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**MAINSTREAM PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF COVID-19 IN KENYA: A
COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF DAILY NATION AND THE STANDARD
NEWSPAPERS**

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DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been presented for an academic award in any other university or institution.

Sign: -----

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

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to students, scholars, and individuals interested in media studies. May it add to your knowledge and contribute to academic and professional success.

ABSTRACT

On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. By April 2020, COVID-19 (a viral disease with flu-like symptoms) had spread worldwide, interrupting lives almost entirely, straining healthcare systems, and causing death. To control COVID-19, mainstream print media played a historical role in information sharing and sensitization. This research is therefore a comparative content analysis study of COVID-19 pandemic coverage by *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers in Kenya. The main objective of the study was to examine how both newspapers covered the outbreak. Framing and agenda-setting theories were selected for this study because they help best understand frames used in media coverage and determine how media sets and builds its agenda and its influence on the public agenda. Content analysis was employed in the study of the two newspapers as a research method. Ninety editions of the *Standard* and 90 editions of the *Daily Nation* were analyzed between March 13, 2020, and June 10, 2020. The study found that; (i) coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in both newspapers was loaded with neutral frames (42.8%) mainly around adherence to public health measures indicating that media helped control and manage the spread of the virus. (ii) 10% or 1 in 10 stories about COVID-19 in *Daily Nation* and the *Standard newspapers* constituted pages 1,2, and 3, meaning the issue was of great importance to them and used it to set public agenda. The study concludes that the two newspapers played a significant role in controlling the spread of COVID-19 through agenda-setting and framing of stories, although the frames were loaded with negativity. The study recommends using positive frames in coverage of pandemics to encourage behaviour change without instilling fear.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

WHO	World Health Organisation
NADIMA	National Disaster Management Agency
MOH	Ministry of Health (Kenya)
GOK	Government of Kenya
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
MERS	Middle East Respiratory Syndrome
H1N1	Hemagglutinin Type 1 and Neuraminidase Type 1 (influenza strain or swine flu)
HIV	Human Immune-deficiency virus
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019. Also known as COVID-19.
OP-ED	Opposite Editorial or opinion

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

The chapter outlines the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, scope and limitation, and operational terms.

1.1. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Over time, Kenya has strived to overcome development obstacles and improve its citizens' socioeconomic status, including health. It established the Health Policy Framework, the Constitution 2010, fast-tracked actions to achieve Millennium Development Goals, and developed Vision 2030 - an economic agenda that upholds every Kenyan's fundamental right to health access. The Ministry of Health recognizes that Kenya aspires to achieve quality health standards and reduce ill-health among citizens. It also hopes to shrink deaths caused by infectious diseases (currently at 48 per cent) to below levels of public health importance but without dropping focus on emerging problems. (MOH, 2014)

The Ministry of Health (2014) and the GOK (2009) note that the recent rise of non-communicable diseases is a threat to the gains. Adding that epidemic outbreaks pose extraordinarily high and increasing disaster risks to Kenyan society. The government has ranked diseases and epidemics among a list of disasters *that disrupt Kenyans' livelihood, divert planned use of resources, interrupt economic activities, and retard development*. Battle (2020) opines that identification and treatment of COVID-19 in Kenya and Africa is challenging because of economic stability, physical environment, education, food community, social context, and health care systems with recommended public health practices to control the spread of the pandemic, presenting challenges for the poor. He adds that access to healthcare for complex cases such as COVID-19 is limited among 52 per cent of the poor living in rural Kenya.

Since March 11, 2020, when WHO (2020) declared COVID-19 a pandemic, it has spread to numerous countries on all continents (Mejia et al., 2020). By early June 1, 2020, global fatalities stood at about 374,369 deaths, with the United States of America recording about a third of the death toll (106,208 deaths) and 6,291,969 COVID-19 positive cases (World meter, 2020). Kenya had 13,771 positive cases of COVID-19, 238 deaths as of July 20, 2020 (MOH, 2020).

Global consultancy firm, Deloitte (2020), acknowledges that COVID-19 has had a vast social and economic impact globally, predicting a global GDP loss of US\$ 9 trillion in 2020 and 2021, a

decline in global oil prices by 42 per cent in comparison to the 2019 average price, and a fall in international remittances by about 20 per cent in 2020. IMF also points to an outflow of US\$95 billion of portfolio capital out of emerging market economies since January 21, when the spread of COVID-19 intensified in China (IMF, 2020).

The World Bank's 2020 *Africa Pulse report* forecasted that sub-Saharan Africa would experience the first recession over 25 years. It further estimated the pandemic would cost the region between \$37 billion and \$79 billion in output losses for 2020. According to IMF (2020), emerging markets and developing economies would be the most affected, given their weaker health systems, more constrained macroeconomic policy space, often less-diversified economies, and in some cases, the high risk of debt distress.

International consultancy firm, Deloitte, reported that 30 million people in America applied for unemployment benefits due to job loss as of April 30, 2020. In contrast, Kenya recorded a drop in revenue collection due to the closure of hotels and the global aviation sector, a decline in import value, reduced forex earnings due to reduced exports, and job cuts (Deloitte, 2020). Kenya also reduced budgetary allocation toward its four-year economic plan called the Big4Agenda (*universal healthcare, manufacturing, affordable housing, and food and nutrition security*) in the 2020/2021 national budget to US\$1.28 billion from US\$4.3 billion the previous year.

To manage the situation, Deloitte reported that governments worldwide implemented intervention measures to curtail the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. For example, the US Federal government cut Fed Funds rates and allocated more than US\$1.5 trillion into liquidity relief for banks to keep them viable. In China, the People's Bank of China disbursed more than US\$ 240 billion of liquidity into the financial system. Other central banks have permeated liquidity in similar ways to cushion firms and households from liquidity constraints. In Kenya, the government introduced several fiscal, monetary, and institutional policies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. As of early April 2020, the government received KShs.5.3 billion from the World Bank and KShs. 7.4 billion from the Central Bank to help navigate the COVID-19 storm (Deloitte, 2020).

Additionally, in February 2020, Kenya issued containment measures, advising the public to maintain high hygiene levels, observe social distancing in public places, and eventually ordered the closure of entertainment spots and restaurants and suspension of public gatherings. In late April

2020, the government announced a cessation of movement in and out of Nairobi and three other counties, mandatory use of facial masks, and social distancing in public places and when using public transport (Aluga, 2020).

As of April 10, 2020, UNICEF (2020) reported that 126 countries had introduced or adapted social protection measures, of which 83 provided explicit support for children and their families. One hundred eighty-eight countries had also imposed countrywide closures, affecting more than 1.5 billion children and youth.

To manage disasters of this magnitude, GOK established an agency called the national disaster management agency (NADIMA). The agency recognizes the media's role in information sharing and sensitization. It therefore counts on it to assist with available resources during a calamity through support *advocacy, public education, sensitization, and awareness efforts* (GoK, 2009).

Mass media plays a historical function in information sharing, education, creating awareness about events, and disseminating health information either in printed, electronic, or web form. It also rallies and influences the people and is a catalyst for social transformation, bringing about positive change. The role of media in reporting COVID-19 was to share news cases and latest health guidelines, sensitize on the dangers, updates on decisions and government measures, and persuade the public to help control the pandemic (Usman, 2020).

According to Reynolds & Seeger (2014), media is a primary source of risk information and plays an essential role in setting agendas and determining outcomes. They state that during significant crises, most people access news from the national media. De Vreese (2005) agrees and adds that one powerful way media shapes public opinion is by framing events and issues.

Mwangi (2005) discourse that people depend on the press to provide them with information about events, creating pictures of the world for us, either accurate and complete or distorted and partial. He opines that mass media has evolved into a critical institution in society, with control, management, and innovation. Noting that media offers a platform for public life affairs to play out and is a source of definitions and images of social reality for society.

Bhopal, a media scholar, observes that media also plays a critical role in increasing public awareness and collecting views, information, and attitudes toward issues. It also provides information, educates, and entertains, and caters to the development of a civilized society.

Furthermore, media has the power to influence the masses and socialize people helping to shape our behaviours, conduct, attitudes, and beliefs and its surveillance role of watching society closely to warn the public about immediate threats or ever-present threats (Bhopal, 2014).

