

High Job Satisfaction Despite Low Income: A National Study of Kenyan Journalists

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Abstract

This Kenya national survey of journalists conducted in 2012 to 2013 ($n = 504$) examines job satisfaction, income satisfaction, and predictors of job satisfaction. Findings indicate that the vast majority of journalists are satisfied with their current jobs (83%). However, a clear majority (61.8%) are dissatisfied with their monthly incomes. Nearly a quarter of journalists fall in the monthly salary bracket of US\$375 to US\$625. Compared by gender, male and female journalists are equally satisfied with their jobs. Older journalists, radio journalists, high income earners, and full-time journalists reported higher job satisfaction. Income, job security, and job autonomy were the main predictors of job satisfaction.

Keywords

job satisfaction, job satisfaction predictors, Kenya, Kenyan journalists, national survey

Introduction

The importance of journalism in any nation—democratic or authoritarian—is a well-documented fact. Journalism is pervasive—as it cuts across our societal fabrics. To use Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009) words, journalism is “one of the most important social, cultural, and political institutions” in society (p. 3). McNair (2005) has described journalism as the “pre-eminent cultural form of our era” (p. 25). The essential role that journalists play in society has earned them the enviable distinction as members of the “Fourth Estate.”

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Across nations, different cultures, and civilizations, the influential role of journalists comes only after those exercised by the executive, legislature, and judiciary. There is no secret that the trinity of executive, legislature, and judiciary relies on journalists to communicate their ideas, agendas, and thoughts to citizens. More so, whether they are politicians, lobbyists, pressure groups, or terrorist spokespersons, journalism provides the essential “oxygen of publicity,” which enables their causes to be noticed and addressed (McNair, 2005). Journalists’ contribution to good governance, an essential ingredient of democracy and nation-building, is recognized in many nations. In democracy, for instance, McNair (2009) says that journalists are charged with monitoring the exercise of power. Similarly, Otieno (2007) argues that the place of the media in development and democratization process cannot be underestimated.

While they contribute to shaping political debates in the public sphere, journalists are also entrusted with the role of societal public watchdogs—where they expose social evils. When we consume and discuss texts created by journalists, we come to understand and construct ourselves as subjects within local, national, and global contexts (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). Thus, texts produced by journalists contribute to deterritorialization of our national borders in terms of media consumption—transforming us into global citizens. Succinctly put, journalists are suppliers of information, and a source of education and entertainment in society.

Based on the importance of journalism in society, McNair (2005) has tried to address the question of “why journalism matters?” He points out that in addition to supplying information to hundreds of millions of people around the world, journalism matters as it enjoys “a uniquely privileged cultural status, placing it at the center of public life and political debate ever since journalists first began to irritate kings and popes in early modern Europe” (McNair, 2005, p. 25).

Thus, the influential role of journalism in society has resulted in a growing body of research on journalists around the world. Although many journalism scholars (Beam, Weaver, & Brownlee, 2009; Weaver, 1998; Weaver & Willnat, 2012) have explored numerous variables related to the practice of journalism in different countries, this study specifically investigates how Kenyan journalists are satisfied with their jobs. It also examines factors that predict job satisfaction among Kenyan newswriters. This is the first representative research on job satisfaction among journalists in Kenya and Africa.

Kenya was selected for this study in Africa because its media encapsulates five vital elements in journalism practice: media freedom, wide consumption, quality production, recognition, and innovation. While Kenyan journalists’ ability to practice is “unrestricted” (Paasch, 2009), Kenya is the freest country in the region for journalists to operate (Mutambo, 2012). Cheeseman (2014) notes that Kenya has one of the most-engaged, well-produced, and widely consumed media in the African continent. Relatedly, the Kenyan media is the most “respected” and “innovative” in Africa (Ismail & Deane, 2008). These factors create comparatively conducive conditions for journalists to operate—hence qualifying Kenya as an ideal ground to study African journalists—especially their job satisfaction.

Understanding whether Kenyan journalists are satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs is important, because job satisfaction might influence their attitude and behaviors in doing their work. There is compelling evidence (Brownlee & Beam, 2012; Chan, Pan, & Lee, 2004; Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2012) that job satisfaction is one of the most researched variables in the practice of journalism. Willnat, Weaver, and Choi (2013) have noted that job satisfaction is an important indicator of working conditions and perceived autonomy among journalists in various countries.

Although many studies on job satisfaction and its predictors have been undertaken in various countries (Lederbogen, 1992; Lo, 1998; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996; Weischenberg, Malik, & Scholl, 2012), such research is seldom in Africa. Generally, Mwesige (2004) has noted that studies on African journalists are scarce. The only available evidence is research on journalists' job satisfaction in Uganda (Mwesige, 2004), Tanzania (Lederbogen, 1992), and Algeria (Kirat, 1998). The lack of research on African journalists is further evidenced in the latest book, *The Global Journalist in the 21st Century* (Weaver & Willnat, 2012), which carries no data from any African country.

These examples confirm the existence of a huge research gap on job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists and Africa in general. Although this study helps to understand the state of job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists, it makes an important contribution to the African journalism research. In addition, the study contributes to the growing body of research on job satisfaction among journalists in various countries. The findings are of great value to journalists, journalism schools, media scholars, media practitioners, and policy makers in the media industry. For example, Kenyan media managers could use the findings to address the problem of job and income dissatisfaction among their newswriters. In a nutshell, there is no research on job satisfaction and its predictors among Kenyan journalists, hence the significance of the current study.

