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# The Effectiveness of ‘Sema na Mahakama’ Independent Television (ITV) Program on Audiences’ understanding of Court Operations.

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## Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of the television program of “Sema na Mahakama,” broadcasted on ITV, in raising public awareness on court operations in Tanzania. The program aimed to enlighten the citizens on judicial process, enhance legal literacy, and foster greater public engagement with the judiciary. The study examines the effectiveness of “Sema na Mahakama” ITV program on audience understanding court operations. Mixed-methods approach was employed whereby data collection was collected through questionnaires, interview and participant observation whereby Meaning construction theory framed this study.

The findings indicate a significant increase in viewers’ awareness of various aspects of court operations, including court procedural knowledge, proper interpretation of laws, civil rights within the judicial system, and the role of different court personnel. Specifically, 61% to 80% of respondents reported a better understanding of court procedures through viewing the program, and felt more confident in their ability to navigate legal issues as a resulted of the program.

The findings suggest that “Sema na Mahakama” has been effective in promoting legal awareness and improving public understanding of court operations. The program’s success underscores the potential of media initiatives in enhancing civic education and fostering transparency and accountability in the judiciary.

The study recommends that, promotion of the program and extend its reach within local communities, strengthening community outreach partnerships with organizations like paralegals, religious institutions, and educational institutions is needed. Workshops or seminars should be organized in conjunction with the program to offer in-depth discussions and interactive learning experiences about court operations.

Recommendations for future programming include incorporating more interactive elements and expanding coverage to address a broader range of legal topics. The study contributes to the broader discourse on media's role in legal education and public engagement, highlighting the importance of continued efforts to make judicial processes more accessible and comprehensible to the Tanzanian populace.

**Keywords:** Citizens, Awareness, Television, Program, Court Operations

## 1. Introduction

The Judiciary of Tanzania is implementing a five-year Judiciary Strategic Plan (JSP) with credit from the World Bank. The strategic plan has three Pillars, however, for the purpose of this study, Pillar three of the Judiciary Strategic Plan and Component three of the Judiciary Citizen-Centric Project are of interest and focal point. They both focus on improving public trust and stakeholders' engagement. To achieve the target, the Judiciary has committed itself to open up its doors to the citizens. This can be achieved by not only giving information on court related businesses but also reaching out to the people through interactive Television and Radio programs with the collaboration with key stakeholders in the Justice Delivery Chain. To meet the objective, the Judiciary needs to reach the citizens through respected media with a solid audience and divergent coverage. It was without any doubt that ITV and TBC media houses are appropriate and fit in the equation. For instance, TBC has an estimated audience of 19,700,000 people whereas ITV boasts itself as a super brand in East Africa.

The overall goal of introducing this initiatives program was to create public awareness on several number of Judiciary red reforms, various services provided by the Judiciary and its stakeholders in the Justice Chain through the use of live and interactive Television programs. To create awareness to the public through informing the public on on-going reforms, seek cooperation, opinion and receive feedback in improving services delivery. In a long run the Organ expect to assess mutual and common understating between the Judiciary and the public on issues related to access to justice, to reduce social misunderstanding and tensions on accessing Judiciary information, to build the culture of constructive dialogue between the Judiciary and citizens and to promote the implementation of judicial reforms in Tanzania. The study examines the effectiveness of "Sema na Mahakama" ITV program on audience understanding court operations.

## 1.2 Literature Review

Equal access to justice is an effort or a system to ensure that people can use and have access to the means to solve conflicts properly. To ensure access to justice, a dispute resolution body such as a court should be placed and made available to people (JICA, 2022). According to JICA (2022), many circumstances impede access to justice globally, particularly in Africa. The issues include an underdeveloped or corrupt judicial system, lack of legal knowledge among the public, lack of financial resources, and physical constraints to accessing legal services. Therefore, many people's issues are not properly resolved, and their rights are not guaranteed.

However, JICA, (2022) suggested that, from an advocacy and social inclusion point of view, socially vulnerable groups, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and displaced persons, do not have sufficient opportunities and means to access justice. With the progress of the economy and society, issues such as property and inheritance, relationships, domestic violence, debt, employment, and living environments are expected to increase.

In many jurisdictions, citizens have a significant lack of awareness and understanding of court operations. This was evidenced by (Othman, 2023), (JoT, 2020) (Repoa, 2015) and (Judiciary T. , 2020) this lack of knowledge creates barriers and challenges when individuals need to navigate the legal system, whether as defendants, plaintiffs, or witnesses. As a result, citizens may feel overwhelmed, confused, or intimidated by the court process, leading to decreased participation and limited access to justice.

According to Roberts (2011) misconceptions and myths about court operations are prevalent in many society. These misconceptions can stem from various sources, including popular culture, gossip, or inaccurate information. Such misunderstandings may perpetuate distrust in the legal system, hinder citizens' willingness to engage with courts, and contribute to a sense of exclusion or unfairness (Roberts, 2011).

Mufamadi and Koen, (2020) argued that citizens may not be fully aware of their rights and responsibilities within the legal framework. This lack of knowledge can lead to missed opportunities to advocate for their rights effectively, make informed decisions, and actively participate in the judicial process. It can also result in citizens inadvertently compromising their legal positions due to a lack of understanding of procedural requirements and available resources.

Likewise (UNDP, 2020) Many members of the public do not understand the court's processes, which often leads to a negative perception of the Justice System. There is a need for trained personnel who can assist people who need information.

To address the situation across the world (UNDP, 2020) asserts that, citizens' lack of awareness and understanding of court operations is a common issue. Legal systems can be complex and intimidating, making it challenging for individuals to navigate through the courts effectively. This lack of knowledge hampers citizens' ability to exercise their rights, participate in the judicial process, and seek justice.

The lack of a system that guarantees law and order (and thus security) to the poor's assets and personal lives also deprives them of opportunities. Crime and violent conflict not only take away physical and human resources, but also negatively affect the flow of economic activities and decrease people's capacity to secure their rights. This is true in Colombia, where violence not only strips people of their property and lives, but also paralyzes poor people's capacity to organise and defend their rights, as armed groups target those who are seen organising (Bruce, 2007).

Likewise, education in numerous areas and at various levels is important, but literacy is a particular problem. People who cannot gain access to information through reading will have great difficulty knowing and advocating for their rights, opportunities, and legal protection (Bruce, 2007)

Public perceptions of the effectiveness and timeliness of communication between the Court and its major stakeholders are shaped by information that is readily available to the public UNDP (2020). The public should receive timely, better, and widely available information.

However, Misconceptions and myths about court operations are prevalent globally. These misconceptions may arise from cultural beliefs, media portrayals, or a general lack of accurate information. They can perpetuate distrust, skepticism, and apathy towards the legal system, undermining citizens' confidence and hindering their engagement (Roberts, 2011).

In addition, (UNDP, 2020) citizens may not clearly understand their rights and responsibilities within the legal framework, which can significantly impact their ability to advocate for themselves and make informed decisions. This lack of knowledge can lead to unequal access to justice, with some individuals disadvantaged due to their limited understanding of court operations.

There is uncertainty about what the Australian Public knows about the High Court and its operation, saying there are important reasons why we should care about the level of public awareness of the High Court's operations and its institutions. (Nielsen, 2018) observed that, several studies have found that public awareness of high court operations is positively correlated with esteem for the judiciary. Positivity theory assumes that, if people have low awareness of the High Court's operations and its institutions, they will be unable to identify the differences between the Court, on the one hand, and Parliament and the Executive, on the other. Lacking such knowledge, the public will imply to the Court a more overt political role and in so doing, will hold the Court, and its Justices, in less esteem than if the Court were regarded as less political.

