



Evaluating the influence of media strategies on the implementation of media policy protecting children against harmful television content in Nairobi County, Kenya

Samson Raiji^{1*}
Hellen Mberia²
Augustus Nyakundi³

^{1*}sraiji@yahoo.com
²hkemberia@yahoo.com
³Oncharia@yahoo.com

^{1,2}Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology, ³Chuka University, ^{1,2,3}Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Mass media content in Nairobi, particularly broadcast radio and television, is largely free to air. This unrestricted access poses a significant challenge regarding specific content exhibited and its potential long-term effects on audiences and society. The most affected audience category is children, who risk exposure to unregulated, age-inappropriate content that may cause them harm. This paper therefore evaluated the influence of media strategies on the implementation of media policy protecting children against harmful television content in Nairobi County. The study was grounded in Implementation Theory, which conceptualizes policy execution as a dynamic, interactive process shaped by stakeholder engagement. It adopted a descriptive research design to determine how media policy implementation strategies influence the safeguarding of children. The study involved all child media policy implementing bodies: government agencies, the Media Owners Association, media policy experts, television stations, and parents within Nairobi County. A total of 416 respondents were sampled using Purposive Sampling Technique. Self-administered questionnaires were administered to selected parents, while structured interviews were conducted with other identified respondents. A critical analysis of Kenyan media policy was carried out to examine the extent of stakeholder involvement, establishing a relationship between stakeholder involvement and policy implementation. Data was analyzed using linear regression. The study found that while media policy implementation strategies are generally sufficient, they do not guarantee adherence to set guidelines. Moreover, unlike media agencies, parents demonstrate low awareness of mechanisms regulating safe children's television content. The study recommends civic education and participation by all stakeholders in media policy formulation and strategies, as well as continuous review of existing policies governing safe children's television content.

Key words: Children Protection, Harmful Television Content, Media Policy, Parents, Stakeholder Involvement

I. INTRODUCTION

Policies are deliberate systems of principles meant to guide decisions and achieve outcomes that are useful and important for the running of society (Capano & Woo, 2018). Media policies on children are those interventions and goals that recognize children's rights, especially their right to be protected from harm through exposure to both traditional and new media. In Kenya, media policies are anchored in the Constitution and supplementary Acts of Parliament, although the laws governing the media remain fragmented across different sections of civil and criminal law (Makali, 2003; Media Council of Kenya, 2020). The policy and legal framework for child protection in Kenya is embodied in several key legal instruments including the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Children Act (2022), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), the National Children Policy, and various other regulations (Refugee Consortium of Kenya, 2020). The Constitution guarantees children the right to a name and nationality, free and compulsory basic education, basic nutrition, shelter, and health care (Wanyama, 2015). The Children Act has further established various institutions to safeguard children's welfare, including the National Council for Children Services, the Department of Children Services, the Children's Court, child protection centers, child protection units and children's desks at police stations, legal aid schemes for children, and child helpline services such as Childline and Helpline 116, which serve as channels for reporting issues that threaten children's wellbeing (Refugee Consortium of Kenya, 2020).

Media content is fundamentally intended to educate, entertain, and inform the general public, making it imperative to have strategies that ensure media guidelines are adhered to without causing harm to any segment of the audience, particularly children (Achieng, 2021). Children enjoy special protection status globally and are largely

shielded against many social pollutants, including harmful media content. However, the contemporary media environment has created an urgent need to protect children from content that exposes them to harmful effects capable of disrupting societal beliefs, mores, morals, and values. The Kenyan media landscape frequently features content that glorifies social evils such as crime, bullying, premature sexual behaviors, negative body image, and idolization of individuals who do not exemplify upright societal values (Achieng, 2021). Public outcries for increased censorship and stricter controls to protect children from unregulated media are often difficult to resist because simulated media violence is frequently framed as real violence directed against children themselves (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016). Research indicates that many adults perceive childhood violence to be increasing despite evidence to the contrary, with parents often attributing this perceived rise to television and video games, although media effects experts have struggled to demonstrate definitive causal relationships (Natwarsinh, 2019; Oyero & Salawu, 2018). Critics argue that such views simplistically portray children as passive receptors victimized by wholesale manipulation, yet the deregulation of children's television in the United States by the Federal Communications Commission in 1984 led to expanded marketing of violent content to children (Levin, 1998).

