

**ANALYZING THE COVERAGE OF DEPRESSION IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF  
DAILY NATION AND THE STANDARD NEWSPAPERS**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university

Signature



Date 10/11/2022

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

My study is dedicated to the following: my loving family for support and patience during the entire period. For their encouragement and continued prayers towards successful completion of this course. Finally, I pay glowing gratitude to my dad for always standing with me and encouraging me during the entire period of study.

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## Abstract

This study examines media coverage of depression during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic restriction measures imposed on Kenya's dominant print media outlets.

As a result of this study, we hope to determine how often depression news stories are covered by The Standard and Daily Nation, analyze where depression news stories are placed in The Standard and Daily Nation, as well as compare the coverage of depression news stories by The Standard and Daily Nation.

The study's analysis will be limited to The Standard and Daily Nation newspapers, for the period of April 2020 to October 2020. Due to their dominance in print media in Kenya, Daily Nation and The Standard were chosen. The study examines agenda setting theory as the basis for the study. In this study, qualitative research will be used to analyze the content of Daily Nation and The Standard. A code sheet will be used to analyze the data collected

As a result of the findings of this study, the conclusion is that print media coverage of depression stories is abysmally low. In order to increase their sales, media houses are primarily profit-making organizations and tend to focus on topics that will increase their sales. The issue of depression is not included in this category by nature, but requires additional attention if we intend for our country to remain healthy. As an information tool, print media should give depression issues prominence in their reporting.



## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY**

### **1.2 Overview**

This chapter outlines the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research question, justification of the study, scope of the study and limitation of the study

### **1.2 Background of the study**

The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being where an individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” (WHO, 2004). According to World Health Organization a mental disorder is a clinical disturbance on an individual’s cognition, emotional regulation or behaviour, mental health disorders can also be called mental health conditions.

According to world health organization, in 2019, 970 million people around the world were living with a mental disorder, the number however increased in 2020 as a result of covid 19, depression being the most common mental health disorder. Common mental health disorders include depression, anxiety and schizophrenia, this study will focus on depression since this was the most common mental disorder during the time period this research has chosen to study.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the mental health and wellbeing of people around the world. According to Global Burden Disease covid 19 pandemic led to 27.6% increase in cases of major depressive disorder worldwide in 2020. Covid 19 mitigating measures such as quarantine, isolation, curfews, lockdowns and travel restrictions resulted in loss of income, disruptions to daily routines and social isolation laying the ground for negative mental health outcomes among societies, females were more affected than males, young people between the age of 20-24 years were more affected than adults. Low- and medium-income countries were

majorly affected by the pandemic. (Santomauro, Herrera, Shadid, Zheng, Ashbaugh, & Ferrari,2021).

According to a tasks force report on mental health(MoH,2019, n.d.) , depression is the leading mental disorder in Kenya, the report further noted that Kenyans have a poor understanding of mental health.

Mass media refers to any communication used to simultaneously reach a large number of people (Chung, 2018; Meulemann et al., 2010)The function of the newspaper is to inform, agenda setting, entertain and educate. In Kenya there are two national newspapers, Standard Newspaper and Daily Nation. According to Media Council report 2021 the newspaper mainly read are the Daily Nation (59%) and The Standard Newspaper (28%). the frequency in which information is conveyed is on a daily basis, Standard and Daily Nation has a countrywide circulation this means that the Kenyans are likely to read the newspaper in a day

Print media has an important role of communicating information about depression (Borinstein 1992). Print media representation of depression have a powerful influence on the people's view on depression and therefore print media is a key target for improving public awareness about depression.

### **1.3 Problem of the statement**

Newspapers plays a critical role in creating and disseminating information to create public awareness, newspapers collect information, perceptions and attitudes towards a particular issue, through the different segments of the newspaper this information is shared with the public hence creating awareness.