The Media System in Kenya

The origin of media in Kenya is traced to the late 19th century. The missionaries and British settlers started the modern Kenyan press in the 19th century (Ochilo, 1993)—the reason why the first publications “carried religious materials” (Obonyo, 2003). However, the first broadcast service was launched in 1927, and it targeted the White community (Ali, 2009). Today's Kenyan media is a product of multiple forces—religious, cultural, economic, political, and technological in nature. Mbeke (2010) explains that the colonial state, settler communities, post-independence political competitions, the one-party dictatorship, political and economic liberalization, social and cultural challenges, globalization, and information revolution had their mark in the Kenyan media.

The development of the press in Kenya is classified into three phases: the press in the colonial era (1895-1962), the press in post-independence era (1963-1990), and the press in multipartism era (1991-present; Ireru, 2012). The pre-independence press was grouped into a three-tier system: European press, Indian press, and African press

(Faringer, 1991). The European press was at the top, the Indian press was in the middle, and the African at the bottom. The objective of the European press was to provide information for the missionaries and settlers of the news coming from England, legitimize the rights of the colonial masters, and provide a channel for social communication among the settlers in Kenya (Ochilo, 1993). The African newspapers were politically motivated, and focused on the independence agenda.

In post-independence Kenya, the press remained dormant throughout the single-party era until the restoration of multipartism in early 1990s (Ileri, 2012). Before 1992, the media operated in an extremely harsh political and legal environment (Aling'o, 2007). This was a very dark period for the media in Kenya, characterized by direct censorship, intimidation, physical threats and attacks, media closures, prosecution and detention of journalists, and confiscation of media materials (Ileri, 2009). During the 24-year reign of President Daniel Moi, media freedom to criticize the government remained elusive (Ileri, 2012). The regime restricted political expression through the press and criminalized some critical journalists and their media outlets through sedition trials (Kalyango, 2011).

But since the return of pluralistic politics in 1991, Kenya's media industry became more diverse and vibrant. The liberalization of polity "further opened up the press system" (Ibelema & Bosch, 2009). The re-introduction of political pluralism (Ogola, 2011), the liberalization of the media sector in 1990s (Ali, 2010), and globalization (Ali, 2010) have contributed to the growth of Kenya's media industry. Freed from the authoritarian control of state, Ali (2009) says the media sector became pluralized, diversified, and dynamic as compared with the previous era.

Another important characteristic of the Kenyan media is that they are commercial in nature. The commercial media are the majority in the country—a reflection of the profit motive behind their establishment and existence. The Kenyan media has thrived in this commercial front in the last few years due to the country's good economic performance. This is reflected in the media advertising revenue, which has been growing since 2003—standing at US\$193 million in 2007—from US\$73 million in 2003 (Mbeke & Mshindi, 2008).

While Paasch (2009) notes that the ability to practice as a journalist in Kenya is unrestricted, Ismail and Deane (2008) argue that "the Kenyan media is one of the most respected, thriving, sophisticated, and innovative in Africa (p. 320). Nationally and internationally, the media are seen as a "principal indicator of the democratic vitality of Kenya" (p. 320). The U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) says Kenya is the freest country in the region for journalists and their work (Mutambo, 2012).

Today, the Nation Media Group and the Standard Group dominate the print media in Kenya. Obonyo (2003) classifies the Kenyan print media into four sub-sectors: daily newspapers, magazines, regional newspapers, and the printed sheets that also seek to pass for newspapers in urban centers. There are six daily newspapers (*Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, *The People*, *The Star*, *Taiifa Leo*, and *Business Daily*), plus several magazines and weekly publications. *The Standard* is the oldest mainstream newspaper in Kenya, established in 1902. Founded in 1960, *Daily Nation* is the most

prestigious and influential newspaper in the region. *Daily Nation* is “arguably *The New York Times* of Kenya’s newspaper industry” (Onyebadi, 2008). *The People* was established in 1993. It was positioned as the voice of the opposition politics and reports materials that *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* feared to touch (Obonyo, 2003). Like *Daily Nation*, *Taifa Leo*, published in Swahili language, is also owned by the Nation Media Group. It was founded in 1958. *Business Daily* and *The Star* are the youngest, launched in 2006 and 2007, respectively.

Kenya was among the earliest African countries to set up television system (Ainslie, 1966). It was inaugurated in 1963. Of concern, however, is that television has not made impact in Kenya’s countryside (Mbeke & Mshindi, 2008; Media Council of Kenya, 2005). Even the liberalization of airwaves in 1990s did not benefit rural population until recently when the government allowed major television networks to expand their reach across the country (Mbeke & Mshindi, 2008).

Television is a source of information for 39% of Kenyans (Media Council of Kenya, 2005). In fact, television sets are not ubiquitous in Kenya (Bowen, 2010). More than 3.2 million households have television sets in the country, with more viewers found in urban centers than in rural areas (Mbeke, Okello-Orlale, & Ugungu, 2010). Television viewership is higher in urban centers because of better access to TV resources, especially electricity, which is not common in all rural areas. The relatively high cost of television sets is another factor for the low use of television in the country. Kenyans with meager resources cannot afford to buy a television set.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) TV, the national broadcaster, dominated the television sub-sector for a very long time until 1990 when Kenya Television Network (KTN) was licensed to broadcast. When KBC’s monopoly ended, the television sub-sector underwent considerable expansion (Ali, 2009). In the liberalized market, KBC has struggled to compete, due to lack of funding, bloated workforce, lack of facilities, and political interference (Mbeke, 2010). Next to go on air was Citizen TV in July 1999. Nation Television (NTV) followed later that year in December. Currently there are 20 television stations on air (Communications Commission of Kenya, 2012). For long, KTN led in television viewership market share until 5 years ago when it was deposed by Citizen TV. Citizen TV controlled 50% of television viewership in the country in 2011 (Bosire, 2012), followed by KTN and NTV both tied at 13%, and KBC with 11% (Mulunda, 2012). K24 TV was fourth with 3% and Kiss TV 2% (Mulunda, 2012). The rest shared the remaining 8%.