Lin et al. (2014) orate that heightened media awareness of prevention can control the spread of infectious diseases. Thus, it is necessary to maintain the same level of information throughout all stages of pandemic development. Collinson et al. (2015) agree that mass media reports on an epidemic or pandemic can provide relevant information to the public, elicit positive behaviour change and disseminate information on current and effective vaccination, drug therapy, and social distancing measures.

Scanlon & Alldred (1982) articulate that media's willingness to cover pandemics or epidemics is because they are newsworthy, mysterious, spread rapidly, have many fatalities, cause adverse effects but guides that media should have their agenda. Reynolds & Seeger (2014) call on the press to remain independent as they are not adjunct to public emergency response organisations.

Gans (1979) acknowledges that framing is an essential tool for journalists to reduce the complexities of an issue, to overcome limitations in their respective media institutions, such as time constraints. However, according to De Vreese (2005), newsmakers use different frames to cover an issue whose abundance in choice can be captured in the analysis as specific distinctive characteristics.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Disease and pandemics undermine Kenya's aspiration to become a middle-income economy and are among a list of disasters that disrupt Kenyans' livelihood, divert planned use of resources, interrupt economic activities, and retard development (MOH, 2014; GOK, 2009). The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the situation, resulting in vast social and economic impact in Kenya and globally, resulting in a decline in global oil prices by 42 per cent in 2020 compared to the 2019 average price and a fall in international remittances by about 20 per cent in 2020. An outflow of US\$95 billions of portfolio capital out of emerging market economies since January 21, 2020, when the spread of COVID-19 intensified in China, and the number of positive cases of COVID-19 and deaths, increased by July 20, 2020 (IMF, 2020; Deloitte, 2020, and the MOH, 2020).

Health is critical in attaining a healthy and skilled workforce needed to steer the economy toward achieving the 2030 economic blueprint. Thus the need to help the public and the government manage the spread of epidemics such as the COVID-19 pandemic. (MOH, 2014; GOK, 2009)

NADIMA, notes that media and private sector players, in general, play a critical role in disaster management and mainstreaming disaster management through education, sensitization, and awareness and are responsible for preventing disasters in their area of influence. It also acknowledges that by so doing, those interventions can result in an informed society where everybody is capable of participating effectively in disaster management, calling on media to use its resources and personnel to help manage disaster and risk. (GOK,2009).

Usman (2020), in this paper titled ‘*Impact of COVID-19 and Pandemic Lockdown in India: Role of Media during Lockdown,*’ observes the role of media in reporting COVID-19 as sharing information on news cases, latest health guidelines, updates on decisions, and government measures, sensitizing on the dangers, and persuade the public to help control the pandemic

Ogbodo et al. (2020) discourses that solutions lie in health bodies' ability to connect with the public through the media during a pandemic. This connection may mean the difference between morbidity and mortality. According to Reynolds & Seeger (2014), media is a primary source of risk information. Moreover, it plays an essential role in setting agendas and determining outcomes as most people access news from the national media during a significant crisis.

Mwangi (2005) asserts that media is a source of definitions and social reality images for society. In comparison, Ogbodo et al. (2020) reckon that framing helps the media connect with the masses by telling the crisis story. Concerning COVID-19, they opine that framing allows us to identify how the media approaches the coverage of the pandemic and the preeminent frames that help determine the efficiency of coverage. Therefore, the media can watch society closely to warn the public about immediate threats or ever-present threats. (Bhopal, 2014)

This study will examine *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers' coverage of COVID-19 in the first three months of the outbreak in Kenya. The analysis will identify whether the media houses deployed enough resources to create awareness on the pandemic or set the agenda through story placement, themes, type of articles, sources, coverage size, and tone.

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The study's main objective is to examine how *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers covered the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

1. To find out how much space *Daily Nation and the Standard* newspapers allocated to COVID-19 stories during the outbreak.
2. To compare and contrast the COVID-19 pandemic coverage in the *Daily Nation and Standard newspapers* in Kenya.
3. To examine how *Daily Nation and the Standard* newspapers framed COVID-19 stories during the outbreak.
4. To investigate the sources of COVID-19 stories in *Daily Nation and the Standard* newspapers during the outbreak of the pandemic in Kenya.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will answer the following questions.

1. How much space did the *Daily Nation and the Standard* newspapers allocate to COVID-19 stories during the outbreak in Kenya?
2. How did the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers cover COVID-19 stories during the outbreak in Kenya?
3. How did *Daily Nation and the Standard* newspapers frame COVID-19 stories?
4. What are the sources of information on COVID-19 stories in the Kenyan mainstream print media?

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The Ministry of Health (2014) and the GOK (2009) note that wide-ranging outbreaks pose extraordinarily high and increased disaster risks to Kenyan society and call on media to help manage the risk. According to NADIMA, media play a critical role in disaster management and mainstreaming through education, sensitization, and awareness and are responsible for preventing disasters in their area of influence. Furthermore, media interventions can result in an informed society where everybody can participate effectively in disaster management (GOK, 2009).

Given the Coronavirus or COVID-19 is novel, an assessment of media coverage on the issue will also guide future reporting of pandemics, adding new insights to the ongoing attempts to analyze mainstream print media's role and effectiveness. While this is the case, some scholars argue that heightened coverage of COVID-19 is causing fear and is excessive. The research examined coverage of the pandemic by Kenyan mainstream media to understand how media reported it.

Ogbodo et al. (2020) opine that the audience's perception and interpretation of the COVID-19 stem from how the media frames it. He argues that the pandemic's constructive coverage would help the public cope with the pandemic's fear, while shortcomings in the evolving COVID-19 pandemic report could trigger more global health concerns, accentuating the public's fear or lack of it

Reynolds & Seeger (2014) believe that understanding the media's role in an emergency will improve the relationship between the organisation and journalists and subsequently improve communications with the public. Yana et al. (2016) note a correlation between individual response to media reports and behaviour changes and recommend media reports that can guide behavioural changes to control the spread of infectious diseases. Media can influence the masses and socialize people, helping to shape our behaviours, conducts, attitudes, and beliefs. (Bhopal, 2014).

The findings of this study will address how governments can effectively engage mainstream media to educate and create awareness among the public on the benefits of conformity to public health rules such as quarantine, social distancing, and the use of personal protective equipment.

1.6. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The scope is limited to the *Standard* and *Daily Nation* newspapers and the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The study will examine coverage of the pandemic in the first three months of the outbreak due to time and resource constraints. Although the pandemic is ongoing, and a lot has happened since the outbreak.

The study will review two mainstream newspapers in Kenya, though other publications could be considered, such as *the Star* and the *People Daily* publications. Audience reach informed the choice of *Daily Nation* and *the Standard*.

The research reviewed secondary data. However, studies on COVID-19 were not available until April 2020. Thus, study resources were limited at the beginning. The researcher addressed this

limitation using resources on other pandemic coverage like H1N1 and attributions made to the authors.

1.7. ETHICAL ISSUES

The data collection period doesn't provide a complete presentation of coverage of COVID-19 by Kenyan mainstream media as the virus is yet to be contained, and reporting is ongoing. Therefore, the researcher limited the study to three months, from March 13, 2020, to June 10, 2020. Future studies could analyze coverage until when the pandemic is controlled.

1.8. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Mainstream media is defined in the study as *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers

Framing: The study defines it in terms of positive, negative, and neutral frames. A negative loaded frame would depict a losing battle and fear, while a positive frame illustrates victory over the virus. In general, framing indicates the nature of stories portrayed by *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* in coverage of the pandemic.

Public agenda in this study means issues or events media consumers seek or wish to be informed about.

Media agenda: The study refers to it as dominant topics and emphasis placed on stories about the pandemic by the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers through repetition, framing, prominence, and redundancy in news coverage.

Hard news: For this study, hard news refers to all general news items, excluding sports news, business news, and county news.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the identified academic discourse in this scope of investigation resulting from the literature review - generating a knowledge overview of the study interest. In addition, it analyzes media coverage of global pandemics and media framing of pandemics and agenda-setting.

2.1 HEALTH IN KENYA

Although Kenya is a fast-growing East African economy and a fledgling democratic state, healthcare has not kept pace. (Keats, Macharia, and Singh et al., 2018) Furthermore, the country's healthcare delivery system is split between public and private healthcare providers. Public healthcare is financed by revenues collected by the government and donor funding.

