



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**AN ASSESSMENT OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE 2022
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.**

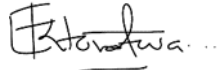
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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN
COMMUNICATION STUDIES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM,
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NOVEMBER, 2023.

DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree in any other University.



Signature.....Date: 6th November 2023

EZER KIPKURUI TOROTWA

K50/37817/2020

Declaration by Supervisor

The project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.



Signature

Date: 14th November 2023

PROF. GEORGE M. NYABUGA

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family for their unwavering forbearance, backing, and reassurance. I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty for granting me strength and guidance during this project. To my family, including my wife Sylvia, children Shammah and Liana, parents Dad and Mom, and siblings Naomi, Ian, Herman, Obed, and Asaph, your steadfast support has been my anchor, providing love and encouragement throughout this challenging and rewarding journey. This dedication is a testament to the profound impact of your presence in my life, and I am profoundly grateful for each of you.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines media coverage during Kenya's 2022 presidential election, focusing on The Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper to discern factors influencing candidate portrayal, media framing, and overall tonality. Noteworthy distinctions in editorial approaches emerge, with The Standard prioritizing candidates' political history and policies, while The Daily Nation leans towards emphasizing poll ratings. Key drivers of coverage include the candidate's manifesto, public interest, media owner influence, and scandals. Media framing predominantly revolves around political dynamics and power struggles, sidelining substantive policy issues, indicative of the "horse race reporting" phenomenon. Tonality analysis reveals varied levels of neutrality, negativity, and positivity, with Raila Odinga portrayed as more neutral and William Ruto facing more negative coverage. The limited positive coverage for both candidates underscores the study's emphasis on balanced reporting and the imperative of media responsibility in shaping public perceptions during democratic processes in Kenya. These insights provide a foundation for discussions and improvements in future electoral event coverage.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

ACME - African Centre for Media Excellence

EMB - Election Management Body

FM - Frequency Modulation (commonly used for radio stations)

IEBC - Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

KANU - Kenya African National Union

KTN – Kenya television network

KBC - Kenya Broadcasting Corporation

MIC - Media Innovation Centre

NMG - Nation Media Group

NTV – National television network

ODM - Orange Democratic Movement

PNU - Party of National Unity

PEV - Political Economic Violence

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

SG - Standard Group

DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Agenda-setting: The media's power to influence the public's perception of issues by choosing what topics to cover and how to cover them

Bias: In this context, "bias" typically means a tendency for media coverage to favour certain candidates, issues, or viewpoints.

Coverage: refers to the reporting, analysis, or presentation of news and information on a particular topic, event, issue, or subject

Candidate-Centric Frame: This frame emphasizes the characteristics and qualities of political candidates.

Civic Engagement: Involvement of citizens in the political and public affairs of their community or country, often encouraged by media.

Electoral Process: The entire process of conducting an election, from voter registration to ballot counting.

Election: A formal process for making a choice, typically in a political context where voters choose candidates for public office.

Framing: "Framing" in the context of media and politics refers to how information is presented to shape the perception of an issue or candidate.

Freedom of Expression: The right to express one's opinions, ideas, and information freely without censorship or restraint, a fundamental principle of democracy.

Hate Speech: Speech that promotes violence or hostility against a particular group based on attributes like race, religion, or ethnicity.

Horse Race: In the context of media coverage, a "horse race" typically refers to the focus on competition and polling results between political candidates, often at the expense of substantive policy discussions.

Inclusive: Ensuring that all individuals or groups have equal access and opportunities; often used in the context of media coverage of elections

Impartiality: Impartiality is a concept that suggests neutrality and fairness in media reporting

Imbalance: "Imbalance" may refer to an uneven or unequal distribution of media coverage or emphasis on different candidates or issues.

Media Reliance: The degree to which individuals rely on media sources for information.

Media: The various means of communication used for transmitting information, including newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms.

Policy Frame: This refers to a media framing that emphasises the discussion of policy matters and the platforms of political candidates.

Political Polarization: This term denotes the division of political opinions or positions into extreme and opposing groups.

Presidential election: This is a political process in which the citizens of a country, typically a democratic one, participate to select their head of state, known as the president.

Political Participation: Active involvement of citizens in the political process, such as voting, attending rallies, or joining political organizations.

Peace Journalism: A style of reporting that focuses on non-violent solutions and emphasises reconciliation rather than conflict.

Social, Political, and Civic Involvement: Different aspects of citizens' participation in society, politics, and civil life.

Trustworthy: Capable of being relied upon or trusted; often used to describe the reliability and accuracy of information the media provides.

Sensationalism: "Sensationalism" refers to presenting information in a way designed to provoke public interest and excitement at the expense of accuracy.

Unrestricted Access to Information: All individuals can access information without limitations or barriers.

Voter Turnout: Voter turnout refers to the percentage of eligible voters who actually participate in an election.

Voter Behaviour: How individuals who are eligible to vote (voters) act and make choices in an election

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the problem statement, the research objectives of the study, and the research questions and discusses the justification study; the chapter concludes by outlining the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Kenya's Political and electoral landscape

After gaining her independence in 1963, Kenya operated as a one-party state, officially established through a constitutional amendment in 1982. This led to a decade marked by media suppression, intimidation, and intolerance of political opposition under the KANU government (Mutiga, 2018). However, in 1991, the repeal of section 2(a) signalled the introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya. The first competitive multi-party elections occurred in December 1992, but due to a divided opposition and confusion among the electorate regarding party affiliations, the incumbent, Daniel Arap Moi, managed to win despite receiving only 36.8% of the votes (Mutiga, 2018).

The second multi-party elections in 1997 saw the participation of 27 opposition parties, yet Moi secured another easy victory (Chege, 2015). Following Moi's retirement after his mandatory 10-year term, the 2002 elections witnessed a unified opposition led by Mr Mwai Kibaki of the Rainbow Alliance, challenging Moi's preferred successor, Mr Uhuru Kenyatta, the KANU candidate. A landslide won the alliance, ending the KANU era characterised by media repression and government control. During this period, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) dominated the broadcast media, while the print media,

providing alternative voices, came at a high cost. Journalists faced detention without trial and other forms of persecution, enabling the government to exert significant control over the media (Kaburu, 2019).

The advent of multi-party politics in Kenya opened up media spaces, allowing the entry of private broadcasters that offered alternative voices (Chacha, 2016, p. 86). However, political influences continued to shape the media landscape as political entities exerted significant control over media organisations (Chacha, 2016). It is worth noting that political freedoms and freedom of expression have been closely intertwined in Kenya's history (Wanjala, 2017).

Kenya, as a young democracy, has made progress in recent years (Wanjala, 2017). Nonetheless, challenges still need to be addressed, such as ethnic divisions, poverty, and lack of trust in the government (Wanjala, 2017). Ethnic divisions pose a significant challenge to democracy in Kenya (Chacha, 2016). With over 40 ethnic groups, the country has a long history of conflict, leading to violence and instability in the past, such as the 2007-2008 post-election violence (Chacha, 2016).

According to Wanjala (2017), poverty is another challenge to democracy in Kenya. A large percentage of the population lives below the poverty line, making it difficult for people to participate in the political process. Struggling to meet basic needs, individuals may lack the time or resources to vote or engage in political activism.

Furthermore, Kenyans have a low level of trust in the government. Corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability contribute to this lack of trust (Wanjala, 2017). Corruption is particularly pervasive, eroding faith in the government and the electoral process, with perceptions of rigged elections (Mwangi & Ng'weno, 2018).

According to Chacha (2016), promoting democracy in Kenya is crucial to addressing the challenges of ethnic divisions, poverty, and lack of trust in the government. This involves

combating corruption, improving efficiency, increasing accountability, and educating people about their rights while encouraging political participation (Mwangi & Ng'weno, 2018) (Kaburu, 2019).

Despite these challenges, there are positive trends in Kenya's political and electoral landscape. These include increased voter turnout, strengthening civil society, and improved media freedom. These positive trends indicate that Kenya is progressing in consolidating democracy (Chege, 2015).

1.2.2 The Kenyan Media Landscape

Kenya has a vibrant and diverse media landscape, encompassing many print, broadcast, and online outlets. The media plays a crucial role in Kenyan society by providing a platform for public debate and holding the government and other powerful institutions accountable (Kameri-Mbote, 2015; Odhiambo, 2016). In the realm of print media, two major players dominate the Kenyan market: the Nation Media Group (NMG) and the Standard Group (SG) (Media Council of Kenya, 2022). These companies publish various newspapers, magazines, and other publications. Additionally, several smaller independent print publications are contributing to the media landscape. The broadcast media sector in Kenya is also primarily dominated by a few key players. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), which is state-owned, stands as the oldest and largest broadcaster in the country. Additionally, numerous privately owned television and radio stations add to the diversity of voices and content (Mwangi & Ng'weno, 2018).

The online media sector in Kenya is experiencing rapid growth. Many online news websites, blogs, and social media platforms provide Kenyans access to a wide range of information and news (Ojwang & Oyaro, 2017).

However, the Kenyan media faces various challenges. One significant challenge is political interference, with the government being accused of influencing media outlets and leading to self-censorship. Economic struggles are also prominent as the media industry grapples with high production costs, low advertising revenue, and a relatively high illiteracy rate. Technological challenges further complicate matters, as the media must adapt to new technologies like the internet and social media, which bring opportunities and obstacles (Mwangi & Ng'weno, 2018; Wanyama, 2019).

Despite these challenges, the Kenyan media remains an essential and vibrant part of society. It is critical in holding the government and powerful institutions accountable and serves as a public discourse and debate platform (Kameri-Mbote, 2015).

In recent years, the Kenyan media has become more independent and critical of the government. This shift has exposed high-profile scandals and increased government accountability (Odhiambo, 2016).

While the Kenyan media still faces obstacles, it continues to grow in importance within Kenyan society. It actively promotes democracy and good governance and amplifies the voices of marginalised communities (Wanyama, 2019).

1.2.3 Role of Media in Elections

The media in Kenya has faced challenges and criticisms along with its role in promoting democracy. Accusations of bias, lack of professionalism, and political influence have been raised against certain media outlets (Gitau & Ibelema, 2019). These challenges highlight the need for media organisations to uphold ethical standards, ensure journalistic integrity, and maintain independence from political interests. Additionally, the digital revolution has brought about significant changes in the media landscape in Kenya. The rise of online platforms and social media has provided new avenues for information dissemination, citizen journalism, and public engagement (Tang et al., 2020). Social media platforms such as

Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become influential tools for sharing election-related information, mobilising voters, and fostering public dialogue.

However, the rapid spread of misinformation and fake news on digital platforms has challenged the media's role in promoting democracy (Mutsvairo, 2017). The circulation of false information can mislead the public, undermine trust in media organisations, and contribute to the polarisation of political discourse.

To address these challenges and ensure the media's effective contribution to democracy, there is a need for media literacy programs to educate the public about the critical consumption of information and the recognition of credible sources. Media organisations should also embrace digital innovation while maintaining ethical standards and responsible reporting practices (Omanga & Wafula, 2020).

The media should play a vital role in promoting democracy in Kenya by providing information, facilitating public discourse, and holding those in power accountable. However, challenges such as bias, political influence, and misinformation must be addressed to ensure the media's effectiveness in promoting a vibrant and inclusive democratic society (Kibiwott, 2019; Macharia & Mugo, 2020).

1.2.4 Media and Recent Elections

After the change in government in 2002, Kenya experienced a restoration of confidence in its democracy (Kameri-Mbote, 2015). The media landscape also changed significantly during the 2002 campaigns, particularly in the broadcast sector. New players like Radio Citizen emerged as alternatives to the government-controlled Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), providing different narratives (Mwangi & Ng'weno, 2018).

President Mwai Kibaki led the review of a new constitution, which caused a division within the government into the Banana faction (led by Kibaki) and the Orange faction (led by Raila Odinga). In the 2005 National Constitution Referendum, the Orange faction emerged victorious, with 58% of the electorate rejecting the proposed constitution. This outcome signaled a lack of confidence in President Kibaki and resulted in an irreparable split in the coalition government. The Orange faction later transformed into the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), while the Banana faction became the Party of National Unity (PNU), aligning with Kibaki and the new constitution (Mwangi & Ng'weno, 2018).

During this time, as the influence of KBC declined, private media outlets gained prominence. Citizen Radio, operated by Royal Media Services, openly supported the YES vote during the referendum and became a popular alternative to KBC (Mwangi & Ng'weno, 2018).

The 2007 general elections witnessed a heated contest between the ODM and PNU, with Kibaki seeking a second term against Raila Odinga. The declaration of Kibaki as the winner by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) on December 20, 2007, sparked violent protests due to allegations of election rigging by ODM supporters. The subsequent Post Election Violence was fuelled by ethnic tensions that had escalated during the 2005 referendum, which divided major ethnic groups (Odhiambo, 2016). The Kriegler report, or the Independent Review Committee's report, highlighted widespread election fraud as the trigger for the violence, making it difficult to determine the actual winner. The media received criticism for exacerbating ethnic and regional divisions through divisive and partisan coverage, especially by vernacular broadcasters. Vernacular radio stations were accused of playing inflammatory music and programming, contributing to the tensions. While national newspapers and media outlets were generally seen as non-partisan, occasional accusations of bias from both parties arose (Odhiambo, 2016).

