

Country Report

Journalists in Tanzania

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Backgrounds of Journalists

In the sample of 272 journalists interviewed in Tanzania, most were male (54.8%), held a bachelor's degree or equivalent (99.3%), and had specialized in journalism and/or mass communication (77.2%). The mean age of these journalists was 27.63 years ($s=3.69$) and the median was 27, suggesting that half of the journalists were under the age of 27. In terms of religious affiliation, of the 262 respondents who reported their religious affiliation, 133 (50.76%) were Christian. Regarding Christian denomination, 72 (27.5%) were Protestant/Lutheran, 44 (16.8%) were Roman Catholic, and 17 (6.5%) were Orthodox. In addition, 125 (46.0%) identified as Muslim and four (1.5%) identified as having no religion. Religion was not rated as highly important for the journalists (mean=2.91 on a five-point scale, where 5 indicated more importance).

Journalists in the Newsroom

While there was spread in the distribution of position titles, the most common title of Tanzanian journalists in this study was reporter (57.4%). The majority of these journalists were employed full-time (72.8%), 16.2 percent had part-time jobs, and 11.0 percent were freelancers. Most journalists held permanent positions (81.0%), worked for only one newsroom (91.1%) and one news outlet (90.4%), did not hold other paid jobs (68.4%), and were generally members of professional associations (89.3%). The journalists tended to be generalists working on several topics (89.3%), and among those who worked on beats, the most common beat was news and current affairs (31.0%), followed by "other" (27.6%). On average, Tanzanian journalists had 6.80 years of experience ($s=2.19$); half of them had more than six years of professional experience. The modal job site was television (26.8%), followed by daily newspapers (23.9%), radio (18.8%), weekly newspapers (12.1%), and magazines (5.1%). The news outlets that respondent journalists worked for were mostly privately owned (57.4%) and national (53.7%) in their reach.

Journalistic Roles

The top six roles, all with means above 4.3 and standard deviations below 1, for Tanzanian journalists, were a mix of those aligned with a liberal press (e.g. promote tolerance and cultural diversity) and those relevant to development journalism (e.g. support national development). "Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience" (mean=4.58) and "Promote tolerance and cultural diversity" (mean=4.56) were the top two roles for these journalists (see Table 1) with 97.8 percent and 98.5 percent of the journalists respectively saying that they considered these roles "extremely" or "very" important. As the low standard deviations indicate, the journalists showed high agreement on the importance of these roles. The least important roles, both with means well below the midpoint of three, were "Be an adversary of government" (mean=1.98) and "Support government policy" (mean=1.99).

Table 1: Roles of journalists

	N	Percentage saying “extremely” and “very important”	Mean	Standard Deviation
Promote tolerance and cultural diversity	272	98.5	4.56	.53
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	272	97.8	4.58	.54
Educate the audience	272	94.9	4.37	.58
Support national development	272	94.5	4.44	.60
Advocate for social change	272	93.4	4.37	.61
Let people express their views	272	92.6	4.39	.62
Provide information people need to make political decisions	272	91.2	4.30	.62
Monitor and scrutinize political leaders	272	90.8	4.28	.62
Set the political agenda	272	90.1	4.26	.63
Report things as they are	272	87.9	4.25	.66
Influence public opinion	272	87.1	4.28	.71
Motivate people to participate in political activity	272	79.0	4.11	.72
Tell stories about the world	272	39.0	3.26	.91
Be a detached observer	272	26.5	3.14	.71
Provide entertainment and relaxation	272	22.1	2.87	.75
Provide advice, orientation, and direction for daily life	272	19.5	2.96	.72
Monitor and scrutinize business	272	6.3	2.72	.64
Provide analysis of current affairs	272	6.3	2.63	.73
Convey a positive image of political leadership	272	.0	2.21	.59
Support government policy	272	.0	1.99	.67
Be an adversary of the government	272	.0	1.98	.67

Question: Please tell me how important each of these things is in your work. 5 means you find them extremely important, 4 means very important, 3 means somewhat important, 2 means little importance, and 1 means unimportant.

Professional Ethics

Tanzania’s journalists had the highest agreement with the statement “Journalists should always adhere to the codes of professional ethics, regardless of situation and context” (mean=4.19) (it was the only role with a mean above 4.00); altogether, 81.6 percent of the journalists said they “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed with the statement. The standard deviation was small for this statement (s=0.72), further indicating considerable agreement about this ethical orientation. Tanzania’s journalists had the lowest agreement (mean=3.18) with “What is ethical in journalism depends on the specific situation” (see Table 2). Standard deviations for the final two statements, “What is ethical in journalism is a matter of personal judgement” (mean=3.19) and “It is acceptable to set aside moral standards if extraordinary circumstances require it” (mean=3.19) were both fairly high (s=1.11 respectively), indicating a large amount of disagreement among journalists on these issues.