Infectious diseases are the leading causes of mortality and morbidity, while non-communicable diseases have been on the rise and are a large contributor to disease in Kenya. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government of Kenya imposed strict containment measures to respond to the pandemic, including the closure of borders and schools and a ban on international travel and social gatherings to control the spread of the virus (Barasa, Kazungu, and Orangi et al., 2021). The intervention was necessary because COVID-19 has become a huge burden for countries, with infections rising from less than one million cases in February 2020 to more than 28 million and 900,000 deaths by September 2020 globally.

Ouma, Masai, & Nyadera (2020) call developing countries to consider health an important component of national security and treat any threat to public health as an emergency. These include making universal healthcare truly universal, expanding the healthcare workforce, addressing corruption and mismanagement of resources, and making individual health insurance accessible for all instead of only 11 per cent of Kenyans currently covered by the National Health Insurance Fund program.

2.2 GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MASS MEDIA IN THE WORLD

Lee (2001) reckons that mass media can trace its history back to the last 500 years. He explains that social change and technological advances pushed mass media development as we know it today. The Bible became the first book to be published and distributed to the masses after the

printing press invention in 1456. Later, in the 1600s, the primary newspaper publication was made available to a broader audience, birthing the evolution of mass media communication.

Unknown author ¹(2010) opines that newspapers were a perfect choice for urbanized Americans of the 19th century, as they could no longer rely on personal interactions for local news. Adding that audiences had more free time and more money during the Industrial Revolution, and the media helped them figure out how to spend both.

Like newspapers, magazines debuted in 1704. On the other hand, electronic mass media grew - first with radio in the 1920s and the discovery of television, satellite communication, and the internet in the early 1980s (Lee, 2001). In 2000, the internet opened the world to a new way of communication - social media. Mozee (2012) defines social media as a term used to describe diverse communication platforms and electronic methods of interacting. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe it as a collection of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0.

2.3 MASS MEDIA IN KENYA

The media has opened government institutions to public scrutiny and fostered development in Kenya. Article 35 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 has also granted journalists the right to access information held by the state and other persons. Esipisu & Khaguli (2009) note that a free society that considers itself democratic should open its doors wide to the public regarding its operations. However, subsequent Kenyan laws like the Civil Service Act (1989) impose restrictions upon public officers to disclose confidential information. That notwithstanding, media critics applaud the effort to say that some limits need to be in place for media to function right. Malvin (1981) says media freedom is not an absolute good and agrees with restrictions imposed on media. For example, the law of defamation in Kenya allows any person whose reputation is injured by the press to commence a civil suit in damages against the person making the false statement and against any publication knowingly carrying the inaccurate information.

Generally, media plays a critical role in increasing public awareness, collecting views, information, and attitudes toward particular issues. It also provides information, educates, and

¹ The author cannot be named (Understanding Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication (2010) by a publisher who has requested that they and the original author not receive attribution.

entertains, and caters to the development of a civilized society, has the power to influence the masses, and can socialize people helping to shape our behaviours, conducts, attitudes, and beliefs. Media also plays a surveillance role, watching society closely to warn the public about immediate or ever-present threats. (Bhopal, 2014)

2.4 MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Mainstream media are very profitable corporations linked to or owned by much bigger corporations. They are at the top of the power structure of the private economy, which is an authoritarian structure and controlled from above. Mainstream media interact with other major power centres like the government, other corporations, and universities. They make money from the sale of news and set the agenda of public discourse. Also, they are considered credible and have enough resources to invest in the news process (Chomsky, 1997).

Mwangi (2016) notes that the Daily Nation and the Standard are the dominant print media outlets in Kenya, commanding about 33% of the market share combined: *Daily Nation* (23%) and the *Standard* (10%). Other local newspapers with considerable share are the *People Daily* with 2%, the *Star* newspaper controlling 1% readership, and *Taifaleo*, a Swahili publication with 6% of the market share. This study will examine how *Daily Nation* and *the Standard* newspapers covered the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya.

2.5 OVERVIEW OF PANDEMICS

A pandemic is an infectious epidemic that spreads through the human population, affecting many people, a sizeable proportion of a state, an entire nation, a continent, or a part of the whole globe. Humans have been affected by pandemics throughout history in varying degrees (Samal, 2014). Chang et al. (2020) remark that the world has witnessed about 30 new illnesses over the years, including the outbreak of SARS and avian influenza in November 2003. Other pandemics include smallpox, HIV/AIDS, Spanish flu, plagues, H1N1 influenza, Ebola, and MERS.

The first well-documented pandemic occurred in 1580, originating in Asia and spreading through Europe, Africa, and the Americas. He estimates 31 influenza illnesses have occurred at intervals since then - three in the last century (1918-19, 1957, and 1968) and six in the 19th century in 1800-1801, 1837, 1843, 1857, 1874, and in 1889-92. The Spanish flu outbreak of 1918 was the most

severe, with extensive morbidity and high mortality - an estimated 40-50 million deaths worldwide (Tognotti, 2009).

Plagues and smallpox were also catastrophic, particularly the three great plagues pandemics recorded, in 541, 1347, and 1894 CE, which killed 200 million people and smallpox, an acute infectious disease of viral origin in the 20th century, responsible for 300–500 million deaths but eradicated in 1980 (Frith, 2012; Thiéves et al., 2014).

Influenza

According to Samal (2014), influenza is an infectious disease of birds and mammals caused by RNA viruses of the family Orthomyxoviridae with fever, muscle pains, headache, coughing, and fatigue. Samal estimates show that the 2009 pandemic of H1N1 mortality ranged from 151,700 to 575,400 people. Many of these deaths were in people younger than 65 years of age.

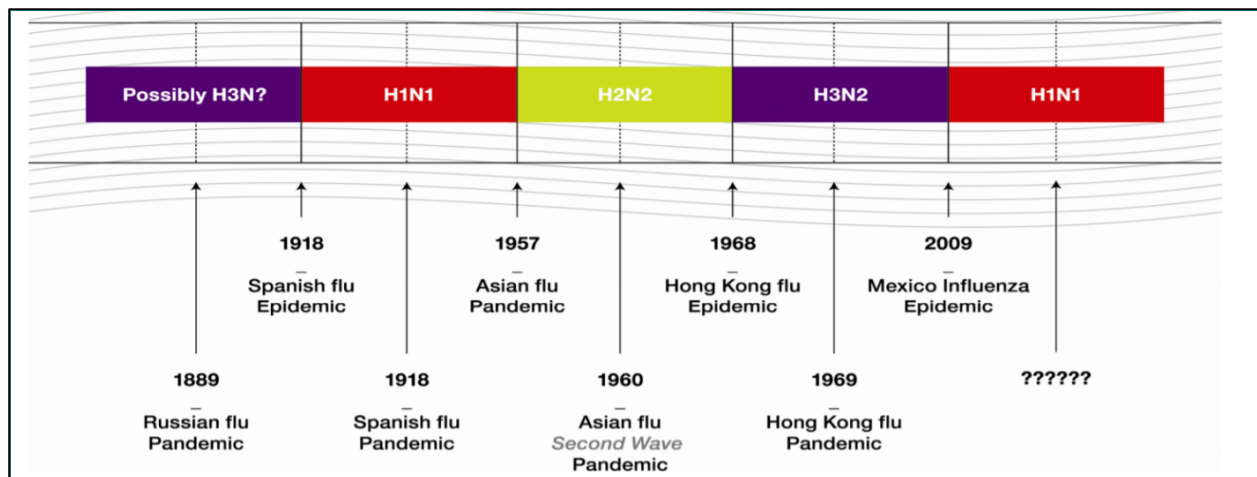


Figure 2.1 Influenza pandemic (1889-2009)- (Tognotti, 2009)

HIV/AIDS

The first cases of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) were reported in the United States in the spring of 1981. They showed that HIV infection (the virus that causes AIDS) was sexually transmitted, with large incidences among gay and bisexual communities. Many of the cases happened in urban, educated, white male gay surroundings. (Center for Substance Abuse

Treatment, 2000). WHO data shows a steady decline in the number of new infections and HIV-related deaths - from two million in 2007 to 770 000 in 2018 (WHO, 2018).

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOCIO-ECONOMY

On March 11, 2020, WHO (2020) declared COVID-19 a pandemic. According to UNICEF (2020), as of April 10, 2020, 126 countries had introduced or adapted social protection measures, of which 83 provide explicit support for children and their families. One hundred eighty-eight countries had also imposed countrywide closures, affecting more than 1.5 billion children and youth. In addition, UNICEF observed that in contrast to previous disease outbreaks, governments imposed school closures pre-emptively in 27 countries before cases of the virus were reported. At the same time, about 58 countries and territories postponed or rescheduled exams, while 11 countries cancelled exams altogether (UNICEF, 2020).