Radio listening is pervasive in Kenya. Radio is an indispensable tool for delivering development information (Bowen, 2010). Nearly all Kenyans are radio listeners and use the medium as a source of news and information (Bowen, 2010). The proportion of the population that listens to radio in the urban and the rural areas are close to each other, comprising 88.1% and 84.6%, respectively (Media Council of Kenya, 2005). The radio landscape in Kenya has exponentially grown in the last decade. Today, there are more than 90 radio stations on air (Communications Commission of Kenya, 2012), compared with the licensing of the first private radio station (Capital FM) in 1996. The majority of radio stations are owned by Royal Media Services—14 in total—and they control 70% of radio listenership (Bosire, 2012).

Job Satisfaction in Journalism Practice

For two centuries, people's job satisfaction has been of great importance to philosophers, social scientists, management specialists, and scholars (Defleur, 1992)—making it one of the most frequently studied variables in research on organizational behavior (Spector, 1997). In journalism, professional job satisfaction is traced from 1971 when Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman (1976) introduced the variable in their seminal study on American journalists. Since then, decennial studies (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, 1991, 1996) of U.S. journalists and in other countries have made job satisfaction one of the leading variables examined in journalism research.

However, Beam (2006) notes that studies of job satisfaction suffer from a lack of commonly accepted conceptual definition. This is so because various definitions touch on various aspects of job satisfaction (Gruneberg, 1979)—resulting in many definitions advanced by different scholars. For example, Mueller and McCloskey (1990) define job satisfaction as the positive effective orientation workers have toward their work. Whereas Smucker, Whisenant, and Pedersen (2003) define job satisfaction as the feelings or effective response to a particular job, Ivancevich and Donnelly (1968) say it is the favorable viewpoint of the worker toward the work role he presently occupies.

There also is a contention among scholars on whether job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are separate constructs. For example, Ewen, Hulin, and Smith (1966) have argued that if the presence of a variable in the work situation leads to satisfaction, then its absence will lead to job dissatisfaction—implying that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction represent different points on the same continuum. Beam (2006) presumes that a worker could be simultaneously satisfied and dissatisfied with a job. However, Locke (1976) has dismissed the two-factor definition as logically and empirically unsupportable.

Despite a lack of consensus among scholars on a universally agreed definition, the centrality of job satisfaction in organizations cannot be gainsaid. Job satisfaction creates confidence, loyalty, and ultimately improved quality in the output of the employed (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Similarly, Spector (1997) says that job satisfaction can influence job commitment, turnover, productivity, and other factors that affect the successful operation of an organization. In various countries, job satisfaction has been reported as an important indicator of working conditions of journalists (Willnat et al., 2013).

Bramlett-Solomon (1992) has made an important point that studies of job satisfaction among newspeople rely on a single indicator: "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present job?" In this research, respondents were asked the same question. Job satisfaction is measured in terms of its intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic factors tend to impact on job satisfaction, which in turn, influences motivation (Herzberg, 1968). They include interest, responsibility, occupational self-direction or control, growth, achievement, challenge, competence, and autonomy (Hall, 1986). Extrinsic elements are tangible in nature—and include income, fringe benefits, work content, safety, and company policies (Rothman, 1987).

Literature Review

In different studies, job satisfaction has been predicted by various factors such as contract type (Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2012) and income (Hanitzsch & Hidayat, 2012; Hao & George, 2012; Mellado, 2012; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). Studies have also found job autonomy (Chan et al., 2004; Pasti, Chernysh, & Svitich, 2012; Tsfatı & Meyers, 2012) and job security (Farias, Rojano, & Roses, 2012; Kirat, 2012) as predictors of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was also correlated with age in Singapore (Hao & George, 2012) and Russia (Pasti et al., 2012), and education in Taiwan (Lo, 2012). A study (Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2012) of Flemish journalists found newspeople were fairly satisfied with their job. Their job satisfaction was related to contract type and job autonomy. Hao and George (2012) surveyed 930 Singaporean journalists. They found majority of journalists satisfied with their job, with 12.2% of them feeling very satisfied and 63.4% feeling fairly satisfied. The researchers reported that job satisfaction correlated with age, income, and autonomy.

A Russian study (Pasti et al., 2012) comprising 620 respondents found the autonomy in news selection predicted job satisfaction. Chinese journalists also derive their job satisfaction from job autonomy (Chan et al., 2004). The survey, conducted in 2002, interviewed 515 journalists in Shanghai. Hanitzsch and Hidayat (2012) reported a relative high level of job satisfaction among Indonesian journalists. Surveying 385 journalists in 2001, they found that 22.6% of respondents were very satisfied, 54.4% satisfied, 21.8% dissatisfied. Pay and job security accounted for job satisfaction.

Mwesige's (2004) study of Ugandan journalists reported low levels of job satisfaction. Income was one of the strongest predictors of their job satisfaction. Ugandan journalists who earned more money were more likely to report being satisfied with their jobs than those who earned less. Income predicted job satisfaction among U.S. journalists older than 40 years (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). The study reported that older journalists with higher salaries were a little more likely to express greater job satisfaction than their less-well-paid colleagues.

