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Kenyan Journalists' Perceptions of Capacity-Building Initiatives in Combating Misinformation

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Abstract

The era marked by widespread misinformation and complex disinformation tactics—including deepfakes and algorithmically amplified fabrications — continues to see journalists under pressure to maintain the integrity of news production and restore public trust. This qualitative study explores the perceptions of Kenyan journalists with regard to the effectiveness, relevance, and access to capacity-building initiatives designed to empower them with the knowledge and tools to combat misinformation. Drawing on in-depth interviews with reporters, editors, and media trainers from a cross-section of Kenyan media institutions, the study explores ways in which journalists experience and evaluate professional training programs, workshops, and newsroom interventions. Findings reveal both consciousness of ongoing efforts and gaps in content delivery, institutional support, and technological resources. Journalists put emphasis on the need for continuous, context-specific training, particularly in digital verification strategies, how to make ethical decisions, and critically engage with social media platforms. The study's conclusion indicates that while capacity-building initiatives are vital in strengthening media resilience, their long-term impact is dependent on sustained dedication of the institutions, collaboration with networks involved in fact-checking, and integration into journalism education curricula. These insights are timely in contributing to the broader unending debate on media sustainability, press freedom, and journalists' role as frontline defenders against misinformation in democratic societies.

Keywords: Misinformation, Kenyan Journalists, Capacity-Building Initiatives, Digital Verification, Media Resilience.

Introduction

Misinformation and disinformation have become defining phenomena of the digital age, with far-reaching consequences for journalism and public debate worldwide. The purpose of journalism as a public watchdog—of informing citizens and holding those in power accountable—is increasingly at risk because false or misleading content is able to spread rapidly and without constraint (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). In the digital information ecosystem, where news travels at the speed of light (not evidence of actual light), and where virality can be prioritized over accuracy, journalists are unable to maintain their credibility and authority. This problem is made worse for developing democracies such as Kenya and within the current media landscape that is rife with political polarization, limited finances and human resources and weak or inconsistent regulatory oversight. This all compromises the independence of journalism and the defiance of false narratives. As with some portions of the world, a growing challenge for journalists in Kenya is the increased and unceasing supply of fabricated content- deepfakes, tweaked images, and small-scale digitally designed smear campaigns that denigrate the reliability of professional media institutions. During the 2017 and 2022 general elections in Kenya, we were treated to an unparalleled escalation of digital propaganda, misinformation, and partisan content disguised as a legitimate news source (Maweu, 2022). Thus, the level of pressure on journalists is tremendous to uphold their standards for accuracy, fairness, and ethical reporting, in an information field that is increasing in complexity, strongly contested, and potentially unstable.

The digital revolution has dramatically changed the media landscape for producing and consuming news by allowing information to be created, shared, and accessed faster than ever before, but it has also altered the creation and dissemination of misinformation at a global scale in the same breadth. Social media platforms have made information accessible and democratized user-to-user empowerment, often with an imposed secondary job description as algorithmically driven content curators based on engagement - clicks, shares, etc. - rather than truthfulness, resulting in the potential for vast misinformation to thrive in their use (Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2020). Today, journalists have increased responsibility - reporting facts while also being digital fact checkers, content objectivists for moderation purposes, and media literacy advocates to help audiences make sense of the digital information overload and encourage critical thinking.

This paper examines how Kenyan journalists perceive, experience, and evaluates efforts to provide them with the knowledge and skills to detect, verify, and counter misinformation. More specifically, we look at the extent, relevance, and impact of capacity-building interventions focused on improving journalistic resiliency in the digital age. The paper analyzes, at institutional, technological, and pedagogical levels of analysis, the different ways these interventions are conceptualized and implemented. The research is grounded in the wider conversations around media's resiliency, ethics and professional codes, and digital transformation in journalism; and is a much-needed contribution to the analysis of both the practical and systemic challenges experienced by the media sector in Kenya.

Statement of the problem

Misinformation challenges journalistic integrity and public trust in Kenya, especially at a time when digital platforms take pride in accelerating the spread of falsehoods. Throughout the past decades, a series of local and international stakeholders have harnessed trainings, workshops, and collaborative opportunities in fact-checking with the aim of imparting the necessary skills to journalists so as to become capable of recognizing, verifying, and combating misinformation (Ogola, 2020; Cheruiyot & Ferrer-Conill, 2018). Half of the question as to how effective the capacity-building exercises have been remains unsaid: the other half never even enters journalists' view.