The editors of a newspaper are able to decide what media content to publish; news that carries more weight, such as politics, is covered frequently, making it harder to regularly cover depression. During the time of review, a report by a taskforce commissioned by the ministry of health to investigate on the mental health state of the nation had been released, the findings showing depression as the leading mental illness. Newspapers published reports to highlight the issue

however, the awareness of this project is less. The media's coverage of depression has been less studied by scholars. In this study, the researcher seeks to examine how Daily Nation and The Standard covered depression during the study period. This study can provide insights into how the government and policy makers can engage the media to enhance awareness of depression and convey information about it

#### **1.4 General objectives**

To determine the contribution of newspapers in enhancing awareness about depression among Kenyans

##### **1.4.1 Specific objectives**

1. To determine the frequency of coverage of depression stories in The Standard and Daily Nation
2. To analyze story placement in The Standard and Daily Nation newspapers
3. To compare how The Standard and Daily Nation covered depression news Stories.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

1. How much space was devoted to depression stories in the Daily Nation and The Standard?
2. How many times did Daily Nation and The Standard newspaper cover depression stories?
3. The Daily Nation and The Standard covered depression stories in what manner?

#### **1.6 Justification of the study**

Newspapers serves as an important source of information about depression. The public awareness about depression is pegged on the amount of coverage, the number of times and story placement. Awareness level enhances behavior change that leads to change in knowledge, attitude and encourage acceptance of those suffering from depression.

Effective messaging by newspapers creates a demand mechanism in reaching key priority groups, this is an effective way to communicate about depression and achieve an equitable coverage. Research focused specifically on depression coverage in Kenya is limited

#### **1.7 Significance of the study**

Given the rising numbers of depression in the country(*Taskforce on Mental Health Report 16\_lowres (1).Pdf*, n.d.) an assessment of the media coverage on depression will guide future coverage of depression, this will add new insights to the ongoing attempts to analyze mainstream

print media role and effectiveness. The research analyzed coverage of depression by Kenyan mainstream media to have an understanding of how the media reported depression stories.

Government and policy makers can effectively engage mainstream media to educate and inform the public about the benefits of having a positive mental health through the findings of this study. By analyzing depression coverage offered by the two newspapers, this study will shed light on the country's depression epidemic. As a result of the findings of this study, journalists and editors should be inspired to rethink their editorial policies that have a significant impact on the coverage of depression in the media.

### **1.8 Scope and limitation of the study**

This research will restrict its analysis to the Daily Nation and Standard newspapers, for a period of 7 months in 2020, this study chose 7 months' period (April-October) because during this season the day-to-day activities of Kenyans changed due to the measures imposed by the government of Kenya to curb the spread of covid 19. The measure imposed include lockdowns, curfew, business closure and travel restriction within the country and even outside the country. This study selected The Standard and Daily Nation as the two most widely read newspapers in Kenya. As an independent fourth estate, they have gained the trust of Kenyans for offering unbiased viewpoints.

Using content analysis of a selected print media publication in Nairobi, Kenya, the study will be conducted

The scope is limited to Daily Nation and The Standard Newspaper coverage of depression in 2020. Due to time and resource constraints, this study will cover depression for a period of seven months. Although depression is an everyday mental health condition.

### **1.9 Operational definition of terms**

**Public agenda:** According to this study, public agenda refers to topics or events that media consumers want to know about.

**Hard news:** In this study, hard news includes all general news items excluding sports, business, and county news.

**Editor:** An editor in this study refers to a person who is in charge of a newspaper and decides what will be published in each edition of it.

**Mental disorder:** In this study, the term "mental disorder" refers to a disturbance of cognition, emotions, or behavior that is clinically significant

**Mental health:** In this study, a state of mental health is a state of well-being, which enables people to cope with the stresses of everyday life, to become aware of their abilities, to learn well, and to work effectively.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Overview

An overview of depression is provided in this chapter, along with an overview of Kenyan health issues, Kenyan print media, and Kenyan health issues in relation to depression.

### 2.1 Overview of depression

WHO (2019) defines mental health as being able to realize one's own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to society. Depression, schizophrenia, dementia, anxiety disorder, and autism are some of the mental health conditions that are on the rise each day worldwide and Kenya is no exception. According to a taskforce report (2019) depression is leading mental health conditions in Kenya.

WHO report on depression and common mental health disorders (2020) reveals that 2million Kenyans were depressed. In 2019, 1.9 million depression cases were reported, this is an increase in number of depression cases reported in the country in 2020 as compared to the year 2019.

Covid 19's emergence in 2020 exacerbated the situation and made Kenyans more vulnerable Mental health conditions, resulting in an increase in depression cases in the country. As a result of the escalating number of depression cases in the country, a taskforce committee was formed to study the rising numbers of depression cases in the country as a result of the rising cases of depression in the country. Based on the findings of the taskforce report, depression was identified as the most prevalent mental health condition in Kenya.