A 2004 survey (Lo, 2012) of 1,642 Taiwanese journalists found that job satisfaction correlated with job autonomy, income, and education. Taiwanese journalists who earned higher salaries, had higher levels of education, and claimed more autonomy in their jobs, expressed greater job satisfaction. Elsewhere, more than half of Chilean journalists (51.1%) were fairly satisfied with their jobs (Mellado, 2012). Income was the main predictor of their job satisfaction. Malaysian journalists reported fair satisfaction with their jobs (Tamam, Jalarajan, & Govindasamy, 2012). Job autonomy and pay predicted their job satisfaction.

In 2002, 39.7% and 54% of Israeli journalists said they were "very satisfied" and "somewhat satisfied" with their work, respectively (Tsfatı & Meyers, 2012). Job autonomy was the main predictor of their job satisfaction. Farias et al. (2012) surveyed 1,000 Spanish journalists in 2009, and found that job security correlated with job satisfaction. Their study highlighted a growing conviction that job security was a deep-seated problem affecting the working conditions of Spanish journalists. Kirat (2012) surveyed 2,000 United Arab Emirates journalists and found that job autonomy determined job satisfaction.

The above literature review shows that journalists enjoy varying job satisfaction depending on the prevailing work conditions in their countries. The literature also demonstrates that job autonomy, job security, and income are the major predictors of job satisfaction across nations. However, there are exceptional cases where other factors predict job satisfaction—for example, contract type in Belgium, age in Singapore and Russia, and education in Taiwan.

The present study examined job satisfaction, levels of income satisfaction, and predictors of job satisfaction—among Kenyan journalists. Based on the literature on job satisfaction in journalism practice around the world, the study advances the following research questions and hypothesis:

RQ1a: How satisfied are Kenyan journalists with their jobs?

RQ1b: How does job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists compare in age, education, income, media type, and contract type?

H1: Job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists is associated with age, education, income, job security, contract type, and job autonomy.

RQ2a: How satisfied are Kenyan journalists with their monthly incomes?

RQ2b: What are the monthly incomes of Kenyan journalists?

RQ2c: How do monthly incomes among Kenyan journalists compare in education and media type?

Method

National in scope, the present study surveyed 504 Kenyan journalists in public and private media organizations. The study covered full-time, contract, and part-time journalists. It targeted all types of journalists: correspondents, reporters, editors, senior editors, sub-editors, bureau chiefs, television and radio producers, radio presenters, television news anchors, television camera journalists, and newspaper photojournalists.

Sampling

Before administering the survey, the researcher compiled a list of all media organizations in Kenya. The Media Council of Kenya provided the lists for the Kenyan print media organizations and for the international news agencies with offices in Kenya. The list for broadcast media was obtained from the Communications Commission of Kenya. The three lists resulted in a total of 99 media organizations. These included 52 radio stations, 13 television stations, 11 international news agencies, 8 magazines, 6 dailies, 6 weekly newspapers, 1 monthly newspaper, Kenya News Agency (KNA), KBC, and the Presidential Press Service (PPS).

The next step was to obtain the names of all Kenyan journalists from the Media Council of Kenya and the Kenya Union of Journalists. However, none of these two official journalist organizations had a complete list of all Kenyan journalists. To create a complete list of all journalists, this researcher compiled the names of newspeople working for the 99 media organizations that were identified earlier. This was by

contacting each media organization and asking for a complete list of journalists working for them.

During this process, 62 organizations agreed to participate in the study. Thirty-seven media organizations declined to cooperate in this study, citing company policies that bar them from releasing the identity of their workers. Of the 37 media organizations that declined participation, 51.4% were radio stations, 27% international news agencies, 16.2% television stations, and 5.4% magazines. The approximate number of journalists working for the 37 media organizations that failed to cooperate (and therefore could not be included in this study) is estimated to be 214 (14%). This estimate is based on figures given to the researcher by insiders at the organizations that refused to participate in the survey. Based on the fact that most of these organizations are not in the core business of news (the focus of this study), their exclusion has no impact on the study's findings.

The 62 media organizations that cooperated were categorized as follows: 31 radio stations (50%), 6 television stations (9.7%), 6 magazines (9.7%), 6 dailies (9.7%), 5 weekly newspapers (8.1%), 4 international news agencies (6.4%), 1 monthly newspaper (1.6%), KBC (1.6%), KNA (1.6%), and the PPS (1.6%). The online appendix provides a list of the organizations that participated in this survey.

The 62 organizations that agreed to participate were asked to provide the names and email addresses of all journalists who worked for them. The researcher, a former reporter in Nairobi with an elaborate network of journalist friends within the Kenyan media, contacted senior editorial managers and journalists known to him. He then requested help in compiling the names of their editorial staff members. No incentives were provided to those who helped to compile the names of journalists. The process of compiling the names started on June 20, 2012, and continued throughout the study period.

Overall, a total of 1,532 journalists were identified by the 62 Kenyan media organizations included in the study. This number reflects well the population of newspeople in Kenya, because all major media organizations in the country participated in the study (see the online appendix).

As the names of journalists became available from the various media houses, half of the names in each media entity were selected for inclusion in the survey sample. To avoid listing bias, all name lists were first randomized. Then, every second name was randomly selected from each of the lists to be included in the final sample. This systematic random sampling procedure, which resulted in a final sample of 765 journalists, ensured that journalists from the 62 media organizations would be represented proportionally in the final sample. The 765 journalists included in the sample were then contacted to participate in the survey.