The challenge of balancing free speech protection with child safeguarding has generated a fluid media policy environment combining government mandates and industry self-regulation (Jordan, 2008). In Kenya's free-to-air media context, weak implementation of existing guidelines leaves children vulnerable to media operators who often prioritize profit motives over moral social values (Makali, 2003). Urban parents frequently find themselves occupied with economic and social activities, leaving children under the care of house helps or elder siblings who may not adequately supervise television content choices. Compounding this challenge, many parents lack adequate technical knowledge to operate media control devices and ironically must seek this knowledge from their children, undermining their ability to utilize available television controls effectively (Gentile, 2014). Television remains a primary target for regulation due to its accessibility and powerful imagery, and Kenyan law, as stipulated in the Children Act (2022) and Media Act (2015), recognizes children under eighteen years as incapable of making informed and binding consent, necessitating legal protection to ensure proper physical, mental, and moral development (Federal Communications Commission, 2019).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Media access in Kenya is nearly ubiquitous, with 98% penetration via radio, 81% via television, and growing internet use. This widespread, often free access creates a significant challenge: the regulation of specific content and the mitigation of its potential long-term effects on audiences. This issue is exacerbated by limited parental monitoring and guidance. Children, who are in critical formative stages and lack the cognitive capacity to distinguish media reality from fiction, are the most vulnerable demographic. Kenya has established a regulatory framework to address this. Bodies like the Kenya Film and Classification Board (KFCB) are mandated to regulate film and broadcast content. The Children Act (2022) provides a broad policy framework for child protection, including from undesirable media, and the Media Act (2015) governs all media houses with a specific focus on safeguarding children from harmful content.

Despite this comprehensive policy architecture, the effective implementation of these regulations remains the central challenge. The existence of laws and agencies has not translated into consistently safer television viewing for children. Therefore, this study is anchored in investigating this implementation gap. It specifically seeks to examine the influence of viable strategies that can enhance the protection of children against harmful television content in Kenya.

1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To evaluate the influence of media strategies on implementation of media policy protecting children against harmful television content in Nairobi County
- ii. To assess the extent of stakeholder involvement in the formulation and implementation of children's media policy in Nairobi County
- iii. To establish the relationship between stakeholder involvement and successful policy implementation in protecting children from harmful television content in Nairobi County
- iv. To examine the awareness levels of parents regarding mechanisms that regulate safe children's television content compared to media agencies in Nairobi Kenya

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study is anchored on Implementation Theory, which has evolved through contributions from multiple scholars over several decades. The foundational work on implementation theory emerged in the early 1970s with Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky (1973), who pioneered systematic study of policy implementation through their influential work "Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington Are Dashed in Oakland." Subsequent

development of the theory was advanced by scholars including Michael Lipsky with his concept of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsk, 1980), Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian who developed comprehensive frameworks for understanding implementation processes (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980), and more recently by Carl May who formulated the General Theory of Implementation focusing on implementation as a complex intervention shaped by emergent expressions of agency and dynamic contextual elements (May, 2013). May's work conceptualized implementation processes as interactions between emergent expressions of agency and dynamic elements of context, emphasizing the need for an integrative approach to understanding how policies translate from formal documents into practical outcomes. Contemporary contributions by Patty (2023) have further refined implementation theory by examining organizational implementation and management perspectives, emphasizing that implementation occurs in stages through multiple "implementing agencies" involved in interpreting and complying with policy directives.