The greater problem rests within the scant empirical account of how the Kenyan journalists actually think and view these interventions—whether the interventions truly address the newspapers' real issues; whether they are the ones to train the newspapers into sustainable ways of doing what to accomplish with big projects; and whether they are conscious of and fitting into the local information ecosystem. Though the capacity-building concept has been increasingly proffered as a panacea to misinforming, little has been accounted for in relation to how this concept really affects and contributes to solving the misinforming problem in the Kenyan media. Without such insights into the nature of capacity-building, efforts to fight misinformation may become top-down exercises detached from the experiences a journalist confronts on a daily basis.

Research Question

The study attempted to answer the question; What are the perceptions of Kenyan journalists regarding the effectiveness, relevance, and accessibility of capacity-building initiatives designed to equip them with the knowledge and tools to combat misinformation?

Literature Review

Misinformation and Disinformation in the Digital Era

The unending surge in digital communication technologies, primarily social media, has seen a transformation in the production, sharing, and consumption of information around the globe. Nonetheless, this shift has seen a birth of numerous challenges, particularly misinformation—false or misleading information shared without intent to harm, and disinformation—false or misleading material that is fabricated with the intent to deceive and manipulate audiences. These challenges, if left unaddressed, undermine journalism's credibility and thus the possibility of informed public discussion through debate and civic action (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). In the global South, particularly in Kenya, in addition to a lack of media literacy and continued digital divides, consumed information exists in high stakes and politicized information spaces, which dramatically reduce citizens' ability and capacity to separate truth from fiction. Kenya has seen a number of significant misinformation events and scandals at key moments like election periods and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. A strong example is during the 2017 and 2022 general elections, where deepfakes, edited images, and outright falsehoods went viral as farming product. The aim was to destroy candidates' characters and effectively manipulate how individuals made voting decisions (Ooko, 2020). Similarly, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kenyan media organizations had some difficulty

verifying and communicating the latest and accurate scientific information during a time of flux. These issues were compounded by social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook which led the delivery of misinformation and practically assured confusion among Kenyans in real time as they sought out information and received official communications (Nyabola, 2021).

Despite these challenges, there are emerging local fact-checking organizations in Kenya, such as PesaCheck and Africa Check, which have been instrumental in the identification and correction of incorrect information, albeit limited outside the remaining urban areas. In addition, most fact-checking efforts are reactive rather than preventative and demonstrate the need for more systematic methods to build journalistic capacity.

Theoretical Framework

Gatekeeping Theory

Gatekeeping Theory, first articulated by Kurt Lewin in 1947 and later advanced by David Manning White in 1950, provides an advantageous scaffolding for understanding the processes by which journalists parse through information to determine what to allow (or keep from) entering the public sphere. Gatekeeping Logic describes how editors, reporters or algorithms, act as gatekeepers to filter, determine, select, and occasionally reject an availability of news stories or information from the sphere of dissemination. Gatekeeping has conventionally meant a single- centralized editorial function. However in the digital context of the present time, the gatekeeping function has become significantly more complex and challenged by advanced access and use of information as online protocols, social media, and user-generated content have diversified and democratized information flows in more remarkable forms (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In Kenya, the traditional exclusionary role of journalists as gatekeepers within mass media has been disrupted by the advent of participatory digital media. It is no longer the case that journalists solely control the public information space; rather, the emerging actors in this space (user generated content producers, social media influencers, algorithms) now share and continue to shape the public information space. Such a move is not only for journalists to be aware of their accountability in filtering and selecting news, but paves way for consistent verification of accuracy and provision of context for the content that spreads rapidly. They must do this under increasing pressures of time and complex editorial agendas in an evolving media environment.

Additionally, the dynamics of gatekeeping also varies with the nature of the platform in the digital age. For example, assessment of the way misinformation on Facebook is moderated is impaired by the opacity of the algorithm and makes predictions more challenging for journalists. Training journalists not only on verification strategies, but also platform gatekeeping responses is critical, as journalists face considered institutional adoption of processes like these; as Tambini (2020) suggested, that this is an initial significant step to knowledge enhancement for journalists in digital learning environments.

Journalistic Responses to Misinformation

While newsrooms around the world continue to deploy various interventions aimed at counteracting misinformation, such as forming fact-checking collaborations, using AI based verification tools, and

developing editorial protocols for sourcing and citation, a truism underpins all of these interventions: journalists need ongoing professional development to adapt to the digital, mediated information environment.