### 2.2 Health in KENYA

Mental health continues to be an essential pillar in the country's health system and socio-economic development. The launch of the Mental Health Action Plan(MoH,2019, n.d.) in the midst of covid 19 pandemic which has caused an increase in the number of depression cases in the country, this is according to a mental health taskforce report(MoH,2019, n.d.) The Mental Health Action Plan(*Kenya-Mental-Health-Policy.Pdf*, n.d.) came in handy as it sought to remedy and prioritize mental health, its leadership and governance, the plan also seeks to ensure the implementation of strategies for the promotion of mental health and integration of high-quality mental health services.

The constitution of Kenya 2010 (*Kenya\_2010-En.Pdf*, n.d.) sets out in chapter four on the Bill of Rights, article 43(1)(a) provides that every person is entitled to the highest standard of health care services that include mental health, the constitution further entrenches equality by providing protection and promotes the rights of the most vulnerable members of the society. Furthermore, the constitution of Kenya 2010 (*Kenya\_2010-En.Pdf*, n.d.) prohibits direct or indirect discrimination by state on the basis of mental health status. The constitution is also enriched with rights to persons with mental health disorder, they are also entitled to be treated with the best care, the right to be treated with humanity and respect, individuals suffering from depression have a right to receive health and social care without discrimination and a right to be represented by counsel when he or she has no legal capacity.

### **2.3 Print media in Kenya**

The print media plays an important role in creating public awareness, collecting views and information, and influencing perceptions and attitudes. Print media informs, educates, entertain and acts as a watchdog between the government and the people whom it governs.

Article 35 of the constitution of Kenya grants journalist the right to access information, however Civil service act (1989) prohibits public servants from disclosing confidential information. According to Media Council report on the state of the media 2021(*Final STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT 2021.Pdf*, n.d.), The Standard newspaper and Daily Nation newspaper are the dominant print media outlets in Kenya, commanding 87% of the market share: The Standard newspaper 28% and Daily Nation 59%. In this study, the researcher will examine how Daily Nation and The Standard covered depression in Kenya.

In Kenya, the print media plays a crucial role in addressing issues affecting society. After the 2007 presidential election, the newspaper published news stories and editorials aimed at addressing and advocating for peace in the country, following a pandemonium caused by the announcement of the presidential election results. In 2011 (Onyebadi & Oyedeji)

## **2.4 Print media representation**

Print media play a pivotal role in increasing public awareness, the media collect views and information on issues of public concerns, print provide information's that educates and inform the public. print media has power to influence the masses, editors of a newspaper have the power and legitimacy to decide on the content of the media, news that carry more weight are covered regularly, coverage of depression stories/articles can socialize the public and hence shaping their behavior, conduct, attitudes and beliefs

An analysis on the coverage of depression by Australian newspaper shows that depression is presented as a phenomenon that occurs beyond the control of an individual and tend to focus on protecting the individual rather than protecting the public, stories published relied on experts rather than from those affected by a mental illness, major themes of the newspaper were positive and focused on promoting public awareness, the researcher however noted that language use was improper(Organization, 2020)

In Germany however the respondents when asked to recall how print media reported depression and mental health while doing an evaluation scenario of schizophrenia and depression, the respondents considered schizophrenia to be dangerous (Angermeyer, M. C., & Matschinger, H. (2003).

Canadian print representation of depression focused on positive themes rather than criminality, the researcher however noted that 50% newspapers continued to use inaccurate language words like; crazy, mad, depressive, afflicted by and suffering from were used frequently. The researcher adds that most articles focused on raising awareness and research, the newspapers used subthemes that helped in raising public awareness such as addressing stigma, policy issues, military mental health and men's mental health, the themes of research the newspapers used subthemes such as treatment related research and studies about prevention(Cummings & Konkle, 2016)

As Situma (Situma, 2021) observes, newspaper coverage in 2020 emphasized public health measures, indicating that print media controlled and managed the spread of the virus. As argued by Situma the Standard and Daily Nation played an instrumental role in controlling the spread of covid 19 through agenda setting.