Implementing a new constitution in 2010 established a dual-level government system in Kenya, comprising the national and devolved county governments. The country was divided into 47 counties, each with elected representatives and political authority. Efforts were made to reorient the media after the 2007/08 Post Election Violence, promoting peace journalism and conflict-sensitive reporting. Capacity-building initiatives on electoral reporting, facilitated by organisations like the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), Internews, and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Committee (IEBC), aimed to enhance adherence to journalistic ethics (Wanyama, 2019). Media outlets, including vernacular radio stations, promoted democracy and dialogue to reduce tensions. These efforts contributed to peace journalism and conflict-sensitive reporting during the 2013 general elections, which concluded without violence. According to the 2017 MCK media monitoring report, election reportage demonstrated improved adherence to journalistic ethics despite interference from media ownership (Wanyama, 2019). "In recent elections, both traditional and social media played crucial roles in Kenya. Traditional media outlets such as newspapers, radio, and television provided comprehensive coverage of the campaigns, candidates, critical issues, and insightful analysis and commentary (Kameri-Mbote, 2015). Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp emerged as influential tools for sharing election-related information, allowing individuals to express their views and engage in public discussions (Ojwang & Oyaro, 2017).

The media's involvement in elections was pivotal for several reasons. Firstly, it ensured the public was well-informed, providing details about candidates, policies, and backgrounds to facilitate informed decision-making (Kameri-Mbote, 2015). Secondly, the media acted as a watchdog, investigating and reporting allegations of corruption and misconduct, thereby promoting accountability and upholding the principles of free and fair elections (Odhiambo, 2016). Thirdly, the media actively encouraged civic engagement by

emphasising the importance of voting and participating in the political process through public service announcements and interviews, instilling a sense of duty among Kenyans and ensuring their voices were heard (Wanyama, 2019).

Despite the challenges faced by the media, including accusations of bias and manipulation by politicians, its role in recent elections in Kenya was pivotal. The media played a crucial part in informing the public, holding the government accountable, and promoting civic engagement. Traditional media outlets provided comprehensive coverage and analysis, while social media platforms facilitated information sharing and public participation. Through these efforts, the media contributed significantly to ensuring free and fair elections, fostering democracy, and representing the people's will in Kenya (Ojwang & Oyaro, 2017).

1.2.5 Media Coverage of the 2022 General Elections

The 2022 elections in Kenya saw a record number of presidential candidates, with over fifteen individuals vying for the position (IEBC, 2022). However, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) only approved four candidates for the ballot (IEBC, 2022). These candidates were David Mwaure Waihiga from the Agano Party, Prof. George Wajackoyah from the Roots Party, Raila Odinga representing the Azimio Coalition Political Party, and William Ruto from the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) (IEBC, 2022).

The election campaigns, which took place on August 9, 2022, followed the familiar coalition strategy, with two significant alliances competing for power (IEBC, 2022). On one side was the incumbent Deputy President, William Ruto, running as the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) candidate. Rigathi Gachagua, the Member of Parliament for Mathira Constituency, is his running mate (IEBC, 2022). On the other side was the Azimio la Umoja faction, led by Raila Odinga of the ODM party, with Martha Karua as his deputy (IEBC,

2022). The selection of a female running mate by Azimio la Umoja was seen as an attempt to secure the support of the gender vote (IEBC, 2022).

One significant aspect of the 2022 elections was the unprecedented scenario where the sitting president supported the opposition leader, Raila Odinga, rather than his deputy president, William Ruto (IEBC, 2022). This created a highly controversial political landscape in Kenya.

The media had to navigate various challenges while covering the 2022 general elections. One notable obstacle was the open partisanship of media owners, which hindered the balanced reporting of the campaigns and election news. The intertwining of media ownership and politics in Kenya has always been a delicate issue for journalists, as politicians often invest heavily in media to exert control and establish close relationships with media owners (Gitau & Ibelema, 2019).

The Kenyan media has faced criticism in the past for exacerbating ethnic tensions during election periods, particularly during the 2007/2008 Post-Election Violence (PEV) (Kibiwott, 2019). Consequently, media coverage of the 2022 elections, like the previous elections, was cautious due to the country's highly divisive nature of politics.

1.3 Problem Statement:

In Kenya, the media is critical in shaping public opinion and influencing electoral outcomes. However, media coverage of elections is often criticised for being biased, unbalanced, and sensationalised. This is particularly concerning in presidential elections, where the stakes are high, and the public needs access to accurate and impartial information. During the 2022 Kenyan general election, there were widespread concerns about the fairness and objectivity of media coverage of the presidential candidates. Some observers alleged that the media favoured specific candidates at the expense of others. In contrast, others argued

that the coverage was overly focused on personalities and horse-race journalism rather than substantive issues.

Investigating the many elements that have impacted media coverage of presidential candidates is necessary to understand the determinants that shape media coverage, candidate framing, the general tone of reporting, and adherence to ethical standards in journalism. This assessment aims to ascertain how external factors, such as political ties, financial reasons, or editorial prejudices, influenced the depiction of candidates in the media. The findings of research conducted by the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) indicate that media portrayal of the 2022 elections mainly consisted of unfavourable content, with a notable emphasis on scandals and gaffes. Moreover, the research revealed bias when some candidates were subjected to more favourable media attention than others (ACME, 2022). Examining ethical principles in journalism is of utmost importance when analysing the media's coverage of the 2022 presidential election. Journalists assume a crucial function in disseminating information to the general public and must adhere to fundamental values of precision, equity, objectivity, and autonomy. The evaluation of whether the ethical standards were maintained throughout the election coverage will ascertain the legitimacy and dependability of the media's reportage.

Another research undertaken by the Media Innovation Centre (MIC) examined the media coverage of the 2022 election and identified occasions in which sensationalised language was used, portraying the election as a crisis rather than a typical democratic procedure (MIC, 2022). This situation gives rise to apprehensions about the media's commitment to ethical principles, as sensationalism and biased narratives can distort the public's perspective and weaken the democratic process. Ensuring precision is of paramount importance in the realm of election reporting, as journalists bear the duty to provide the general populace with duly substantiated and verifiably accurate information. This process

includes the meticulous examination of facts, the validation of sources, and the conscientious avoidance of inaccurate or deceptive material. Furthermore, justice and impartiality are crucial in shaping election coverage, guaranteeing a well-rounded portrayal of candidates and their respective campaigns. Journalists need to exercise impartiality, avoid prejudice, and abstain from endorsing personal or political goals that may potentially skew the public's image. The principle of independence is paramount since it allows journalists to engage in impartial and critical reporting, free from any undue influence exerted by political parties, politicians, or media proprietors. Adhering to these ethical principles enhances political awareness among the citizenry and bolsters the general credibility of democratic processes.

Despite the importance of media coverage of elections, little research has been done on how the Kenyan media portrays presidential candidates. This study addresses this gap by analysing newspaper coverage of the presidential candidates in the 2022 Kenyan general election. The findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the role of the media in Kenyan elections and help to identify areas where the media can improve its coverage of presidential elections.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The main objective was to assess media coverage of presidential elections in Kenya's 2022 general election.

1.4.1 Specific objectives

The specific objectives were:

- i. To determine factors informing media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya's 2022 general election.
- ii. To identify and analyse media framing of presidential candidates in Kenya's 2022 general election.

- iii. To examine the tone of coverage of Kenya's 2022 general election.

1.5 Research Questions

The following were the research questions:

- i. What factors informed media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya's 2022 general election?
- ii. How did the media frame presidential candidates in Kenya's 2022 general election?
- iii. What was the media tone of Kenya's 2022 general election coverage?

1.6 Justification of the study

This comprehensive study on the newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya aims to provide valuable insights into the media landscape and its impact on democratic processes. The study will shed light on biases and promote media accountability by investigating factors influencing media coverage, such as candidate popularity, campaign strategies, and political affiliations. Additionally, the analysis of framing strategies will enable a critical examination of how candidates are portrayed, ensuring transparency in the information presented to the public.

The assessment of media tone during the election will gauge fairness and objectivity, enhancing transparency and accuracy in reporting. The study's findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the media landscape and inform future electoral processes and media practices. For stakeholders, including media organisations, electoral commissions, and policymakers, practical implications will be derived to develop guidelines and standards that improve media ethics, journalistic practices, and electoral transparency.

This study aims to foster a media environment that upholds integrity, fairness, and democratic principles. Promoting responsible journalism and empowering citizens through informed decision-making seeks to strengthen democratic processes in Kenya. The research

findings will contribute to the broader discourse on media influence, guide future electoral improvements, and ensure a transparent and engaged electorate.

1.7 Scope of Study

The scope of the study, as stated by Easterby-Smith et al. (2014), describes all the topics that the research study addressed concerning the subject, geographical area, methodology, and population. This study has a specific scope centres on analysing the newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya. It explores factors that shaped media coverage, such as candidate popularity, campaign strategies, political affiliations, controversies, and other relevant variables. The analysis will delve into media framing, examining how the candidates were portrayed regarding their policies, achievements, personal backgrounds, and any discernible biases or stereotypes. Additionally, the study will assess the media tone of the election, evaluating whether the coverage exhibited a positive, negative, or neutral sentiment toward the candidates.

It is essential to acknowledge that the studies' focus on newspaper coverage means that other media platforms, including television, radio, and online sources, will not be included. Furthermore, the findings of this study will be specific to the context of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya and may not apply to different countries or election periods. Nevertheless, by narrowing the scope to newspaper coverage, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing media coverage, framing of candidates, and the overall tone during the 2022 election in Kenya.

1.8 Limitations of Study

According to Robson (2017), a limitation is a factor over which the researcher has no control but imposes restrictions on and influences a research study. This study on the media

coverage of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya has certain limitations. Firstly, it focuses exclusively on newspaper coverage, potentially overlooking perspectives provided by television, radio, and online platforms. Additionally, the findings are specific to the context of the 2022 election and may not be widely applicable to other countries or election periods. Factors influencing media coverage, framing, and tone can vary in political and cultural contexts. Subjective interpretation is also a limitation, as researchers may have varying interpretations of media framing and tone. However, despite these limitations, the study aims to offer valuable insights into the media landscape of the election, contributing to a more informed electorate and encouraging responsible journalism in Kenya.

It is important to note that external factors, such as political pressures, editorial biases, and media ownership, may influence media coverage but are not directly addressed in this study. Furthermore, relying on newspaper articles as the primary data source may neglect the impact of social media platforms, which have increasingly shaped public opinion during elections. Additionally, time and resource constraints may limit the depth and breadth of the analysis. Despite these limitations, the study's objectives include promoting media accountability, revealing framing strategies, evaluating media tone, strengthening democracy, and providing insights for future electoral improvements. By addressing these limitations, the study strives to enhance the integrity of democratic processes and foster responsible and impartial journalism in Kenya.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

The dependent variable in the conceptual framework is media coverage of presidential elections in Kenya's 2022 general election. This can be measured in various ways, such as the amount of time and space devoted to coverage of different candidates and issues, the tone of the coverage, and the sources cited. The conceptual framework suggests that various factors, including media framing and tone, handling strategies, and social demographic factors,

influence media coverage of presidential elections. These factors can interact with each other in complex ways, and their impact on media coverage can vary depending on the specific context of the election. The conceptual framework can guide research on media coverage of presidential elections in Kenya. For example, researchers could use the framework to identify the factors that influence media coverage, assess the quality of media coverage, and understand the impact of media coverage on voters.

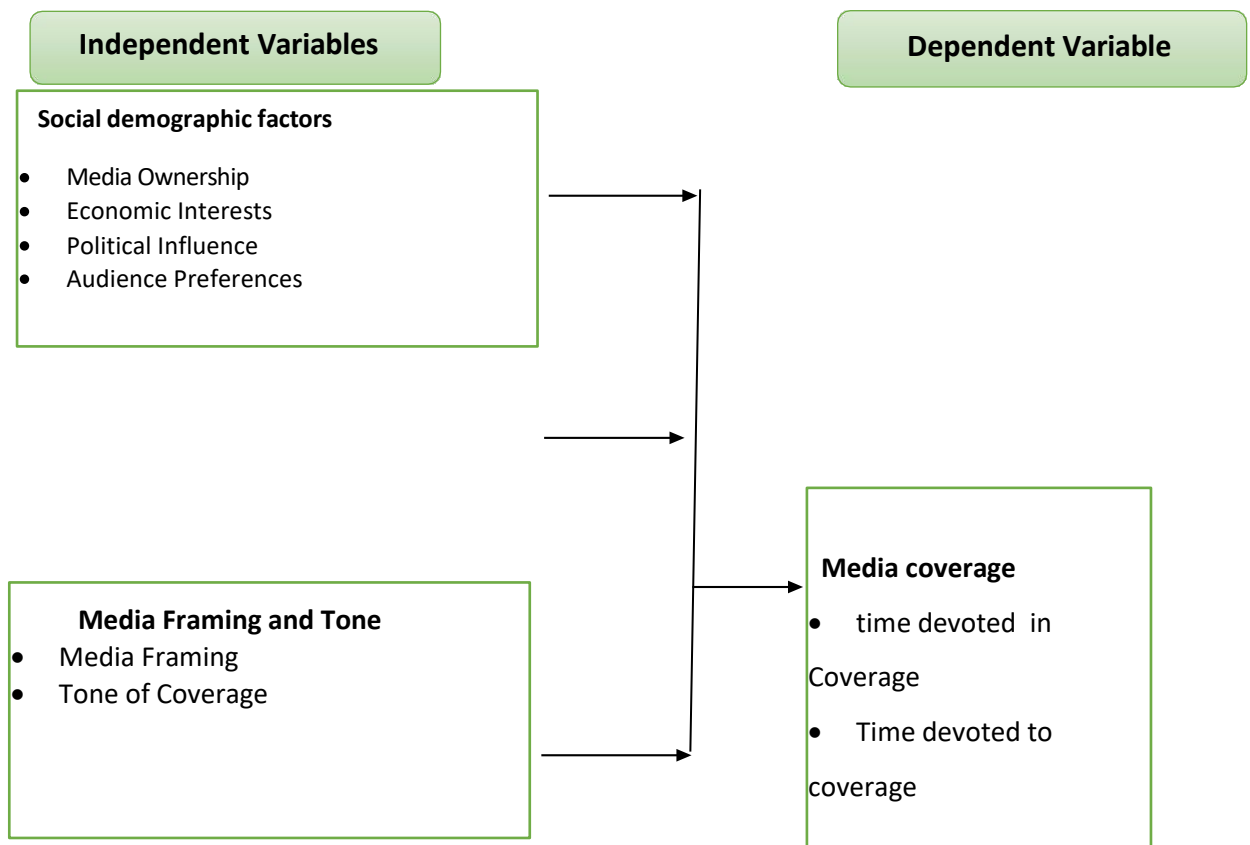


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The role of media in elections has always been crucial in shaping public opinion, influencing voter behaviour, and promoting democratic processes. This chapter reviews the literature on the factors informing media coverage during the election period.