Data Collection

This study's data were primarily collected using a survey questionnaire—in two versions—online and printed questionnaires. Poindexter and McCombs (2000) define surveys as a research technique that uses a standardized questionnaire to collect

information about attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and backgrounds and lifestyle characteristics from a sample of respondents. Survey questionnaires have been used successfully in other studies (Johnstone et al., 1976; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; Weaver & Willnat, 2012) of journalists around the world.

One of the most fundamental objectives in research is the generalizability of results. Therefore, the use of a survey in this study allowed for the use of a probability sample. The representative sample creates confidence in this study as it ensures that the findings are generalizable to the overall population of Kenyan journalists. In addition, the use of a standardized questionnaire ensured uniformity in measuring the data gathered from the journalists.

To ensure credibility in the answering of the online questionnaires, first a courtesy email was sent to the respondents explaining the study and requesting their participation. This courtesy email was followed a few minutes later by an email that contained a link to the actual online questionnaire (hosted by Qualtrics). On average, eight reminder emails were sent to respondents who did not complete the questionnaire. For the printed version, the researcher visited the media organizations, and waited for the questionnaires to be filled out.

The survey questionnaire employed in the study was based on the questionnaire used by Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, and Wilhoit (2007), which contained questions about job satisfaction, income, job autonomy, and job security. It is important to note that the Weaver et al. questionnaire is based on the 1982 (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986) and the 1992 (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991) national telephone surveys of U.S. journalists. For many years, these questionnaires have served as the standard bearer in national survey of journalists in different nations (Herscovitz & Cardoso, 1998; Layton, 1998; McMane, 1998; Mwesige, 2004; Ramaprasad, 2001).

Before administering the survey, a pretest was conducted with 13 Kenyan journalists to ensure that the questionnaire was adequately designed and contained no errors. The journalists who participated in the pretest were subsequently excluded from the main survey. No incentives were offered to participants. The survey was approved by the university Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The online survey ran between July 23, 2012, and February 26, 2013, and resulted in 351 completed questionnaires. The data collection using the printed questionnaire ran between January 2, 2013, and February 22, 2013—resulting in 153 completed questionnaires. Overall, of the 765 journalists who were contacted to participate in the study, 504 completed either the online or the printed questionnaire. This represents a healthy overall response rate of 66%. The final sample analyzed in this study represents about one third of the entire (estimated) Kenyan journalism population and is, therefore, highly representative. The online appendix provides a list of the response rate for each of the 62 media organizations.

Of the 503 journalists who reported their job titles (one refused), 34.4% were reporters ($n = 173$), 17.9% editors ($n = 90$), 11.1% correspondents ($n = 56$), 8.3% sub-editors ($n = 42$), 7.5% radio presenters and producers ($n = 38$), 6.4% news anchors ($n = 32$), 4.4% bureau chiefs ($n = 22$), 1.8% photojournalists ($n = 9$), and 8.2% other titles ($n = 41$).

Table 1. Job Satisfaction Among Kenyan Journalists.

Satisfaction	Number of respondents	Percent
Very satisfied	59	11.9
Satisfied	351	71.1
Dissatisfied	70	14.2
Very dissatisfied	14	2.8
Total	494	100.0

Note. 10 respondents did not report their levels of job satisfaction.

For many years, job satisfaction has remained a central variable in several studies (Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2012; Powers, 1991; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991) about journalists in various nations. To measure job satisfaction in this study, respondents were asked on a 4-point scale (1 = *very dissatisfied*, 4 = *very satisfied*) how satisfied they are with their present job. The questionnaire also contained three questions on predictors of job satisfaction—income, job autonomy in news selection, and job security. Income is an important demographic variable that has been examined in most journalist survey studies (Joseph & Richards, 2012; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991; Weischenberg et al., 2012). Respondents rated their income satisfaction on a 4-point scale ranging from *very dissatisfied* (=1) to *very satisfied* (=4).

Job autonomy in news selection has also been studied widely (Demers, 1995; Mellado & Humanes, 2012; Weaver et al., 2007). To measure journalistic autonomy, respondents were asked the following: How much freedom do you usually have in deciding which aspects of a news story should be emphasized? Answers to this question were assessed on a 5-point scale ranging from *no freedom at all* (=1) to *almost complete freedom* (=5). The perceived job security of journalists in their work also has been extensively investigated in journalism research (Farias et al., 2012; Kirat, 2012). Respondents rated job security on a 4-point scale—ranging from *very dissatisfied* (=1) to *very satisfied* (=4).

Findings

RQ1a asked how satisfied Kenyan journalists were with their jobs. As Table 1 shows, the vast majority of Kenyan journalists were either “satisfied” (71.1%) or “very satisfied” (11.9%) with their current jobs. In contrast, fewer than 2 in 10 journalists were “dissatisfied” (14.2%) or “very dissatisfied” (2.8%) with their jobs.

RQ1b asked how job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists compares in age, education, income, media type, and contract type. To investigate which demographic and work-related factors might influence journalists’ perceived work satisfaction, mean job satisfaction scores were computed for journalists’ gender, age, education, income, media type, and contract type. The findings are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Job Satisfaction by Demographics and Work-Related Factors.

Demographic/factor	Mean job satisfaction
Gender	
Male	2.9
Female	2.9
Age	
18-29	3.0
30-49	2.9
50-64	3.1
Education	
High school	3.1
Associate degree	2.9
Undergraduate	2.9
MA degree	3.0
PhD	2.5
Income in US\$	
Less than 375	2.6
375-625	3.0
625-875	2.8
875-1,250	3.0
1,250-1,875	3.0
1,875-2,500	3.1
2,500-3,125	3.2
3,125-3,750	3.4
3,750-4,375	3.4
More than 4,375	3.4
Media type	
Daily newspapers	2.9
International news agencies	3.0
Kenya News Agency	3.0
Magazines	2.8
Radio	3.1
Television	3.0
Weekly newspapers	2.8
Other	2.9
Contract type	
Contract	2.8
Full-time employee	3.0
Part-time	2.7
Other	2.7

Note. Job satisfaction scale: 1 = very dissatisfied; 4 = very satisfied.