Moreover, (Nielsen, 2018) contends that-, low knowledge of courts is politically significant since it threatens the legitimacy of judicial institutions. Public understanding of the High Court's operations and its institutions is, relatedly, very much linked to public confidence in the Court and its decisions. Justice Margaret McMurdo writes: 'Most of us now accept that it is for the judiciary to foster public confidence in the courts by ensuring the public understand the role of judges to administer justice according to the law. This is necessary to maintain public confidence, understanding and support for the courts, even when they make unpopular decisions'.

Furthermore, language barriers, limited access to legal resources, and financial constraints exacerbate the problem, making it even more difficult for citizens to comprehend court procedures and effectively navigate the system.

In January, 2018 the chief justice, Geoffrey Ma Tao-li, said the "transparency of Hong Kong's legal system is an important part of its structure". However, (Cross, 2018,) contends that, judicial proceedings remain a mystery to many people, who, despite television dramas do not know how things operate. Although, to their credit, the courts now issue detailed reasons for their judgments, much more can be done to promote public appreciation of their work. Trials, for example, are public events, and there is a legitimate public interest in what happens, particularly if they involve high-profile defendants, yet few people have ever seen one.

Addressing the problem requires global efforts to enhance public awareness and understanding of court operations. (Mufamadi & Koen, 2020) It asserts that television programs can play a crucial role in providing accessible and informative content that educates citizens about their rights, clarifies legal processes, and promotes active participation in the justice system. Empowering individuals with knowledge can foster a more just and inclusive society.

In order to improve the awareness of court operations among the publics there must be adequate and continuous training for court staff at all levels and for the key stakeholders at all levels on the processes of the Justice system. Establishment of a Public Relations Department within the Justice System to communicate efficiently with the public and address complaints by members of the public (UNDP, 2020).

### **1.2.1 Court Operations.**

According to Karlen (2024) Court, also known as: court of justice, court of law, law court, tribunal is a person or body of persons having judicial authority to hear and resolve disputes in civil, criminal, ecclesiastical, or military cases. The word court, which originally meant simply an enclosed place, also denotes the chamber, hall, building, or other place where judicial proceedings are held.

The court's operations have embarked on many movements and procedures as one of the state machinery. For a layperson to understand, it is the process whereby an individual, republic, or stakeholders moves the court to act upon felony or abuse of morality and breaking the contract as well as using alternative dispute resolution according to the laws of the land governing those deeds (Karlen, 2024).

An institution is legitimate when it is perceived as having the right or the authority to make decisions and when its decisions are viewed as worthy of respect or obedience. Judicial legitimacy derives from the belief that judges are impartial and that their decisions are grounded in law, not ideology and politics (Karlen, 2024).

There are core operations or functions of the court of justice the primary function of any court system is to help keep domestic peace is so obvious that it is rarely considered or mentioned. (Karlen, 2024) if there were no institution that was accepted by society's citizens as an impartial and authoritative judge of whether a person had committed a crime and, if so, what type of punishment should be meted out, vigilantes offended by the person's conduct might well take the law into their own hands and proceed to punish the alleged miscreant according to their uncontrolled discretion.

The other court operation is courts are called upon to decide controversies (deciding disputes in criminal matters) (Karlen, 2024) If, in a criminal case, the defendant (one charged with a crime) denies committing the acts charged against him, the court must choose between his version of the facts and that presented by the prosecution. Suppose the defendant asserts that his actions did not constitute criminal behaviour. In that case, the court (often aided by a jury) must decide whether his view of the law and facts or the prosecution's is correct.

Karlen (2024) asserts that other courts' operation is to decide disputes in matters of civil litigations. In a civil case, if the defendant disputes the plaintiff's account of what happened between them for example, whether they entered into a certain contract or agreement, or if he disputes the plaintiff's view of the legal significance of whatever occurred, for example, whether the agreement was legally binding, the court again must choose between the contentions of the parties. The issues presented to, and decided by, the court may be either factual, legal, or both.

Judicial Law-making is another example of court operation. As courts decide disputes in individual cases, they create an important by-product beyond peaceful settlements that is, they develop rules for deciding future cases. The judicial decisions embodying these interpretations then become controlling for future cases, sometimes to the extent that they virtually displace the legislative enactments themselves (Karlen, 2024).

According to Karlen (2024) states that, in one of the court's operations in some countries, courts not only interpret legislation but also determine its validity (constitutionality), and in so doing, they sometimes nullify statutes passed by legislatures. A court empowered with such authority may declare that a piece of legislation is null and void because it is incompatible with constitutional principles, For example, in the recent Kenyan tax bill case, the court declared the government's position to be invalid, stating that the tax bill's provisions went against Kenya's constitutional principles. Similarly, in Tanzania, a court of appeals received a petition challenging the law

marriage act's age requirement for child marriage. The court arrived at its rulings by stating that they were unconstitutional because they violated the child girl's right to follow her dreams. Court operations fall under review of administration's decision. (Karlen, 2024) States that, if the agency decides controversies in substantially the same manner as a court but in a different and more limited area, judicial control takes much the same form of appellate review as is provided for lower courts' decisions. The objective of reviewing the record of the proceedings is to determine whether the administrative agency acted within the scope of its jurisdiction, whether there was any evidence to support its conclusion, whether procedures were fair, and whether the governing law was correctly interpreted and applied. Administrative decisions are seldom upset by the courts, because most judges believe that administrative agencies have expertise in their specialisation.

Likewise court can operate by enforcing judicial decisions. (Karlen, 2024) The method of enforcing a judicial decision depends upon its nature. If it does nothing more than declare legal rights, as is true of a simple divorce decree merely severing marital ties, not awarding maintenance or the custody of children or a declaratory judgment for instance interpreting a contract or a statute, no enforcement is needed. If a judgment orders a party to do or to refrain from doing a certain act, as happens when an injunction is issued, the court itself takes the first step in enforcing the judgment by holding in contempt anyone who refuses to obey its order and sentencing him to pay a fine or to go to jail. After that, enforcement is in the hands of the executive branch of government, acting through its law-enforcement and correctional authorities.

The court operations has moved parallel with the invention and use of information communication technology to dispense justice and to archive its records especially moving to virtual processes. (Baldwin, 2020) argues that, the use of audio, video conferencing and teleconference technology, in particular, has been a great resource for courts as they allow for judges, counsel, and court personnel to continue to convene and confer as necessary, notwithstanding in a different format. Courts have also had to consider remote access to the courts for court participants, and court leaders must support virtual representation in various ways "Logistical Issues and Security Concerns". While these modifications allow for courts to continue to function in certain capacities, they also inhibit public access to the courtroom, create new challenges for court personnel, and pose obstacles for case parties and those required to have contact with the court.

Several courts in United States of America that have moved to conducting hearings the adjudications of cases on court operations using the technology via audio or video technology have made these available to the public by streaming them online. Taking the examples above, the District Court Circuit and the Michigan and Texas Supreme Courts streamed their audio and video sessions, respectively, online for the public to observe in real time (Goldstein, 2020).

In Tanzania, the Judiciary is vigorously pushing towards the use of information communication technology in its day-to-day operations of adjunction and dispensation of justice in the country. Chief Justice His Lordship Professor Ibrahim Hamis Juma revealed this in his remark on marking the judiciary's new year calendar of 2022: "The era of fourth industrial revolution: the journey of reforms toward e-judiciary".