2.2 Media and Elections

Trustworthy and inclusive elections are predicated upon fundamental democratic ideals (Mason et al., 2018). The abovementioned principles are included in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Among them are the fundamental entitlements to freedom of expression, unrestricted access to information, and equitable treatment under the legal system (Nyawa, 2017). These principles include the entitlement of the voters and political players to engage in unrestricted discourse about political matters and public policy and the freedom to articulate their viewpoints. The dissemination and reception of information by voters and candidates strongly depend on their media access. Establishing an inclusive and varied media platform is necessary to provide fair and unbiased coverage and equal opportunities for all candidates and political parties to participate.

Dunaway and Graber (2022) asserted that the media significantly influences the electoral process and its results. The media plays a crucial role in the electoral process by disseminating necessary information to voters to make informed decisions and serving as a platform for contestants to engage with the public. Furthermore, the media has the power to shape the agenda of the electoral process through its selection of topics to cover, the

questions it poses, and the tone it adopts in its coverage (Dunaway & Graber, 2022).

According to Wilson et al. (2014), electoral campaigns often hinge on media representation and the proliferation of costly political commercials, which may determine the outcome of an election. The media can exert influence and provide information. It is anticipated that the media will fulfil a knowledgeable and vigilant function, ensuring that individuals remain well-informed on electoral matters, including the stances of candidates and the processes and rationales for voting (Wilson et al., 2014). Hence, the media needs to function as an unbiased and inclusive platform for public deliberation and discourse, ensuring that candidates and political parties are given equal opportunities to present their campaigns.

The news media intermediates the general public and the external world (Bhagwat, 2021). Ensuring public confidence in the integrity of the media is a primary responsibility since those who place their faith in these sources are inclined to await their most current iteration. The media disseminates information in a manner that may influence the beliefs and attitudes of the general population. Various forms of media, including print media, have a significant role in forming our perceptions and influencing our judgments about certain issues (Bhagwat, 2021). This research explores the impact of news media on voter involvement and decision-making throughout the election process, recognising the significance of media in general and news media specifically (Bursztyn et al., 2018). A heightened dependence on the media exists in contemporary society, leading individuals to exhibit a distinct inclination towards acquiring political knowledge. Both contemporary and conventional media outlets are equally favoured by individuals, enabling them to engage in electoral processes. Hence, a discernible association exists between political knowledge and voting behaviour, as the media serves as a conduit that connects these two variables (Wolfsfeld et al., 2016). There are six significant manners in which the news media exert influence on elections and the political engagement of voters. These include the polarisation of media platforms, utilising visual

content such as pictures and videos, direct interaction with the public, and serving as a watchdog for the democratic process by consistently monitoring polling stations and potential conflicts among political parties and politicians. By adopting such an approach, the dissemination of political narratives during electoral periods serves to enhance civic engagement and bolster the foundations of democratic governance.

In their study, Gentzkow et al. (2011) analysed the effects of American newspapers on the level of political participation among voters, spanning from 1869 to 2004. The researchers used an experimental methodology and conducted a content analysis on 3,913 newspapers. The study's findings directly impacted individuals' voting involvement due to the incomplete coverage provided by newspapers. Persons who saw presidential elections as unfair showed a lack of interest in participating in the voting process, unlike other persons. The researchers concluded that the media has a significant influence in inspiring voters, a perspective shared by Alexis de Tocqueville, who also saw media as a catalyst for heightened political engagement. According to Matthes (2012), the media plays a crucial role in educating the people about the significance of their votes in enhancing the democratic process. Media outlets enable people to express their issues and opinions by providing political campaign coverage. Political parties communicate with the general public, effectively disseminating their message and actively promoting citizen involvement in the political process. Burford (2012) conducted a study examining the effects of mass media on voter engagement during elections. The researchers used an exploratory methodology and chose to analyse social media information specifically from the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in December 2011. The study's results indicated that many postings effectively encouraged and inspired the audience to actively engage and vote to support the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB).

In a study conducted by Sokhan (2014), the researcher examined the effects of mass media on the stimulation and reinforcement of political engagement in the context of the 2014 elections in Cambodia. The researchers opted for an exploratory study strategy and collected data using structured questionnaires. The study's results revealed that the respondents had a widespread belief in the significant influence of mass media, which served as a strong motivator for their active engagement in the voting process. In their study, Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014) examined the concept of strengthening political involvement via the combined use of traditional and new media tactics. Newspapers, television, and radio serve as traditional channels for information dissemination, while new media platforms play a crucial role in facilitating the sharing, receiving, and validation of this information. This elucidates the multifaceted role of media platforms as sources of information, motivation catalysts, and political engagement facilitators. Moeller et al. (2014) examined the effects of conventional and new media on political activities and election involvement. The researchers used an experimental design methodology and opted for a sample size of $n=729$ participants from the Netherlands. The study's findings indicate a significant correlation between engaging in newspaper reading and active involvement in acquiring and disseminating online political information. Furthermore, the researchers have also identified the internal effectiveness of print media as a significant factor influencing increased political involvement among voters. In order to further confirm this occurrence, Skoric et al. (2016) analysed the association between mass media consumption and public involvement in elections. The researchers used a meta-analysis methodology and opted for a sample including 22 papers published between 2007 and 2016. The findings indicate that media significantly influences the levels of social, political, and civic involvement among individuals within a society. The researchers discovered a robust and statistically significant correlation between the level of media

reliance during the electoral period and an augmented acquisition of political knowledge among the public.

Odhiambo (2021) in his study noted that the issue of election-related violence has emerged as a significant concern in several African nations. Odhiambo added that the media has the potential to magnify or provoke national biases or tensions in the context of controversial electoral processes. The local media organisations in Kenya were instrumental in disseminating hate speech, contributing to the escalation of the post-election violence in 2007-2008, which resulted in a significant loss of lives, estimated to be over 1,100 fatalities. According to Odhiambo (2021), the elections held in 2013 saw an increase in the practice of "peace journalism," the implementation of governmental directives to prevent hate speech, and a renewed emphasis on enhancing the skills and capabilities of journalists. However, significant concerns still need to be addressed, and there is room for improvement in the efforts of media organisations, the Kenyan government, and the international community in preparing for the next 2017 elections. In her study, Odhiambo (2021) investigates the potential impact of media on the dissemination of hate speech and its contribution to the escalation of election-related violence. The author also explores the significance of impartial and autonomous journalism in fostering a more harmonious electoral process. The author offers policy suggestions about the optimal means by which the Kenyan government, local media entities, and foreign collaborators might effectively foster the growth of an autonomous, impartial, and proficient media sector.

In Internews' evaluation of the media's involvement in the 2007 crisis, journalists failed to adhere to the ethical and professional norms associated with their job (Long, 2013).

Significant TV stations' transmission of preliminary presidential results was criticised for their lack of confirmation and sometimes contradictions with results broadcasted by other stations (Long, 2013). According to the findings of the Kriegler Commission, there was a

notable trend among television stations to engage in a competitive race to report election results, frequently before the official announcements of Kenya's Electoral Commission. Additionally, in its research, Internews discovered that two prominent media sources, namely NTV and Kenya Television Network, presented divergent and contradictory results. The circumstances above led to perplexity and heightened animosity among observers over the true victor, enabling adherents from both factions to assert their legitimate claim to the election's outcome.

2.2 Role of the Media in Elections

Khasawneh (2020) found that media has a significant role in informing the public about current events and increasing their knowledge of many societal issues. Furthermore, it profoundly influences the perspectives and cognitive processes of the general population. According to Stockmann and Luo (2015), the media plays a crucial role in shaping and, at times, manipulating public opinion. The function of the media is crucial under regular circumstances, and it becomes much more significant on unusual occasions, such as election junctures, when the media assumes a key role. Elections are a fundamental challenge to the media, as they serve as a litmus test for neutrality and objectivity. The role of the media, particularly national media organisations, should not include serving as a conduit for any governmental entity or specific political candidate. The primary function of this entity is to provide illumination and education to the general public while serving as an impartial and unbiased forum for the unrestricted discussion of diverse perspectives (Stockmann & Luo, 2015). Hence, election observation teams often assess media accessibility and coverage as critical factors in evaluating elections' fairness. The practice of monitoring the media during election seasons has gained popularity in recent times. This practice involves using statistical

analysis and the methodologies of media studies and discourse analysis to assess the impact of media on elections.

Schulz (2019) stated that the role of media in contemporary politics and society is crucial for maintaining transparency in democratic processes. This function is sometimes referred to as its "watchdog" job. Transparency is a fundamental need across several dimensions, including providing information, establishing accountability and legitimacy within persons, institutions, and processes, facilitating proper involvement and fostering public discourse. Transparency, in the context of access to information, provides essential and complete information to the people. This enables them to make well-informed decisions and hold authorities and institutions responsible (Schulz, 2019). This includes the provision of legal and operational procedures, as well as the dissemination of information about authorities and institutions. In the context of elections, an Election Management Body (EMB), for instance, has the responsibility of disseminating information to the general public on its activities, determinations, and strategies. The individuals designated or chosen to serve on an Electoral Management Body (EMB) are considered public figures expected to operate in the general public's best interests. Therefore, the public is granted unrestricted access to information about individuals' connections, histories, and performance throughout their tenure in office. The media serves as a tool for deterring and examining claims about transgressions or misconduct. The watchdog function encompasses the responsibility of holding officials accountable for their acts while in office, as well as overseeing whole processes (Khasawneh, 2020). The media presence at voting and counting centres plays a crucial role in avoiding electoral fraud, mainly when robust safeguards are in place to promote freedom of expression and ensure that media outlets may operate freely and impartially.

In their study, Spierings and Jacobs (2018) observed that candidates and political parties are entitled to provide voters with information about their characteristics, political goals, and recommended strategies. In addition to engaging in direct interactions with constituents, politicians and political parties use media campaigns to achieve this objective. Spierings and Jacobs (2018) assert the crucial importance of ensuring equitable access to media for all candidates and parties in democratic political processes. According to Vincent's (2020) comparative research, candidates and political parties use many strategies to engage in campaign activities via the mass media. These strategies include sponsored direct access spots, paid political advertising, televised debates, utilisation of social media platforms, and other similar mechanisms. Vincent also observed that the media would willingly provide coverage due to the inherent newsworthiness associated with their campaign endeavours. Political parties allocate significant personnel and financial resources to strategically develop and implement mass media campaigns.

The media plays a significant role in facilitating discourse and deliberation by offering a forum for ordinary individuals, interest groups, scholars, and political figures to express their viewpoints on many policies and political agendas (Yu, 2013). The public can interact directly with competitors and voice their ideas via various mediums such as interviews, talkback radio, television, social media, and websites. This engagement allows individuals to influence fellow voters and maybe gather support. Moreover, the influence of media coverage on press conferences, demonstrations, and events orchestrated by interest groups, in conjunction with the analysis of public sentiment via surveys and the emergence of citizen journalism, significantly impacts the formation and development of the political environment. The interchange of ideas and opinions is facilitated through letters to the editor and discussions on blogs, Twitter, and social media platforms. This reinforces the critical role of the media in enabling citizens to engage in democratic processes (Dunaway et al., 2014).

In addition to its good contributions, the media can potentially have detrimental influences on the cause and escalation of electoral violence. According to Tanui (2018), an analysis of media coverage during the 2007 general election in Kenya revealed a politically unstable atmosphere characterised by animosity, violence, and intense competition between two leading contenders. The study further highlighted that this portrayal was influenced by biased reporting. In addition, prominent media organisations like NTV and KTN have forecasted an election marred by significant flaws and extensive manipulation, intending to benefit the governing party (Gakunju, 2017). Hence, the apparent effort by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) to mishandle the vote tabulation process just validated the media's earlier forecast. This might have catalysed the phenomenon known as Political Economic Violence (PEV) (Tanui, 2018).

Masheti (2017) noted that some media outlets, particularly FM radio stations, seemed to have had a role in promoting hate speech that incited ethnic hostility and resulted in widespread violence after the elections. The most mentioned stations were Inooro FM, Kameme FM, Kass FM, and Lake Victoria FM. According to Masheti (2017), although significant media organisations such as KBC, Nation Media, and Standard Group exercised more caution, FM radio stations, particularly those programming in ethnic languages, seemed to contribute to the promotion of ethnic enmity and antagonism by using hate speech and offensive language. For example, KASS FM, a radio station that caters to the Kalenjin community residing in the former Rift Valley Province, used the term "foreigners" to describe their Kikuyu neighbours. Similarly, Kameme FM, a widely listened-to Kikuyu radio station, often used the term "fishermen" when referring to the Luo community.

