digitally".]

The move to national digitalisation projects as deliberated by TCRA is a commendable effort. However, the national statistics of digital and mobile network subscribers (according to the TCRA's quarterly newsletter Jan –March 2022) do not really match the urgent need for it. It seems like every department functions independently in a single organisation such that one department is

unaware of the plans and prospects of the other so as to advise each other accordingly. The study thus realises that regulating media performance in the country, which probably falls under this regulator may not be possible.

The news editors who responded to the question on how these regulatory bodies enhance the profession; showed a crosscutting phenomenon as far as the roles of regulatory authorities are concerned. The editors affirm that TCRA is a regulator that is concerned more with issues pertaining to physical structures and permits of media houses rather than issues of the *"quality of the media content"*. The authority deals more with laws and regulations and licensing of media houses rather than regarding the content and media professional practices. This was affirmed through the following statement made by one of the editors:

> *"It is the civil society organisations that deal more with issues related to matters of content and professionalism in journalism. In such scenario, media houses are left to design in-house protocols to be adhered to according to ownership, editorial policies, and their desired publics" (*Interview -9/11/2021).

This inference means there is not a strict monitor for journalism products in place, such that every media house is responsible for its own checks and balances. Having a profession with no strict regulator makes the profession lose its credibility and sense as far as Ibbi (2016) and Egbujor (2018) are concerned.

The education regulators (TCU and NACTE) provide for the field practical attachment segment in the course of training that has to go alongside the theoretical knowledge gained in the journalism study program. However, this has so far been neglected as proven in these findings. Each side of the collaboration teams (the journalism training institutions and the media houses) gives reasons for the inability to collaborate as suggested.

It is the view of this study that the knowledge gained through experience, as Kolb's theory advises is not strictly adhered to. In the journalism module for the Diploma, students' experiments are mentioned, but the learning emphasises mainly the tutor/mentor classroom disposition (doing tests and assignments, contact hours of lectures, among others). The practical field requirement is not given enough emphasis as it is only awarded 10 credit values (*equivalent to 4 hours only*) out of the total 129 credit values (*equivalent to 82 hours)* throughout the two-year program. This is according to the curriculum for (NTA level 5 in Journalism page 7). To adopt Kolb's model the study suggests adherence to the learning cycle.

Figure 2: Adoption of the KOLB'S Experiential Learning Theory in Journalism training
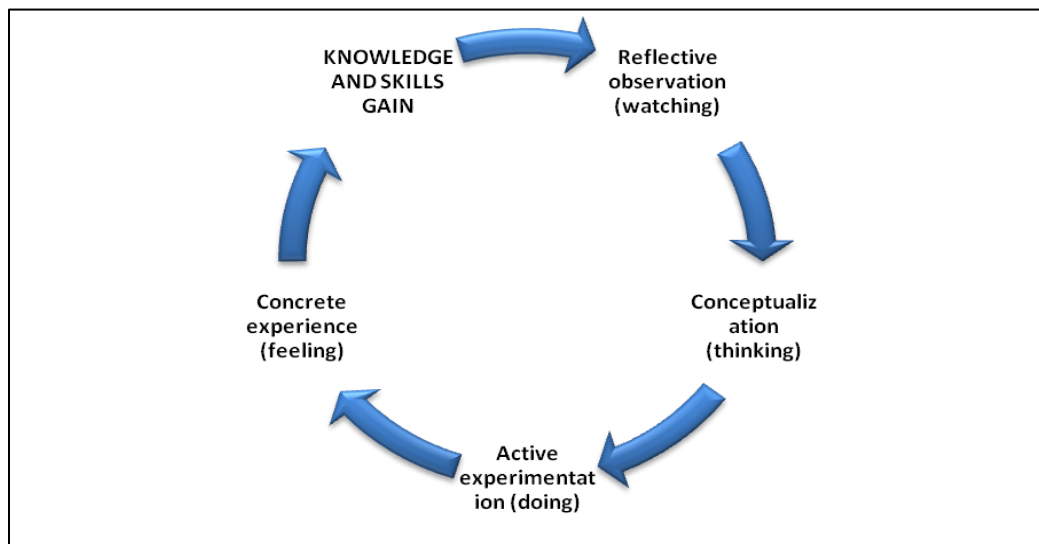
(**Source**: Researcher Data analysis and Triangulation).

This model now means that in order for the learner to acquire knowledge and skills, they must be exposed to a continuous process of watching (reflective observation), thinking (conceptualise), doing (active experiment), and feeling (concrete experience) what they are supposed to do. The knowledge and skills gained are a result of the whole process, which ought to be continuous.