The World Bank opines that containment measures to slow the spread of the virus have slowed global trade and disrupted global value chains. Official quarantines have interrupted the movement of people and free flow of goods, while precautionary behaviours have reduced travel and tourism. (World Bank, 2020).

In China, where the disease originated, recorded an estimated fatality risk of 2.3 per cent, with higher risks in older individuals (14.8% in those aged >80 years) and health workers on the frontlines of battling the disease (Euzebiusz & Selgelid, 2020). China implemented elaborate control measures including proactive surveillance for suspect cases, rapid diagnosis of patients and immediate isolation of confirmed cases, rigorous tracking and quarantine of close contacts, and a high degree of population understanding and acceptance of these measures, which minimized transmissions in humans' (WHO, 2019).

Global consultancy firm, Deloitte, observes that COVID-19 has had a vast social and economic impact globally. The global GDP loss over 2020 and 2021 might stand at US\$ 9 trillion. According to Deloitte, quarantines, lockdowns, and social distancing measures affect sections that depend on social connections such as travel, hospitality, entertainment, and tourism, as more than half of the world's population was already under some form of lockdown (Deloitte, 2020).

The World Bank's Africa Pulse 2020 report forecasted sub-Saharan Africa would experience the first recession over 25 years. Estimating the pandemic will cost the region \$37 billion and \$79 billion in output losses in 2020. Agricultural production is likely to contract between 2.6 per cent and 7 per cent with a drop in food imports - from 13 to 25 per cent due to a combination of higher transaction costs and reduced domestic demand (World Bank, 2020).

IMF (2020) reported that emerging markets and developing economies would be the most affected, 'given their weaker health systems, more constrained macroeconomic policy space, often less-diversified economies, and in some cases the high risk of debt distress.

MarketsandMarkets™ (2020) estimates COVID-19 impact on the global medical supplies market to reach \$100 billion by 2021 from \$78 billion in 2020, with increased awareness of personal hygiene and the environment.

A WHO survey showed that countries reallocated more than 95% of health resources to Coronavirus. It also observed a reduced focus on non-communicable diseases, especially cancer screening. Immunization rates also plummeted during the pandemic. (WHO, 2020)

The East African newspaper noted that Kenya had reduced budgetary allocation towards its economic blueprint - the Big4agenda, by allocating it \$1.28 billion compared with \$4.3 billion the previous year (Anyanzwa, 2020).

To manage the situation, the US Federal government cut Fed Funds rates and allocated more than US\$1.5 trillion into liquidity relief for banks to keep them viable. In China, the People's Bank of China disbursed more than US\$240 billion of liquidity into the financial system. Other central banks have permeated liquidity in similar ways to cushion firms and households from liquidity constraints. In Kenya, the government introduced several fiscal, monetary, and institutional policies in battling the COVID-19 pandemic with donor support. The government also received Kshs. 5.3 billion from the World Bank and Kshs. 7.4 billion from the Central Bank to help navigate the COVID-19 storm in early April 2020 (Deloitte, 2020).

2.6 MEDIA COVERAGE OF GLOBAL PANDEMICS

Vasterman & Ruigrok (2013) observe that media coverage of global pandemics is 'alarming, sensationalist, focused on worst-case scenarios, and a narrative built on iconic images of the

medieval plague rebirth when a new outbreak occurs.' In their paper on *coverage of A/H1N1 by Dutch media*, they note the pandemic was not as fatal as the media had made people believe, as the Netherlands recorded 63 deaths by 2010.

The Dutch media caught interest in the pandemic after WHO, in 2009, announced it was the first global pandemic in 40 years and had originated in Mexico. The announcement threw media into a frenzy, with news outlets across the world covering the story (Vasterman & Ruigrok, 2013).

Vasterman & Ruigrok (2013), citing Vasterman et al. (2005); Kasperson (1987) and Hooker (2010), assert that hyping coverage of pandemics creates the impression that 'is a severe risk that needs attention' and 'puts pressure on the government and public health institutions' to address the situation. They add that such a reaction does 'validate the frame of a real crisis' and may become 'a health scare.' The two scholars further believe that advances in media coverage of pandemics are related to the pandemic outbreak stages, namely - sounding the alarm, mixed messages, and hot crisis and containment, as shown below. Kenya was in the 3rd stage by October 2020.

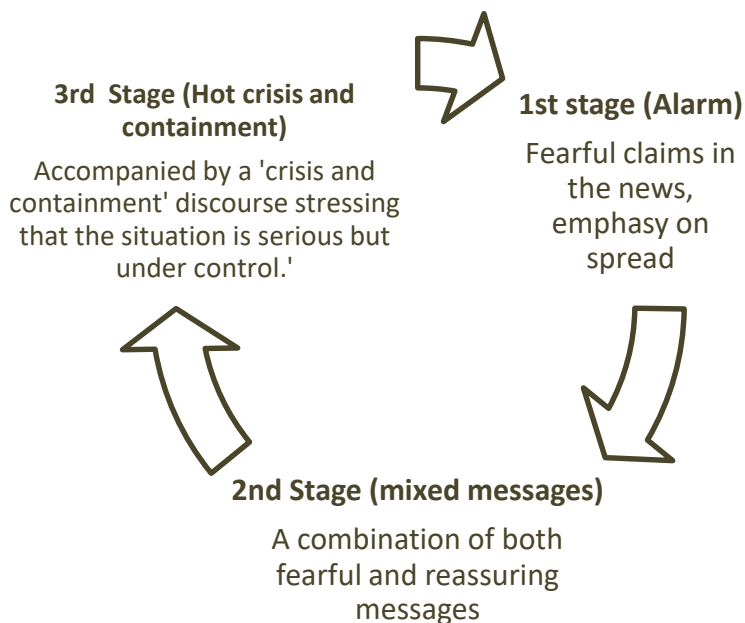


Figure 2.2 Vasterman & Ruigrok (2013) analysis model of the A/H1N1 pandemic in 2009.

In their research, Vasterman & Ruigrok (2013) categorized 10,980 statements as alarming, reassuring, or neutral. Out of which, the government, WHO, RIVM (Dutch Centre for Infectious Disease Control) ranked top three in the percentage of alarmist messages shared via media channels on the pandemic, especially during the first and third stages of the outbreak. Alarmist messages increase media devotion to cover the pandemic, but also the scholars add it does push governments to action.

Klemm et al.'s (2016) study called *Swine Flu and Hype: A Systematic Review of Media Dramatization of the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic found that AH1N1 attracted huge media attention and news content stressed threat over precautionary measures.*' In their analysis of 13 journal articles that evaluated coverage of the H1N1 pandemic globally, they observe that all the studies acknowledged H1N1-related coverage was high initially but later dwindled within the first month. The media reports referenced 'the risk of hospitalization or death, the spread of the disease, and mortality tallies.'

Klemm et al., 2013 citing Fogarty et al., 2011; Goodall et al., 2012; Kaspersen et al., 1988; Mazur & Lee, 1993, observe continued media coverage of H1N1, government attentiveness and the daily reports of new infections and deaths, may lead to risk overestimation and increase feelings of fear.

2.7 MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PANDEMIC

Time magazine ranked Coronavirus as the most covered pandemic by media globally. The magazine analyzed data by LexisNexis, the largest data broker worldwide, on media coverage of Ebola and Coronavirus. The results show that over 41,000 English-language print news articles mentioned the word 'Coronavirus,' of which 19,000 included it in their headlines from January 2020. Compared to only 1,800 English-language print news articles published in August 2018, the first month of the 10th Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. About 700 headlines mentioned Ebola (Ducharme, 2020).

Ducharme (2020) justifies this trend saying it could be because Ebola had a few fatalities (11,000 deaths) compared to COVID-19 (about 380,000 deaths by June 2020 according to WHO) and was contained in West Africa, unlike COVID-19, which spread across the world to over 200 countries.

Scholars agree there has been heightened media coverage of Coronavirus because it's new, and people are discerning information about it, although others see it as 'excessive' (Ducharme, 2020).

A recent study by Parse.ly on 3,000 high-traffic news sites in the US shows that '*in the past week (March 9-17, 2020), coronavirus articles represented just one per cent of published articles, but about 13 per cent of all article views.*' The amount of reading the news also increased by 30 per cent in the period of study. The main subtopics were social distancing, flattening the curve, self-quarantine, and travel restrictions. (Vox, 2020).