The prevailing observation suggests a lack of adherence to professional standards in the media before and after post-election violence (Howard, 2008). The earliest media accounts exhibited inaccuracies, lack of balance, and unfairness. The verification of factual

information has consistently been inadequate, resulting in the victims of the war being dehumanised and reduced to simple statistical figures devoid of individual identities. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the media organisations lacked professionalism in disseminating election results. The authorities' dissemination of diverse, fragmented, and conjectural findings induced distress and bewilderment among an already apprehensive electorate nationwide (Masheti, 2017). This phenomenon may have also contributed to the sense that the election was manipulated, increasing post-election violence.

Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti (2013) argue that to carry out its functions effectively, the media must maintain a standard of professionalism, accuracy, and impartiality in their reporting. Regulatory frameworks play a crucial role in ensuring the maintenance of high standards. Laws and regulations should ensure the assurance of fundamental freedoms that are crucial to the functioning of a democratic society, such as freedom of information and speech, as well as the right to participate. In elections, some measures, such as mandating government-funded media outlets to provide impartial coverage and equal opportunities for opposition parties, promote responsible conduct within the media landscape.

2.3 How media promotes democracy

Plattner (2012) stated that the presence of free and professional media is crucial for the functioning of a democratic society that fosters effective government. Media presence is crucial for citizens to make well-informed voting decisions, actively participate in public affairs, safeguard the integrity of the rule of law, and maintain systems that prevent the abuse of power. However, in nominal democracies, where the fundamental principles of democracy are more present in legal documents than in actual implementation, the media face limitations due to restrictions imposed by governmental and non-governmental entities. Additionally, it

is essential to establish procedures that guarantee their accountability to the public and uphold ethical and professional standards. Mason et al. (2018) found that the assurance of media independence is contingent upon the financial viability of media organisations, their freedom from interference by media owners and the state, and their operation within a competitive economy. The media must be made available to a broad cross-section of society. Efforts to support the media should focus on safeguarding the rights of the press, strengthening media accountability, increasing media capabilities, and promoting equitable access to media resources to foster democratic principles.

Agbo and Chukwuma (2017) found that the media is seen as a courageous and efficient guardian that plays a crucial role in nascent democracies characterised by weak institutions and susceptibility to political influence. When legislative, judicial, and other regulatory institutions lack authority or are susceptible to corruption, the media often emerges as the only mechanism to counteract the misuse of authority (Nyawa, 2017). Nyawa argues that the media is responsible for fulfilling a heroic function by uncovering and highlighting the abuses of power committed by presidents, prime ministers, lawmakers, and judges, even in the face of potential dangers and threats.

The media plays a crucial role in facilitating communication between those in power and the general public and providing a platform for public discourse that contributes to the development of informed policies and decision-making (Page-Tan, 2020). The enduring strength of the Enlightenment heritage is evident in the perception of the press as a public forum. According to the press, American television journalist Bill Moyers was expected to engage residents in the public square during the early 1990s. The objective was to foster a culture of communal dialogue by stimulating inquiry on significant public matters, according to Silva (2023). In nascent democratic systems, there is an anticipation that the media will contribute to cultivating a civic culture and establishing a tradition of discourse and

deliberation previously unattainable under authoritarian regimes. During elections, media platforms provide comprehensive coverage of political campaigns, candidate biographies, and policy discussions, facilitating voters in making well-informed decisions (Page-Tan, 2020).

The media plays a crucial role in critically examining the behaviour of government officials and exposing any misconduct (Kriesi et al., 2013). This measure may contribute to guaranteeing government officials' accountability towards the populace, preventing the potential misuse of their authority (Kriesi et al., 2013). The media in the United States has assumed a significant role in ensuring accountability inside the Trump administration by scrutinising its many scandals and instances of power abuse. The media serves as a kind of oversight of government power via its role in researching and revealing cases of corruption, abuse of authority, and mismanagement (Camaj, 2013). The openness that arises from media examination strengthens the accountability of leaders and institutions, hence upholding democratic principles.

Khasawneh (2020) noted that media has the potential to serve as a forum for public discourse, akin to a daily parliament, perhaps surpassing the efficacy of the official legislative body. The media may serve as a suitable platform for individuals to deliberate and discourse on the potential opportunities and limitations associated with their challenges and dilemmas. Through its platform, the media has significance in its potential to function as an autonomous and constructive counterforce to those in positions of authority. Spierings and Jacobs (2018) stated that political parties functioning as opposition often exhibit biased perspectives and frequently reject policies to further their political agendas. In some instances, political parties, including the governing and opposition factions, may refrain from expressing particular viewpoints or doing specific actions due to concerns about potential vote loss. However, it is worth noting that such decisions may hinder the advancement of debates and initiatives that

have significance for the broader national welfare (Spierings & Jacobs, 2018). Similar to the court, the media lacks a specific constituency. The whole country serves as its constituency. The media has the potential to serve as an unbiased, objective, and constructive evaluator of government policies and programs, safeguarding the nation's interests from politicians' acts and inactions driven only by electoral considerations.

2.4 Factors Influencing Media Coverage

The inclusion of editorial material in modern media has been linked to a range of factors that influence the choice of news coverage (Wang, 2022). The factors that are considered most essential in this context include media owners, media managers, government entities, editorial policies, sponsors, viewers, and information sources. Urban residents exhibit a sense of urgency as they hastily return to their residences to partake in televised broadcasts. At the same time, rural inhabitants rely on compact radios to be informed about current global events.

The prioritisation of social protest by the government fosters a heightened degree of prejudice within the media field (Avraham & Ketter, 2016). Following this, governments often want to influence the media via various approaches ranging from rigorous regulation and coercion to support and diversification. Avraham and Ketter (2016) provided a distinct advantage in examining the prevalence of corruption within news events, which may be categorised as favourable or unfavourable to the government (FMd, 2023). The subject matter garners considerable attention on the front page, displaying notable disparities in the extent of space-related resources allocated to it, both in terms of temporal fluctuations and among various publications. The findings of the research done by Avraham and Ketter have been determined to be relevant. This phenomenon refers to a situation in which the government and media collaborate to engage in a mutually beneficial arrangement. This arrangement involves the newspapers providing biased reporting favouring the government in exchange

for financial compensation. Additionally, this collaboration results in substantial financial burdens due to decreased newspaper circulation (Gehlbach & Sonin, 2014).

Wanjala (2017) noted that the government can exert influence on media coverage by implementing censorship measures, engaging in acts of harassment, and using tactics of intimidation against journalists. The government of Kenya has faced allegations of using these strategies to stifle critical reporting on its actions. In 2018, a cohort of journalists in Kenya encountered physical aggression from those aligned with the government after disseminating a news article detailing corruption charges involving a government official. In the year 2019, a journalist from Kenya was compelled to leave the nation due to imminent danger to his life, as he had been subjected to threats of death (Wanyama, 2019). These threats were a direct consequence of his investigative reporting on the actions undertaken by a militia organisation operating inside the local community.

Petrova (2012) researched the relationship between broadcast houses and particular interest organisations. The research used a qualitative approach since it aimed to investigate the role of mass media based on existing studies. The data analysis examined a specific interest group about a particular media source. The prevailing assumption is that a particular interest group typically supports media policies that do not compromise fundamental principles. The investigation revealed that the particular interest group values incorporating a broad audience by news outlets that exhibit conventional bias. The researcher has also investigated the potential consequences that may arise when different special interest groups endeavour to influence the media policy adopted by a particular media source. The study indicates that when the preferences of specific interest groups are considered, the resultant bias tends to be higher on average compared to situations when the inclinations of particular interest groups are not aligned. Various interest groups, including companies, religious organisations, and political parties, possess the ability to exert influence on media coverage

by means such as providing journalists with information and sources or by using the tactic of threatening to boycott media entities that fail to present their concerns favourably.

Interest groups have a significant influence on media coverage via a range of strategies. Various entities, such as companies, religious organisations, and political parties, can influence narratives by carefully providing journalists with information, sources, and exclusive stories (Petrova, 2012). Petrova (2012) stated that by adopting this approach, individuals may guarantee that their viewpoints and objectives are well represented, often resulting in a bias in the broader media dialogue. Furthermore, these interest groups can influence media organisations by suggesting the potential for boycotts or adverse repercussions if their concerns are not presented positively (Petrova, 2012). This interplay presents a nuanced challenge for journalists, as they are tasked with striking a careful equilibrium between maintaining journalistic integrity and yielding to the pressures exerted by these prominent groups. Consequently, media coverage can be influenced, either intentionally or unintentionally, by the agendas of different factions, possibly modifying the public's understanding of many matters.

Media organisations' substantial financial dependence on advertising gives marketers a formidable instrument to exert influence over media coverage (Chebii, 2012). The impact becomes more evident when marketers withdraw their advertising support as a reaction to articles that portray their goods or services unfavourably. Motivated by the need to sustain their financial viability, media organisations may unintentionally give precedence to narratives that match advertisers' preferences to mitigate the risk of significant declines in advertising income. The intricate interplay between these factors can deter the practice of critical journalism, as media organisations may exhibit reluctance to engage in investigative reporting or covering issues that can disengage advertising. The possibility of advertisers withdrawing their advertising dollars acts as a discouraging factor, influencing the way media

coverage is presented in a manner that not only conforms to the tastes of advertisers but also can undermine the variety and comprehensiveness of news coverage (Maltseva, 2017). This highlights the complex equilibrium that media institutions must achieve to maintain their financial viability and commitment to journalistic ethics.

The public significantly influences media coverage via their consumption habits and interactions on social media (Maltseva, 2017). Media firms profoundly understand that their economic prosperity is contingent upon the ability to allure and maintain a substantial audience, including viewers, readers, and followers. Consequently, media outlets often customise their coverage to align with the tastes and interests of their specific target audience. When audiences exhibit a preference for certain genres of narratives, media organisations are motivated to prioritise such subjects to optimise their audience reach and level of interaction. In some instances, a tendency exists for spectacular or amusing narratives to acquire prominence at the expense of more substantial but less captivating news pieces. According to Maltseva, the influence of media is heightened by the widespread usage of social media platforms. This is due to users' tendencies to share specific stories, which may result in them becoming viral and thus increasing their effect. As a result, media companies are motivated to create material that elicits similar emotions. As a result, it is essential to acknowledge that catering to audience preferences in news reporting might improve its accessibility. However, this approach also carries the potential danger of prioritising attention-grabbing and interactive stories above critical and noteworthy ones (Chebii, 2012).

2.5 Media Tone in Election Coverage

Dunaway (2013) found that the media's portrayal of election coverage might exhibit variability contingent upon many circumstances, such as the prevailing political atmosphere, the specific media platform, and the intended recipient demographic. Nevertheless, media portrayal of electoral events often leans towards a mostly unfavourable tone rather than a

favourable one. According to Dunaway (2013), the media often prioritises horse race coverage, which refers to the battle between political candidates, rather than focusing on substantive policy problems. Dunaway said the media's emphasis on competitors' weaknesses and errors rather than their strengths and achievements might contribute to a more pessimistic atmosphere.

Çarkoğlu, Baruh, and Yıldırım (2014) in their study found that the existing political context significantly influences the media tone. During periods characterised by political polarisation, the media may elect to take a more critical position towards both candidates to preserve a perception of impartiality and equilibrium. Çarkoğlu et al. (2014) argue that the strategic adoption of a neutral stance is intended to attract a broader range of individuals and prevent the exclusion of any one demographic. The inherent characteristics of the media source itself can have a substantial influence. Tabloid newspapers tend to favour sensationalism and often use a negative tone to captivate readership. Conversely, reputable news sources prioritise impartiality and endeavour to provide a more equitable viewpoint, emphasising policy matters and the credentials of candidates.

Fernandes and Shumow (2016) highlighted that analysis of the vocabulary used in election coverage might provide valuable insights into the ideological position of the media. A negative perspective may include emphasising candidates' errors, scandals, and controversies. On the other hand, a positive tone may accentuate the accomplishments, policy recommendations, and qualities of candidates. The degree to which these facets are addressed may serve as an indicator of the media's biases. Finally, media coverage may tend to prioritise negative features due to the perception that scandals and controversies are more likely to attract attention. This phenomenon may lead to an excessive focus on the shortcomings and errors of candidates, overshadowing their achievements. Achieving a

harmonious equilibrium between these two aspects is paramount to ensure impartiality and precision in journalistic endeavours (Fernandes & Shumow, 2016).

2.6 Media Framing of Presidential Candidates

If politics were seen as a competitive endeavour, it would entail the identification of distinct winners and losers (Pew, 2012). One contender now has the highest position in the polls, followed closely by a group of individuals. At the same time, another set of candidates face challenges in maintaining a competitive position in the campaign. In recent years, there has been an observable increase in the use of horse-race framing within election coverage. This frame prioritises the identification of poll leaders and winners rather than the substantive examination of policies and concerns (Pew Research Center, 2012). The prevalence of media coverage during elections is higher for some frames, such as the policy frame, than others. The policy frame emphasises discussing topics and platforms relevant to an election while downplaying the significance of other elements. This finding is supported by research conducted by Pew in 2012. The general populace is fascinated by determining the victor in a given competition, and journalists consistently disseminate this data to their audience. There is a significant degree of scepticism among critics about the horse-race framing, with some asserting that it may be responsible for the perceived inadequacy of political coverage. This is attributed to the continued emphasis on less relevant aspects of the current narrative (Jang & Oh, 2016).