Responses to misinformation in Kenya have not been uniform. For example, larger media organizations like Nation Media Group and Standard Group have created fact-checking divisions and developed guidelines for ethical reporting. Smaller media organizations often lack the capital and resources to do so, which means that their journalists regularly send out unexamined and untraceable information to the public. Additionally, freelancers and community journalists, as the current largest segment of the media labor force in Kenya, are usually excluded from established forms of capacity building (Mak'Ochieng, 2019). A growing issue is the psychological impact of misinformation on journalists. Studies have shown that ongoing exposure to toxic information and disinformation can lead to stress, fatigue, and ethical dilemmas (Posetti et al., 2020). Kenyan journalists undergo similar pressures, especially when covering emotionally sensitive issues or highly politicized events.

Theoretical Framework: Media Literacy Theory

Media Literacy Theory is another useful lens through which to think about how we might approach journalistic training, and signifies that people gain the critical ability to use various aspects of media to access, analyze, and evaluate, and eventually create their own media (Potter, 2010). Media literacy is a public skill, and also a professional responsibility for journalists in multifaceted. Media Literacy Theory is relevant in Kenya, as journalists have to navigate cultural, technological and political complexities. Enhancing media literacy for journalists entails more than teaching verification, and actually involves development of critical thinking, awareness of cognitive biases, and knowledge of political economy, surrounding media platforms (Hobbs, 2017). Kenyan journalists covering health misinformation related to COVID-19 required the ability to differentiate between credible scientific sources and pseudo-science; such a task requires very high levels of media literacy. Initiatives who integrate Media Literacy Theory have been successful in developing journalistic resilience to misinformation (Frechette & Williams, 2016).

Capacity-Building in Journalism

Capacity-building is conceived as the intentional work of strengthening the capacity of people and institutions, including individuals to perform the tasks—or functions—that they need to deliver effectively, sustainably and efficiently (UNDP, 2009). In journalism this is visible through training courses, mentoring systems, mission networks, and other forms of training programs. The goal of capacity-building is to give journalists the range of skills, knowledge, and ethics that they need, so they can face contemporary challenges, including misinformation.

In Kenya a number of local and international actors have been involved in capacity-building initiatives for journalists. For example, local actors such as the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), and international actors such as Article 19, and Internews, have run training programs relating to transformed journalism, fact checking, data journalism, and digital safety. Such training programmes have focused

not only on the technical aspects of misinformation detection such as reverse image search and source triangulation, but also importantly, on content, training in media ethics and public trust in support of journalists.

As with the example of fact-checking noted by Moreno et al (2022), the design and delivery of these capacity-building training have not always been successful. Whilst there are critiques of poor geographic reach, with many training events being Nairobi based, limited follow up support, and an absence of suitability to local newsroom cultures there are also critiques that much of the capacity-building was 'donor-driven' rather than journalist led (Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2022). Critiques have also been called into question as to the sustainability of these donor-led programs, as well as the relevance to those who have been trained.

In addition, the way that training is conducted is important. Interactive, context-specific, and peer-led trainings tend to be more effective than generic lecture-based trainings. E-learning modules also show promise, especially for reaching journalists in rural locations, though issues with connectivity and digital literacy exist.

Synthesis and Research Gap

While existing research offers important perspectives on the growing misinformation phenomenon and associated journalistic responses, there is not a great deal of literature that notes how journalists themselves think about and experience capacity-building interventions. Research is largely centered at the institutional level or on assessing the effectiveness of fact-checking tools and there is less emphasis on the context of journalists' lived experiences when they are participating in training.

This study closes this gap, and explores Kenyan journalists' perceptions of capacity-building efforts in an age of misinformation. Informed by Gatekeeping and Media Literacy theories, the research illuminates the ways in which journalists negotiate their roles, evaluate the importance of their training, and contextualize their application of new skills.