In May 2020, APO group, an online press release distribution service, reported that it had distributed pro-bono more than 3,000 press releases and official statements about COVID-19 in Africa for 326 official organisations and governments, from April 1, 2020, to May 25, 2020. Below is a table of the top ten organisations that used the service.

Table 2.1 Top ten organisations using press releases about COVID-19 from April 1, 2020, to May 25, 2020

Organisation/ Government	Number of press releases
World Health Organisation (WHO)	169 press releases
Ministry of Health – Kenya	157 press releases
Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC)	149 press releases
Government of South Africa	126 press releases
Ministry of Health – Uganda	79 press releases
Ministry of Health – Ethiopia	78 press releases
Ministry of Health – Cameroon	64 press releases
Ministry of Health – Rwanda	61 press releases
Ministry of Health – Senegal	60 press releases
Ministry of Health – Gabon	58 press releases

APO Group, April 2020

2.8 ROLE OF MEDIA IN PANDEMIC

Mwangi (2005) observes that mass media is an essential tool of the 21st century. It provides the framework for perceiving reality and manipulation by political, economic, and academic elites who control the system. While Reynolds & Seeger (2014) notes media is a primary source of risk information.

NADIMA agrees that media players perform a critical role in disaster management and mainstreaming disaster management through sensitization and are responsible for preventing disasters. It also reckons that media interventions can cause society to help in disaster management (GOK, 2009).

Media plays an essential role in setting agendas and determining outcomes as most people access news from the national media during a significant crisis. It is also one of the powerful ways to shape public opinion (De Vreese, 2005). Media has the power to influence the masses and socialize people, helping shape our behaviours, conducts, attitudes, and beliefs. It also plays a surveillance role, watching society closely to warn the public about imminent or ever-present threats. (Bhopal, 2014)

Regarding COVID-19, mass media, especially print media, acts as a channel for information by producing and passing across health-related information during a health crisis. For example, during this lockdown period, the media was the most reliable platform for information about the coronavirus. (Usman, 2020).

2.9 CONTENT ANALYSIS IN NEWSPAPERS

This research analyzed coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic using comparative content analysis. Spurk & Lublinski (2014) notes that content analysis is a tedious method, with a strict order of steps to be taken, including identifying the research material and conducting a deep analysis of the content sentence by sentence. In addition, the procedure requires using a tool called codebook to systematically collect data from a group of text to and the results entered or coded and counted to establish a pattern. Finally, the data is assigned numerical codes for ease of analysis.

Taşdemir & Kuş (2011) citing, Bilgin (2006), opines that content analysis is a research technique that establishes relations between elements. Macnamara (2005) concurs, noting that content analysis is used to study a range of texts and discussions in clinical and social research and newspapers and magazines' editorial and advertising content. He adds that Harold Lasswell introduced it to mass media research in 1927 to study propaganda.

Lynch & Peer (2002) *recommend studying a week's worth of newspapers, looking at a proportion of stories, overall structure, listings, and content promotion, and studying each story to understand*

the content. For content analysis of news articles, the authors recommend that the articles should meet the following criteria.

- *Longer than two inches in length*
- *Written in complete sentences with a central theme*
- *Must not be part of a paid advertisement*
- *It must be a complete story, not a promotional reference for a full story contained elsewhere.*

Lynch & Peer (2002) encourage researchers to use at least five to ten coders and commission them to work in small groups to limit errors. Additionally, he recommends convening a meeting with the coders to review the definitions and procedures, coding sheet, meaning of each question, and how to collect data.

A coding list or sheet should establish all relevant messages despite the tone, categories of issues or topics, names of sources associated with messages. Also, the author recommends setting variables (Macnamara,2005). This research used the five key variables by scholars such as Macnamara and Linström & Marais (2012), namely:

- *Placement: page number allocated for the story,*
- *Type of story: nature of the article such as opinion, hard or soft news,*
- *Size of articles or length of radio and T.V. segments or article,*
- *Tone: Story direction*
- *Theme: What the story is about*
- *Sources: Originators of the story (e.g., known expert, report, or institution).*

Lynch & Peer (2002) further guide that *each coder should be given story analysis forms for each story they will examine, story analysis instructions and definitions, quick reference code list, and a ruler.*

Content analysis involves identifying the research material and conducting a deep analysis of the content sentence by sentence (Spurk & Lublinski, 2014).

The study followed the steps used by Taşdemir & Kuş (2011) in the *Content Analysis of the News in the National Papers Concerning the Renewed Primary Curriculum in Turkey.* The first step

was to identify and determine the media form (print media), the date or period, and the research unit (by conducting an online search of stories covered by the two media houses in the said period).

The researcher conducted a preliminary online search of the stories on the *Nation and the Standard newspaper* websites to identify the coverage with mentions of COVID-19. COVID-19 was the keyword used in searching the articles. News pieces that matched the keywords were identified. The researcher then used the match to access hard copies of the news items from the *Nation Media Group* and *the Standard Group libraries*. The articles were read and analyzed for relevant variables using a codebook.

The codebook contained six major variables for the research: *placement, story type, story direction, sources, size, and theme*. The data is read word by word to derive codes by first highlighting the exact words from the text that capture key thoughts or concepts. Notes were then made based on first impressions, thoughts, and initial analysis to code the data. Codes were later sorted and organized into categories of meaningful clusters. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Krippendorff (2004) notes that content analysis involves a 'systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter' to interpret the meaning and respond to the research.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) opine that data collection accuracy depends on the instruments used to collect the data in terms of validity and reliability.

2.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is hinged on Agenda setting and framing theories and will examine its use in coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic by Kenya mainstream media.

2.11 AGENDA SETTING THEORY

Potter (2019) opines that *Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw introduced agenda-setting theory to explain their findings from a research project that used both a survey and a content analysis of media coverage of the 1968 USA presidential campaign*. According to the author, agenda-setting is a media theory that claims that the media agenda influences the public agenda and is reflected by what is stressed in news coverage. In contrast, the public agenda is mirrored by issues the public thinks are dear and formed by the media agenda as people consume media and trust what's covered. Media often makes them feel that those are the issues they should ponder upon as they are important.

Agenda setting extends beyond political settings covering a range of public issues. It emphasizes on characteristics and traits of objects, which composed and defined the agenda. Although agenda-setting theory has similarities with framing theory by stressing how the media picture certain topics through the news contents. (Stacks et al., 2015)

Luo et al. (2018) opine that although news coverage of issues is essential, the significant question is whether and how differentiated presentations of an issue affect how the public thinks about it. The author adds that agenda-setting effects vary across media platforms because of their capacity to carry the issues. For instance, newspapers often provide more coverage space than television or magazines, with online media inhibiting media audience capacity in drawing the public's attention.

Repetition of messages in the news daily, along with the ubiquity of the news media in our daily lives, establishes media influence on the audience. Furthermore, that redundancy of the news agenda allows the public to learn about issues and other topics in the news with little deliberate effort, lending the issue to become a public agenda. The curious nature of man to know what is happening in the environment leads to the desire to search for information, rely on the media, and become predisposed to agenda-setting effects. Although media sets the agenda, it's not the dominant source of orientation as the public can rely on personal experience, friends, and family. Both media and prominent persons can set media agenda as the pattern of news coverage that defines the media's agenda results from exchanges with news sources, the daily interactions among news organisations themselves, journalism's norms and traditions, and social media trends. While public officials, for example, presidents and prime ministers, are chief agenda setters. Public relations practitioners also influence news agendas (Valenzuela & Mccombs, 2019).

Though media sets public agenda, public relations influence media agendas through framing and information subsidies (advertorial and press releases). Public relations practitioners' select information, highlight it, organize it, then feed it to the media, avoiding negative news about products and services. Media selects information provided by public relations practitioners based on news value, and as a result, 'this agenda-setting influences audiences.' (Van, 2015).

Valenzuela & Mccombs (2019) list the negative effects of agenda-setting as forming opinions, priming opinions by emphasising issues and shaping an opinion by stressing attributes.

In his study on *agenda setting vs gatekeeping in press coverage of presidential elections in Kenya*, Mwangi (2016), notes that the influence of agenda-setting theory closely reflects his study position that content of media is a fundamental and powerful variable in any process intended to cast light on agenda setting discourses. He observes that media educates the public about the magnitude of importance they should place on one issue versus another. Also, the media can set an agenda due to the control it has of information that passes its gates.