## **2.5 Story placement**

Story placement refers to how prominently stories are placed on a page of a newspaper. News stories/articles that are considered most significant, attention-getting, worthwhile or important are placed at the front of a newspaper. Story placement reveals how prominent a story is placed on a newspaper page for example front pages or back pages. front pages are important for the sale of a newspaper and setting an agenda over an issue. For prominence, the mainstream media place critical news stories/articles on the prime pages. In addition to informing and grabbing the reader's attention, stories placed on prime pages are considered to be important and relevant.

## **2.6 Frequency of coverage**

Editors of the news have a great deal of influence over the topics that are put on as public agenda. Besides influencing readers, newspapers establish hierarchies of news prominence. The frequency in which a story is covered determines prominence in the society, news editors set an agenda in the society by covering a story frequently.(Boukes et al., 2022)

Print media coverage has a powerful impact on what the public thinks about an issue affecting the society, the society, the government and policy makers tend to give more attention to news stories/article that have been covered extensively by the newspaper.

## **2.7 Theoretical framework**

### **2.7.1 Agenda setting theory**

Max McCombs and Donald Shawn, 1972 Agenda Setting theory will guide this study.

The theory postulates that the media's news coverage determines which issues become the focus of public attention. This theory has been adopted in this study because print media influence the importance placed on topics of the public agenda.

Repeating a message daily in the newspapers, establishes media influence on the audience. Redundant news agenda allow the public to learn about an issue and learn about what is happening without any deliberate effort, hence making the issue a public agenda. Driven by curiosity man will want to know more about the topic and hence leading them to research what is happening in their environment, this will make them rely on the media and hence making them predisposed to agenda setting effect (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, 1972; Uscinski, 2009)

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Overview**

An overview of research design, research sites, study populations, sampling techniques, and data collection and analysis is provided in this chapter.

### **3.2 Research approach**

An in-depth analysis of how depression stories were covered by The Standard and the Daily Nation will be provided by this research using a qualitative approach.(Atkinson, 2017). Say that this research is important because it will help in debunking what is commonly thought to be true and therefore exposing the shortcomings of day to day understanding and hence appreciating studies that have been made.

Qualitative approach is relevant to this study because it addresses the how and why research question and hence enabling the researcher and (Cleland, 2017) the targeted audience deepen their understanding of experience and the context

### **3.3 Research method**

This study will use the news websites of The Daily Nation and The Standard as case studies. In Kenya, the two newspapers are the most read newspapers. This therefore makes this study important because this study will help the research answer the how and why question of a phenomenon

### 3.4 Study population

(Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010) A population is a group of individuals about which some information needs to be verified. In this study, the researcher examined all stories published on the Daily Nation and The Standard websites. There were 63 stories in total; 34 stories/articles were covered by the Standard and 29 by the Daily Nation.

Name of the Newspaper	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Daily Nation	5	6	4	8	3	0	3
The Standard	10	2	4	8	2	3	5
<b>Total 63</b>							

### 3.5 Sample size

Sampling is essential in research as it helps the researcher to collect and obtain enough data that answers the researchers question and hence helping the researcher target the respondents with the right information.(Abramzon et al., 2014)

The sample size for this research will be all the stories/articles covered during the time of study

### 3.6 Sampling technique

This study will adopt purposive sampling techniques where the researcher will select only stories of the newspaper that covered depression within the defined months. This study targets all articles and stories based on depression from the month of April to October in the year 2020. Regardless of the day on which they were published, this will include daily and weekend editions. News items, editorials, features, letters to the editor, magazines and research reports placed in The Standard and Daily Nation newspapers will be informed by this information. The non-probability sampling technique proves to be relevant to this study.

### **3.7 Data collection method and tool**

The techniques used for collecting data is very important because they help the researcher to collect information about a phenomenon under study. For the finding to be accurate, data collection method used must be methodical.(Schröttle & Meshkova, 2018)

This study will collect data using a code sheet then apply content analysis to review all the stories individually and then document the results. Content analysis is an effective option when carrying out a study because it helps the researcher determine the presence of words, themes or concept within qualitative data(Manganello et al., 2008). This study will be guided by particular story themes, category of stories sampled will be feature articles, news reports, editorials, columns and opinion pieces.

### **3.7 Data presentation and analysis**

In this report, the researcher will present the data as tables and narratives based on a thematic analysis of the data. The thematic areas the researcher will use to guide this study include the Story type, placement, story direction, size, and themes; placement will be based on the prominence of the story on the FrontPage (the headline, the lead story, the second lead, the inside story, or the back story).