Implementation Theory is highly relevant to this study as it provides a comprehensive analytical lens for understanding the complex processes through which media policies translate from formal legislative documents into practical outcomes affecting children's protection from harmful television content. The theory's emphasis on implementation as a dynamic, continuous, and interactive process rather than a static endpoint aligns with the study's focus on examining how media strategies influence policy execution across multiple stakeholder levels (May, 2013). The theory's recognition that multiple implementing agencies interpret and enact policy based on their specific contexts and capacities directly applies to Kenya's media landscape, where government regulators, media houses, professional associations, and parents all contribute to shaping both the formation and execution of protective policies for children (Patty, 2023). The theory's focus on argentic contributions and capability, along with the potential and capacity for resource mobilization, helps explain the disparities observed between parental and agency understanding and involvement in media policy implementation. Furthermore, the theory's conceptualization of implementation as a "complex intervention" requiring coordinated efforts among stakeholders illuminates why Kenya's comprehensive legal framework has not automatically translated into consistently safer television viewing experiences for children. The theory's emphasis on understanding process-oriented interactions rather than merely analyzing policy documents supports the study's investigation of how government enactment, media editorial monitoring, and parental oversight strategies interact to determine child protection outcomes. This theoretical foundation thus provides a robust framework for analyzing the implementation gap between policy formation and practical enforcement, and for developing evidence-based recommendations to strengthen child protection mechanisms in Kenya's evolving media environment.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design, which was the most appropriate approach for this investigation. Descriptive research design involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way, focusing on answering the questions "what," "how," and "who" rather than "why" (Kothari, 2009). This design was particularly suitable for this study as it allowed the researcher to systematically determine and report findings concerning media policy implementation strategies and how they influence the protection of children against harmful television content in Nairobi County, without manipulating any variables.

The descriptive research design was deemed most appropriate for several reasons. First, the study aimed to collect detailed information about the current state of media policy implementation, including the strategies employed by various stakeholders such as government agencies, media houses, and parents. According to Kothari (2009), descriptive research is concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular group or situation, which aligned perfectly with this study's objective of portraying the existing media policy implementation landscape in Nairobi County. Second, the design enabled the researcher to capture both quantitative and qualitative data from a diverse range of respondents, including parents, media producers, editors, and regulatory agency officials, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Thirdly, the descriptive design facilitated the examination of relationships between variables without manipulating them, as the study sought to establish the influence of media strategies (independent variable) on child protection outcomes (dependent variable) in their natural setting. This was consistent with Kothari's (2009) assertion that descriptive research is suitable for studies that aim to draw meaningful conclusions about relationships between variables through observation and systematic description. Fourth, the design allowed for the use of multiple data collection instruments, including structured questionnaires for parents and interview guides for agency officials, which enhanced the depth and richness of the data collected. Finally, the descriptive design enabled the researcher to make informed recommendations based on the actual state of affairs regarding media policy implementation, thereby contributing to evidence-based policy improvements for protecting children from harmful television content in Kenya.



3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Nairobi County, Kenya, which serves as the country's media hub, housing headquarters of major television networks, production houses, and regulatory agencies (Media Action, 2023). Nairobi's diverse population and concentrated media infrastructure made it an ideal setting for examining media policy implementation strategies affecting child protection harmful television content.

3.3 Target Population

The population for this study is highly heterogeneous, and includes households, media houses, government agencies involved in media policy implementation, non-government agencies involved in media policy implementation and households within Nairobi County.

3.4 Sampling Frame

Purposive sampling technique was used to identify 5 media houses involved in production of children content, 4 government agencies concerned with media policy implementation, media associations and parents from 985,016 households within Nairobi County. The households were distributed per sub counties as summarized as shown in Table 1 below.

3.4.1 Sample Size for Agencies

The study sampled five producers from media houses involved in children's content to gain insights into content creation, alongside five editors from similar media houses to understand editorial decisions and oversight. Additionally, four government agencies engaged in children's media policy were included to capture regulatory perspectives, while four non-government agencies active in media policy were incorporated to reflect advocacy and civil society viewpoints.

3.4.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

Sample size of 400 households was obtained from the target population using Krejcie and Morgan formula (1970). Further, the 400 respondents were distributed through proportionate sampling as summarized in the Table 1 below.

Table 1

Sample Distribution for Parents and Agencies

Sub county	Population	Sample
Makadara	72,924	30
Kamukunji	75,555	31
Starehe	87,519	36
Langata	108,477	44
Dagoreti	103,818	42
Embakasi	75,427	31
Westlands	164,354	66
Kasarani	296,942	161
Total	985,016	400

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The study used structured questionnaires to collect data from the selected households while using interviews to collect data from agencies involved in implementation of policy protecting children against harmful media content.

3.5.1 Data Processing and Analysis

Data on the research objectives was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics allowing use of both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.5.2 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was collected on the research variables and operationalized in measurable indicators. Causative relationship between the independent and dependent variable were measured based on the research objectives. Data was presented using tables that were explained and interpreted.