The presidential election in 2016 garnered significant attention, with media coverage mostly adopting a horse-race framing, a trend evident from the early stages of the primary elections (Patterson, 2016). It has been said that this sort of media coverage resulted in some contenders, such as Ohio Republican John Kasich, facing challenges in gaining prominence during the primary elections due to a disparity in media attention compared to frontrunners. Moreover, it is worth noting that how an issue is presented, including framing techniques, can

influence voters' decision-making process (Patterson, 2016). The significance of the horse-race frame lies in its increasing prominence. Allocating excessive focus on the victors of the contest has the potential to diminish the visibility of alternative candidates in the eyes of voters.

Previous elections in Kenya have shown consistent patterns in terms of media coverage. In the first stages of the 2008 presidential election, the predominant emphasis in media coverage was on funding, campaign strategies, and polling, therefore adopting a horse-race narrative (Wanyama, 2019). Furthermore, irrespective of the communication platform used, the Pew Research Center determined that the majority of coverage placed significant emphasis on the competitive aspect of the subject matter, sometimes referred to as "the horse race" (Jang & Oh, 2016). According to Fernandes and Shumow (2016), separate research indicated that the prominence of the horse race phenomenon persisted throughout the 2012 Presidential Election but to a lesser extent than the 2008 election. The prevalence of news articles focused on the outcome of political campaigns in media coverage necessitates an examination of the potential impact of this framing on voters, politicians, and the whole electoral process.

Several reasons may influence an individual's choice to participate in the act of voting on Election Day (Delshad, 2013). Pew (2018), in his study, found that the voter turnout in previous elections was below 60 per cent among those eligible to vote. Sometimes, individuals may have used their voting rights due to the influence of their social circles and surrounding circumstances (Pew, 2018). In some instances, several variables, such as an individual's opinions towards a particular candidate, their enthusiasm for a given political matter, or a range of personal qualities, may influence their decision to use their voting rights. The influence of media coverage, particularly its presentation in horse-race framing, policy

and platform focus, or candidate-centric emphasis, may significantly impact an individual's attitudes, perceptions, and views.

Jang and Oh (2016) elucidate the influence of framing on several elements of voters. However, little scholarly attention has been devoted to investigating the effects of framing on election media coverage. Historically, a considerable body of research has been dedicated to examining the impact of framing on individuals' views and actions, with a particular emphasis on a specific problem, policy, or event. Moreover, a limited number of studies have shown the influence of framing on an individual's inclination to participate in voting and the actual voter turnout (Fernandes & Shumow, 2016). While much research has been conducted on the impact of framing on views, this study aims to explore its influence on behaviour, particularly about voter intentions. The primary objective is to investigate whether using the horse-race frame has any discernible effect on individuals' inclination to vote.

The increasing prevalence of horse-race framing in political media news coverage necessitates a comprehensive understanding among journalists, political scientists, and voters of its potential impact on voters and elections (Dwinarko et al., 2023). While most existing work on framing primarily examines the impact of frames on individuals' psychological views and beliefs, less attention has been given to exploring the potential influence of framing on individuals' behaviour. A notable deficiency exists within the existing body of studies about the relationship between political news framing and its impact on an individual's voting intentions and subsequent behaviour. According to Delshad (2013), the prevalence of horse-race journalism in American media leads to decreased production of articles about policies and concerns. There is a pressing need for a deeper understanding of the potential impact of this phenomenon on electoral processes, given that elections serve as the mechanism via which individuals are chosen to govern a nation.

The presidential election held in August 2022 in Kenya resulted in the declaration of Dr. William Ruto as the nation's fifth President (Otieno & Ndonge, 2022). The election coverage received commendation and censure from many sources, including the President, who levied allegations of partiality on journalists and news organisations. According to a survey issued by the Media Council of Kenya in June, it was found that from April to early June, Raila Odinga, one of the prominent contenders, got 61% of media attention. However, his primary rival, Dr William Ruto, earned 38% (Otieno & Ndonge, 2022). Despite the findings of their subsequent report, which suggested an improvement in media coverage as the country approached the elections, multiple media outlets and journalists encountered offline and online attacks and criticisms due to the perceived bias towards a specific candidate (Dwinarko et al., 2023). In contrast to previous election cycles, whereby the media prioritised advocating for peace and neglected to report on matters that were seen as potentially divisive, the media coverage of this year's election placed a greater emphasis on providing impartial reporting of the emerging concerns stemming from the electoral process. Journalists hold politicians and related agencies accountable for disseminating information (Delshad, 2013).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

In the words of Stewart and Sambrook (2011), theories offer explanations for why and how things are the way they are. According to Ravitch and Riggan (2016), a theoretical framework illustrates the connection between a study and its theoretical context. The researcher employed the framing and agenda-setting theories in this investigation. The goals and research questions guided the selection of the two theories. For example, the Agenda Setting theory addressed the study's first aim, whereas framing addressed the study's second and third objectives.

2.7.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

The theory originated in 1922 following Walter Lippmann's concerns regarding the role of media in putting specific images in people's minds (Coleman et al., 2009). (McCombs et al., 2018) to observe how media influenced the voters' choice in the 1968 US presidential election. They established that the media had a say in the elections as the majority of the public referred to the information provided by the media. Mchaw (1993) cite a relationship between the public and media agendas. According to the agenda-setting theory, the emphasis on an issue directly influences its audience. The media coverage had a significant impact during the electioneering period. Agenda setting is essential because it can influence public policy. When the media focuses on specific issues, it can pressure policymakers to address them. For example, if the media focuses on crime, policymakers may be more likely to enact crime-fighting policies.

Agenda setting can occur through several different mechanisms. One important mechanism is priming. Priming occurs when the media's coverage of an issue makes that issue more accessible in people's minds (McCombs et al., 2018). When asked to list the country's most critical problems, they are more likely to list problems covered prominently in the media. Another important mechanism of agenda setting is framing. Framing refers to the way that the media presents an issue. The media can frame an issue in several ways by emphasising certain aspects and downplaying others. How an issue is framed can influence how people think about it and what should be done.

2.7.2 Framing theory

Framing theory of mass communication suggests that the media does not simply tell us what to think but also how to think about it. The media does this by framing issues in specific ways, which can influence how the public interprets those issues (Kuan et al., 2021). For example, a news story about a political scandal might frame the scandal as a failure of

leadership, or it might frame it as a trivial matter. The way the scandal is framed can significantly impact how the public views the politician involved. Framing theory is based on the idea that people do not simply process information objectively. Instead, they interpret information through their values, beliefs, and experiences. The media can influence this process by framing issues that resonate with specific audiences.

Framing can have a significant impact on public opinion. For example, a study by Iyengar and Simon (1993) found that how television news framed the issue of the Iran-Contra affair influenced how viewers perceived the seriousness of the scandal. Viewers exposed to news coverage that framed the scandal as a serious matter were more likely to view it as a severe matter themselves. Framing theory can be applied to media coverage of various issues, including elections, crime, terrorism, and health. For example, a study by Entman (1993) found that the way that television news framed the issue of AIDS influenced how viewers perceived the severity of the epidemic. Viewers who were exposed to news coverage that framed AIDS as a serious threat to public health were more likely to view it as a severe threat themselves.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the methodology employed to assess newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya. It begins by outlining the research design, which consists of a mixed-method approach. Data collection methods such as content analysis, framing analysis, and surveys are also outlined. The chapter also discusses the data analysis techniques used to analyse the collected data. Ethical considerations are also addressed to protect participants' identities, rights, and privacy. The chapter also offers the limitations that the study was likely to encounter

3.2 Research Design

A mixed-method approach was adopted because it combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This approach allows the triangulation of findings from different sources and perspectives, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results. In this study of newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election, the mixed-methods approach could be efficient because it enables us to capture quantitative data (such as frequencies and percentages) and qualitative insights (for example, perspectives and nuances) from media professionals.

Quantitative content analysis involves systematically categorising and counting specific attributes in media content. We also quantify the frequency of candidate mentions, the distribution of positive/negative tones, and the prevalence of particular themes. This data provides a quantitative snapshot of media coverage patterns. Framing analysis is partly qualitative as it involves interpreting and categorising how media frames stories. By combining quantitative data on the prevalence of different frames with qualitative insights

explaining how these frames are used, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of media portrayal. Finally, qualitative surveys with journalists, editors, and experts were taken to explore media decision-making processes, biases, and challenges in-depth. These surveys offer context and depth to the quantitative patterns identified in content and framing analyses.

3.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was centred on a comprehensive analysis of the media coverage surrounding the 2022 Kenyan Presidential Election Campaign, as depicted by the "Nation" and "Standard" newspapers. The research delves into how these two prominent newspapers reported on various aspects of the campaign. The assessment period under consideration spans from the official commencement of the campaign on May 29, 2022, extending to the campaign's conclusion in August 2022, a date marked by the announcement of the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission.

During this specified timeframe, the study examines and dissects how the selected newspapers covered crucial elements of the election campaign. The primary objective was to unravel how the media portrayed and discussed candidates, campaign events, issues, and themes. The intention was to identify patterns, discern trends, and gain insights into the newspapers' perspectives and approaches. As such, the scope of analysis encapsulates a comprehensive investigation of the content, nuances, framing techniques, and potential biases embedded within the newspaper coverage.

The scope was intentionally limited to the "Nation" and "Standard" newspapers as these media outlets are known for their extensive readership and influence within Kenya's media landscape. By focusing solely on these two newspapers, the study aimed to attain a concentrated understanding of the coverage patterns exhibited by media sources with significant reach and impact. Notably, the study seeks to provide a detailed account of the

media's portrayal of the election campaign, offering valuable insights into public discourse and information dissemination during this pivotal period in Kenya's political landscape.

3.4 Site of the Research

The research focuses on the 2022 presidential campaign coverage in two major newspapers, Nation and Standard. The newspapers were selected based on their circulation and to ensure a representative sample of media outlets nationwide. The study analyses the election campaign coverage in these newspapers and evaluates their role in informing the public about the election process. The selection of these newspapers helps ensure that the research findings can be applied to other media outlets nationwide, thereby increasing the study's generalizability.

3.5 Methods of data collection

3.5.1 Content Analysis

The content analysis methodology was designed to delve into the media coverage surrounding the 2022 presidential election. The primary focus of this analysis revolves around the systematic collection and examination of newspaper articles that pertain to news related to the election campaign. Specifically, the two selected publications, the Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers are the sources from which the articles are drawn. A systematic sampling method was employed to ensure a representative sample that encapsulates the breadth and diversity of coverage. This approach entails selecting articles at regular intervals from a predefined list of articles within the designated time frame – from the official commencement of the campaign on May 29, 2022, to the campaign's conclusion in August 2022, as determined by the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission.

Data collection involves an in-depth analysis of each selected article, focusing on critical factors contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the media coverage. These

factors encompass the frequency of candidate mentions, the tone of each piece – classified as positive, negative, or neutral – and the identification and assessment of framing techniques employed in the coverage. Additionally, contextual information surrounding the publication date and the events covered within the articles was collected.

This content analysis methodology directly aligns with the research's objectives, enabling the exploration of framing techniques, examination of tone, and identification of factors that underpin media coverage of the election campaign. The systematic sampling method enhances the validity of the findings by ensuring a well-rounded representation of articles across candidates and critical election periods. Through this systematic approach, the research endeavours to unravel nuanced insights into how the chosen newspapers portrayed the 2022 presidential election, offering a deeper understanding of media dynamics within the context of this significant political event.

3.5.2 Framing Analysis

As a pivotal aspect of this research, framing analysis offers a robust method to uncover how media craft narratives and influence public perspectives. At its core, framing analysis seeks to illuminate the underlying mechanisms that shape the portrayal of events and issues. In this study, framing analysis is central to deciphering the strategies employed in newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election.

The primary objective of employing framing analysis in this study is to discern the distinct frames woven into the fabric of media coverage. In this context, an edge represents a specific angle or perspective through which an issue is presented. These frames are potent tools that mould public interpretation and influence collective understanding. To systematically unveil these frames, a coding scheme was meticulously developed. This scheme draws insights from existing literature and theoretical frameworks, establishing a structured foundation for the analysis.

Applying this coding scheme entails a comprehensive process of identifying and categorising frames within the newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election. Each frame encapsulates a particular lens through which candidates, events, and themes are depicted. The analysis delves into multiple dimensions, considering not only the content of the frames but also the emphasis placed on certain aspects and their implications. By delving into these frames' content, power, and impact, the study aimed to uncover hidden patterns, implicit biases, and the underlying agendas that might influence readers' perceptions. Framing analysis is a lens that allows us to explore the intricate interplay between media representation and public opinion formation. Through this methodological approach, the research aspires to shed light on the multifaceted layers of newspaper coverage, ultimately contributing to a deeper comprehension of the media's role in shaping the discourse surrounding the 2022 presidential election.

3.5.3 Surveys

Surveys were conducted with selected newspaper editors to gain insights into the factors informing media coverage, media framing, and media tone during the 2022 presidential election. A purposive sampling technique selected participants with extensive political journalism experience and election coverage. Semi-structured questionnaires or interview guides were developed to gather their perspectives and expertise in assessing media coverage. Their input provides valuable insights into the decision-making processes, editorial policies, and considerations that shape media coverage of the presidential candidates in the 2022 general election.

3.6 Data Sources

This study's data collection foundation rests on news articles from the selected newspapers during the 2022 presidential election campaign. This data was culled from online archives and physical copies of the newspapers, forming the primary reservoir of information

for the analysis. As a direct representation of the media's coverage, the news articles serve as a rich source for examining various facets of the election campaign, including the activities of presidential candidates, their policy platforms, campaign strategies, and the broader issues relevant to the election. The coding process for analysing these news articles relies on predetermined codes to ensure methodological rigour and consistency. These codes, derived from a synthesis of existing literature and theoretical frameworks, were crafted and tested to establish inter-coder reliability. This meticulous approach safeguards the integrity of the analysis and the subsequent conclusions drawn about the newspapers' treatment of the election campaign.