Research Design

The research utilized a qualitative design to examine the lived experiences of journalists, specifically their perspectives on their own experiences during the capacity building programs for combating misinformation. An exploration of a phenomenon which is context-dependent and resolved within a complexity framework lends itself to a qualitative approach as it allows the researcher to understand a complex set of experiences and highlight the voices of participants and the meanings they assign to their experiences (Creswell & Poth 2018). Semi-structured interviews were used as they offered flexibility to probe for emerging themes while following a review protocol. A total of 25 journalists were selected through purposive sampling. This sample included reporters, editors, and media trainers from different media institutions, including print, broadcast, and online. A diversity of experiences adds richness and depth to the data obtained.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was employed to pinpoint individuals with direct experience of media capacity-building interventions for addressing misinformation. Lavrakas (2008) observes that this allows the researcher to identify and select individuals who would provide pertinent, rich and detailed, and aligned data. The study ensured there were voices from both national urban-based media houses, as well as community-based media outlets, to ensure a level of representativeness in terms of institutional breadth and geographic representation.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, and subsequently were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, analyzed thematically using manual coding, and reported. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis format served as the basis upon which we focused on themes generated: perceived program effectiveness, accessibility, institutional support, strengths and weaknesses of the program. All research participants provided informed consent prior to the interviews. The research maintained confidentiality and anonymity, as pledged.

Results and Discussion

Awareness and Participation in Training Programs

Most of the interviewed journalists exhibited some degree of awareness of capacity-building actions, especially those organized by reputable organizations such as Africa Check, PesaCheck, and Code for Africa. These actions mainly sought to enhance journalistic ethics and counter the increasing prevalence of misinformation and were well embraced among journalists in Kenya. However, knowledge does not always equate to participation. Out of all the journalists interviewed, it seemed their geographic location, employment status, and the communications of organizations were key factors in accessing these trainings.

"In Nairobi, we hear about these training almost every month. They send us invites on WhatsApp or via email," said Lenox, a Nairobi based journalist. "But my colleagues in the county bureaus often miss out. It's not only about knowing, but also about attending."

Ratemo C. O

~~This quote illustrates well the geographical imbalance. In the capital or bigger towns like Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa, training opportunities were more readily available due to proximity, connectivity, and structural opportunities to access straight networking. However, for journalists living in remote, rural, or under-served counties, participation was impeded more by the logistics, meaning travel costs, time, and employer facilitation, than those in urban or satellite towns.~~

"I saw a flyer for a fact-checking workshop on Twitter (X), but it was in Kisumu and I'm in Wajir," said Bashir, a community radio journalist. "Even if I wanted to, there would be no way for me to afford to travel on my own."

Bashir's situation exemplifies the dual burden that rural journalists face: limited access to information about trainings and financial or logistical impediments to actually attending one once they knew about it. While social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp, have improved the dissemination of information about the trainings, they do not remedy the disparities in access due to geographic and infrastructural contexts in Kenya.

Furthermore, freelancers, a growing segment of journalism in constantly evolving media ecology, are often made to feel not welcomed. Even though freelancers tend to be extremely vulnerable to misinformation given the unique and isolated nature of their work only in digital contexts, they are the least likely to be the targeted audience of any capacity building programs.

"If you're not affiliated to a big media house, you're invisible. Most times, you only hear about these programs after they've happened," lamented Aaron, an independent journalist in Laikipia.

Aaron's frustration is common. Several freelancers echoed these views, claiming that unless training programs are intentionally inclusive, through special outreach or decentralization, many journalists will stay on the periphery. This aligns with Troxclair et al's (2021) assertion that professional development programs should be designed to aim at building the capacity of individuals who will reflect it for the specific sector as a group. Furthermore, because freelancers generally do not have access to newsroom calendars, internal memos, or notices about workshops or professional development shared within "organized" journalism, it seems likely many freelancers will be left out, regardless of their awareness of training programs.

Findings also suggested that awareness has increased due to social media and professional networks, but we cannot deny the ongoing structural inequalities. These inequalities can be reduced if there is a better plan for inclusion and are willingness to think about decentralization in terms of providing training for journalists outside of Nairobi's sphere of influence.

Evaluation of Training Relevance and Effectiveness

The participating journalists agreed that where the training involved content that was directly rated, contextually relevant and interactive, it was the most effective. They suggested that the reporting and fact-checking capabilities of journalists improved considerably when the training used real life tools, showed practical demonstrations and made use of Kenyan case studies.

"The workshop by Code for Africa in 2023 was eye-opening. They didn't just talk theory—they showed us how to trace image origins using tools like TinEye and Google Reverse Image Search," recalled Mercy, a sub-editor in Nairobi.

Ratemo C. O

~~These hands-on apps provide journalists with information that they can use right away in their jobs.~~ Besides technical tools, much training included legal briefings, ethical frameworks, and mock interviews that added value to the experience.