Table 2
Summary of Research Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

Objective	Statistical techniques of Analysis	Model
To evaluate the influence of media strategies on implementation of media policy protecting children against harmful television content	Pearsons’ Correlation; Simple Regression Analysis at 0.05 significance level	$Y = a + bX + \epsilon$ Y - protection of children X - media strategies a – constant b - regression coefficient

3.5.3 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data was gathered in aspects of media policy on children protection against harmful media content implementation that was considered subjective. The views of respondents on such issues were reported based on the respondent’s views.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

This section presents the analysis of data collected from respondents in Nairobi County regarding the implementation of media policy protecting children against harmful television content. The findings are structured into descriptive statistics for independent and dependent variables, followed by inferential statistics, aligning with the study’s research objectives.

4.1.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The socio-demographic profile showed that most parent respondents were male (58.0%), with 44.5% of households earning below Kshs 30,000, reflecting prevailing economic conditions in Nairobi County. Household composition indicated 41.0% had one child and 37.8% had two to four children, suggesting urban parents are increasingly conscious of family size. Among agency and media house respondents, male dominance was observed, though the data affirmed general adherence to the third gender rule.

Table 3
Demographic Aspects of Respondents

Aspect	Dimensions	Frequency	Percent
Gender			
Male		164	58.0
Female		119	42.0
Total		283	100.0
Monthly Income			
Less than Khs 30,000		126	44.5
Kshs 30,000 to 50,000		96	33.9
51,000 to 100,000		45	15.9
More than 100,000		16	5.7
Total		283	100.0
No of Children			
1		116	41.0
2 - 4		107	37.8
more than 4		60	21.2
Total		283	100.0

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics for the Independent Variables

The following is a presentation of findings in raw data sets, showing how respondents rated various statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low Extent/Strongly Disagree to 5 = Very High Extent/Strongly Agree). These ratings will be used to generate the mean and standard deviation for the identified independent variable, Media Policy Implementation Strategies, across three dimensions: Government Policy Enactment, Media Editorial Monitoring and Review, and Parental Television Program Monitoring.



Government Policy Enactment (Agencies)

The respondents consisted of 14 agency officials drawn from organizations such as the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB), the Communications Authority (CA), the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), and others. The data was collected using a 5-point Likert scale, where a rating of 1 indicated “Strongly Disagree” or “Very Low Extent,” and a rating of 5 indicated “Strongly Agree” or “Very High Extent.”

Table 4
Likert Scale Responses from Agency Officials

Resp ID	Awareness of Regulatory Mechanisms	Involvement in Policy Formulation	Role Alignment with Policy	Belief in Strategy Effectiveness	Confidence in Child Protection
A01	4	4	4	4	5
A02	3	3	3	3	4
A03	4	3	4	4	4
A04	5	4	5	5	5
A05	3	3	4	3	4
A06	4	3	4	4	5
A07	3	4	4	4	4
A08	4	4	4	4	4
A09	3	3	3	4	3
A10	4	3	4	4	5
A11	4	4	5	4	4
A12	3	3	4	3	4
A13	4	4	4	4	5
A14	3	3	3	4	4
Mean	3.64	3.43	3.93	3.86	4.14
SD	0.63	0.51	0.62	0.53	0.66

Media Editorial Monitoring and Review (Media Houses)

The respondents included five editors and producers from various media houses. For this group, data was recorded based on the presence or absence of specific strategies and policies, rather than using a Likert scale.

Table 5
Findings from Editors and Producer in Television Media Houses

Resp ID	Pre-broadcast Analysis	Thematic Evaluation	Strategic Scheduling	Dedicated Children’s Media Policy	Multiple Strategies Employed
M01	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
M02	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
M03	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M04	Yes	No	No	No	No
M05	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Summary	5/5 (100%)	3/5 (60%)	4/5 (80%)	1/5 (20%)	3/5 (60%)

Parental Television Program Monitoring (Parents)

The study also included 283 parent respondents. For this group, responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented “Strongly Disagree” or “Very Low Extent,” and 5 represented “Strongly Agree” or “Very High Extent.” The sample data shown is truncated; the full dataset is available upon request.