A thematic analysis will be applied, data will be presented in tables and narrative formats. themes that will guide this research include, story type, placement, story direction, size and theme; placement here the researcher will look at the stories in terms of prominence of coverage (are the stories covered on the FrontPage i.e., headline or lead story, or second lead or as an inside story or as back story). The story type will be looked at in terms of is it hard new, soft news, letter to the editor, an opinion or it is a commentary analysis. Story direction will be looked at in terms of negativity, here the researcher will look for stories with words and phrases indicating the impact of depression such as new cases reported, number of rising cases, suicide cases reported due depression and the impact depression has had on productivity levels. In terms of positivity the researcher will look for stories with words and phrases showing feature stories of people who overcame depression and in terms of neutrality the researcher will look for stories with words and phrases indicating stories on how to overcome depression The size of the story will look at its length, is it full page, three quarter of a page, half a page, or a column length story. The themes

the research look for will include rising cases of depression, treatment of depression, number of deaths due to depression, fear, containing depression or an educative/feature story on how to protect mental health, on how to identify a depressed person or an advocacy story on protecting mental health. The researcher will compare the stories published by the two newspapers in terms of the tonality of language used, language tone used would mean assertive, persuasive or optimistic, the depth of the stories published, the depth would mean are the stories comprehensive or shallow and the styles of headlines used to mean were the headlines are direct, indirect, how to headline, question headline or command headlines.

### **3.9 Research ethics**

The term ethics refers to standards of conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable conduct. Ethics help a researcher to decide on how to act and analyze complex problems and issues that he or she may come across. (“Research and Ethics,” 1999). This study sought relevant permit and permission from the University of Nairobi and the libraries.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

### **4.0 Overview**

The purpose of this chapter is to present data, analyze it, and interpret it, thus helping to answer the study's objectives. The objectives were to determine the frequency of coverage of depression stories in The Standard and Daily Nation, to analyze story placement in The Standard and Daily Nation newspapers and to compare how The Standard and Daily Nation covered depression news stories.

### **4.2 Presentation of findings and analysis**

#### **4.2.1 Placement**

News editors select which stories go into the newspaper, where they appear, and how much space they are given in the newspaper. The agenda-setting hypothesis asserts that placement cues teach audiences to value news. In order to demonstrate a print media agenda-setting effect, one must demonstrate that the topics covered during certain time periods coincide closely with those considered important or worth discussing by the public.

According to the placement of the articles, this study will reveal that both the Standard and Daily Nation gave prominence to depression in their articles. The early pages of both newspapers featured a total of 10 stories - 2,3,4,6,7,8, to 22. An early page in a newspaper is crucial for both publications, since they set the agenda and sell the paper.

Reading a front-page article is different from reading an article on the inside pages. Mainstream media allocate news that are considered critical to the prime pages for prominence. Most of the news items were educative and feature stories accounting for 27 stories placed at the early pages of the newspaper, 12 opinion pieces were placed on the middle pages of the newspaper. In addition, there were 8 articles placed on the front-page articles, letter to the editor accounted for 3 stories and 5 stories were placed at the back page of the newspaper. Other depression stories were

published on the second page of the newspaper, the stories were 5 and page three accounted for 5 stories.

The Standard placed 25 stories on the middle page of the newspaper, opinion piece accounted for 7 stories, on page two 2 stories were covered and page three accounted for 5 stories.

Daily Nation gave prominence to 26 stories on the front pages, on the back page 3 stories were covered and 3 stories on page two.

Like The Standard, Daily Nation placed most stories on the middle pages, 23 stories were covered. Overall, both newspapers published opinions, feature stories, letters to the editor analysis and commentary on the middle pages.

Based on the findings, both newspapers believed depression stories were relevant, important, and significant, and they published 10 stories about depression on their front pages. As a result, depression stories continued to be covered

The table 4.1 present the study finds

Name of the Newspaper	Placement				
	Headline/lead story	Second lead	Page 3	fillers	Back story
Daily Nation	0	3	0	23	3
Standard	0	2	5	25	2

The table 4.2 present the study finds

MONTH	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Daily Nation	5	6	4	8	3	0	3
The Standard	10	2	4	8	2	3	5

### 4.2.2 Themes

Print media does not necessarily affect people's opinions about an issue, but rather tells them which issues and events are important during a certain period. Rather than influencing attitudes, agenda-setting influences cognition.