Meanwhile, Court operations in Tanzania is advocating the use of technology when dispensing justice. The Judiciary have been given the authority and responsibility to administer and dispense justice through article 107 of the Constitution of United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, serve that the Zanzibar Island judicial operations is administered under the constitution of Zanzibar, 1984 substantively for matters tried by the court of appeal of Tanzania emanated from Zanzibar Island. For the matter of this study, the court operations is referred to "Sema na Mahakama" Television program on creating citizens' awareness conducted by Independent Television Limited (ITV).

### **1.2.2 An Overview of Television Program in creating citizens' awareness.**

Even before television was first broadcast as a mass medium, commentators expressed hopes and fears about its impact on education. On the one hand, Television could be a window to the world, and on the other, it could be an endless distraction from productive and sustained learning. Others like to use print media to access the judicial information that can never be left out; this mostly operates and designated frequencies. All these media outlets have relatively varied and anonymous audiences with different interests. Some are interested in knowing the justice system because of studying purpose while other citizens' want to manoeuvre with the system in charge of justice expeditions in a given country (Anderson, 2013).

However, Access to justice is still a significant challenge for the poor for several reasons ranging from the cost of legal fees to a lack of rights awareness and education. This contribution on promoting access to justice through the broadcasting of the legal proceedings consider the possible effectiveness of introducing media-based teaching tools to society in an attempt to increase the rights awareness of the citizens (Mufamadi, 2020).

In addition, "Sema na Mahakama" is a television program in Tanzania dedicated to enhancing public awareness and understanding of court operations, legal procedures, and rights. The program plays a crucial role in educating citizens about the justice system and fostering transparency and accountability within the judiciary. It is typically produced collaboratively by the Judiciary Tanzania and various stakeholders in Tanzania's legal and media sectors (Judiciary, 2022).

The program's overarching goal is to bridge the gap between the judiciary and the public by providing accessible and informative content related to the legal system. Here is a general overview of the role of "Sema na Mahakama" in creating citizens' awareness on court operations.

Legal literacy is an effective tool to project human rights. It can help the people recognize their civil, political, social and cultural rights. Only when the people can be made aware of what the laws offer to them will they be less susceptible to injustices confronting them. Promoting of Legal Literacy through informative content and public outreach initiatives, "Sema na Mahakama" television program promotes legal literacy among citizens, empowering them to navigate the legal system more effectively. By understanding their rights and responsibilities, individuals can advocate for justice and participate meaningfully in civic life (TSLSA, 2024).

According to Media Council of Tanzania (2013) contends that, the courts operations are there to act on behalf of the ordinary people, so it is important they carry out their operations in public for all people to see and understand the rationale, it is a fundamental principle that justice must not only be done, but be seen to be done. In other word, court operations have to do the righteous things and the public has to see and understand that they do so. For that reasons advance, any member of the public may attend any court session.

So, to speak "Sema na Mahakama" television program serves as an educational platform, offering viewers insights into the workings of the court system. Through informative discussions, interviews with legal experts, and explanations of legal processes, the program clarifies the law and makes it more accessible to the general public.

Public service televisions along with Private must face a double challenge in the scope of accountability and transparency. On the one hand, there is a need to provide the citizens with all the data related to the institution's daily activities. On the other hand, the requirement of making the production stages transparent to prove the degree of compliance and commitment to a quality service (Lopez-Lopez, 2018). "Sema na Mahakama" television program is also duty bound to build transparency and accountability. By promoting showcasing court proceedings, highlighting landmark cases, and explaining judicial decisions, by doing so, the program promotes transparency

and accountability within the judiciary. Citizens can better understand of how courts operate and the principles guiding legal judgments, thereby fostering trust in the justice system.

Moreover, there is a global interest in alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Overloaded court dockets, increasing cost of litigation and desire to empower citizens in non-adversarial techniques are partially responsible for the interest in promoting ADR methods. In Nigeria, electronic media have been engaged in non-adversarial dispute resolution techniques in the last four decades. It contributes to the positive transformation, de-escalation and resolution of social conflicts (Oyebode, 2015). “Sema na Mahakama” program plays a role in conflict resolution “Alternative Dispute Resolution” by raising awareness of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and promoting peaceful means of resolving conflicts. By highlighting successful mediation and arbitration processes, the program contributes to promoting justice and social cohesion.

The legal system led to believe that the criminal justice system is protecting us against the gravest threats to our well-being when, in fact, the system is protecting us against only some threats and not necessarily the gravest one (Roberts, 2011). Addressing misconceptions and biases television programs like “Sema na Mahakama” also help address misconceptions and biases about the legal system. By presenting diverse perspectives of how legal issues can be treated user-friendly, thus Programs designed with specific educational objectives and research based on legal cases, such programs can challenge stereotypes and promote a more nuanced understanding of justice.

The cultivation theory, which contends that watching television over time can change viewers’ attitudes and perceptions, is examined in this ground breaking study by Gerbner and Gross. Even though the theory focuses on violence, it can be used to analyse any kind of television content, including shows that try to increase public awareness of legal issues (Gerbner, 1976).

The study by Mastro and Greenberg (2000) investigates the portrayal of racial minorities on television. While not directly related to court operations awareness, it highlights how television programming can influence perceptions of societal issues, which may extend to legal matters (Mastro, 2000).

### **1.2.3 Television Program Awareness on Court Operations in the USA.**

There has been a worldwide shift during the last 20 years towards introducing film cameras to courtrooms, radically transforming how the public can ‘see justice being done’, to paraphrase the famous legal aphorism of Lord Justice Hewart. In the second decade of the 21st century, there has been an evident acceleration in this shift, with the global transmission of high-profile criminal hearings such as those involving Anders Breivik (in 2012) and Oscar Pistorius (in 2014). Courtroom transmission is fast becoming a quintessential feature of modern criminal justice, an innovation that is especially prized by those courts that style themselves as forward-looking (Moore, 2019).

Over the years, some in Congress, the public, and the media have expressed interest in television or other electronic media coverage of Supreme Court and other federal court proceedings (Tong, 2006). Current policies on televising court proceedings include the release of audio recordings of oral arguments in a number of cases this year, which has had a generally positive effect because “people are learning a little about how the Supreme Court functions.” The heated debate was in the electronic media coverage debate, democratic values of government, transparency, separation of powers, due process, and integrity of court proceedings, security, and civic education. Congress highlighted the civic educational value of public access to court proceedings and, in particular, the Supreme Court’s proceedings is of constitutional rights.

In the past three years, seven states and one county have allowed televising of courtroom proceedings. Four states are currently considering following suit. However (Silverstein, 1978)



contends that, there was a debate about whether television proceedings should be allowed in the courtroom or not. The debate was against or for, those argued for advanced the debate with the following arguments (Arguments Favouring Televised Trials): televised trials educate the public about the Judicial Process and prevent starchamber proceedings. Prohibitions against televised trials violate the Right to a public trial. Prohibitions of television from courtrooms are unconstitutional restraints freedom of the press and freedom of the press is meaningless if the tools of the trade cannot be used in the courtroom (Silverstein, 1978).

The most frequently quoted statement in this regard is that of Justice Otto Moore of the Colorado Supreme Court once said; it is highly inconsistent to complain of the ignorance and apathy of voters and then to “close the windows of information through which they might observe and learn.” Generally only idle people, pursuing “idle curiosity” have time to visit courtrooms in person.

The study of Hetsroni and Lowenstein (2012) examines the educational potential of courtroom dramas on television. Although the focus is on fictional portrayals of legal proceedings, the study underscores the role of television in shaping public perceptions and understanding of the legal system by creating obedience to the national laws (Hetsroni, 2012).