Manaf et al. (2017), citing McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (2014) and Wu and Coleman (2009), notes that media prompts audiences on the importance of news through the size of the headings and the positioning of the news report. For instance, coverage appearing on the first page of a newspaper is rated as very important parallel to news stories published on page five onward. The selection and constant repetition of a few issues in the news (media agenda) make the audience perceive them as more important than others resulting in the media agenda becoming a public agenda. Manaf et al. (2017) also observe that more exposure to media agenda makes the issue top of mind in the audience's mind and later prominent in public opinion as audiences believe that the issue is indeed important.

In coverage of a single event, like the COVID-19 pandemic, agenda-setting is often limited to local news sources than cross-national sources because coverage involves only domestic events (Wu, 2021).

2.12 FRAMING THEORY

Framing is a communication process that 'involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue via 'a dynamic process that involves frame-building, frame-setting, and individual and societal level consequences of framing.' Frame-building consists of internal and external factors that influence the news item before publication, frame-setting are prepositions to existing issues and events, and consequences are altered attitudes and behaviour because of exposure to news frames. (De Vreese, 2005)

Media scholars De Vreese, 2005; Gitlin, 1980; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; define news frames as interpretive patterns that give meaning to an event or issue. While (Pedersen, 2020), outlines media framing as how the news media organize and provide meaning to a story by emphasizing some parts of reality and disregarding others. The scholars add that these patterns of stressing and

omission in news coverage create frames that can have considerable effects on news consumers' perceptions and attitudes about an issue or event. Concerning COVID-19, the government emphasized behaviour changes such as hygiene, social distancing, wearing masks, and quarantine.

Linström and Marais (2012) trace the origin of framing theory to Erving Goffman, a sociologist. They note the idea of framing was based on Goffman's book – in which he used the concept of frames to label diagrams of interpretation that allow people 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label' occurrences or events. Since then, the theory has gained popularity in media analysis studies after media scholar Robert Entman applied it to the analysis of mass media in his paper published in 1993.

Framing theory suggests that presentation influences people's choices of how to process information. Media create the frame by introducing news items with predefined and narrow contextualization. Frames can be designed to enhance understanding or are used as cognitive shortcuts to link stories to the bigger picture (De Vreese, 2005).

Kozman's (2017) observed that frames helped analyze coverage and narrow down the precise nature of framing. It could also open opportunities to 'methodological standardization and replication' that lead to a deeper understanding of the theory. Frames represent factors that make up the 'individual construct'.

For Ogbodo et al. (2020), the audience's perception and interpretation of the COVID-19 stem from how the media frames it. The author argues that the pandemic's constructive coverage would help the public cope with the Coronavirus' fear. While shortcomings in the evolving COVID-19 pandemic report could trigger more global health concerns. For instance, the nature of the pandemic's media framing may have accentuated the public's fear or lack of it.

De Vreese (2005) opines that the empirical approach has proven that frames are specific textual and visual elements and differ from 'the remaining news story, which may be considered core news facts.' He suggests two types of general typology or distinction regarding the frame's nature and content - issue-specific frames or generic frames. He, however, shows a liking for Tankard's (2001) list of framing mechanisms, which includes the following; headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics, and charts, and concluding statements and paragraphs.

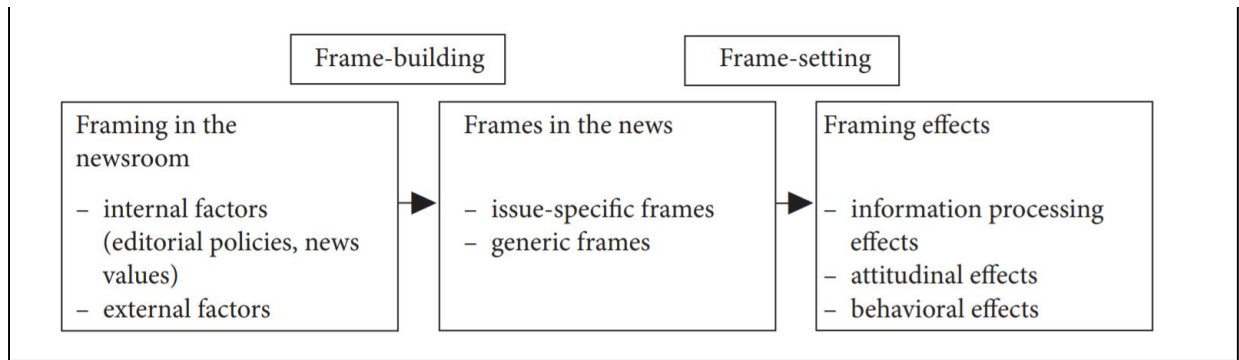


Figure 2.3 Integrated framing process model (de Vreese, 2005)

The government's contribution to the debate attracted media attention and formed frames that all media outlets in his study used 'with almost identical frequency.' In this research, he noticed that 'media's frequent adoption of the policy frame was almost proportional to the number of officials covered in the press and that it could be because of 'journalists' tendency to cover their beats and all its happenings.' His assessment of news reports by bloggers revealed that they did not use much of the policy frame due to either lack of access to official sources or non-conformity to the cardinal rule of news reporting. Instead, they relied on coverage from mainstream media, and as a result, 'bloggers conveyed the frames of dominant sources contributing to the issue' in traditional media (Kozman's, 2017).

Although 'media significantly influence and shape collective behaviour,' and is essential 'for effective and smooth cooperation among individuals and diverse groups in society.' Government entities cannot 'influence and predict the public's engagement and participation in political life when media credibility is low.' (Volobueva, 2008)

Ogbodo et al. (2020) argue that framing helps the media connect with the masses by telling the crisis story. Relating to COVID-19, he opines framing allows us to identify how the media approaches the coverage of the pandemic and the preeminent frames that help determine the coverage's efficiency.

Jakopović and Skoko (2015), citing Hallahan (1999), Verčič et al. (2004), discourse that framing is also applicable to public relations. He adds that 'it can be described as a white lie' where one 'creates a positive image by highlighting the characteristics that distinguish them from the

competition.' Jakopović and Skoko (2015) found that although media play a critical role in interpreting and creating social reality through framing, they are not free from external influence.

This theory was chosen for the study because it can give frames about negativity and positivity in the coverage by *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* in coverage of the pandemic. The research will examine mainstream media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya using content analysis.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter gives an overview of the research approach. It presents the study population, sampling and sampling procedure, data collection and analysis methods, and reliability and validity instruments. This study is a comparative content analysis of the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* from when Kenya confirmed the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, March 12, 2020, to when the pandemic cases escalated in the first 90 days. The study will analyze all newspaper editions published by the two papers from March 13 to June 10.

3.1 STUDY POPULATION

The research population includes copies of all *Daily Nation and the Standard Newspapers*, published between March 13 to June 10, the first three months of the COVID-19 outbreak in Kenya. The number of copies totals 180 issues – 90 *Daily Nation* newspapers and 90 editions of the *Standard*. The selected study duration is the period between when the Kenyan government confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in the country and when it issued and enforced containment measures.

Table 3.1 Study population

Name of the Newspaper	Mar 13 - 31	Apr 1-30	May 1-31	June 1- 10	Total
	<i>The Standard</i>	19	30	31	10
<i>Daily Nation</i>	19	30	31	10	90
Total					180

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

The 180 newspaper editions made the study population. Given the sample size was small, the researcher used census survey. The census technique allows all representative groups to be studied. All 180 newspapers and data concerning articles about COVID-19 were analyzed.