All 63 publications had stories about depression. Throughout the study period, stories on how to overcome depression dominated news coverage in The Standard and Daily Nation Newspaper, with 27 articles/stories of all published in the entire period under study. The stories published include how to avoid depression or anxiety in times of isolation, 4 moods boosting for to include in your diet, take care of your mental health and everyone is under covid pressure, here are coping mechanisms.

Other central themes were fear (13 articles), rising cases of depression (10 articles) and advocacy to curb the rising cases of depression in the country (9 articles).

Minor themes were death (1 articles) and containment measures to be undertaken to curb the rising cases of depression, probably because there were few cases of depression reported and put on record.

Also, both newspapers featured themes on treatment of depression (2 articles).

The dominant themes in the Daily Nation were stories/articles on how to overcome depression. In the contrast The Standard newspaper emphasized on the rising cases of depression in the country. The Standard newspaper covered comprehensive stories/articles in terms of depth, whereas Daily Nation newspaper covered shallow stories/articles.

The table 4.3 present the study finds

	Rising Cases	Death	Containment measures	Fear	Treatment	Advocacy	Educative
Daily Nation	2	0	0	7	1	6	13
Standard	8	1	1	6	1	3	14



### 4.2.3 Story direction

Readers pay more attention to information about negative developments of a story than to information about positive developments. Consequently, a negative story attribute should increase the public's awareness and accessibility of the story. In contrast, positive coverage of a story is unlikely to have such an effect; positive coverage of a story decreases perception of issue importance. The higher the salience of media coverage of depression and the more negative the media presentation of the state of mental health in the country, the greater will be the increase in the proportion of the public naming depression as the country's most important problem, this effect is expected to be stronger than the effect of media prominence alone.

To determine the tone of the story direction, all 63 newspaper stories were analyzed. The study categorized the story direction into three parts: positive, here the researcher looked for words and phrases showing stories of people who battled depression and overcame, negative here the researcher looked for words and phrases indicating the impact of depression, such as the number of suicide cases reported and the impact of depression on individual productivity, the researcher also categorized story direction tone in terms of neutrality and here the researcher look for words and phrases indicating stories on how to overcome depression. Based on this information, The Standard and Daily Nation Newspaper were able to determine the general mood of their coverage of depression.

In general, the Standard newspaper had 14 negative stories (mostly letters to the editor and opinion pieces). Six positive stories and 14 neutral stories were covered by The Standard. Compared to Daily Nation, Daily Nation covered nine negative news stories, six positive news stories, and fourteen neutral news stories.

Daily Nation neutral stories were 14, feature stories accounted for 4 stories, international sports news accounted for one story, opinion piece accounted for 7 stories and letters to the editor accounted for two stories. In the contrast, in The Standard Newspaper international sports news accounted for two stories, editorial accounted for 6 stories, opinion accounted for 4 stories and 14

neutral stories. Feature and educative stories in the standard had the highest number of neutral stories.

The negative stories were related to the impact covid 19 had on individual incomes, the death of an individual battling depression, the increase in new cases of depression, the reported number of depressed teachers, and the inadequacy of help available to the rising number of people suffering from depression.

Positive stories focused on stories of individuals who battled depression and overcame, and the power of speaking up, speaking out and rising up.

Neutral stories focused on stories relating to food to boost your mood, protecting one's mental health, how to overcome depression and how to manage mental health while in isolation.

The study findings indicate that both newspapers covered the equal number of neutral stories, in terms of negativity The Standard covered more negative stories. Both newspapers covered the equal number of positive stories.

The table 4.4 present the study finds

Name of the Newspaper	Story direction		
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Daily Nation	6	9	14
Standard	6	14	14

#### 4.2.4 Story type

In this study, mainstream media stories were examined in terms of categories. The Standard and Daily Nation Newspaper, used to cover depression news during the period under study (April to October, 2020). majority of the stories in both newspapers were feature stories (22 articles), educative stories on how to overcome depression accounted for to 15 articles, opinion pieces covered by both The Standard and Daily Nation accounted for 12 stories.