Frankly speaking, free speech and fair trials are two of the most cherished policies of our civilization, and it would be a trying task to choose between them. Americans have always been fascinated by criminal trials, as demonstrated by the enormously successful novels, plays, ‘films, and television shows’ based on these trials. Criminal trials, however, are not only the subject of popular forms of entertainment; they are news and create awareness to citizens on legal dimensions (Marcus, 1982).

The reporting of the criminal trial is factual, usually timely, and invariably newsworthy. As a result, the courts have taken great pains to ensure minimal interference with media reporting of the criminal trial.

In written opinions that decide cases with no claims or defences concerning television programming or the television industry, judges often help explain substantive or procedural points with references to themes and fictional characters from well-known dramas or comedies. In civil and criminal cases alike, the courts’ own use of television references (and references to other cultural stimuli such as music, literature, and sports) Parties may argue for a decision based on ideal visions of American society, but courts use television references to illustrate the reality session (Abrams, 2016)

Abrams (2016) contends that, at its inception, Court Television departed from the fictional by presenting what one federal district court called actual “complete, extended coverage of trials, both civil and criminal, as well as coverage of oral arguments on motions and in appellate proceedings.” True Television now broadcasts only sensational trials, among other fare designed to hold viewers’ attention. The television images of the era that remained so remarkably sharp in people’s memories, often fresher than memories of real life.

“Television’s ability to shape our view of the world in general, and the legal system in particular, makes it a powerful cultural force.” As a pervasive source of popular entertainment and public information for the past several decades, the medium has helped shape the perspectives that today’s readers bring to briefs and judicial opinions (Abrams, 2016).

Combining of different information and communications technologies with appropriate changes in policy and practice can enable the justice system to perform in qualitatively different ways and better and more efficiently achieve its intended goals. Information and communications technologies are central to courts. These technologies have provided the opportunity for increased

efficiency for example, the capabilities afforded when using information technology based court or case management systems compared with performing tasks in a paper-based system (Jackson, 2016).

In the United States, televised confessions and sensational trials have become integral to television programming. Since 1991, the majority of trials have been broadcast by Court Television, a 24-hour based cable television service that provides live coverage of the nation's most compelling trials. Some observers believe that televised trials are desirable, because broadcasting courtroom procedures will enhance public understanding, awareness of judicial administration, and reduce misconceptions about the administration of justice. The producers of Court Television emphasise that their goal is to educate Americans about the legal system and administration of justice to the public. They want to substitute real law for "L.A. Law," and they consider the informational and educational function of the channel of paramount importance (Valkenburg, 1998).

However, critical observers of televised trials believe that viewers primarily watch televised trials for entertainment, just like they watch soap operas and crime shows (Thaler, 1994)

On the other hand, one of the policy issues that Congress has discussed related to cameras in the courts is the extent to which the public and the media are entitled to access courtrooms and their proceedings. Proponents argue that these are constitutionally protected rights that the U.S. Supreme Court and the federal circuit and district courts have adopted regarding video cameras in their courtrooms, along with the attitudes Supreme Court Justices and other federal judges have expressed toward expanding video use. Video broadcasting can be treated as one of several means by which the courts provide information about their proceedings to the public and the press (Report, 2019).

In regard to, press coverage of the courts is at least as worthy of public concern and scholarly attention as press coverage of politics, perhaps even more so. Judges, mostly, speak only through their opinions, which are difficult for the ordinary citizen to obtain and understand. Especially in an era when the political system has conceded to the courts many of society's most difficult questions, it is sobering to acknowledge the extent to which the courts and the country depend on the press for the public understanding that is necessary for the health, and ultimately, the legitimacy of any institution in a democratic society (Yanus, 2006).

Klein (2000) examines the role of popular culture, including television, in shaping individuals' legal awareness. While the article primarily discusses the impact of Street Law programs in schools, it provides insights into how legal knowledge and awareness can be disseminated through various media channels (Klein, 2000).

#### **1.2.4 Television Program Awareness on Court Operations in Europe.**

In England or British the government, together with many lawyers, journalists and experts, believes that lifting the ban on televising trials may enhance the transparency of the judicial system, and eventually lead to higher levels of public trust (Garcia-Blanco, 2018). It is believed that the media play a fundamental role in shaping citizens' perceptions of criminal justice, and may contribute to improving the public's understanding (and perceptions) of how justice works (Hough, 2003).

The Government and judiciary are determined to improve transparency and public understanding of the court by allowing court broadcasting. We believe television [and, by extension, other media] has a role in increasing public confidence in the justice system. (Ministry of Justice, 2011)

In reality very few citizens can scrutinise the judicial process: that media perform scrutiny, whether newspapers or television, acting on behalf of the body of citizens. Without the commitment of an

independent media the operation of the principle of open justice would be irremediably diminished. (Quoted in Birkinshaw, 2014).

To the majority of cases, public scrutiny of the court and judicial activity rely upon the media. Reports in regional and national newspapers have long been and research suggests continue to be an important source of information, shaping public knowledge and facilitating public scrutiny of the justice system (Moran, 2013).

The interconnectedness of 'the judiciary and the media' open justice is a long-standing and fundamental principle of the legal system of England and Wales. Justice must be done and seen to be done if it is to command public confidence, and so the relationship between the judiciary, courts and the media is a vital one (JOIT, 2016).

However, a significant change in the law took place in 2009 when the Supreme Court opened, for broadcasting from it was allowed footage recorded in the Court could be shown on television news programmes. In December 2011, the Lord Chief Justice published new guidance for consideration by courts, litigants, their legal representatives and the media when dealing with journalists wishing to use live text-based communications in courtrooms, during the conduct of a court case (JOIT, 2016).

The Judicial Office contains a Press Office, which deals with media enquiries from journalists. The Judicial Office also has a Communications Team which publishes online the most high-profile (often landmark) judgments made in court (JOIT, 2016).

Meanwhile, Court reporting by audio-visual and online media in the Russian Federation the results of public opinion polls shows, television news and television shows simulating court hearings with a pseudo-judge represent the two major sources of information on the court system and the activity of the courts operations. In other words, television creates the image of what is going on in the courtrooms more than any other media or personal experience (Nikoltchev, 2014).

Focusing on audio-visual and online media it will address issues of balance between access to information and the right to privacy, possible limitations to freedom of information and media freedom, prejudgment by the media. The persons, attending an open court session, shall have the right to carry out audio recording and to make records of it in writing. Taking photographs, video recording and cinema shooting shall be admissible only with the permission of the presiding justice of the court session Taking photographs, video recording and broadcasting of the court session on the radio and on television shall be admissible by permission of the court (Nikoltchev, 2014).

The Resolution reminded the judges that the openness of the justice system presupposes the necessity of a broad informational coverage of the courts' activity. Therefore the courts should seek a wider use of the mass media for an objective, reliable and fast coverage of their activities. At the same time the Russian law-makers and top courts underline in their acts the need to open the judicial system to the citizens in as much as possible in order to gain public trust.

The European Convention on Access to Official Documents states that public access to government information is essential for the exercise of fundamental rights, enhances the transparency and accountability of the public sector, and informs citizens' participation in the democratic process. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation to the governments of its member states on the provision of information through the media about criminal proceedings (Nikoltchev, 2014).