However, not all training programs received positive feedback. Some journalists stated training was sometimes too broad or generic, and they did not adequately consider the specific media and misinformation context in Kenya. For example, the use of international case studies - especially United States and European ones - was considered by some to be irrelevant or even dangerous.

"We had this online session on misinformation, but it was too generic. They kept using US examples that don't apply here," noted Ombega, a reporter with a regional media house in Kisii. "And after the training, there was no follow-up. No refresher, no support."

The lack of continuity was the most pressing concern. Without refresher training sessions, follow-up consultations, or mentoring opportunities, the knowledge learned in training typically diminished over time. Foà et al (2023) support this argument and insist that numerous of training sessions would serve as crucial reminders for journalists and communication professionals on how to perfect their art. Participants argued that training should not be viewed as a single event, but a part of a longer professional development experience.

"Trainings should not be an event—they should be part of our professional journey," added Khaemba, a TV news producer.

This perspective reinforces the expectation that training providers can make the change from ad-hoc, donor-funded events to systematic learning pathways that serve the shifting professional needs of journalists. Regular follow-up, certification, online communities of practice and refresher training can significantly improve retention of knowledge and long-term skills development.

There was also a call for customization. Journalists covering politics, journalists covering health, and journalists covering business have different needs when it comes to fact-checking but training sessions view journalism as a single entity. Participants suggested that training providers should do needs assessments and break their sessions based on specialization, language and geography.

Institutional Support and Barriers

Highlighting the role of media institutions as either patron or barrier to training participation was one of the major findings of our study. In some cases, journalists expressed massive appreciation for their employers as they had even transported them to and from the training, provided allowances, and altered newsroom schedules to accommodate the journalists attending training.

"My editor is always telling us to attend trainings, providing us money for transportation and lunch," offered Brian, a reporter for a leading national daily. "We have also been told that we are to share what we learn with the newsroom team."

These arrangements developed an informal culture of learning in the newsroom and offered opportunities for a transfer of knowledge, as one trained journalist could share their knowledge base with other journalists, multiplying the value of the investment.

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However, for many others, the opposite was reported, as many journalists discussed the apathy, or even outright hostility, they faced from their employers in terms of time for training, or allowances for the cost of training.

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"We are told to go, but they won't give you a day off. If you go, your desk suffers, and your stories pile up," said Maryanne, a TV journalist in Nakuru. "It's not worth the stress sometimes."

This situation created a quandry for many inbound professionals – when attending professional development training meant falling behind on deadlines, risked missed bylines. This is in line with the findings by Ireton and Posetti (2018) which showed that at the very least, for progressive journalists faced with such challenges, it brought the possibility of reprimand for being absent, every training session was critically weighted. In some rare cases, journalists would have to take their own leave days or even lie about their whereabouts to attend training.

From a professional development perspective, freelancers experienced the endpoint of the institutional neglect. Lacking affiliation to any formal news organization, not only did freelancers lack any agency to support them financially, freelancers also lacked social and professional networks to remain engaged with training that was coming up on the horizon.

"I once got a scholarship to attend a media ethics workshop in Mombasa, but I couldn't go because I had to file three stories that week to pay rent," said Alfred, a freelance journalist based in Mombasa. "No newsroom, no backup, no cushion."

This testimony encapsulates the precarious existence of many freelance journalists in Kenya—constantly juggling between financial survival and professional growth. For them, missing a few workdays could translate to missing rent or food for their families.

The findings highlight ways in which institutional commitment can vary considerably, frequently aligned with the size, setting, and editorial policy of a media house. Large, fairly well-resourced organizations often support professional development whereas smaller organizations, especially community or regional organizations, lack the resources or foresight to invest in capacity building.

Technological and Resource Challenges

While training courses typically teach journalists the necessary digital tools and techniques for fact-checking, data analysis, and audience engagement, the application of these skills is often blocked by poor technological infrastructure in Kenyan newsrooms.

"We were shown how to use CrowdTangle and other Facebook analytics, but the computers in our newsroom were so old that you could barely open the second tab," noted Carolin, who is a news editor in western Kenya.

This example illustrates the technology gap that undermines any possibilities for innovation and reduces the benefits of training programmes. Such is consistent with De Ferranti (2003) who insists that integration patterns are pivotal especially for technological absorption. Even when journalists are willing to try out new skills, the absence of adequate hardware and software can mean that the new skills can be close to impossible to put into practice.