Complementing the analysis of news articles, the study further engages with key stakeholders in the journalistic realm by administering questionnaires to editors affiliated with the selected newspapers. This method provides a distinct layer of insight, delving into the inner workings of the editorial process—the research endeavours to uncover the intricate factors that influence news coverage decisions by soliciting editor feedback. Insights into ethical considerations and the application of guidelines for fair and balanced reporting offer a nuanced understanding of the editorial rationale that shapes the newspapers' portrayal of the 2022 presidential election. Combining the quantitative analysis of news articles with qualitative insights from editor questionnaires, the research adopts a comprehensive approach to illuminate the multifaceted dimensions of media coverage. This dual-pronged data collection strategy enhances the validity and depth of the findings, enabling a more holistic assessment of the newspapers' role in framing the discourse surrounding the crucial 2022 presidential election campaign.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis phase of this study was designed to unravel significant insights embedded within the collected data from content analysis and framing analysis, offering a comprehensive understanding of media coverage during Kenya's 2022 general election. The analysis process encompasses systematic coding, categorisation, and thematic analysis techniques, allowing for a robust exploration of the data's intricacies. To decipher the factors that underpin media coverage, the collected newspaper articles undergo coding and categorisation using predefined coding schemes. This systematic approach aids in the identification and classification of specific factors within the data. Employing quantitative analysis, the study delves into the frequency and distribution of these factors, including candidate mentions and prevailing themes. Descriptive statistics provided a comprehensive overview of the influential factors shaping media coverage during the election campaign.

Moving into media framing, the analysis embraces a coding scheme. After that, research was done to identify recurring frames and patterns that thread through the data. The technique uncovered each frame's content, emphasis, and implications. By dissecting these facets, the research endeavours to gain profound insights into the lens through which the media presented the presidential candidates. The analysis was bolstered by illustrative quotes and examples extracted from the data, lending depth and credibility to the interpretation.

The assessment of media tone pivots toward quantitative analysis. Through a comprehensive review of the newspaper articles, the study ascertained the overall tone attributed to each candidate's coverage, distinguishing between positive, negative, and neutral styles. Statistical tests may come into play to explore potential associations between the media tone and candidate characteristics, providing a layered perspective on the media's portrayal.

The culmination of the analysis was manifested in a presentation of findings, which was articulated using a combination of tables, graphs, and textual descriptions. This multifaceted approach ensures the effective communication of results, catering to a diverse audience. Ultimately, this comprehensive analysis promises to unearth valuable insights into the factors driving media coverage, the nuances of media framing techniques, and the overarching media tone during Kenya's 2022 general election.

3.7.1 Chi-square test

A chi-square test was conducted to test whether there is a relationship between the categorical variables. To assess the relationship between tonality counts and the presidential candidate, the chi-square value is obtained by calculating the expected, obtaining the squared differences, and dividing by the expected value. The p-value is further obtained to check whether the null hypothesis is rejected. The following is the formula used to calculate the chi-square statistic;

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

O-Observed frequencies

E-expected frequency

3.7.2 Regression analysis

Regression analysis examined the association between the dichotomous categorical dependent and independent variables.

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \dots + \beta_kx_k$$

Where p – is the probability of having the desired outcome

$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right)$ - is the log odds of having the outcome

β_s -regression coefficients

x's- independent variables.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process to protect the rights and privacy of participants. Informed consent was obtained, and measures were implemented to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The research strictly follows ethical guidelines and principles to ensure responsible data handling.

During data analysis, ethical standards were upheld to safeguard participant information. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and strict measures were implemented to protect personally identifiable information. The data was handled with the utmost care and security to prevent unauthorised access or disclosure.

Additionally, proper citation and referencing practices were followed diligently to acknowledge and credit the sources of information. This demonstrates respect for the intellectual contributions of others and upholds the principles of academic integrity. By adhering to these ethical considerations, the research ensures the responsible and ethical use of data, prioritises participant privacy and maintains the highest standards of academic integrity.

3.9 Limitations

Acknowledging certain limitations that may arise during the research process is essential. The study relies on newspaper articles as the primary source of media coverage, which may only capture part of the full extent of media representation. Additionally, the perspectives collected through surveys or interviews may be subjective and influenced by participants' biases or personal experiences. Despite these limitations, the research provided a comprehensive and reliable assessment of newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election.

Furthermore, the study has several inherent limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the research focused solely on newspaper coverage and did not include other media outlets such as television and radio. This limited scope may provide a partial picture of the overall media landscape during the election. Secondly, the mixed method employed in this study offers valuable insights into the factors informing media coverage, media framing of candidates, and media tone. However, it provides a different statistical rigour than a quantitative approach. Lastly, the study utilises a purposive sample of newspaper articles and journalists, which may introduce bias if the researcher's judgment is not impartial. Recognise these potential limitations and exercise caution when generalising the findings beyond the specific context of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya. is crucial

Despite these limitations, the research offers valuable insights into the factors influencing media coverage, media framing of candidates, and media tone during the 2022 presidential election. By openly discussing these limitations and contextualising the findings, the study aimed to enhance the credibility and validity of its conclusions.

3.9.1 Summary

The methodology chapter of this study encompasses a comprehensive approach to assessing newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya. It employs a mixed-methods approach that amalgamates quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand the research problem comprehensively. The utilisation of both content analysis and framing analysis techniques, along with surveys, is outlined to collect and analyse data. The research design section emphasises the significance of a mixed-method approach, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of the research problem by triangulating data from different sources. Quantitative content analysis involves systematic coding to quantify attributes in media content while framing analysis delves into qualitative interpretation and

categorisation of media frames. Additionally, surveys with media professionals provide in-depth insights into media decision-making processes.

The scope of the study was centred on analysing media coverage of the 2022 Kenyan Presidential Election Campaign as reported by the "Nation" and "Standard" newspapers. The study period spans from the official campaign commencement to its conclusion, aiming to uncover nuances, framing techniques, and potential biases embedded within the newspaper coverage. The chosen data sources are newspaper articles from the selected publications. Both online archives and physical copies of the newspapers serve as data repositories, ensuring a representative sample. The systematic approach to analysing news articles includes coding, categorising, and assessing factors that shape media coverage. Framing analysis decodes media narrative construction, while content analysis quantifies elements such as candidate mentions and themes. The assessment of media tone is conducted quantitatively, distinguishing between positive, negative, and neutral tones. Findings are communicated using a variety of visual aids and textual descriptions.

Ethical considerations underline the research, emphasising informed consent, confidentiality, and proper citation practices. The study upholds ethical standards to protect participants' rights and privacy. Acknowledging potential limitations, the study recognises that newspaper articles may not capture the entire media representation. Subjectivity in survey responses was accepted while admitting that the study's scope is limited to newspaper coverage. The study's strengths and weaknesses are addressed to enhance credibility and validity.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS, AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, interpretations, and discussions of our study. Results are interpreted and discussed within the context of the study's objectives and the broader literature on media coverage of elections.

4.2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 4.1 below shows the distribution frequency of how the respondents were selected based on the media organisation they work for.

Table 4.1: which media organisation do you work for?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The Daily Nation	96	37.1	37.1	37.1
The Standard Newspaper	163	62.9	62.9	100.0
Total	259	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1 above shows the distribution of the respondents in the study on media coverage of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya. Most respondents (62.9%) worked for The Standard Newspaper, while 37.1% worked for The Daily Nation. Since the selection was random, the findings suggest that The Standard Newspaper may dominate printed media in Kenya.

4.3 Factors informing media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya’s 2022 general election

The first objective of this study was to determine factors informing media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya's 2022 general election. To address this objective, a descriptive analysis of the respondents' perceived factors reporting media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya's 2022 general election was done. Hypothesis testing and, finally, the discussion of the results followed this.

4.3.1 Prioritization of news stories during the election campaign during the daily Coverage of presidential candidates

This study examined how news stories were prioritised during the daily Coverage of the 2022 presidential candidate campaign. In the context of the specific question posed, poll ratings, past political history, candidate's name, and policy proposals were some factors journalists considered when prioritising news stories during the daily Coverage of presidential candidates' campaigns. The respondents were asked to choose among the elements. Table 2 presents the results of the study.

Table 4.2: Prioritization of news stories during the election campaign

		Media organisation							
		The Daily Nation		The Standard Newspaper		Total			
		Count	Table Valid N %	Count	Table Valid N %	Count	Table Valid N %	chi-square (pdf)	p-value

In your daily Coverage of presidential candidates, how do you prioritise news stories during the election campaign?	Based on the candidate's name	0	0.0%	4	1.6%	4	1.6%	51.979 (3)	<0.001
	Based on the candidate's past political history	13	5.0%	85	32.9%	98	38.0%		
	Based on the candidate's policy proposals	28	10.9%	43	16.7%	71	27.5%		
	Based on the candidate's poll ratings	54	20.9%	31	12.0%	85	32.9%		

Table 4.2 shows that journalists from The Standard Newspaper are more likely to prioritise news stories based on the candidate's past political history (32.9%) and policy proposals (16.7%). In comparison, journalists from The Daily Nation are more likely to prioritise news stories based on the candidate's poll ratings (20.9%). This difference in prioritisation may be due to several factors, such as the different editorial policies of the two media organisations or the different perspectives of the journalists who work for them. It is also possible that the difference is simply due to sampling error.

The chi-square test's significant value shows a substantial difference in how journalists from The Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper prioritise news stories during their daily Coverage of presidential candidates. The p-value is less than 0.001, meaning there is less than a 0.001% chance of obtaining a result this extreme if there is no real difference

between the two groups. This may suggest that there is a real difference in the way that journalists from the two media organisations prioritise news stories.

The findings of this study suggest that journalists from The Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper prioritise news stories differently during their daily Coverage of presidential candidates. This difference in prioritisation may be due to several factors, such as the different editorial policies of the two media organisations or the different perspectives of the journalists who work for them. These findings are significant because they suggest that the media may shape public opinion about presidential candidates. By prioritising specific news stories over others, journalists may influence the aspects of a candidate's campaign that are most visible to the public. This study also has implications for how voters consume news about presidential elections. Voters should be aware of the potential biases of different media organisations and should try to get information from a variety of sources.

4.3.2 Factors do you consider when deciding to give prominence to specific candidates over others in your reporting

The study sought to determine the factors journalists consider when giving prominence to specific candidates over others in their reporting. Some of the factors that journalists were deemed to consider a variety of factors when deciding to give importance to particular candidates over others in their reporting, including the relevance of the candidate's campaign news, level of public interest in the candidate, candidate's engagement with the media and candidate's accessibility for interviews. The respondents were allowed to choose among the factors to ascertain what they consider when giving prominence to specific candidates. Table 4.3 below shows the results of a study that examined the factors that journalists from The Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper consider when deciding to give prominence to specific candidates over others in their reporting.

Table 4.3 Factors considered when deciding to give prominence to specific candidates

		Media organisation						chi-squar e(pdf)	p- val ue
		The Daily Nation		The Standard Newspaper		Total			
		Co unt	Table Valid N %	Co unt	Table Valid N %	Co unt	Table Valid N %		
What factors do you consider when giving certain candidates prominence over others in your reporting?	Candidate's accessibility for interviews	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	1.425 (3)	0.7
	Candidate's engagement with the media	7	2.7%	17	6.6%	24	9.3%		
	Level of public interest in the candidate	23	8.9%	35	13.6%	58	22.5%		
	Relevance of candidate's campaign news	66	25.6%	109	42.2%	175	67.8%		

Table 4.3 above shows that the most critical factor for both groups of journalists is the relevance of the candidate's campaign news (67.8%). This is followed by the level of public

interest in the candidate (22.5%) and the candidate's engagement with the media (9.3%). The candidate's interview accessibility is the least important factor for both groups of journalists.

The p-value is 0.7, meaning there is a 70% chance of obtaining a result this extreme if there is no real difference between the two groups. This suggests that journalists from the two media organisations prioritise factors when giving prominence to specific candidates over others in their reporting.

The findings of this study suggest that journalists from The Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper prioritise factors when deciding to give prominence to specific candidates over others in their reporting in a similar way. The most crucial factor for both groups of journalists is the relevance of the candidate's campaign news. The findings of this study are significant because they suggest that the media may play a role in shaping public opinion about presidential candidates. By prioritising specific news stories over others, journalists can influence which aspects of a candidate's campaign are most visible to the public. This study also has implications for how voters consume news about presidential elections. Voters should be aware of the potential biases of different media organisations and should try to get information from a variety of sources.

4.3. 3 Critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya

The study sought to find what media professionals perceive as the most critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya. Table 4 below contains the results and analysis of a study on the essential elements media professionals perceive as media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya.

Table 4.3: Critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya

		Media organisation						chi- squa re(p df)	p- valu e
		The Daily Nation		The Standard Newspaper		Total			
		Cou nt	Valid N %	Cou nt	Valid N %	Co unt	Valid N %		
	Candidate's manifesto	64	25.0 %	95	37.1%	159	62.1%	2.01 6(3)	0.56 9
As a media professional, what do you perceive as the most critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya?	Influence from media owners Public interest Scandals	11	4.3%	28	10.9%	39	15.2%		

Table 4.4 shows that the most critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya is the candidate's manifesto (62.1%). This is followed by public interest (20.3%), influence from media owners (15.2%), and scandals (2.3%). The chi-square test for independence shows no statistically significant difference in how media professionals from The Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper perceive the most critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya. The p-value is 0.569, meaning there is a 56.9% chance of obtaining a result this extreme if there is no real difference between the two groups. This suggests that the way that media professionals from the two media organisations

perceive the most critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya is the same.