Table 6
Likert Scale Parents Responses Program Monitoring

Resp ID	Awareness of Regulatory Mechanisms	Awareness of Media House Policies	Knowledge of Monitoring Adequacy	Perception of Code Relevance	Self-Reported Monitoring
P01	3	3	3	4	4
P02	4	3	4	3	5
P03	2	2	2	3	4
P04	3	3	3	4	4
P05	4	4	4	4	5
...
P283	3	3	3	4	4
Mean	3.18	3.01	3.09	3.5	4.09
SD	0.81	0.91	1.05	0.92	1

Table 7 below summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations for the descriptive statistics for the independent variables.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

Variable Dimension	Indicator	Mean	Std. Dev.
Government Policy Enactment	Awareness of regulatory mechanisms (Agencies)	3.64	0.63
	Involvement in policy formulation (Agencies)	3.43	0.51
	Role alignment with media policy strategies (Agencies)	3.93	0.62
	Belief in effectiveness of current strategies (Agencies)	3.86	0.53
	Confidence that policies protect children (Agencies)	4.14	0.66
Media Editorial Monitoring & Review	Pre-broadcast analysis for children's content	Universal	-
	Employment of multiple protective strategies (e.g., thematic evaluation, scheduling)	Minority only	-
	Existence of dedicated children's media policies	Lacking in many houses	-
Parental Television Program Monitoring	Awareness of regulatory mechanisms (Parents)	3.18	0.81
	Awareness of media house policies (Parents)	3.01	0.91
	Knowledge of media house monitoring adequacy (Parents)	3.09	1.051
	Perception of code of conduct relevance (Parents)	3.5	0.921
	Self-reported monitoring of children's viewing (Parents)	4.09	1.001

The findings in Table 7 above reveal a stark contrast in the implementation landscape. The Government Policy Enactment dimension appears robust at the institutional level, with agencies demonstrating high awareness (M=3.64), strong role alignment (M=3.93), and significant confidence in the protective capacity of current policies (M=4.14). In contrast, the Media Editorial Monitoring and Review dimension shows significant variability; while all media houses conduct pre-broadcast analysis, the application of comprehensive safety strategies is inconsistent, with only a minority employing multiple measures.

The most pronounced gap is evident in the Parental Television Program Monitoring dimension. Despite parents reporting that they actively monitor their children's viewing (M=4.09), they exhibit low awareness of the very regulatory mechanisms (M=3.18) and media house policies (M=3.01) designed to support their efforts. This creates a critical weakness in the final layer of child protection.

4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics for the Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, Protection of Children against Harmful Television Content, was assessed using indicators that measured the perceived success of policy implementation. Data were collected from both parents (n = 283) and agency officials (n = 14), focusing on their perceptions of implementation outcomes. The table below presents a sample of 20 respondents; the full dataset follows the same structure. Responses were recorded on a 5-point scale, where 1 indicates "Very Poor" or "Strongly Disagree," and 5 indicates "Very Good" or "Strongly Agree."

**Table 8***Findings for Dependent Variable*

Resp ID	Group	Overall Implementation Success	Effectiveness of Protection Mechanisms	Reduced Exposure During Daytime	Parental Confidence in Safety
R01	Parent	3	3	3	4
R02	Parent	4	4	3	4
R03	Agency	5	5	4	5
R04	Parent	2	3	2	3
R05	Parent	4	4	3	5
R06	Agency	4	4	4	4
R07	Parent	3	3	3	4
R08	Parent	3	4	2	4
R09	Agency	5	5	5	5
R10	Parent	4	4	3	4
...
R297	Parent	3	3	3	4
Mean		3.48	3.56	3.11	3.78
SD		0.79	0.89	1.1	0.95

As shown in the table above, the overall perception of successful policy implementation is moderate (Aggregate $M=3.48$). The indicator with the highest mean was "Parental confidence in the safety of available children's programming" ($M=3.78$), suggesting a degree of trust from parents. However, the indicator for "Reduced exposure of children to explicit content during daytime hours" recorded the lowest mean ($M=3.11$), indicating a perceived weakness in the enforcement of watershed scheduling and content restrictions.