Internet connectivity continues to be an issue, especially in counties that are not on the national fibre optic grid. Journalists from Turkana, Tana River, and even parts of North Eastern complained about not being able to load basic fact-checking tools, attend online training workshops, or upload multimedia stories.

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~~*"Following the training, I tried to use the tools they identified, but without fast internet it's a nightmare. Half the time the pages don't load," said Paul, a community media practitioner based in Turkana.*~~

In urban contexts, the cost was referenced as another barrier to digital tools. While some fact-checking platforms have free versions, many of the paid tools are monthly or annual subscriptions as opposed to one-time fees which are not realistic for freelancers and decided in underfunded newsrooms

"Some of these tools all require monthly subscriptions! Who is going to pay for that? My employer isn't. So, I just use what is free," said Grace a business journalist.

The mismatch of the training content and their work realities reveals a clear need for resource-sensitive and context-based training design. Offline toolkits, getting institutions on to a discount subscription, or simply providing free mobile versions of software could massively increase accessibility and usability.

Ethical and Editorial Considerations

Alongside technical issues, journalists highlighted ethical issues connected to misinformation. There is a longer conversation about the tradeoff between speed and virality in the current digital media ecosystem, and the ethical responsibilities that accompany journalists' verification.

"There is a lot of pressure to be first on a breaking story; sometimes you will see a tweet and your editor wants you to confirm five minutes later," said Dennis, a digital news producer. "It's difficult to remember verify takes time."

"When a story goes viral, usually it is an unvoiced assumption that we jump on it-even when we are not 100% sure. If we do not get something out, our competition will," said Elizabeth, a political reporter.

Many journalists admitted to publishing work that they then learned was misleading or quasi false because the reporting had to be rapid or pressure from an editor. Many journalists argued for ethical training that links newsroom practices to journalistic ethics.

"We need ethical case studies-real stories where journalists in Kenya were sued or where misinformation led to real consequences," said Franklin, a crime reporter. "Talking about ethics is good, but only in theory."

Additionally, younger journalists--often those in online media--told us that ethics are unclear when it comes to influencer journalism, paid content, and native advertising. *"Sometimes you're offered money to create a post that appears to be newsworthy. When you're broke it's hard to say no,"* argued Arege, a student-based content creator. *"We need more training on where to draw a line."* As such, these reflections have underscored the need for embedding ethics in all aspects of journalism training and practice in Kenya.

Recommendations from Journalists

The study participants made considered and specific suggestions for improving the relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness of training. First, the participants were united in calling for ongoing and compulsory training, particularly in fast-changing areas such as digital verification and misinformation.

“Make sure training is in our job descriptions. Don’t just train us when there is a emergency, like elections,” one senior sub-editor, Beatrice said.

Second, journalists called for contextualized material that reflects Kenya’s sociopolitical context, languages, and digital practices. *“Teach us how to fact-check WhatsApp forwards in Sheng and vernacular. That’s where the fake news lives,” said Tony, a community radio presenter in Kiambu.*

Third, they called for stronger partnerships between media houses, journalism schools, and fact-checkers for a more coherent system of training journalists whilst they teach journalistic practices. *“Let journalism students start learning verification from year one,” said Rhoydah, a journalism lecturer. “They shouldn’t wait to encounter fake news after graduation.”*

Fourth, they called for monetary and logistical support for the freelance journalists typically on the frontlines of the information wars, but who are left out of structured programs.

“Fund us like you fund staff reporters; give us a stipend; think of us in your plans,” stated Boniface, a reporter based in Nairobi.

Lastly, reporters said it was necessary to change journalism course work to incorporate digital verification, ethics, and misinformation literacy at all levels of training.

“We can’t treat this as a side course anymore. It’s foundational,” said Julius, a university lecturer and media trainer affiliated with a local NGO.

Conclusion

From the study finds, Kenyan journalists have a comprehension of the value attached to capacity-building initiatives especially in enhancing their ability to deal with false information. This paves way for a starting point taking into account aspects such as more extensive, inclusive, and long-lasting interventions. Curricular integration, collaborative networks, and institutional support are all essential consideration if long-term impact is to be ensured.

Such observations find themselves at the center of supporting discussions on journalistic integrity, media resilience, and democratic sustainability in the international scene. The tactics used to combat misinformation must also proportionately change with the times, being based on the professional requirements and lived realities of those who are at the forefront of exposing false information.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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