Gender and Age

Overall, Kenyan male and female journalists are equally satisfied with their jobs ($M = 2.9$). Older journalists also have a higher job satisfaction levels than their younger colleagues. Journalists between the age 50 and 64 years reported the highest job satisfaction

($M = 3.1$), followed by those between 18 and 29 years old ($M = 3.0$). Middle-aged journalists (30-49 years) were the least satisfied with their jobs ($M = 2.9$).

Education

High school graduates reported the highest job satisfaction ($M = 3.1$), followed by master's ($M = 3.0$), associate degrees (diploma in Kenya), and bachelor's degree holders (both $M = 3.0$). Surprisingly, the most dissatisfied journalists were holders of doctorate degrees ($M = 2.5$).

Income

Unsurprisingly, Kenyan journalists with higher income were more satisfied with their work than those who received lower pay. In general, journalists earning more than US\$3,125 were the most satisfied with their jobs ($M = 3.4$), whereas those earning less than US\$375 per month reported the lowest levels of satisfaction ($M = 2.6$).

Media Type

The level of job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists is fairly evenly distributed across media types. The highest job satisfaction was found among radio journalists ($M = 3.1$), whereas journalists working for weekly newspapers and magazines reported the least job satisfaction ($M = 2.8$). Journalists working for international media, KNA, and television fall somewhere in the middle of that ($M = 3.0$).

Contract Type

As expected, Kenyan journalists with full-time contracts reported higher job satisfaction ($M = 3.0$). Journalists with contracts ($M = 2.8$) and those employed on part-time basis ($M = 2.7$) reported lower levels of job satisfaction.

H1 predicted that job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists correlate with age, education, income, job security, contract type, and job autonomy. To test this prediction, a multiple regression analysis model was developed that regressed gender, age, education, income, job security, media ownership, contract type, job autonomy, and work experience on Kenyan journalists' perceived job satisfaction. As Table 3 shows, the regression analysis indicates that income ($b = .40, p < .001$), job security ($b = .17, p < .01$), and job autonomy ($b = .10, p < .05$) are positively associated with journalists' job satisfaction. The hypothesis is partially supported because only three (income, job security, and job autonomy) out of the six independent variables in the regression model correlated with job satisfaction.

RQ2a asked how satisfied Kenyan journalists were with their monthly incomes. The findings indicate that less than 4 in 10 journalists are satisfied with their monthly income (1.6% "very satisfied" and 36.6% "satisfied"). In contrast, as Table 4 indicates, the clear majority is either "dissatisfied" (47.6%) or "very dissatisfied" (14.2%). **RQ2b** asked about the monthly incomes of Kenyan journalists. Table 5 indicates that

Table 3. Predictors of Job Satisfaction Among Kenyan Journalists.

Predictor	Beta
Gender	-.05
Age	-.01
Education	.00
Job income	.40***
Job security	.17**
Media type	.02
Contract type	.07
Job autonomy	.10*
Work experience	.04
Adj. R^2	.30***
N	374

Note. Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients.

Table 4. Income Satisfaction Among Kenyan Journalists.

Satisfaction	Number of respondents	Percent
Very satisfied	8	1.6
Satisfied	181	36.6
Dissatisfied	235	47.6
Very dissatisfied	70	14.2
Total	494	100

Note. 10 respondents did not report their levels of job satisfaction.

most of Kenyan journalists earn between US\$375 and US\$625 per month (22%), followed by those earning between US\$625 and US\$875 (18.7%), and US\$875 to US\$1,250 (15.9%). Notably, a significant number (16.6%) of Kenyan journalists actually earn less than US\$375 per month. Only 5.8% earn more than US\$2,000 per month.

RQ2c examined how monthly incomes among Kenyan journalists compare in education and media type. When the earnings are analyzed by education, Table 6 shows that master's degree holders are the highest paid, with monthly earnings that range between US\$1,250 and US\$1,875. The second highest paid are bachelor's and PhD degree holders, earning between US\$625 and US\$875. High school graduates and associate degree (diploma) holders earn the least—between US\$375 and US\$625.

When it comes to income by media type, Table 7 reveals that journalists in the international media enjoy better salaries than their colleagues in the local media houses. They earn a monthly salary of between US\$1,875 and US\$2,500 ($M = 6.6$). However, when the local media are analyzed, magazine journalists are the best paid, falling in the monthly salary bracket of US\$875 to US\$1,250 ($M = 4.8$). Those working for radio ($M = 3.2$), television ($M = 3.5$), daily newspapers ($M = 3.4$), weekly newspapers

Table 5. Monthly Income of Kenyan Journalists.

Monthly income in US\$	Monthly income in KSH	Number of respondents	Percent
Less than 375	Less than 30,000	74	16.6
375-625	30,000-50,000	100	22.4
625-875	50,000-70,000	84	18.7
875-1,250	70,000-100,000	71	15.9
1,250-1,875	100,000-150,000	68	15.2
1,875-2,500	150,000-200,000	24	5.4
2,500-3,125	200,000-250,000	5	1.1
3,125-3,750	250,000-300,000	7	1.6
3,750-4,375	300,000-350,000	5	1.1
More than 4,375	More than 350,000	9	2.0
Total		447	100.0

Note. Fifty-seven respondents did not identify their monthly salary.