In a similar light, the training of journalists as suggested by Veglis and Maniou (2019) and Stark (2019), calls for more international collaborations among journalism schools since digitisation has increased public awareness and interaction such that journalism education has moved from teaching to learning the ways of the real world. The regulatory frameworks, specifically TCRA having all the efforts of digitising the nation, ought to embrace this shift to make the media sector more efficient.

The agenda-setting done during the Covid-19 Pandemic by both international media and local media in early 2020 revealed the power that the media still possess in steering public opinion. This was also a time when journalists worldwide showcased a poor attire of professionalism when they kept reporting unconfirmed, biased, and uncertain news about the pandemic. Some of the truths, albeit bitter, that emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic are "related to political authorities and community spirit" (Caron, 2021, p.2); it became apparent that journalists failed to delineate themselves from both sides.

The incidents of improper reporting, libel and slander charges facing Tanzania media outlets in recent years have lowered the credibility of media houses, and others lost completely. The MCT's Annual Media Report (2020) and the editors of the media houses interviewed in this study said that these are the effects of the Media services act of 2016 passed by the parliament of Tanzania. Cementing this truth, on the 2022 World Press Freedom Day held in Arusha on May 03, the President, Honorable Samia Suluhu Hassan insisted that journalists should observe caution when reporting Government affairs. The President firmly said despite journalists complaining about the punitive media laws, they ought to adhere to Tanzanian natural values of dealing with authority. The President urged the media to focus on

development journalism for their society while maintaining the important cultural aspects for peace and tranquillity of all nations (UNESCO Arusha Declaration of the World Press Freedom Day—WPFD 2022).

Media regulation also transcends the boundaries of the profession as far as the current wave of agenda-setting theory is concerned. In Kenya's editors Guild summit (KEG) in 2019, it was learned that most traditional media journalists sourced their information over social media and directly shared the same via their public stations. The major concern about this was the authenticity and credibility of the information. The one-time media audience has now changed into users and producers of information journalists are left hanging as their profession is swayed. This means a lack of media regulation anyway. As a result, journalists form their own individualised agenda.

The findings of this study contend that; McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver's (1972) Agenda Setting Theory is challenged owing to the complaints from media editors and media owner's version that Journalists seem not to possess the power to steer public agenda because they lack the confidence to do so much that major public opinion is controlled by the social media. News editors of Mwananchi communication and TBC all agreed that training must also concentrate on equipping the students with new media technologies of timely identification of news items from global technologies alongside identifying fake stories against real stories; *"the media world is so fast,"* they contend.

The media now more than ever before needs a vibrant, assertive, and activist personality to perform in the newsroom. This quality is not vividly reflected in the journalism graduating fellows. The news editors all explain how even authentic news sources like the government and reliable business communications have preferred to share information through various reliable social media blogs like *Millard Ayo,* or *Michuzi Blog*, to name but a few, for a spontaneous effect. The study by Zain (2014) says the current media situation calls for a critical and analytical approach to journalism scholars and training institutions as it carries along a change in the paradigm of the theory. The key finding that this study unveils is the lack of

coherence of the regulatory bodies in supervising the media profession from training to industry practice.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the role of regulatory frameworks in enhancing journalism training and media practice in Tanzania. As far as they are concerned regulatory bodies perform their job very well according to their stipulated guidelines and the measures are evident. However, notwithstanding these roles, complaints of poor media professionalism still abound. It is the study's opinion that since the media is an important player in social development programs, it is high time the media's credibility is restored and used effectively.

Findings identified the lack of a linked strategy between the training and practice regulatory frameworks that contribute to irresponsibility in governance. The study suggests that the policy that establishes particular authority should be reviewed to have a single body with departments that all collaborate to enhance the profession; therefore, the study addresses both the ministry responsible for education and the ministry responsible for communications. The education ministry should direct efforts for monitory education protocols from the very low level of the education system (primary) to ensure quality from the onset of the person's knowledge building and gaining because when it comes to higher learning institutions and career building the regulatory bodies functions become quite a huge load as the effects of the system are deeper rooted even before students reach university level.

Recommendations

The study then recommends that the ministry of information, communication and information technology should strategically institute a journalism and media profession regulatory authority subsection in the ministry to regulate all matters concerned with the profession, from the funding of journalism training, media research, media performance and quality assurance. This aims to make the media sector bearer and equal performer in Tanzania's socio-economic development programs and not just be a receptor

and forwarder of important national communications.

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