3.3 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

In this study, the primary unit of analysis was news article(s) relating to mentions of the COVID-19 pandemic in the *Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers*, published during the study timeline. The stories include opinion pieces, letters to the editors, commentaries, hard news, and soft news articles. Linström & Marais (2012) consider individual news articles that appeared in the selected population as the unit of analysis in frame analysis. The researcher categorized the articles further using the following variables in the unit code:

- i. Placement:** *Prominence of the coverage. FrontPage (headline/lead story), Page 2 (second lead), Page 3, fillers (inside stories), and back page story.*
- ii. Story type:** *Hard news, soft news, editorial, opinion, letters to the editor, commentary and analysis, cartoons, and photos*
- iii. Story Direction-Positive, Negative and Neutral.** *These are adjectives that reveal the tone or sentiments of the article.*
 - Negative-** *words or phrases indicating the disease's negative impact, such as lockdown, job losses, spread, death, new cases, pay cut, and curfew.*
 - Positive-** *economic stimulus package, reopen, safety nets, treatment, and vaccine*
 - Neutral –** *social distance, wear masks, test, frontline workers, quarantine, technology, and isolation.*
- iv. Size-** *length of the story or column length allocated to it in centimetres square or its proportion in the A3 paper*
- v. Theme-** *New cases, containment measures, travel restrictions, technology, treatment, economy and trade, austerity measures, death, treatment, resources and equipment, and fear.*
- vi. Sources-** *These are the originators of the news stories.*

Government	President/PSCU/Statehouse Deputy President Government Spokesperson/Government Chief Justice Speaker (National and County) COVID Emergency Response Fund (Kenya)	Media	Journalist Media house Newspaper columnist Kenya News Agency (KNA) International News Agency
			County Government
Legislature	Parliament MP		
Ministries			

	Minister of Health/Ministry of Health Minister of Education Minister of Agriculture Minister of Finance Minister of Transport Minister of Trade Minister of Interior Security Minister of Foreign Affairs Minister of Sports Minister of Agriculture Permanent Secretary (Ministry) Chief Administrative Secretary (Ministry)	International Organisations	WHO UNICEF UN FAO IOM
		Development Agency	World Bank IMF EU/ G-20
Pharmaceuticals	Pfizer Astrazeneca Sputnik Johnson & Johnson GAVI (Vaccine Alliance) Moderna Novavax OXFORD Institute Serum Institute COVAX	Government Agency	Independent Policing Authority (IPOA)/Police Service Kenya Airways State Corporation
Research	KEMRI CDC LANCET (Laboratory)	Hospitals	Private Hospital Mission Hospital National/Referral Hospital County Hospital
Academia	Professor University/Institution of Higher Learning Lecturer (of a university/Institution) Teacher (Primary school) Teacher (secondary school) ECD (Early Childhood Education teacher) PhD student/ University Student	Union	KUPPET KNUT COTU/Workers Unions Student/ business Association
		Political parties/ politics	Jubilee party UDA party NASA party ODM Politician Registrar of political parties
Experts	Public relations/Communications specialist/International Relations/Partnerships HR/ Management experts Lawyer/Advocate Policy Analyst Economist/Researcher Medical Practitioner/Medic Scientist Nurse Data/technology expert	Judiciary	Judges
		Reader	
		Religion	SUPKEM National Council of Churches (NCCK) Clergy
		Embassy/Consulates	United Kingdom (UK) Embassy or High Commission Danish Embassy Ethiopian Embassy US Embassy
		Private Sector	Corporate Entity- private or intergovernmental or NGO CEO/MD
		Other (s)	

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) opines that data analysis is the process of ensuring order, structure, and meaning to the collected information. The study used descriptive analysis to transform data into tables and charts. Quantitative data were analysed for frequency distribution and percentages. Coded data were analyzed by extracting dominant frames and discussing each selected frame in detail to operationalize the theory for qualitative data. Matthes (2009) notes that framing scholars prefer broader levels of analysis and a dominant frame per news item. The study analysis used frequency measures on the main variables to identify inconsistencies within datasets and review the survey for biases and missing information. Data were analyzed using the SPSS version (Kothari, 2011).

3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The study developed a coding sheet and trained coders to ensure inter-coder reliability. Macnamara (2005) advises using two or more coders for each reliability sub-sample to ensure obtained ratings are distinctive. The research engaged two coders to achieve inter-coder reliability. Neuendorf (2002) and Macnamara (2005) recommend that researchers compare the ratings at two levels: agreement (coders score and ratings) and co-variation (consistency of variance) (Neuendorf, 2002).

Citing Neuendorf (2002), Macnamara (2005) proposes coding between coder pairs and multiple coders to be compared at two levels: (a) agreement and (b) co-variation. Where agreement compares the level of likeness between the coders' scores and ratings, and Co-variation assesses whether, when scores do vary, there is a high level of variance. Percentage agreement is the measure of basic assessment. He recommends that inter-coder reliability be assessed for each of the variables studied. Validity is achieved through careful understanding preliminary reading of a sub-set of relevant content and selection of the sample of media content to be analyzed.

Coders were given a detailed explanation of the variables, trained on coding, and provided clear instructions. Then coded data was uploaded onto an excel sheet for analysis, and results from the two coders were compared for validity and reliability. If the two coders made the same interpretation, the data was considered dependable.

Inter-coder reliability= $2*M / (N1+N2)$

M= total number of decisions the two coders agreed on

N1 and N2 = Number of decisions made by coders 1 & 2, respectively

Where: 0= no agreement and 1=perfect agreement

$$2*9 / (10+10) = 0.9$$

The coders achieved 0.9 agreement, which is an almost perfect agreement. The score represents the degree of accuracy and reliability in the study. The calculation measured the agreement between two raters who each classified items into mutually exclusive categories. (IDO Statistics, 2020)

3.6 DATA ETHICS

The study obtained relevant research permission and permits from the University of Nairobi and libraries. The coders worked independently to ensure the reliability of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the data, analysis, and interpretation, helping answer the study objectives. The objectives were to identify dominant frames used by *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* in the coverage of the pandemic, determine the sources of COVID-19 stories in media, investigate the size of space allocated to COVID-19 reports, and compare and contrast how *Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers* covered the outbreak. The study data is presented in charts, graphs, and tables.

4.2 THEME

All 180 publications had stories about the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the study period, stories on containment measures dominated news coverage in the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers, with 512 articles representing 41% of all articles published in the first three months of the pandemic. The published articles included stories about the enforcement of curfew rules, social distancing, and wearing masks. This indicated that the media created awareness about the virus and how to control spread.

Other central themes were fear and panic (154 articles or 12.4%), spread and contact tracing (91 articles or 7.2%), and trade and economy (93 articles or 7.4%). Vaccine development and testing (43 articles), COVID-19 recovery and treatment (29 articles), economic stimulus package (29 articles), support to the needy (28 articles), sports (25) articles, and travel restrictions (20 articles).

Minor themes were; limited COVID-19 resources and facilities in hospitals (19 articles), isolation (16 articles), new COVID-19 cases (15 articles), politics (15 articles), and quarantine (13 articles), probably because the pandemic was novel and Kenya was still recording low infection rates.

Also, both newspapers featured themes on death and culture (14 articles), health and wellbeing (12 articles), relief loans (12 articles), job cuts (11), food security (8 articles), domestic violence (8 articles). Finally, E-commerce and technology had nine stories as people used technology to adjust to the new normal—for example, those working from home and online classes and court hearings.

The dominant themes in the *Daily Nation* coverage were containment measures (52%), fear and panic (14%), contact tracing, and the spread of the virus (5.1%). In contrast, the *Standard* emphasized containment measures (27.3%), the spread of the virus and contact tracing (9.9%), trade and economy (9.7%), fear and panic (8.5%).

The findings indicate that media adequately sensitized the public about the pandemic helping the public cope and adjust to the new normal. The results of the study are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The Coverage of COVID-19 Pandemic Outbreak in the Standard Newspaper

Theme	Standard		Nation		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Containment measures	154	27.3	358	52	512	40.8
Quarantine	6	1.1	7	1	13	1.1
Isolation	12	2.1	4	0.6	16	1.3
Fear/Panic	54	9.6	100	14.6	154	12.4
New COVID-19 cases/Infection	5	0.9	10	1.5	15	1.2
Spread/Contact tracing	56	9.9	35	5.1	91	7.2
Impact of COVID on trade & economy	55	9.7	38	5.5	93	7.4
Resources for COVID facilities in hospitals	14	1.4	5	0.7	19	1.5
COVID-19 recovery/ COVID-19 treatment	8	1.4	21	3.1	29	2.3
COVID-19 vaccine development, testing and production, vaccination	20	3.5	23	3.3	43	3.4
Stimulus package for COVID-19	18	3.2	11	1.6	29	2.3
Relief loans	7	1.2	5	0.7	12	1
Support to the needy during COVID	15	2.7	13	1.9	28	2.2
Travel Restrictions	10	1.8	10	1.5	20	1.6
Health	12	2.1	0	0	12	1
Education	12	2.1	7	1	19	1.5
Job loss/unemployment/ pay cut	10	1.8	1	0.1	11	0.9
Domestic violence	3	0.5	2	0.3	5	0.4
Insecurity	8	1.4	0	0	8	0.6
Technology/E-commerce	5	0.9	4	0.6	9	0.7
Death/burial/Culture	9	1.6	5	0.7	14	1.2
Entertainment	10	1.8	2	0.3	12	1
Sports	20	3.5	5	0.7	25	2
Online learning/e-learning	6	1.1	5	0.7	11	0.9
Others	16	2.8	7	1	23	1.8
Politics	13	2.3	2	0.3	15	1.2
Food shortage, food security, agriculture	5	0.9	3	0.4	8	0.6

Information sharing	2	0.4	5	0.7	7	0.5
Total	565	100	688	100	1253	100

4.3 STORY TYPE

This study examined the categories of stories in mainstream media: *Daily Nation* and *the Standard* newspapers, used to convey COVID-19 news during Kenya's outbreak.