The findings of this study suggest that media professionals from The Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper perceive the most critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya similarly. The most crucial factor for both groups of media professionals is the candidate's manifesto. The findings of this study are significant because they suggest that the media plays a role in shaping public opinion about presidential candidates. By prioritising the candidate's manifesto in their Coverage, journalists can help voters understand the candidates' policies and plans for the country. This study also has implications for how voters consume news about presidential elections. Voters should be aware of the potential biases of different media organisations and should try to get information from a variety of sources.

4.3.4 Instances of Biases during Coverage

The study sought to identify media bias towards or against specific candidates during your reporting. The respondents were asked if they had encountered media bias towards or against particular candidates during their reporting. Table 5 below shows the results of the study.

Table 4.4: Instances of Biases during Coverage

		Media organisation							
		The Daily Nation		The Standard Newspaper		Total			
		Count	Valid N %	Count	Valid N %	Count	Valid N %	chi-square(df)	p-value
Have you encountered media bias towards or against specific candidates during your reporting?	No, media coverage is impartial	22	8.5%	88	34.0%	110	42.5%	30.402(3)	<0.001
	Not sure	2	0.8%	3	1.2%	5	1.9%		
	Yes, bias against specific candidates	19	7.3%	33	12.7%	52	20.1%		
	Yes, bias in favour of specific candidates	53	20.5%	39	15.1%	92	35.5%		

The study results found in Table 4.5 above show that 52 (20.1%) respondents reported instances of bias against specific candidates during their reporting. 92 (35.5%) reported bias cases favouring particular candidates. This suggests that media bias is a problem in Kenya and affects the Coverage of presidential elections. The table also shows that journalists from The Standard Newspaper were more likely to report coming across instances of media bias than journalists from The Daily Nation. This suggests that there may be systematic differences in how the two media organisations cover presidential elections.

The findings of this study suggest that media bias is a problem in Kenya and is affecting the Coverage of presidential elections. Journalists from The Standard Newspaper were more likely to report coming across instances of media bias than journalists from The Daily Nation. This suggests that there may be systematic differences in how the two media organisations cover presidential elections.

4.3.5 Handling potential biases while reporting

They sought to determine how media professionals handle potential biases in reporting on different presidential candidates. The respondents were asked to identify ways to address potential biases while writing. Table 6 below shows the results of the study.

Table 4.5: Ways of handling potential biases while reporting

	Media organisation						chi- squ are(pdf)	p- valu e
	The Daily Nation		The Standard Newspaper		Total			
	Cou nt	Table Valid N %	Co unt	Table Valid N %	Co unt	Table Valid N %		
Attend bias- awareness training	9	3.5%	21	8.2%	30	11.8%	55. 183 (3)	<0. 001
Regularly self- assess for biases	53	20.8%	25	9.8%	78	30.6%		
Seek feedback from colleagues	14	5.5%	19	7.5%	33	12.9%		
How do you personally handle potential biases in reporting on different presidential candidates?					11			
	18	7.1%	96	37.6%	4	44.7%		

Table 4.6 above shows that the most common way media professionals handle potential biases while reporting is to follow editorial guidelines (44.7%) strictly. This is followed by regularly self-assessing for preferences (30.6%), attending bias-awareness training (11.8%), and seeking feedback from colleagues (12.9%). The table also shows that journalists from The Standard Newspaper were more likely to report following editorial guidelines to handle potential biases while reporting than journalists from The Daily Nation. This suggests that there may be systematic differences in how the two media organisations approach the issue of media bias.

The findings of this study suggest that media professionals in Kenya are aware of the potential for bias in their reporting and are taking steps to address it. However, the findings also indicate that there is room for improvement. For example, more journalists could attend bias-awareness training and seek colleague feedback. The results of this study have important implications for the media and the public. The media should continue to take steps to address the issue of media bias. This includes developing and implementing editorial policies that promote fair and impartial Coverage of political campaigns, training journalists on the dangers of media bias and how to avoid it, and creating a culture of openness and feedback within media organisations.

4.4 Regression analysis

Regression analysis was performed to examine the effects of the candidate's manifesto, influence from media owners, scandals, public interests, and media organisations on the likelihood of media coverage. Table 4.7 shows the results of the regression analysis.

Table 4.6: Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.(p-value)	Exp(B)
Manifesto	-.860	.364	5.577	1	.018	.423
Influence from media owners	22.053	2420.465	.000	1	.993	3780559337.747
Scandals	-.248	.274	.823	1	.364	.780
Public interests	.518	.261	3.941	1	.047	1.679
Which media organisation do you work for	.083	.717	.013	1	.908	1.087
Constant	-105.332	12102.323	.000	1	.993	.000

The regression model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(5) = 242.693$, $p < 0.05$. The regression analysis results show that the candidate's manifesto and public interest are the drivers of media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya, as indicated by a P-value less than 0.05. The model is statistically significant, explaining 85.7% of the variance in media coverage. The results also show that influence from media owners, scandals, and media organisations does not significantly impact media coverage since the p-value is more significant than 0.05. This suggests that journalists are primarily influenced by the candidate's manifesto and public interest when deciding which candidates to cover and how much coverage to give them.

The findings of this study suggest that journalists are more likely to cover candidates who have a strong manifesto and are of interest to the public. This is a positive finding, as it suggests that the media plays a role in informing the public about the candidates and their

policies. However, the study also raises some concerns. The fact that influence from media owners and scandals do not significantly impact media coverage suggests that the media may be less likely to cover candidates who are critical of the government or involved in scandals. Media may hurt the public's ability to decide who to vote for.

4.5 Content Analysis

The content analysis of Kenyan election coverage was done using a quantitative approach. The researchers selected two of Kenya's most widely read newspapers, the Daily Nation and The Standard. They analysed all election-related articles published during the official three-month and eight-day campaign.

The researchers developed a coding scheme to identify the key themes and topics covered in the articles. The coding system for framing analysis included Source, policy framing, horse race framing, issue framing, and conflict framing. The coding scheme for tonality included the following categories: candidate, topic, tone (positive, neutral, and negative), and Source. The analysis was done as indicated in Appendix 2

4.6 Framing Analysis.

During the electoral period, newspaper articles predominantly concentrated on political dynamics, power struggles, competition, and tactical manoeuvring, overshadowing crucial policy issues that should have been central to the electoral discourse. Only a % of the articles (12%) delved into substantive policy matters, revealing a significant deficiency in media coverage depth and substance. The Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers published 3687 election-related stories within the official three-month and eight-day campaign period, highlighting their crucial role as influential media outlets disseminating

public information. This extensive Coverage underscores their substantial involvement in shaping public opinion and perceptions regarding the electoral process. These Kenyan newspapers primarily spotlighted the top contenders, William Ruto and Raila Odinga, while paying minimal attention to vital policy issues and rarely scrutinising candidates' claims. Most published articles heavily revolved around William Ruto and Raila Odinga, side-lining other candidates like George Wajackoyah and David Waihiga Mwaure. The prevalent "horse race reporting" phenomenon in election media coverage was evident, with journalists prioritising discussions about candidate standings over substantive policy matters. Despite substantial press focus on the elections, a noticeable coverage discrepancy emerged. This selective emphasis perpetuated a narrative framing the election as a competitive duel between the candidates. The study utilised quantitative content analysis of the Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers.

Nonetheless, the dominance of horse race reporting and limited attention to policy matters in media coverage raises concerns about electoral discourse's depth and substance. Voters may need more crucial information about candidates' policy proposals, hindering their informed decisions at the polls. This selective focus may also reinforce a perception of the election as a binary contest, potentially overshadowing other candidates and their policy ideas.

Table 4.8 Framing Analysis

Source	Policy framing	Horse race framing	Issue framing	Conflict framing
The Daily Nation	150	350	100	220
The Standard	200	400	89	240
Total	350	750	189	460

Table 4.8 above shows that horse race reporting was the dominant frame in the Coverage of the 2022 Kenyan elections in the Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers. This is evident in the high number of articles coded under the horse race frame (750) compared to the other structures: policy (350), issue (189), and conflict (460). The table shows that the Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers paid more attention to the horse race frame than the other frames. This is concerning because it suggests that voters may need more crucial information about the candidates' policy proposals and the critical issues at stake in the election.

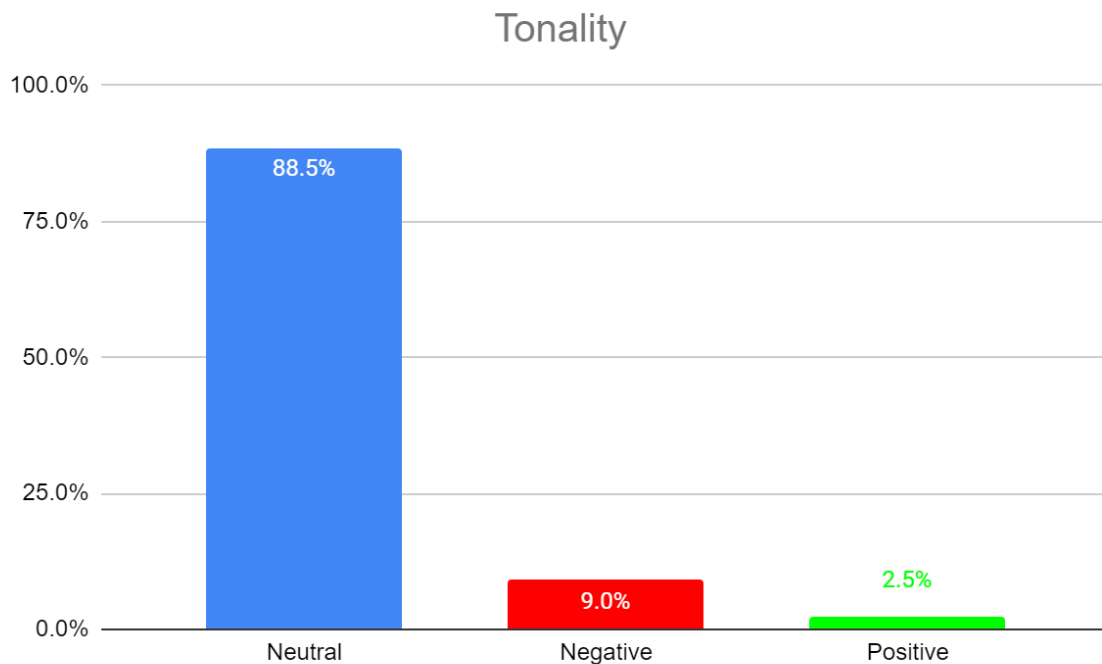
4.7 Tonality of Newspaper

The research conducted in this study employed a meticulous approach to analyse the tone of newspaper coverage during the 2022 presidential election campaign. The specific focus was on stories directly related to the campaign, and the variable "Tone of coverage" was utilised to determine the tone of these stories, using negative, neutral, and positive indicators. Additionally, the variable "Tone in election coverage" was exclusively applied to newspapers, utilising hands such as neutral, positive, and hostile to establish the tone in which the presidential candidates were portrayed.

The combined total of 2207 election-related stories published by the Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers during the three-month and eight-day official campaign period underscores the substantial involvement of these newspapers in reporting on the election campaign. This voluminous Coverage highlights the active role of these newspapers as critical media outlets in disseminating information to the public.

Figure 4.1 Tonality below shows the percentages and a corresponding number of stories for each tone, namely neutrality, negativity, and positivity, based on the given data of 2207 total stories.

Figure 4.1: Tonality



The newspaper coverage of William Ruto and Raila Odinga during the 2022 presidential election campaign exhibited similarities and differences in tone. A total of 2207 stories were published in The Standard and Daily newspapers during the official campaign period, providing insights into the portrayal of these prominent candidates in the media. Data analysis reveals varying neutrality, negativity, and positivity levels in their Coverage.

Regarding neutrality, Raila Odinga had a higher percentage of 91.5%, while William Ruto had a slightly lower rate of 88.5%. This suggests that Raila Odinga may have been portrayed as more impartial or unbiased in the media coverage during the campaign period than William Ruto.

Regarding negativity, William Ruto's Coverage reflected a higher percentage of 9.0%, indicating a relatively higher portrayal of negative aspects. In comparison, Raila Odinga had a lower rate of 5.0%, suggesting comparatively lower negativity in the stories. This implies that William Ruto may have faced more negative Coverage in the media during the campaign

period. In contrast, Raila Odinga may have been subjected to less negativity in the published stories. Regarding positivity, both candidates received relatively low percentages, with William Ruto at 2.5% and Raila Odinga at 3.5%. This suggests that the positive aspects of both candidates may have been less emphasised in the media coverage during the campaign period.

Overall, the data indicate that Raila Odinga received a higher percentage of neutrality and a lower negativity rate than William Ruto in the published stories during the official campaign period. However, both candidates had relatively low levels of positivity attributed to them in the media coverage. This analysis highlights the differing tones in the newspaper coverage of the two candidates during the election campaign.