Table 2: Ethical orientations of journalists

	N	Percentage saying “strongly” and “somewhat agree”	Mean	Standard Deviation
Journalists should always adhere to codes of professional ethics, regardless of situation and context	272	81.6	4.19	.72
What is ethical in journalism is a matter of personal judgment	248	58.5	3.19	1.11
It is acceptable to set aside moral standards if extraordinary circumstances require it	255	57.6	3.19	1.11
What is ethical in journalism depends on the specific situation	242	50.4	3.18	.90

Question: The following statements describe different approaches to journalism. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree. 5 means you strongly agree, 4 means somewhat agree, 3 means undecided, 2 means somewhat disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree.

“Accepting money from sources” was the practice that had the largest percent of respondents saying it was “always justified” (44.5%) and “justified on occasion” (34.6%). “Altering photographs” and “Publishing stories with unverified content” followed with 29.0 percent and 10.7 percent of the respondents saying these were “always justified”, and 44.9 percent and 27.9 percent saying there were “justified on occasion”, respectively (see Table 3). Thus, these three practices appeared to be more acceptable to journalists from Tanzania than other practices were. “Claiming to be somebody else” was the least accepted practice with 0.0 percent saying it was “always justified” and only 1.5 percent saying it was “justified on occasion”.

Table 3: Justification of controversial reporting methods by journalists

	N	Percentage saying “always justified”	Percentage saying “justified on occasion”
Accepting money from sources	272	44.5	34.6
Altering photographs	272	29.0	44.9
Publishing stories with unverified content	272	10.7	27.9
Exerting pressure on unwilling informants to get a story	270	4.4	28.9
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	271	3.0	34.7
Paying people for confidential information	269	1.1	3.3
Making use of personal documents such as letters and pictures without permission	269	.7	8.9
Using hidden microphones or cameras	268	.4	9.3
Altering or fabricating quotes from sources	272	.0	4.0
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	270	.0	4.4
Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors	271	.0	2.2
Claiming to be somebody else	272	.0	1.5

Question: Given an important story, which of the following, if any, do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?

Professional Autonomy and Influences

Journalists indicated considerably low professional autonomy with all averages in all areas following below 3.00; “Selecting stories” was the highest rated area (9.6%, mean=2.44, s=0.82) followed by “aspects emphasized” (9.9%, mean=2.43, s=0.86) and “participate in editorial coordination” (9.6%, mean=2.43, s=0.83).

The top influence for these journalists was censorship (mean=4.50), followed by availability of newsgathering resources (mean=4.19), the owners of news organization (mean=4.19), and the managers of news organization (mean=4.19) (see Table 4). More than 80 percent of the journalists indicated these four as being “extremely” or “very” influential. Public relations were rated last (mean=1.53) in influence, with only 1.9 percent of the journalists considering this influence as “extremely” or “very” important. The mean influence of religious considerations was 2.82. Several influences fell below the midpoint of three, including politicians, peers on the staff, business people, colleagues in other media, and the economic influences of profit expectations and advertising considerations.

Table 4: Perceived influences

	N	Percentage saying "extremely" and "very influential"	Mean	Standard Deviation
Censorship	272	90.4	4.50	.67
Availability of news-gathering resources	272	83.1	4.19	.70
The managers of news organization	272	82.4	4.19	.71
The owners of news organization	272	82.4	4.19	.71
Personal values and beliefs	272	82.4	4.15	.77
Editorial policy	272	80.9	4.09	.69
Media laws and regulation	272	78.7	4.12	.80
The military, police and state security	272	78.3	4.15	.77
Information access	272	76.5	4.07	.76
Feedback from the audience	272	72.8	4.04	.81
Journalism ethics	272	68.8	3.81	.94
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	272	67.3	3.74	.77
Relationships with news sources	271	39.1	3.28	1.00
Time limits	271	35.1	3.17	.95
Government officials	272	27.2	3.09	.78
Religious considerations	272	22.4	2.82	.80
Advertising considerations	225	19.6	2.57	1.12
Politicians	272	19.1	2.62	1.07
Profit expectations	219	17.4	2.50	1.06
Pressure groups	272	11.0	2.40	.98
Public relations	269	1.9	1.53	.72
Audience research and data	249	1.2	1.56	.63
Peers on the staff	272	.7	2.35	.64
Friends, acquaintances and family	272	.7	2.25	.71
Colleagues in other media	272	.7	1.93	.73
Business people	270	.4	2.09	.77
Competing news organizations	260	.0	1.83	.71

Question: Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work. 5 means it is extremely influential, 4 means very influential, 3 means somewhat influential, 2 means little influential, and 1 means not influential.