### **1.2.5 Television Program Awareness on Court Operations in China.**

Hawes (2023) concludes that, television mediation shows can help to educate viewers about the benefits and drawbacks of mediation for resolving certain narrow kinds of domestic and neighbourhood disputes and bringing about peace in the society. Cases drawn from two top-rated mediations demonstrate how they privilege morality and “human feeling” over narrow application of the law. Such shows could be viewed merely as a form of propaganda, is known as “harmony ideology”. Yet while recognising that further political, social, and legal reforms are necessary to address the root causes of social conflict in China (Hawes, 2013).

The requirement for courts and other government institutions to publicly demonstrate their support for mediation as the most “appropriate” method for resolving interpersonal and neighbourhood disputes. The desire of television producers to commercially exploit interpersonal conflicts without blowing the flames of social instability and the demands of official censors for Television programming promoting a “harmonious society”.

In December 2019, China has announced that millions of legal cases are now being decided by “Internet courts” that do not require citizens to appear in court. The “smart court” includes non-human judges, powered by artificial intelligence and allows participants to register their cases online and resolve their matters via a digital court hearing to (Vasdani, 2019).

The Chinese Internet courts handle a variety of disputes, which include intellectual property, e-commerce, financial disputes related to online conduct, loans acquired or performed online, domain name issues, property and civil rights cases involving the Internet, product liability arising from online purchases and certain administrative disputes.

A Hangzhou court official told China’s state-run CGTN television network that the Internet court system operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In today’s marketplace where almost everything is purchased or transacted online, the potential for this type of court system is significant.

Over the past decade, the Chinese media have emerged as among the most influential actors in the Chinese legal system. As media commercialisation and increased editorial discretion have combined with growing attention to social and legal problems, the media have gained incentives to expand their traditional mouthpiece roles in new directions. As a result, the media have emerged as one of the most effective and important avenues of citizen redress. Their role in the legal system, however, has also brought them increasingly into conflict with China's courts to (Liebman, 2005).

It shows how media commercialisation has resulted in incentives for the media to expand the scope of critical reporting, to challenge propaganda department content regulations, and to influence court decision-making. The media influence China's courts by demonstrating that, the media's effectiveness and influence stem from a combination of their continued position as an arm of the Party-state and their ability to reflect and create public opinion. While at the same time media scrutiny increasingly highlights problems in the Chinese justice system.

However, the popular Television series Draw the Line has strengthened public interest in how the rule of law is developing and how courts work in China since its first episode aired on Sept 19. The show, broadcast online and on Hunan Television, reveals how the country's judicial reforms have continued to unfold through vivid depictions of actual cases (China-Daily, 2022).

The 40-episode series, created with guidance from the Supreme People's Court, the country's top court, focuses on various hot legal issues, including those concerning live streaming, sexual harassment, justified self-defence, and the Civil Code. It educates audiences about the law by telling stories about judges and cases in grassroots-level courts.

About media, it was found that, China's courts mostly used their online platforms to release information and broadcast trial proceedings. Consequently, the role of news media and journalists in providing court case information and promoting judicial openness has declined in the age of new media (Xu, 2021).

### **1.2.6 Television Program Awareness on Court Operations in Australia.**

The media plays an important role in the legal landscape. It acts as an intermediary between the public and the courts. Media has the power to provide scrutiny, accountability and transparency of legal processes, raise public awareness and foster knowledge of legal processes. It can create attention for issues of concern to the community and create a forum for the law and its administration to be open to criticism to improve outcomes for the individuals and the community (Meritt, 2018).

Public Awareness of court operations is of paramount importance in building trust in the public on legal system endeavours. (Meritt, 2018) Media is important in keeping the public informed about legislative shortfall, review, creation, and reform. Although many documents regarding these processes are publicly available through parliament and relevant government departments (the Executive), the media provides a more condensed version that will generally summarise relevant aspects for the public, creating more easily digestible information and potentially increasing engagement in community sections. This may also act to increase knowledge and accessibility, potentially reducing community non-compliance when new legislation is introduced, or existing legislation is reformed. Media reporting on matters of legal importance acts to raise community awareness and creates transparency in the processes of legislative design, administration and reform. Enhanced awareness may encourage citizens to become more actively involved in other democratic processes.

Television and Court in Australia had gained significance since the appointment of Public Information Officers enabled the courts to break new ground in allowing cameras into courtrooms. (Johnston, 2019) Commented that, while Australia did not experience the rush of television cameras into the courts that the United States had witnessed, there were nevertheless some significant advancements in this field, which are closely associated with the appointment of PIOs. Phillips recalls the Access to Justice Report, published in 1994 recommended the Federal Court 'take a lead role in broadcasting'.

The Federal Court was a safer environment due to the absence of juries or witnesses. 'The judges did it because they thought it would benefit the court,' recalled Phillips. 'Justice North told me he was big fan of Television in courts he did not have to tell me twice.' Phillips strongly believes you can 'get so much good Public Relations from Television. You can reach the public by having a judge explain what they have decided and why. It's not that hard to do.

Two judges at the forefront of televising courts in the 1990s, Federal Court of Australia Justice Tony North, and Justice Teague of the Victorian Supreme Court, each credit their respective court's PIOs for advancing this field. Justice Teague recalled how the process began with the media giving notice to seek camera access, thus allowing the courts to cater to television media's needs (Johnston, 2019).

Broadcasting courts have remained a reason for appointing PIOs. In 2014, changes to legislation relating to the broadcasting of Supreme and District Courts in New South Wales were a catalyst for the courts to appoint a dedicated District Court media coordinator. This was, in part, due to the requirement that the televising of court proceedings should be supervised (Johnston, 2019).

According to (Warren, 2013) the role of open justice in a new technological age. While courts have been public places for centuries, the advent of new technologies and social media has driven

courts towards direct community engagement to preserve open justice. The reduction in official press reporting of court cases has meant an information vacuum being filled through social media and online content. This phenomenon results in information being published without deference to editorial opinion regarding its newsworthiness or the accuracy of content. While courts must continue to be vigilant in ensuring certain information is suppressed in some cases, it must also engage with social media to ensure open justice.

Justice Warren asserts that, judicial officers have a duty to maintain public confidence in the judiciary by facilitating access to information about courts and court proceedings. These two fundamentals, openness and public confidence, are the starting point and purpose of the court's relationship with the media. They also underpin and drive reform of the court's relationship with both the media and the community.

The courts must develop constructive strategies for engaging with new technology if they are to guarantee open justice for all community members. Open justice in the technological age means the ability of the community to view or access information about court proceedings through the Internet or social media as well as traditional print and electronic mediums.

### **1.2.7 Television Program Awareness on Court Operations in Canada.**

Audio-visual programming in court operations gains educational benefits and creates public awareness. According to (Ravid, 2017 ) The main argument here is that allowing audio-visual coverage will expose the public to court operations, legal proceedings and other institutions working with, fostering and enriching the public with an understanding of the legal system, legal processes, and how judges, lawyers, and parties think and behave. This view was implied in Justice Breyer's interview, with CBS's The Late Show with Stephen Colbert's attempts to understand the Court's persistent refusal to allow live coverage of its hearings. "Justice Breyer: The toughest part about the question you posed is this when I am deciding a case, I am deciding it for 315,000,000 people who are not in the courtroom. The rule of law and the rule of interpretation, apply to everybody. But human beings, correctly and decently, relate to people they see. And they'll see two lawyers and two clients. Will they understand the whole story? Will they understand what we are doing? Will there be distortion? That's the argument against you. The argument for you is that it will be a fabulous educational process. Colbert: . . . and pretty entertaining. Justice Breyer: mmm, well. . . NO."