Table 6. Monthly Income by Education.

Education	Monthly income in US\$	Mean monthly income
Associate degree	375-625	2.5
High school	375-625	2.8
PhD	625-875	3.3
Undergraduate	625-875	3.4
Master's degree	1,250-1,875	5.4

Note. Mean monthly income scale: 1 = lowest income, 9 = highest income.

($M = 3.9$), and “other” ($M = 3.4$) are in the same income bracket—US\$625 to US\$875. KNA journalists are the lowest paid—earning US\$375 to US\$625 ($M = 2.7$).

Discussion

Job satisfaction has for many years remained a central variable in various studies (Reinardy, 2007; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991; Weaver et al., 2007) on journalists. Job satisfaction can influence journalists' attitudes and behaviors in producing news and information (Bramlett-Solomon, 1992). Thus, it was important to know whether Kenyan journalists are satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs—because the level of job satisfaction might influence their attitudes and behaviors in news production.

Findings indicate that Kenyan journalists are fairly happy with their profession (70% are “satisfied”). This satisfaction is, however, contradicted by “income”—a predictor of job satisfaction—because almost half (61.8%) of them are dissatisfied with their monthly pay. This contradiction depicts as a case of where the Kenyan journalists like their profession—but are unhappy with their career's rewards. Thus, it is reasonable to

Table 7. Monthly Income by Media Type.

Media type	Monthly income in US\$	Mean monthly income
Kenya News Agency	375-625	2.7
Radio	625-875	3.2
Daily newspapers	625-875	3.4
Other	625-875	3.4
Television	625-875	3.5
Weekly newspapers	625-875	3.9
Magazines	875-1,250	4.8
International news agencies	1,875-2,500	6.6

Note. Mean monthly income scale: 1 = lowest income, 9 = highest income.

assume that job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists mostly reflects intrinsic factors such as job security or job autonomy. This is likely to be true because, as Herzberg (1968) has explained, intrinsic factors (e.g., job autonomy) tend to have an impact on job satisfaction, which in turn, might influence motivation. Indeed, it is instructive to note that these two intrinsic factors were the main predictors of job satisfaction in this study. Therefore, journalists who reported high job autonomy and job security were more likely to like their work.

Away from intrinsic and extrinsic factors, Kenyan journalists' high job satisfaction might be occasioned by factors outside the organization—for example, bribery and job prestige. It is a well-documented fact that journalism practice in Kenya is riddled with bribery (Ileri, 2015)—an unethical practice that affords journalists to make extra income from news sources desperate for favorable news. The extra money they make through corrupt practices might mitigate the effects of poor pay—bringing to them a sense of job satisfaction. The journalism profession is held in high regard in Kenya and journalists are seen as elite members of society. This public perception and the privilege to rub shoulders with the high and mighty in corridors of power might contribute to their work satisfaction.

Compared with their counterparts around the world, Kenyan journalists appear relatively more satisfied with their work. Lederbogen (1992) found that 76% of Tanzanian journalists were dissatisfied with their work, compared with Kenya's 14% who were dissatisfied. Weaver et al. (2007) reported that 51% of American journalists were "fairly satisfied." Like in Kenya, Slovenian journalists enjoy high job satisfaction (Lah & Zilic-Fiser, 2012). These comparisons indicate that job satisfaction among journalists vary from one country to another—depending on the prevailing working conditions in those countries.

Kenyan male and female journalists are equally satisfied with their jobs. This is encouraging, as it goes against the expectations that Kenyan women journalists are dissatisfied with their jobs. At the same time, the finding is astonishing, especially because female journalists in Kenya generally hold lower positions and receive smaller compensation. Also, the Kenyan media is dominated by men—a factor likely to marginalize women in newsrooms—resulting in their profession dissatisfaction. Similarly,

in a patriarchal society such as Kenya, women journalists face many challenges in newsrooms, which are detrimental to their job satisfaction. For example, Nyambate (2012) notes that female journalists in Kenya suffer from negative perceptions from their male counterparts, who often see them as not suitable for a “demanding” journalism career. This is a real hindrance to Kenyan women journalists who aspire to rise to managerial positions, yet they have to overcome many hurdles to prove that just like men they are equal to the task. However, the fact that Kenyan women journalists are satisfied with their jobs might signal that they are overcoming some of the traditional challenges they have faced in their work.

The findings also show that older and more educated journalists in Kenya tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. This higher job satisfaction among these journalists might be explained by the fact that they are likely to earn more due to promotions and more work experience. This again underscores the importance of income in determining job satisfaction among Kenyan newspeople. The older Kenyan journalists, for example, are more satisfied with their jobs because they have gained more work experience, which is likely to lead to higher job satisfaction. However, this finding contradicts previous studies which have reported higher job satisfaction among younger journalists in Singapore (Hao & George, 2012), Russia (Pasti et al., 2012), and in the United States (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991).

When analyzed by education, journalists with higher education enjoy more job satisfaction. This is because the better educated journalists are likely to earn promotions and salary increments—leading to greater job satisfaction—a variable known to influence journalists’ work productivity. The last decade has seen many Kenyan journalists return to the classroom to further their education, so as to gain promotions, better pay, and job security.

Although job satisfaction was fairly evenly distributed across media types, Kenyan radio journalists are the most satisfied. The reason for their high job satisfaction is likely due to flexible work schedules. Although no empirical evidence is available, it can be argued that radio journalists experience less stress, owing to the fact that their stories are shorter compared with their print media counterparts. As expected, this study also found that full-time journalists have the highest job satisfaction. Obviously, this is because they have stable jobs, which create a sense of job security and motivation to work—resulting in higher job satisfaction.