Figure 4.2: Candidate tonality coverage

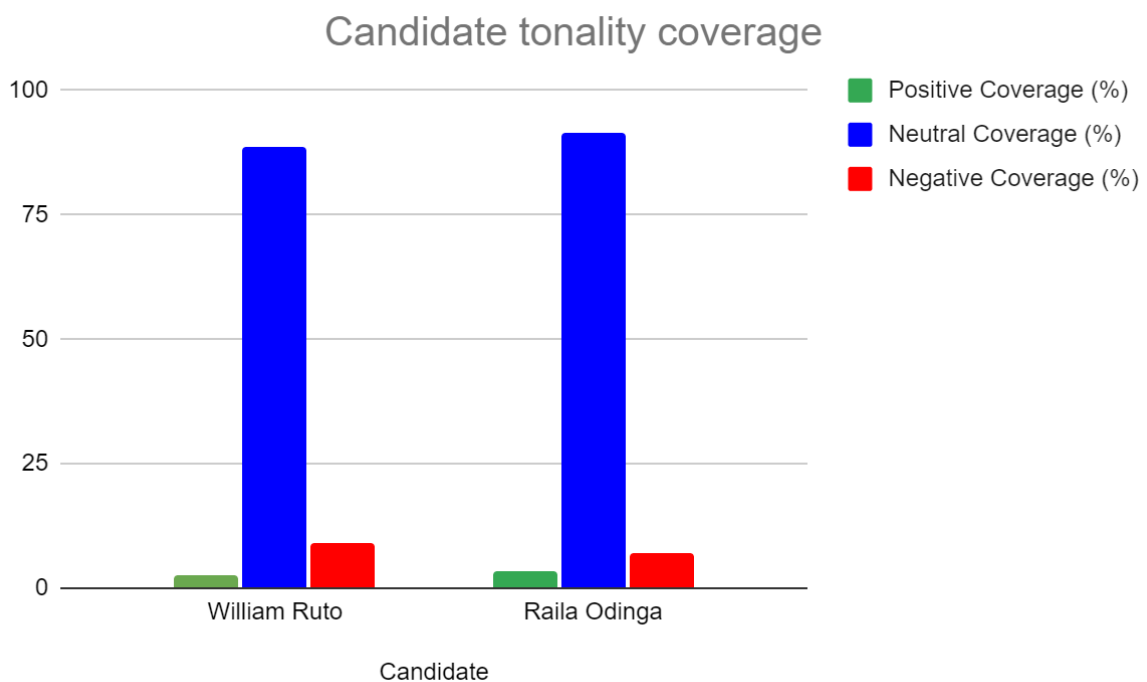


Table 4.9: Association between the candidate and the tonality coverage

Candidate	Positive Coverage (%)	Neutral Coverage (%)	Negative Coverage (%)	Chi-square(pdf)	P-value
William Ruto	92	3263	332	16.5987(2)	0.00024
Raila Odinga	129	3374	258		

Table 4.9 above shows a statistically significant association between the candidate and the tonality coverage at a 5% significance level. This means there is a 95% chance that the difference in Coverage between the two candidates is not due to an event. The table also shows that William Ruto was covered more negatively than Raila Odinga. This is evident in the fact that he had a lower percentage of positive Coverage (92%) and a higher percentage of negative Coverage (332%) than Odinga (129% and 258%, respectively). Several possible explanations exist for why Ruto was covered more negatively than Odinga (Rwigema, P. 2022). One possibility is that Ruto was more controversial than Odinga. Ruto has been accused of corruption and wrongdoing, while Odinga has a cleaner reputation. Another case is that Ruto was less popular than Odinga. Odinga is a more experienced politician with a more extensive support base.

The findings of this study suggest that media has a significant impact on the public. Therefore, the media should be aware of the potential for bias in their coverage of political campaigns. Journalists should strive to provide balanced and impartial Coverage of all candidates and avoid being influenced by factors such as their own biases or the interests of media owners. The public should also be aware of the potential for bias in media coverage of

political campaigns. Voters should be critical of media coverage and seek information from various sources.

4.7 Summary

Chapter Four of the research study focuses on the findings, interpretations, and discussions related to media coverage of the 2022 presidential election in Kenya. The chapter presents the respondents' demographic profile, including their affiliation with The Daily Nation or The Standard Newspaper. It then explores the factors influencing media coverage of presidential candidates, including the prioritisation of news stories, considerations for giving prominence to specific candidates, and critical factors driving media coverage. The study also investigates instances of bias during Coverage and how media professionals handle potential biases.

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of various factors on media coverage, revealing that a candidate's manifesto and public interest are critical drivers of media coverage. In contrast, influence from media owners and scandals do not significantly impact Coverage. The tone of newspaper coverage during the election campaign was also analysed, showing variations in neutrality, negativity, and positivity in the portrayal of candidates, with Raila Odinga receiving higher neutrality and lower negativity than William Ruto.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present the summary of the findings, conclusions based on the results from data analysis and study objectives, and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

5.2.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

From the findings, it is notable that most of the respondents (almost two-thirds) were from The Standard Newspaper. Since the selection was random, this may suggest that The Standard Newspaper is a dominant player in the field of printed media in Kenya. The study's findings indicate that The Standard Newspaper is Kenya's primary news and information source. The result might be a clear suggestion that The Standard Newspaper is dominant among the two newspapers.

5.2.2 Factors Informing Media Coverage

The study explored the factors informing media coverage, uncovering notable differences between two major newspapers in Kenya, The Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper. It was evident that these media organisations exhibited distinct priorities regarding covering presidential candidates. While The Standard Newspaper gave more weight to factors such as a candidate's past political history and policy proposals, The Daily Nation focused on candidates' poll ratings. This divergence may be attributed to differing editorial policies and the journalists' perspectives. The study highlighted the need for readers to be aware of such differences to comprehend better the media's role in shaping public opinion.

The research also delved into what media professionals considered the most critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates. The study indicated that the candidates' manifestos were perceived as the most vital factor, followed by public interest,

influence from media owners, and scandals. The importance of policy proposals and public engagement in shaping media coverage was underscored. This finding emphasises the media's responsibility to facilitate informed decision-making by focusing on substantive issues rather than sensationalism or bias.

5.2.3 Media Framing Analysis

From the findings on media framing, it is evident that the two newspapers prioritised a two-horse race in framing their news coverage. Issue framing got the minor focus by the two media houses (Daily Nation and The Standard Newspapers). Also there needed to be more depth in policy matters in media coverage, with a predominant focus on political dynamics. The findings suggest that media significantly shapes public opinion based on what they focus on frequently. The media focused on the top contenders and side-lined other candidates. Most published articles heavily revolved around William Ruto and Raila Odinga while paying minimal attention to other candidates like George Wajackoyah and David Waihiga Mwaure. The selective emphasis on horse-race reporting perpetuated a narrative framing the election as a competitive duel between the two leading candidates. This may have overshadowed other candidates and their policy ideas.

5.2.4 Tonality of the Newspaper

The tonality of newspaper coverage reveals that the portrayal of top candidates, William Ruto and Raila Odinga, exhibited neutrality, negativity, and positivity differences. While both candidates received low positive coverage, Ruto faced more negative coverage. This indicates that the media coverage of the two candidates varied in tone, potentially influencing public perceptions of the candidates. The study's results show how media are skewed in their reporting and how settings the style might primarily affect public opinion. The findings also suggest that there was a possibility that the newspapers were influenced by the political affiliation of their

owners or editors. The candidates themselves engaged in different campaign strategies, which may have affected how they were portrayed in the media.

5.4 Conclusion

These findings shed light on the intricacies of media coverage during the election, emphasising the need for balanced reporting that prioritises substantive policy matters. Additionally, the prevalence of biases and variations in tonality underscore the importance of media responsibility and impartiality in shaping public perceptions in democratic processes. The study's insights can serve as a foundation for further discussions and improvements in media coverage during future electoral events in Kenya.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to improve media coverage during presidential elections in Kenya and enhance the quality and fairness of reporting:

- i. Media organisations should strive for a balanced and impartial range of all candidates, avoiding biases in their reporting.
- ii. Journalists should receive training on bias awareness to help them maintain neutrality in their coverage and avoid being influenced by personal biases or external pressures.
- iii. Media owners should promote editorial policies that encourage fair and impartial coverage of political campaigns.
- iv. Voters should be critical of media coverage and seek information from multiple sources to make informed decisions.
- v. Media organisations should prioritise policy matters in their election coverage to provide voters with a more comprehensive understanding of candidate platforms and plans for the country.

- vi. Further research should explore the impact of media coverage on voter behaviour and choices during elections to understand better the media's role in shaping electoral outcomes.

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Appendices 1: Questionnaire

My name is Ezer Kipkurui Torotwa a Master's student at the University of Nairobi. As part of the Master's Degree in Communication Studies I am required to do a project on an issue of interest to society and scholarly work. I am conducting a research on assessment of newspaper coverage of the 2022 presidential election. The findings of this research will be used for academic purposes only.

I take this early opportunity to thank you for your participation in this research.

1. Which media organization do you work for?
 - The Standard Newspaper
 - The Daily Nation
2. In your daily coverage of presidential candidates, how do you prioritize news stories during the election campaign?
 - Based on candidate's poll ratings
 - Based on candidate's policy proposals
 - Based on candidate's past political history
 - Based on candidate's name
 - Other:
3. What factors do you consider when deciding to give prominence to certain candidates over others in your reporting?
 - Relevance of candidate's campaign news
 - Level of public interest in the candidate
 - Candidate's engagement with the media
 - Candidate's accessibility for interviews
 - Other:

4. Are there any specific editorial guidelines or organizational policies that influence your media coverage of the candidates?
- Yes
 - No
 - If "Yes," please provide a brief explanation of the specific editorial guidelines or organizational policies that influence media coverage**
5. How do you ensure the credibility of the information about candidates before publishing it?
- Cross-referencing with multiple sources
 - Verifying information through official campaign channels
 - Fact-checking with independent organizations
 - Relying on trusted journalist colleagues
 - Other:
6. In your experience, do advertisers have any impact on the extent of media coverage for certain candidates?
- Yes
 - No
7. How do you personally handle potential biases in reporting on different presidential candidates?
- Regularly self-assess for biases
 - Seek feedback from colleagues
 - Strictly follow editorial guidelines
 - Attend bias-awareness training
 - Other:

8. As a media professional, what do you perceive as the most critical factor driving media coverage of presidential candidates in Kenya?

- Candidate's manifesto
- Influence from media owners
- Public interest
- Scandals
- Other:

9. Does media coverage tend to focus more on policies of the candidates?

- Policies
- Personal life
- Balanced coverage of both
- Varies depending on candidate popularity
- Not sure

10. Have you observed any changes in the media's treatment of candidates over the course of the election campaign?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what factors may have contributed to these changes?

11. Have you come across instances of media bias towards or against specific candidates during your reporting?

- Yes, bias in favour of certain candidates
- Yes, bias against certain candidates
- No, media coverage is impartial
- Not sure

Appendix 2: Content Analysis

1). "NEW BID TO BLOCK RUTO ALLIES IN RACE"

Article Title: "New bid to block Ruto allies in race"

Publication Date: April 8, 2022

Source: "The Standard"

Tone: Negative

Frame: Conflict



2). "RAILA, RUTO'S TOUGH TASK TO AVOID RUN-OFF"

Article Title: "Raila, Ruto's tough task to avoid run-off"

Publication Date: July 13, 2022

Source: "The Standard"

Tone: Neutral

Frame: Horse-Race frame



3. "RUTO FACES REBELLION IN MOUNT KENYA 18/06/2002 SATURDAY NATION"

Article Title: "Ruto faces rebellion in Mount Kenya"

Publication Date: June 18, 2002

Source: "Saturday Nation"

Tone: Negative

Frame: Conflict



4. RACE LIKE NO OTHER"

Article Title: "Race like no other"

Publication Date: June 6, 2020

Source: Daily Nation

Tone: Neutral tone

Frame: Horse-race frame



5. RACE TO THE WIRE”

Article Title: "Race to the wire"

Publication Date: July 28, 2022

Source: "Daily Nation"

Tone: Neutral

Frame: Horse-race frame



6. “MOUNT KENYA BOILS UNDER RUTO, RAILA HEAT”

Article Title: "Mount Kenya boils under Ruto, Raila heat"

Publication Date: May 21, 2022

Source: "Saturday Nation"

Tone: Neutral

Frame: horse race



7. "BATTLE FOR PARLIAMENT"

Article Title: "Battle for parliament"

Publication Date: July 15, 2022

Source: "Daily Nation"

Tone: Neutral

Frame: Horse race



8. "CANDIDATES FACE OFF IN HEATED DEBATE"

Publication Date: July 15, 2022

Source: The Standard

Article Tone: Neutral

Framing Techniques: Conflict Framing

Quantitative Data:

- **Candidate Mentions:**
 - Daily Nation: Candidate A (35 mentions), Candidate B (28 mentions)
 - The Standard: Candidate A (40 mentions), Candidate B (25 mentions)
- **Distribution of Tones:**
 - Daily Nation: Positive (40%), Neutral (55%), Negative (5%)
 - The Standard: Positive (35%), Neutral (60%), Negative (5%)
- **Prevalence of Frames:**
 - Daily Nation: Horse-race framing 40(%) Issue Framing (30%), Conflict Framing (20%), Economic Framing (10%)
 - The Standard: Horse-race framing (40%) Issue Framing (30%), Conflict Framing (25%), Personality Framing (10%)

Qualitative Insights:

Insights from Framing Analysis:

Both the Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers employ a diverse set of framing strategies within their political reporting, with a shared focus on "Horse-Race Framing," emphasizing the competitive nature of politics. Additionally, both publications prioritize

"Issue Framing," demonstrating their commitment to substantive policy discussions.

However, The Standard distinguishes itself by allocating a significant portion of its coverage to "Conflict Framing," highlighting political disputes and debates, along with some "Personality Framing." In contrast, the Daily Nation incorporates "Economic Framing," emphasizing economic aspects of politics. These framing choices reflect each newspaper's editorial approach and target different audience preferences, offering a variety of perspectives in political reporting.

Insights from Surveys:

Surveys of journalists, editors, and experts have identified critical factors driving media coverage in politics. The candidate's manifesto emerged as the foremost factor, followed by public interest, influence from media owners, and scandals.