According to Ravid (2017) exposure to legal proceedings might also increase public awareness of the values of the law and of pivotal issues dominating public discourse. Many proponents of this argument argue that preference should be given to visual platforms such as television or the Internet rather than radio due to their dominance in the daily lives of the public and high exposure to this medium.

Arguments Supporting the Expansion of Audio Visual Coverage is by strengthening public access to courts. The main argument supporting the expansion of audio-visual coverage is that allowing the coverage will strengthen public access to court proceedings. According to this argument, simply allowing the public to attend trials in person is insufficient-, due to physical and other limitations that prevent civilians from actually reaching courtrooms. These limitations would not stand in the way of the public if hearings were transmitted through radio or television, the latter being one of the main channels through which the public processes information in the modern era (Ravid, 2017 ).

### **1.2.8 Television Program Awareness on Court Operations in Africa.**

The possible success of bringing media-based educational resources to South African society to raise citizens' awareness of their rights. (Mufamadi K. , 2020) Suggests that, this increased

understanding of rights can help South Africans interact with the law, their rights, and the legal system overall in a way that enhances access to justice. It takes into consideration both potential future interventions and the country's current use of television-based teaching resources. In an attempt to understand how South Africans interact with television-based teaching tools, it draws on previous television-based education initiatives in the country. It also argues for more frequent broadcasting of court proceedings by referencing the open justice principle.

According to Mufamadi (2020), television is considered in three other jurisdictions and assessed for its effect on our cognitive and subconscious engagement with the law. The discussion of other jurisdictions includes how fictional legal programming, syndicated court programmes, and other forms of 'Court Television' have contributed both positively and negatively to the legal consciousness of those societies.

The question regarding the public broadcasting of judicial proceedings has evoked significant debate in domestic and international legal circles. In applying to the Gauteng Division for permission to broadcast the Oscar Pistorius murder trial, several media houses jointly argued, among other points, that the broadcasting of the trial would be of educational benefit to the public on the workings of the South African justice system and that such coverage would give effect to the open justice principle (Mufamadi K. , 2020).

An expansion in the quantity and variety of court proceedings televised for the general public may result from the live streaming of court proceedings. This is especially true given that it appears that the media has only covered high-profile issues rather than ones that impact on regular people's day-to-day lives.

Mufamadi (2020) documents that, research indicates that, television campaigns have had a positive effect on educating citizens' awareness and reducing the rate of new infections particularly amongst young people. This indicates that generally South Africans respond well and actively to television-based teaching tools and social interventions.

The termed "syndi-courts" and fictional television programmes such as "Law and Order". Drawing from the challenges created by these types of portrayals of the justice system, one can more effectively consider what an improved or more useful teaching model may in fact look like.

These are programmes that depict a dramatised version of legal proceedings presided over by a judge or an arbitrator. An example would be programmes such as "Judge Judy" or "Judge Mathis", both of which aired on South African television. The programmes have considerable potential to teach citizens about the law but also present some clear challenges in terms of creating an unrealistic understanding of law (Mufamadi K. , 2020).

The reporting of South African court proceedings by the media was altered by an event that occurred in 2014. Similar international media attention was paid to the trial of Olympian blade runner Mr. Oscar Pistorius. The trial influenced journal articles, blogs, television channels, books, and newspaper articles. For months, newsfeeds on laptops and other devices flooded social media with information about the trial, the judge's decisions, the witnesses who testified, and most importantly, the verdict. Without question, there was much interest in the Pistorius trial both domestically and internationally. Furthermore, it has permanently altered how South Africa's legal system and media interact. (Moseneke, 2018 ).

The media gave the Oscar Pistorius trial proceedings a lot of coverage. Numerous foreign journalists descended upon South Africa. Information was abundant on our radios, Televisions, newspapers, and even Facebook feeds. The only intention behind creating a 24 hour television channel was to broadcast the proceedings and subsequently discuss them. One would have had to

cut off all communication with the outside world to remain unaware of the trial because it was covered so thoroughly. All of this was made possible by Judge Mlambo's decision to grant media organisations permission to broadcast a criminal trial live and in full Technicolor before the trial even started, something no other South African court had ever dared to do.

With all in mind, Moseneka (2018) documented that, because of the rapid advancement of technology, our society is no longer one in which citizens must, or should have to, wander into courtrooms to find out what is happening. People want to see, and hear all in their places of work, in the comfort of their own homes and villages or in other open spaces, so long as they have an active internet connection. The event no doubt brought close to how the judicial administers the justice and proceedings of the court, hence creating awareness of court operations in South Africa.

The arguments in favour of open justice are discussed widely, the media first helps in discover the truth and is crucial for educating the public. Second, it promotes accountability and discourages inappropriate behaviour. Third, it provides a sense of closure and healing, ensuring that justice has been served (Moseneka, 2018 ). While the new South Africa was full of hope and unconstrained potential. For open justice alone, the Constitution guarantees the freedom of the press, the freedom of the media and the right of the public to receive and discuss information and ideas.

In the Central African Republic a study was conducted to evaluate the International Criminal Court (ICC) after violence resulted in genocide. Public information and outreach have emerged as one of the fundamental activities of transitional justice mechanisms. They aim to raise public awareness, knowledge and participation among affected communities. Despite this increased focus, understanding of the role, impact and effectiveness of various outreach strategies remains limited, as is understanding of communities' knowledge, perceptions and attitudes about transitional justice mechanisms, including their expectations (Vinck, 2010).

Vinck & Pham (2010) documented that, findings showed that, mass media and informational meetings are effective at raising awareness and knowledge, but that the lack of access to formal media and reliance on informal communication channel create a group of 'information poor' individuals. The authors suggest that outreach must be locally conducted in order to respond to individuals' needs and expectations and to ensure their access to information thus will allow communities to access justice.

This article examines the public's perceptions of the criminal justice system and how the media shapes public opinion. It provides information about how media coverage and television programming can affect public awareness and comprehension of legal issues, even though it is not specifically focused on Central Africa (Barnett, 2013).

This article explores how political and economic factors impact peacebuilding efforts in the Central African Republic, though it is not specifically related to television shows. Gaining an understanding of the wider framework surrounding governance and justice concerns in the area can help to clarify the possible effects of media, particularly television, on the general public's knowledge of court operations (Kasfir, 2013).

Mamdani (2001) offers a thorough examination of the Rwandan genocide and its historical background, highlighting the media's role in fostering ethnic animosity and igniting violence. It emphasises the significant impact of media in influencing public attitudes and perceptions, even though it is not specifically related to television shows on court operations (Mamdani, 2001).

This book explores the role of media in fostering democracy and social change in Southern Africa, which has implications for understanding the potential impact of television programs on legal awareness and court operations in Southern Africa (Tomaselli, 2007).



### **1.2.9 Television Program Awareness on Court Operations in Tanzania.**

In Tanzania, there are the number of institutions like the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs of Tanzania, Non- Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations, Paralegal Aid, Civil Society Organisations, the Media Council of Tanzania and Tanganyika Law Society to mention a few that make media advocacy initiatives, intervention and outreach programs on creating awareness on legal affairs and civic rights not directly addressing the issue of television program awareness on court operations.

According to the Annual Report (2013) published by the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA). Radio programs produced 35 aimed to create and raise awareness of various issues in the community. The themes revolved around good governance, gender equity and sexual and reproductive health rights. They brought together various stakeholders working around the thematic areas including lawyers, Local government leaders, Police officers, Gender desk officers, Doctors (members of the Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians Tanzania and the Medical Women Association of Tanzania), Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau, and Commission of Human Rights and Good Governance. These programs were recorded and target community radio stations. Encoding of programs is aired live, and viewers interact through calls and asking questions. The program was transmitted through ITV in the Ijue Sheria program and ITV radio Kumepambazuka na Sheria. TAWLA sponsored KIPIMA JOTO which is a television program where TAWLA air about sexual and reproductive health rights and good governance on different legal issues on different radio stations in Dar, Dodoma, Arusha and Tanga regions (TAWLA, 2013 ).