The multiple regression analyses, which were performed to control for the effects of various variables on job satisfaction simultaneously, showed that income, job security, and job autonomy emerged as the strongest predictors of job satisfaction. On the other hand, age, contract type, education, gender, media ownership, and work experience did not predict job satisfaction. This underscores the importance of income, job security, and job autonomy in evaluating job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists.

The findings that income, job autonomy, and job safety predicted job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists confirms similar results in previous studies. Research in the United States (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986), Singapore (Hao & George, 2012), Uganda (Mwesige, 2004); Taiwan (Lo, 2012), and Chile (Mellado, 2012) reported income as a job satisfaction predictor among journalists. Job autonomy predicted job satisfaction among

journalists in Belgium (Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2012), Russia (Pasti et al., 2012), China (Chan et al., 2004), and Malaysia (Tamam et al., 2012). Hanitzsch and Hidayat (2012) and Farias et al. (2012) found that job security accounted for job satisfaction. These findings underscore how income, job autonomy, and job security have over the years remained a permanent fixture in predicting job satisfaction among newspeople across nations.

Of the three predictors of job satisfaction, more attention should be paid to income—the strongest predictor of job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists. This is so because the variable is expected to have some implications in the practice of journalism in Kenya. Importantly, although income is a demographic variable that has been examined in most of journalism studies (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991), it can affect job satisfaction, which, in turn, can enhance or undermine the productivity of journalists.

As such, a closer look at this study's findings, they paint a negative picture on monthly salaries for Kenyan journalists. The pay is poor—with 16.6% earning less than US\$375 per month and slightly below a quarter (22.4%) taking home between US\$375 and US\$625. There are also glaring disparities between top and low earners—US\$4,375 per month against US\$375. The US\$375 to US\$625 that majority (22.4%) of Kenyan journalists earn per month closely reflects the average monthly pay for Kenyans working in the private (US\$438) and public sectors (US\$479; Nyabiage, 2013).

The poor income has far-reaching ramifications in the practice of journalism in the country. Because of poor pay, Kenyan journalists engage in unethical practices such as bribe-taking, corruption, and extortion. For example, 74% of Kenyan journalists perceive bribery and corruption as rampant in the Kenyan media (Ileri, 2015). The implication, of course, is that corruption among Kenyan journalists compromises the principle of objective reporting. Blaming corruption in the Kenyan media on poor pay, one journalist said,

Poor remuneration is to blame because as a journalist you have a name in society. You have the pressure from society . . . where people expect you to live in a good neighborhood or drive a good car. To meet those societal expectations, journalists try to go for the next available alternative for extra cash (Ileri, 2015, p.159).

Poor pay is also responsible for the high turnover of journalists from one media house to another—standing at 57% (Ileri, 2015). For the same reason, Kenyan journalists are joining the public relations industry in large numbers in search of higher income and better working conditions. In fact, 26.8% of those planning to leave journalism in the next 5 years prefer to pursue a career in public relations (Ileri, 2015). This definitely deprives the Kenyan media of qualified journalists—a move likely to affect the standards of journalism profession in the country. Relatedly, poor income might explain the pretty average commitment to the profession among Kenyan journalists—which stands at 53% (Ileri, 2015)—with nearly a quarter (23%) of them planning to quit the profession in the next 5 years (Ileri, 2015). This is also reflected in the United States where Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) reported that the salary issue was the main reason why the U.S. journalists were abandoning the profession.

Therefore, while poor pay among Kenyan journalists results in corrupt practices or less commitment to the profession, poor income also leads to lower morale and

productivity—thus affecting negatively on the job satisfaction. In conclusion, it is safe to state that the clear relationship between pay and job satisfaction underscores the fact that journalism is one of the least well-compensated professions in Kenya.

Conclusion

This study examined job satisfaction and its predictors among Kenyan journalists. The study is highly representative because it included journalists from all the major media organizations in Kenya. Findings indicate that Kenyan journalists are highly satisfied with their profession—but at the same time they are highly dissatisfied with their monthly incomes. The major predictors of job satisfaction were found to be income, job autonomy, and job security.

Despite the fact that the research provides very useful insights and information about job satisfaction among journalists in Kenya, it suffers from some limitations. For instance, some media organizations declined to participate in such an important study—citing various reasons. Future research should, however, include all media organizations in the country. Doing so would provide more useful data and findings—resulting in a complete reflection of the Kenyan journalism population—in relation to their perceived job satisfaction.

Notably, the study excluded freelance journalists because of the fact that they do not have permanent workstations—making it impossible to trace them for inclusion in the research. However, future research should strive to include freelancers in studies of job satisfaction among Kenyan journalists. It is important to include freelancers in job satisfaction research because they differ with those employed in permanent basis—in their assessment of job security and job autonomy (Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2012).

This study also analyzed job satisfaction by age, gender, education, income, contract type, and media type. Future research should analyze job satisfaction in relation to job title. This would help understand who between managerial and non-managerial journalists are more satisfied with their jobs. Deprez and Raeymaeckers (2012) have reported that managerial and non-managerial journalists assess certain job-intrinsic and job-extrinsic elements differently. Beam (2006) also says that supervisors and rank-and-file newswriters differ in the predictors of job satisfaction.

Acknowledgment

The author thanks Professor Lars Willnat for his insightful feedback on the article.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was funded by The Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications, Nairobi, Kenya.

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