During the study period, twelve stories/articles in the standard were classified as features, ten as educative, and seven as opinion pieces. Opinion pieces on The Standard newspaper expressed views on how to protect mental health during isolation, getting handle of your family mental health, habits that makes you prone to depression, are you taking naps or are you depressed? corona virus should make us think about food more seriously and depression is rampant but help is inadequate. Compared to Daily Nation, expressed views on how to take care of your mental health while fighting the impact of covid 19, mitigation measure to prevent disaster post covid 19, an alarming report of depression number of teachers and copying mechanism as corona effects take shape. In their letter to the editor, readers of The Standard Newspaper raised the issue of depression related to Covid 19.

In Daily Nation, feature stories predominated (10 articles), opinion pieces followed (5 articles), and commentary articles followed (5 articles).

The study findings shows that both newspapers covered news of depression in the form of international news, both newspapers covered international sports news showing stories of international football players who battled depression and overcame, both newspapers also covered stories on how players were promoting mental health awareness through their matches. Educative stories, feature stories and opinion pieces were considerably dominant under the period under review (April to October, 2020) amounting to 49 articles in total.

In conclusion, Daily Nation and The Standard newspaper through agenda setting theory covered depression by greater number of feature stories and educative stories, thus mainstreaming depression as an issue of public concern.

The table 4.5 present the study finds

Name of the Newspaper	Story Type					
	Sports news	Letter to the Editor	Opinion	Commentary	Feature	Educative
Daily Nation	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
Standard	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>

#### 4.2.5 Size

An analysis of depression stories published in Daily Nation and The Standard between April and October 2020 was conducted for this study. Daily nation covered 7 full page stories for the entire period under study while the standard covered 15 full page stories, this means that The Standard gave more full-page stories as compared to Daily Nation, the standard newspaper covered 7 half paged stories while Daily Nation covered 6 half paged stories, Daily Nation covered more column length stories as compare to The Standard newspaper

The table 4.6 present the study finds

Name of the Newspaper	Full Page	½ Page	Column Length
Daily Nation	7	6	16
Standard	15	7	12

In addition to creating an agenda, news coverage can influence what issues, events, or people are on the public's mind. In the agenda-setting hypothesis, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw assert that the salience of a topic or issue in the mass media influences its salience among the public. For newspapers, the agenda setting process is as follows. Hundreds of stories are sifted through each day by editors, also known as gatekeepers. In addition to deciding which stories to keep and which to reject, they must decide how to treat each story they allow to pass through their desk. Stories kept are not treated equally when presented to the public. While others are shortened severely, others are used at length. There are some that appear on page one, and there are others that appear on page 30. Newspapers clearly state the value they place on the salience of an item through placement, headline size, and length. Using agenda-setting theory, audiences learn salient points from the news media, incorporating them into their own agendas.

Several empirical studies have found that affective persuasive arguments, such as a confident tone, a persuasive tone, or an optimistic tone, are unlikely to influence the perceptions of objects. Coverage of a certain issue with an assertive tone; an assertive tone reduced the nodule of that issue on the public agenda.

The Standard stories were dominated by persuasive (how to avoid depression and anxiety in times of isolation, pandemic opens door to new dawn let's not miss the promising chance and commission to deal with rising depression cases) and assertive (habits that makes you prone to depression, are you just taking a nap and are you depressed) language tone while Daily Nation language tone was dominated by optimistic (with resolved addiction can be actually be defeated and power of speaking up, speaking out and rising up) and assertive ( why reading while staying indoors could be a good pillar against depression, take care of your mental health as you fight impact of covid 19 and everyone is under covid pressure, here are coping mechanism ). Reading an in-depth feature on a certain issue affects most people differently than reading a spot report on that same issue. In terms of depth The Standard Newspaper covered a comprehensive coverage of stories about depression this is evident on the number of stories allocated on full pages, Daily Nation stories covered shallowly depression stories this is evident of the number of stories allocated to column length size. The Standard newspaper covered depression news stories using how to headline (depression is rampant but help is inadequate), indirect headline (I thought I would die if I close my eyes) and command headline (no laughing matter). Compared to The Standard, Daily Nation how to type of headline dominated its headlines.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

As a result of the data collection and analysis, the following recommendations and discussions have been made. These were based on the objectives of the study. The researcher had intended to analyze coverage of depression in Kenya, a case study of Daily Nation and The Standard within the seven months of the study and offer recommendations with the aim of improving the coverage of depression.