Through its offices located in Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Arusha, and Tanga, TAWLA offers outreach services related to legal aid awareness to impoverished women and children in the community. A total of 2920 clients with a range of issues, including civil, matrimonial, inheritance/probate, land, and gender-based violence (GBV), were served. Our community paralegals rendered legal aid services to 450 clients. Reconciliation is a common solution to problems arising from our legal aid clinics. Therefore, there is no need to file these cases in court; some are resolved by referrals to social welfare and other Legal Aid providers, and others are filed in court where clients choose to represent themselves or receive representation from TAWLA.

Creating citizens' awareness of court operations through outreach intervention and capacity-building initiatives to empower women to present themselves to court procedures seemed effective. The NG'O provided self-representation training to legal aid clients to make sure they are equipped to handle their legal matters. Several women with court cases have been able to represent themselves thanks to the tactic known as self-representation. Eighty women with cases during the review period received self-representation training. Eighty percent of the participants in a post-training evaluation said that they felt more capable of representing themselves in court after the training, despite their lack of confidence in their ability to do so before (TAWLA, 2013 ).

The finding indicated that the percentage of satisfaction has increased from 61% in the baseline (2015) to 78% in the 2019 survey. The standard of services provided by relevant parties and the level of public knowledge regarding the services provided by Tanzania's judiciary. Raising awareness through the use of court events and radio and television programming. Training judicial staff members and interested parties. Programs for raising public awareness about court operations have been carried out via radio, television, contact call centres, and court events such as the "Sema na Mahakama" television series (REPOA, 2019).

### **1.3 Methodology**

In this study, the researcher focused on assessing the effectiveness of the “Sema na Mahakama” television program in raising public awareness about court operations. A mixed-methods approach was employed, with a strong emphasis on quantitative analysis, supplemented by participant observation and qualitative interviews. Quantitative methods provided insights into patterns and trends among respondents, capturing general reactions and levels of awareness raised by the program. However, as Beck (2004) points out, quantitative methods alone cannot establish causation; thus, qualitative elements were incorporated to provide depth and context. Participant observation involved systematically documenting recurring themes, behaviors, and interactions within the televised contents and the broader social setting, allowing the researcher to track key issues raised in the program. To further enrich the data, interviews were conducted with key informants knowledgeable about court operations and the program’s objectives. This approach aimed to capture not only statistical trends but also personal perspectives and qualitative evidence of the program’s impact on citizens’ understanding of the judiciary.

#### 1.4. Study Findings

The research question sought to establish how well the program fulfils its goal of informing and educating the public through media on court operations, the judicial system and its processes. This involves examining the contents presented in the program, the engagement level of the audience, and the impact on viewers’ understanding of their legal rights and court procedures. Assessing effectiveness, the research aims to identify strengths and weaknesses in the program’s approach, explore whether it successfully raises awareness, and determine if it influences viewers’ perceptions of the legal system. The findings provided valuable insights for improving the program initiatives, ensuring enduring needs of the community in fostering informed participation in legal matters.

The study was deep-rooted in finding the viewers’ holistic opinions toward the “Sema na Mahakama” television program on ITV, which created citizens’ awareness on court operations. It assessed the effectiveness of the program by applying a survey or questioners to a selected sample population of 400 participants. Below are the findings of the same presented through statistical tables and statistical bar charts.

##### 1.4.1 The Viewers Understanding of Court Operations.

Table one below presents the extent Sema na Mahakama Program has helped audiences to understand issues on court operation

To what extent did ‘Sema na Mahakama’ program has helped you to understand Court operations					
	Issues Presented	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Citizens Opinion on court operation	80	21	25.5	25.5
	Citizen Responsibility	8	2.1	2.5	28
	Civil Rights	37	9.7	11.8	39.8
	Citizens Obligation	3	0.8	1	40.8
	Judicial procedures	87	22.8	27.7	68.5
	Proper interpretation of the rules	28	7.3	8.9	77.4
	Provision Education	53	13.9	16.9	94.3

	Other	18	4.7	5.7	100
	Total	314	82.4	100	
Missing	System	67	17.6		
Total		381	100		

**Source: Field Data 2024**

### 1.4.2 Correlation Analysis on Watching frequently the Program and facilitating understanding of Court Operations.

Table two below indicates correlations analysis on watching frequently the program and facilitating understanding of court operations

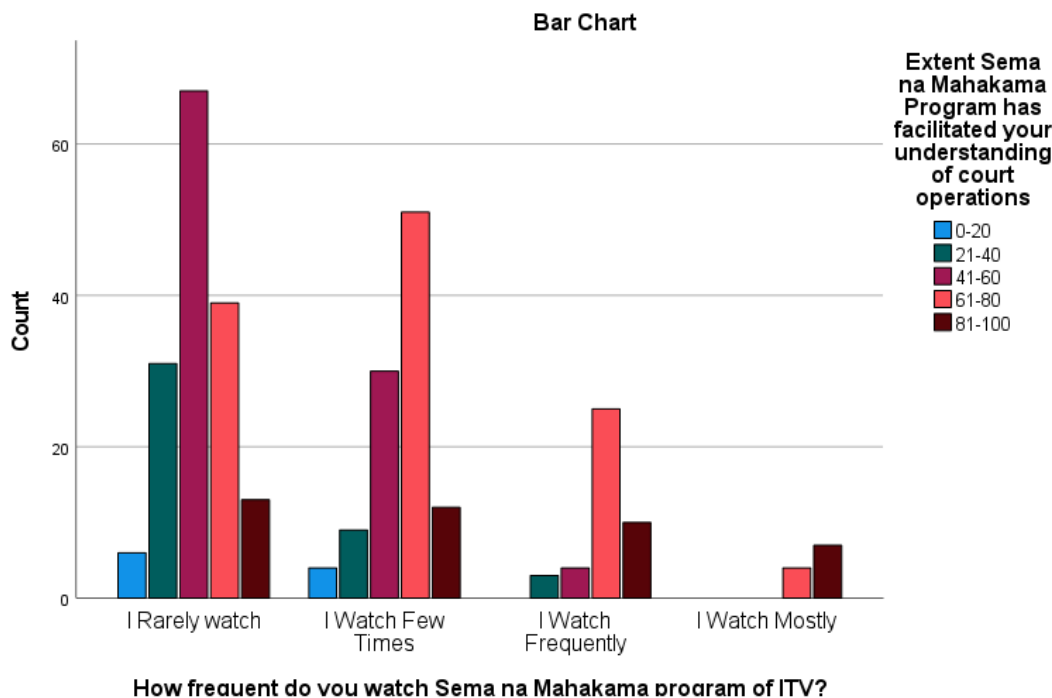
Correlation significant		How frequent do you watch 'Sema na Mahakama' program of ITV?	To what extent 'Sema na Mahakama' Program has facilitated your understanding of court operations?
How frequent do you watch 'Sema na Mahakama' program of ITV?	Pearson Correlation	1	.377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	381	315
To what extent 'Sema na Mahakama' Program has facilitated your understanding of court operations?	Pearson Correlation	.377**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	315	315
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

**Source: Field Data 2024**

Pearson correlation (r) is the correlation coefficient, which measures the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables. An r value of 0.377 indicates a moderate positive correlation, meaning that as the frequency of watching the 'Sema na Mahakama' television program increases, it creates an understanding of court operations and hence tends to increase as well, but the relationship is not very strong.