Journalism in Transition

Journalists who had worked for five or more years in the profession were asked to indicate whether certain aspects of their work had strengthened or weakened. All journalists (100.0%) indicated that the use of social media had strengthened, followed by the use of search engines (82.3%) and the relevance of journalism for society (65.1%) (see Tables 5 and 6). Among the areas that journalists indicated had weakened, audience research was at the top (65.2%), followed by public relations (63.2%) and pressure toward sensational news (44.2%).

Table 5: Changes in journalism

	N	Percentage saying has "increased"	Percentage saying has "decreased"
Use of search engines	249	82.3	.0
The relevance of journalism for society	249	65.1	6.0
Interactions of journalists with their audiences	249	59.4	6.4
Technical skills	249	59.4	1.6
Average working hours of journalists	249	53.0	18.1
The credibility of journalism	249	38.6	24.5
Having a university degree	249	35.7	2.4
Having a degree in journalism or a related field	249	32.5	10.8
Time available for researching stories	249	26.1	43.0
Journalists' freedom to make editorial decisions	248	20.2	32.3

Question: Please tell me whether you think there has been an increase or a decrease in the importance of following aspects of work in Tanzania. 5 means they have increased a lot, 4 means they have somewhat increased, 3 means there has been no change, 2 means they have somewhat decreased, and 1 means they have decreased a lot.

Table 6: Changes in influences on journalism

	N	Percentage saying has "strengthened"	Percentage saying has "weakened"
Social media	249	100.0	.0
User-generated contents, such as blogs	249	60.6	2.0
Competition	249	54.6	20.5
Western ways of practicing journalism	249	47.0	6.4
Journalism education	249	44.6	16.9
Ethical standards	237	30.0	25.7
Pressure toward sensational news	249	26.9	44.2
Advertising considerations	240	26.7	33.8
Audience feedback	234	25.6	34.6
Audience involvement in news production	248	25.4	35.9
Profit making pressures	248	20.6	40.3
Public relations	239	10.5	63.2
Audience research	112	.0	65.2

Question: Please tell me to what extent these influences have become stronger or weaker during the past five years in Tanzania. 5 means they have strengthened a lot, 4 means they have somewhat strengthened, 3 means they did not change, 2 means they have somewhat weakened, and 1 means they have weakened a lot.

Journalistic Trust

Interestingly, Tanzania's journalists' trust in various societal institutions capped at a mean of 3.54, indicating that their trust in institutions was not very high (see Table 7). Their highest trust was reserved for politicians in general (mean=3.50) with 53.7 percent saying that they had "complete" or a "great deal" of trust in this institution. The news media followed close behind (mean=3.54) with 50.7 percent saying they had "complete" or a "great deal" of trust in this institution. The military and police earned the least trust (means of 1.60 and 1.51 respectively). No journalists said they had "complete" or a "great deal" of trust in the police or military.

Table 7: Journalistic trust in institutions

	N	Percentage saying "complete" and "a great deal of trust"	Mean	Standard Deviation
Politicians in general	272	53.7	3.50	.95
The news media	272	50.7	3.54	.96
The judiciary/the courts	268	32.5	3.11	.96
Religious leaders	272	25.0	3.04	.78
Political parties	272	22.4	2.74	1.02
The government	272	11.4	2.48	.86
The parliament	272	7.4	2.21	.83
Trade unions	264	.8	2.25	.69
The military	250	.0	1.60	.66
The police	270	.0	1.51	.66

Question: Please tell me on a scale of 5 to 1 how much you personally trust each of the following institutions. 5 means you have complete trust, 4 means you have a great deal of trust, 3 means you have some trust, 2 means you have little trust, and 1 means you have no trust at all.



Methodological Information

<i>Size of the population:</i>	890 working journalists (estimated)
<i>Sampling method:</i>	stratified proportionally random sampling for newsrooms and simply random for journalists within newsrooms
<i>Sample size:</i>	272 working journalists
<i>Interview methods:</i>	face-to-face
<i>Response rate:</i>	77.71%
<i>Period of field research:</i>	11/2013-05/2014