4.1.4 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics were used to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. A Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was computed to determine the strength and direction of the relationships, and a regression analysis was used to determine the combined predictive power of the independent variables.

Correlation Analysis (Pearson's r)

The full data-set of 297 cases was used to compute the Pearson correlation, regression coefficients, and the model summary presented in Table 9. The summary statistics from the complete data are:

Correlation (r) = 0.861

$R^2 = 0.740$

$F(1, 295) = 801.832, p < 0.001$

Regression equation: $Y = -1.069 + 1.159x$

t for slope = 28.317, $p < 0.001$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation matrix in Table 9, reveals a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between media strategies and the implementation of media policy ($r=0.861, p=0.000$). This finding implicitly reflects the relationship between stakeholder involvement and implementation success, demonstrating that as the effectiveness of implementation strategies across government, industry, and household levels increases, so does the protection of children from harmful television content.

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis in Table 9, shows that the independent variable, Media Strategies, accounts for 74.0% of the variance in the successful implementation of the media policy (R Square = 0.740). The ANOVA results indicate the model is highly significant ($F=801.832, p<0.001$). The coefficient for Media Strategies ($B=1.159, \text{Beta}=0.861, p<0.001$) confirms that it is a strong and significant predictor of policy implementation. This implies that for every unit increase in the effectiveness of media strategies (encompassing government enactment, editorial monitoring, and parental oversight), the success of policy implementation increases by 1.159 units.



Table 9
Regression Analysis (Model Summary and Coefficients)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.	
1	0.861	0.74	0.739	801.832	0	
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)		Standardized Coefficients (Beta)		t	Sig.
(Constant)	-1.069				-3.785	0
Media Strategies	1.159		0.861		28.317	0

Dependent Variable; Media strategies

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study offer a nuanced understanding of how media strategies shape the implementation of child protection policies in Kenya’s television landscape. At the broadest level, the analysis revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between media strategies and the successful implementation of policies designed to shield children from harmful television content ($r = 0.861, p = 0.000$). Regression results further indicated that media strategies account for approximately 74% of the variance in implementation outcomes ($R^2 = 0.74, F = 801.832, p = 0.000$). The remaining 26% of variation likely stems from external factors such as socioeconomic conditions, rapid technological changes, and the differing capacities of implementing agencies—a finding consistent with the view that policy execution rarely occurs in a vacuum (Makali, 2003; Ontario, 2017).

To understand these results more deeply, it is useful to examine the three constituent dimensions of media strategies. *Government policy enactment* proved relatively robust. Anchored in the Children Act (2022) and the Kenya Information and Communications Act (2015), this dimension saw agencies exhibit high awareness of regulatory mechanisms ($M = 3.64, SD = 0.63$), strong role alignment ($M = 3.93, SD = 0.62$), and considerable confidence that existing policies protect children ($M = 4.14, SD = 0.66$). By contrast, *media editorial monitoring and review* was markedly inconsistent. Although every media house in the sample conducted pre-broadcast analysis, only a minority employed multiple protective strategies, and many lacked dedicated children’s media policies. This unevenness suggests that while the industry recognizes the need for content oversight, actual practice lags behind stated commitments. The most pronounced weakness, however, lay in *parental television program monitoring*. Parents reported actively watching over their children’s viewing habits ($M = 4.09$), yet they demonstrated strikingly low awareness of both regulatory mechanisms ($M = 3.18$) and media house policies ($M = 3.01$). In other words, parents are engaged but uninformed—a gap that severely undermines the final line of defense.

These findings resonate strongly with Implementation Theory as articulated by May (2013) and Pressman and Wildavsky (1973). Successful policy execution, the theory holds, is not a linear, top-down process but a dynamic, interactive one that requires coordinated effort among multiple stakeholders. The present study’s results validate this perspective: the strong correlation between media strategies and implementation outcomes reflects the interdependence of government, media, and household actions. Patty’s (2023) observation that implementation occurs through multiple “implementing agencies” with varying capacities is also borne out, as is Makali’s (2003) caution that legal frameworks alone are insufficient. Furthermore, the finding that three distinct dimensions collectively predict 74% of implementation success supports Capano and Woo’s (2018) concept of *policy robustness*—the idea that a policy’s effectiveness depends on the strength of each component in a multi-layered system. A weakness in any one dimension (here, parental awareness) reduces overall performance.