$P < 0.001$  indicates the correlation is very unlikely to be. Hence the relationship between two variables is statistically significant.

#### 4. 3 Statistical Bar Chart that represent the frequency of watching the program and facilitating understanding of court operations.



**Source: Field Data 2024**

The graph shows how scattered the responses are. The highest frequency was 61-80. Also, those who rarely watch the 'Sema na Mahakama' program seemed to have higher concentration on it, and that was revealed by the extent to which the program helped them understand court operations.

#### 1.4.3 Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between understanding court procedures extent to how 'Sema na Mahakama' program has facilitated understanding court operation. The analysis revealed a weak negative ( $p < 0.001$ ) (almost negligible) correlation of the two variables

Pearson correlation  $r = 0.337$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), indicating a statistically insignificant. This suggests that, a slight increase in the extent 'Sema na Mahakama' program has facilitated citizens' understanding of court operations was a result in a slight increase in understanding of court operations, generally, which was insignificant. Hence the two variables are independent of each other.

#### 1.4.4 Interpretation of Results

In general, the study aimed to assess "Sema na Mahakama" television program on ITV in creating citizens' awareness on court operations. The results indicated that citizen's awareness was higher as the majority of the respondents indicated that they are 61% to 80% aware of the program. Furthermore the respondents are aware mostly on issues relating legal matters like civil rights, proper interpretation of laws and judicial procedures. Also correlation analysis revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between the frequency of watching the program and the understanding of court operations.

### 1.4.5 Practical Implications of the findings

The findings had practical implications for all citizens, educators, policymakers and the media. Encouraging citizens to allocate their time to watch the program. That may lead to significant improvements in general understanding of the laws and Court operations. Hence reducing the number of possible conflicts that, may result because of the individuals having no marginal lines and knowledge on how to resolve matters peacefully or amicable ways. However, it was also crucial to emphasize the participation of women in these forums in order to ensure that they are also engaged and understand the laws and other court procedures so they might not be the victim of not knowing legal issues.

### 1.6 Discussion

The research questions of the study was meant to assess how effective was ‘Sema na Mahakama’ television program on ITV in creating citizens’ awareness on court operations. This question intended to survey and to discover whether the program helped the public to bridge the gap between the legal system and ordinary citizens, enhancing understanding and accessibility, changing perceptions toward the justice system and fostering trustworth and participation in the legal system.

The Cohen study was grounded in acknowledging that television plays a substantial role in shaping public attitudes and knowledge. The study explores legal dramas aid in clarifying legal procedures, correcting misconceptions, and offering valuable legal insights to viewers. By examining various types of legal content on television, the study gauges the impact of these programs on viewer’s awareness of legal privileges, procedures, and the inner workings of the legal system (Cohen, 1994).

The study from Kariuki (2019) revealed that, educating the public comprehension of court procedures and the legal system was essential to promoting confidence in citizens and involvement in the legal system. Initiatives such as legal education television programs are crucial in helping the public understand the legal system and their rights, so enabling them to make informed decisions (Kariuki, 2019). Study by Nguyen (2021) highlighted how successful television programming as a medium for legal education because of its broad appeal and capacity to convey complicated concepts in an understandable approach.

The scholar’s views on television programming underscore the effectiveness of television as a medium for legal education, given its wide reach and ability to present complex information in an accessible format.

“Sema na Mahakama” television program used expert live interviews to convey the legal knowledge to audiences and narrative to educate viewers about judicial procedures and court operations. Bruner, (1990) contended that Meaning Construction Theory states that viewers make sense of this scripted concept and materials by drawing on viewers’ prior knowledge, experiences, and mental models. The degree to which the program complements and broadens viewers’ pre-existing conceptual conceptions of the court issues that determines the effective way in raising awareness (Bruner, 1990).

The findings on Effectiveness of “Sema na Mahakama” television program on audiences awareness on court operations. The results indicated that, citizens' awareness is higher as the majority of the respondents indicated that about 61% to 80% were aware of the program. Awareness level mostly emerge on issues relating legal matters like civil rights which was about

9.7%, proper interpretation of laws carried 7.3%, judicial procedures which occupied 22.8% and other provision education matters relating to court operations garnered 13.9%

The study took several key concepts engaged in participant observation on the issues presented, the modality of production through Key Informant Interviewees on the effectiveness of “Sema na Mahakama” television program on ITV. Issues produced and presented to the programs like raised common legal aspects strengths and weaknesses of the program, clarity of the messages, audience engagements, relevancy to the viewers, language used by guest speakers and selected time for broadcasting the program.

The study observed that program producers ensured that the legal information presented was both accurate and understandable, which significantly attracted the audiences to engage. The aspects like matrimonial legal issues, probate legal issues, land disputes and labour disputes to underscore that program expert’s presented the information in a way that attracted viewers’ attention and encourages them to learn more about court operations and legal framework.

Analysing the program’s effectiveness in educating viewers about court operations highlighted how successfully it addressed common legal misconceptions and enhanced legal literacy. The study discovered that common legal aspects like Probate procedures can vary greatly in complexity depending on the relevant jurisdiction. The complexities of how wills are certified, estates are managed, and disputes are settled may be too complex for viewers to comprehend.

The experts were clarity on offering the messages, gently using simple language to convey the messages without using jargons to the viewers’ to make it so easier to understand. By doing so audience’s engagement were impeccable. The legal professionals took centre stage, answering call-in viewers’ questions with a humble tone, contributing to feedback and correcting misconceptions and misinformation during the program. The programs were addressed to pitch perfect prime time hours.

The program producers ensured the program gist accompanied accumulatively knowledgeable legal fraternity experts like Judges, Registrars, Deputy Registrars, Court Administrators, Judicial Officers (Magistrates). Other legal officers who were taken on board were from Public Institutions and Governmental Departments and lawyers Associations like Tanganyika Law Society Charters, who represented a diverse range of experiences and perspectives, particularly when creating awareness of legal issues that affect different demographic groups in the community.

## **1.7 Recommendations**

The program producers and owners need to collaborate collectively with the legal fraternity, professionals, Judges, and Academicians to provide authoritative insights by ensuring the accuracy, authenticity and reliability of the information presented. They should also use feature guest experts who are motivational speakers to attract audiences or interviews with professionals who can offer additional perspectives and expertise on court operations.

Also, in the future, multi-platform availability will be needed to make the program available on various platforms, including online streaming, social media, and mobile apps, to reach a wider audience and provide flexible viewing options. As well as provide usage subtitles and translations in different languages to ensure accessibility for non-native speakers and those with hearing impairments.

Moreover, to promote the program and extend its reach within local communities, strengthening community outreach partnerships with organizations like paralegals, religious institutions, and educational institutions is needed. Workshops or seminars should be organized in conjunction with

the program to offer in-depth discussions and interactive learning experiences about court operations.

It is worth seeking legal knowledge even before contradicting legal troubles. By using the platform of “Sema na Mahakama” television program raises enthusiasm to learn civil rights and court procedures. This program was designed to help the public to understand the legal framework and court operations at large. However the program meant to shape public morality and decency to a large community by engaging to it may lead to significant improvements in general understanding of the laws governing the land and daily Court operations. Hence create awareness and reduce the number of possible conflicts that, may result due to the individuals having no marginal lines and knowledge on how to resolve matters peacefully or applying amicable ways.

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