ABSTRACTS FOR ST. PAUL'S UNIVESITY RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON 23rd & 24th NOVEMBER 2017

THEME: Strengthening Research and Innovations for Climate Adaptation and Sustainable Development

Media Framing of Climate Change Information in Kenya: A Case Study of the December 2015 Paris Accord

Iddah Wayumba[1] & Fredrick Ogutu[2]
St Paul's University, P. O. Private Bag, Limuru, 00217, Kenya
Corresponding Email: iwayumba@spu.ac.ke

Abstract

More than 50 years after independence, Kenyans keep suffering periodical episodes of pain and agony brought about by severe weather conditions. From extreme droughts, to floods and loss of lives all which have been linked to global warming that has made the weather patterns severe and unpredictable. The Kenyan government whilst being unable to curtail its effect has agreed that the problem is global in nature. However, there have been efforts to manage the problem universally, the most recent one being the Paris Accord (COP21), an agreement signed through consensus in December 2015 at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Paris. In the pact, over 195 state parties agreed to be part of the efforts to significantly reduce carbon emissions which are cited as the number one cause of climate change. The role of the media in ensuring the flow of such information to the citizens remains critical. It remains the only global link in the process of implementation and operationalization of the agreement. Through its coverage, real progress can be reported and accountability achieved. It has been argued that the citizens' understanding on global climatic issues solely rests on how the media frames them. Framing is a component of agenda setting theory where the media or its agents construct narratives in a bid to influence the audience perspectives around the media. This paper therefore seeks to investigate how the mainstream print media (Nation and Standard Newspapers) highlighted the Paris Accord more than 12 months since its signing. The research will employ content analysis of headlines, editorials and features about the Accord. The findings on how the media reports important climate change issues will influence and improve the future strategies on reporting climate related matters.

Key words: Paris Accord, climate change, media coverage