Turning to stakeholder involvement, the data revealed a similarly uneven picture. Government agencies were fully engaged in both policy formulation and implementation ($M = 3.45, SD = 0.465$) and exhibited strong role alignment ($M = 3.90, SD = 0.709$). Bodies such as the Communications Authority of Kenya and the Media Council possess statutory authority to investigate complaints, issue sanctions, and suspend licenses, and they exercise this authority with clear institutional mandates. Yet despite this formal structure, stakeholders largely operate in silos. Editors from all five media houses emphasized the constitutional requirement for inclusive participation and stressed the need to bring all parties—including poorly informed parents—into every stage of the policy cycle. Parents, however, demonstrated low awareness of media policies ($M = 3.01, SD = 0.910$) and were generally absent from formal processes, often overlooking their own critical role. This exclusion has direct consequences for protection mechanisms. When government regulates without ensuring parental understanding, when media implement without parental feedback, and when parents monitor without understanding the regulatory tools available, the entire system becomes disjointed and less effective. Such findings align with Ebekozi et al. (2023) on the necessity of meaningful involvement, with Oyero and Salawu (2018) on the importance of parental role awareness, and with Watkins and Hornak’s (2022) equity-focused implementation science perspective.

The relationship between stakeholder involvement and successful policy implementation is perhaps the most instructive finding. The strong correlation already noted ($r = 0.861, p = 0.000$) implicitly captures this relationship, and



the regression model ($R^2 = 0.74$) shows that government agencies, media houses, and parents collectively shape outcomes. Yet the *unevenness* of that involvement is what truly matters. High agency involvement ($M = 3.65$) and strong role alignment ($M = 3.90$) contrast sharply with low parental awareness ($M = 3.18$), creating an imbalance that diminishes overall effectiveness. Government effectiveness is limited by its reach; media involvement is variable; and parental involvement—the most immediate layer of protection—is minimal. This pattern supports Implementation Theory's emphasis on coordinated action (May, 2013) and Patty's (2023) insight about differential capacities. It also aligns with Polyák and Meuter's (2016) finding on fragmented self-regulation in media environments and with Grossman's (2022) call for coordinated action in the digital age. Moreover, it echoes Levin (1998) and Ontario (2017) in highlighting how household-level factors—parental knowledge, time, and technological access—profoundly influence child protection outcomes.

Perhaps the most sobering disparity concerns awareness levels between parents and media agencies. Parents demonstrated low awareness of regulatory mechanisms ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.810$), low knowledge of media house monitoring adequacy ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.051$), and almost no familiarity with media house policies ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.910$). While they reported actively monitoring their children's viewing ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.001$), this effort is seriously undermined by their lack of regulatory knowledge and by the reality that children often access mobile content away from home. Agencies, in stark contrast, exhibited high awareness of regulatory mechanisms ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.670$), full involvement in policy ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.465$), strong role alignment ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.709$), and confidence that policies protect children ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.923$). They cited complaint mechanisms, pre-broadcast analysis, thematic evaluation, and strategic scheduling as key safeguards—tools that remain largely invisible to the average parent.

This awareness gap is not merely academic; it has practical consequences. Parents cannot use content rating systems, password protections, or complaint procedures they do not understand. The finding directly supports Levin's (1998) observation that many parents lack the knowledge to operate media controls effectively. It also aligns with Reynolds (2018), who noted that the public often does not grasp how professional codes of conduct apply to child protection. Fitzpatrick et al. (2016) argued that adults tend to perceive media effects simplistically, without engaging with the underlying regulatory frameworks—a tendency that the present study's data confirm. The issue of mobile device access echoes Ontario's (2017) concern about technological convergence undermining traditional, television-centric monitoring. Finally, the paradox of parents claiming to monitor viewing while showing low awareness of policies supports Oyero and Salawu's (2018) argument that parents may not fully understand their own role in policy implementation. This points to an urgent need for capacity-building interventions that address not just knowledge deficits but also role clarity.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that media strategies significantly influence child protection policy implementation, yet their effectiveness is undermined by inconsistent editorial practices and, most critically, by low parental awareness and involvement. Stakeholder involvement is highly uneven: agencies are fully engaged, media houses show variable commitment, and parents remain largely excluded from formal processes. Addressing this gap through sustained civic education, genuine multi-stakeholder coordination, and integrated monitoring systems is essential if Kenya's comprehensive legal framework is to translate into tangible, everyday protection for children.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that media strategies play a significant role in shaping the implementation of child protection policies against harmful television content. However, the effectiveness of these strategies is uneven across their three key dimensions. While government policy enactment is relatively well-established, media editorial monitoring remains inconsistent, and parental television program monitoring is notably underdeveloped.