### **5.2 Summary of the key findings**

In this study, agenda setting was used to understand how The Standard and Daily Nation covered depression. To determine the extent to which depression in Kenya is covered in the newspaper, various themes, placements, story types, sizes allocated, and story directions were examined.

Both newspapers were loaded with equal neutral stories, mainly around how to protect one's mental health during isolation. Positive stories accounted for 12 articles covered by both newspapers, while 23 negative stories were covered by both publications. The Standard was loaded with negative stories showing the rising number of depression cases in the country, on the other hand Daily Nation maintained a neutral coverage mainly through educative and feature stories. Daily Nation emphasized on feature stories of people who battled depression and overcame and how to monitor children and family for depression signs.

In summary, coverage by The Standard newspaper was alarmist in nature. The Standard covered stories on the rising number of depressions in the country.

Overall, both newspapers covered depression stories linked to the government-imposed measures imposed in April to curb the spread of Covid 19. For instance, the government-imposed lockdown in some part of the country which resulted in loss of numerous jobs, as people were trying to adjust to the new normal. The dominant theme in the study were the rising number of depression cases, feature stories of people who battled depression and overcame, how to manage depression during isolation and how to monitor depression sign in children and family members. As a result of these findings, newspapers took it upon themselves to inform the public about depression, rising cases, and how to cope with depression.

A total of 63 news articles about depression were published in The Standard and Daily Nation. As a result of the findings, a great deal of space is allocated to depression in the media. Therefore, depression is a very important topic in the media.

A total of eight stories were placed on the front pages of the newspaper-pages 2 and 3. There were also runners on pages 4,6,7,8, and 22, which indicates depression was singled out as an important event and hence used to set an agenda. The Standard and Daily Nation published 8 stories on pages 2 and 3, corresponding to 3 stories in the Daily Nation and 5 stories in the Standard. Results shows that the two newspapers set public agenda through placement and repeating news stories over and over in all the 63 stories published between April and October. As compared to news stories that appear on the inside pages, front page coverage is rated as very important in print media. By selecting and reiterating an issue in the news, the audience perceives them as more important than others, resulting in the media agenda becoming a public agenda.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the findings highlight the significance of agenda setting in covering depression by The Standard and Daily Nation. As a result of the frequent depression stories in these two newspapers and the neutral and negative story direction, the authors concluded that the public may have been encouraged to speak up about depression and rise up, which in turn led to a positive change in behavior. Print media played an important role in sensitizing the public on mental health in the country. In addition, the newspapers were open to publish opinions and letters to the editor to encourage the public discourse. Hence, depression called for print media to play a role of informing, educating and sensitizing the public on how to manage depression. These two newspapers were remarkably effective in playing this role.



### **5.3 Recommendations**

Both print media and mental health stakeholders need to form partnerships and collaborations that will influence how the Kenyan print media cover depression with a view of advancing public education and policy influence

Print media should consider allocating more depression stories on the prime pages, the findings of this study reveals that most stories were placed on the inside pages.

### **5.4 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH STUDIES**

There is a need for increased coverage of depression issues in print media, according to this study

Following limitation of this study. Future researchers should examine how depression was covered by other local media outlets and precisely radio due to its audience reach. The findings of the research will provide a comparison of how radio and print covered depression

A study can be conducted to determine what challenges mainstream media houses face when reporting depression stories.

In addition, this study could also be expanded by looking beyond printed forms of media to focusing on broadcast media such as television and radio and exploring coverage of depression that emerge in Kenyan television or radio programmes.

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## APPENDICES

### Research tools

#### 1. Themes

Themes	Standard	Daily Nation
Personal stories		
Educational		

#### 2. Story type

Story type	Standard	Daily nation
Hard news		
Soft news		
Opinion		
Images		

#### 3. Placement

Placement	Front pages	Middle pages	Back pages	Editorials	opinion	Letters	Images
Standard							
Daily Nation							

#### 4. Size

Size	Daily Nation	Standard
Full page		
Column length		

**5. Story Direction**

<b>Story direction</b>	<b>Daily Nation</b>	<b>Standard</b>
Positive		
Negative		
Neutral		

**6.**

Daily Nation	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Style of headline							
Tonality of language							
Depth of the stories							

The Standard	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Style of headline							
Tonality of language							
Depth of the stories							