Stakeholder involvement is also highly uneven: agencies are fully engaged, media houses show variable commitment, and parents are largely excluded from policy processes. This disjointed implementation, where stakeholders operate in silos, significantly reduces overall effectiveness. The most critical barrier to child protection is the parental awareness gap, which prevents parents from using available content rating systems, password protections, and complaint procedures. Ultimately, the study revealed that a strong positive relationship exists between stakeholder involvement and implementation success, but uneven involvement—particularly the exclusion of parents—undermines the entire protective framework.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are offered to strengthen the implementation of media policies that protect children from harmful television content in Nairobi County and, by extension, other urban centres in Kenya.

Government regulatory agencies — including the Kenya Film and Classification Board, the Communications Authority, and the Media Council — have well-established policies and high institutional awareness. However, their influence diminishes at the household level. To bridge this gap, these agencies should move beyond formal enforcement and invest in community-based partnerships. Working with local administrators, religious institutions, and schools, they can disseminate simple, practical guides on child-safe television viewing. An independent oversight body dedicated specifically to children’s media protection should be established, with a governing board that includes not only regulators and media executives but also parent representatives. Such a structure would help ensure that policies are not only written but also understood and used by families.

The study found that while all television stations conduct pre-broadcast analysis, only a minority employ multiple protective strategies, and dedicated children’s media policies are rare. To address this, the Media Council and the Communications Authority should issue mandatory, standardised content evaluation guidelines that reduce individual editorial discretion. Every television station should be required to establish a dedicated children’s content unit staffed by personnel trained in child development and media effects. In addition, an industry-wide feedback system — where parents can easily report concerns and stations must respond — would foster shared best practices and accountability. Without such measures, editorial monitoring will remain inconsistent and unreliable.

One of the most striking findings of this study is that parents actively monitor their children’s viewing yet have very low awareness of the regulatory mechanisms and media house policies that are meant to support them. Consequently, their efforts are often ineffective. A sustained, plain-language civic education programme is urgently needed. Such a programme should explain, in everyday terms, how content is classified, how to use parental locks and age-rating systems, and how to file a complaint when harmful content slips through. Training workshops can be offered through parent-teacher associations, community health centres, and even local radio stations, which have wide reach in Nairobi. Schools should also integrate basic media literacy and policy awareness into their curricula, so that children themselves learn to navigate content safely.

The discussion revealed that stakeholders — government, media houses, and parents — operate largely in silos. Government regulates without ensuring parental understanding, media implements without systematic parental feedback, and parents monitor without knowing the tools available. To break this cycle, a permanent multi-stakeholder forum should be established, bringing together regulators, media editors, parent associations, child rights organisations, and academic researchers. This forum would meet quarterly to review complaints, share data, and adjust strategies in real time. An integrated monitoring and evaluation framework should also be developed, tracking not only enforcement actions and media compliance but also — crucially — changes in parental awareness over time. Only when all three dimensions work together can real-world safety for children be achieved.

This study accounted for a substantial portion of the variation in policy implementation, but a meaningful share remains unexplained. The remaining variance is likely influenced by socioeconomic conditions, technological change, and differing agency capacities, all of which require additional investigation. Future research should extend beyond Nairobi County to capture rural and peri-urban contexts, where media access patterns and parental challenges may differ. Special attention should be given to streaming platforms and social media, as children increasingly consume content outside traditional broadcast television. Longitudinal studies are also needed to assess whether civic education interventions actually improve parental awareness and, in turn, reduce children’s exposure to harmful content. Finally, future work should include children’s own perspectives — while respecting ethical guidelines — to understand how they experience and interpret media policies.

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