The majority of the articles in both newspapers were hard news (14.3%), opinions (13.2%), commentary and analysis (11.3%), soft stories (10.1%), and international news (8%). In addition, sports news (7.4%), business news (6%), letters to the editor (5.4%), and newspaper editorials (5%) were also common types of articles used to deliver news about the pandemic.

A considerable number of articles throughout the study period in *Daily Nation* newspaper were classified as hard news 106 (15.4%), soft news or feature story 109 (15.8%), and opinion 102(14.8%). Opinion pieces on *Daily Nation* expressed views on support to medical teams, the need to keep the virus at bay, and rooted for mass testing as a measure to curb the spread of the virus. Compared to the *Standard Newspaper*, which expressed called on leaders to communicate the right message, discussed the issue of national debt and government revenue loss, maternal health, and curfew hours during Ramadhan. Readers, too, penned letters with suggested measures, including adopting cashless transactions. The readers in the *Standard Newspaper* also flagged the rise in domestic violence cases in their letters to the editor and commentary.

Similar to the *Daily Nation*, the dominant news type in the *Standard* were commentary & analysis (20%), hard news (13%), international news (12%), opinion (11%), and newspaper editorial (8.1%).

The study findings also show both papers conveyed news of the pandemic in the form of international news, newspaper editorial, and opinion in the first 35 editions (March 13 to April 16). Commentary & analysis articles and soft news were considerably high from 56-90 editions (May 6 to June 10) as new cases emerged and people started feeling the impact of the pandemic on their lives, work, and business. Cartoons on COVID-19 were minimal. Table 4.2 presents the study findings.

Table 4.2: Story type

Story type	Standard		Nation		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hard news	73	12.9	106	15.4	179	14.3
Newspaper editorial	46	8.1	11	1.6	57	4.6
Commentary & Analysis	110	19.5	32	4.7	142	11.3
Opinion	62	11	102	14.8	164	13.2
Letters to the Editor	15	2.7	51	7.4	66	5.4
Soft news/Feature news (emotional stories)	27	4.8	109	15.8	136	10.1
International News	65	11.5	55	8	120	9.7
Sport news	48	8.5	43	6.3	91	7.4
Business news	32	5.7	43	6.3	75	6
Cartoons	3	0.5	5	0.7	8	0.6
Advertisements	11	1.9	15	2.2	26	2.1
Classified	4	0.7	12	1.7	16	1.3
County News	19	3.4	43	6.3	62	5
Supplement/Pullout magazines	31	5.5	43	6.3	74	5.9
Photos/Images/Illustration	19	3.4	17	2.5	36	3
Other news	0	0	1	0.1	1	0.1
Total	565	100	688	100	1253	100

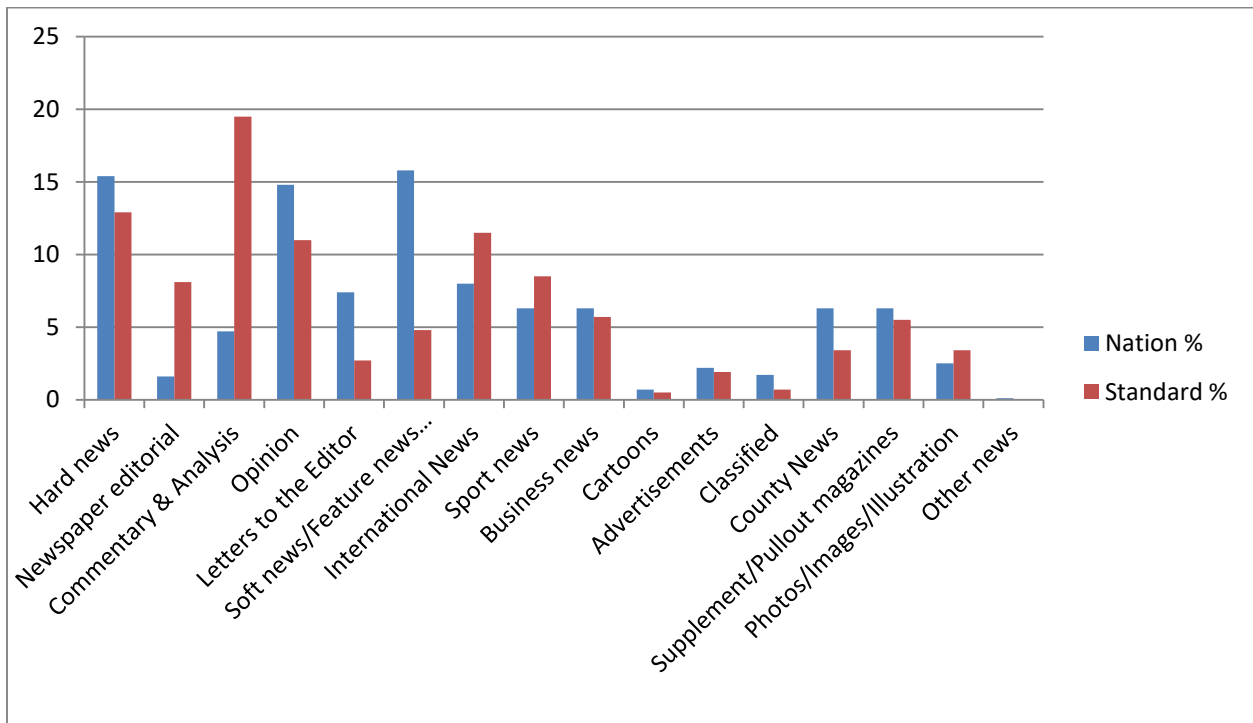


Figure 4.1: Frequency of story type by media (% number of stories)

4.4 SIZE

The study examined the size of stories about COVID-19 in *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* in cm². The *Nation* and *Standard* are printed on A3-sized papers with a print space of 891-centimetre square cm² per page. In the period under study, stories regarding COVID-19 took a combined space of 446, 160 cm² translating to 486.01 newspaper pages or 11% of an average daily newspaper. This size of space is significant as it translates to an average of eleven newspaper editions, considering a newspaper contains 40-44 pages. If both papers were to charge for space, stories about COVID would have generated KShs.194,404 million of advertising revenue. Full-page black and white advertisement costs about KShs.400,000 inclusive of 16% value-added tax in Kenya.

Of the two newspapers, *Daily Nation* allocated a much bigger space of 392,790 cm² coverage of the pandemic compared to 53,370 cm² in the *Standard*. The smallest space allotted to COVID-19 stories in the *Standard* was 32 cm² and 25 cm² in the *Daily Nation*. The largest article in both papers was a centre spread of 1,782 cm². When clustered to sizes, the *Daily Nation* had 108 stories in the 1=200cm² cluster and 42 stories with a space of above 1,201 cm². Seventy-seven articles measured between 801 cm² and 1,200 cm². These are full-page and centre spread articles.

The *Standard* recorded 110 stories with space of 1-200 cm² and 26 articles with above 1,201 cm² and had the highest number of full-page and centre spread articles compared to Daily Nation: 87, occupying between 801 cm² and 1,200 cm².

Table 4.3 Size (cm²)

	1- 200	201- 400	401- 600	601- 800	801- 1000	1001- 1200	1201- 1400	1401- 1600	1601- 1800	1800- 2000	Above 2000
Daily Nation	108	231	178	48	79	2	1	1	13	10	17
Standard	110	132	150	60	84	3	2	4	14	0	6
Total	218	363	328	108	163	5	3	5	27	10	23

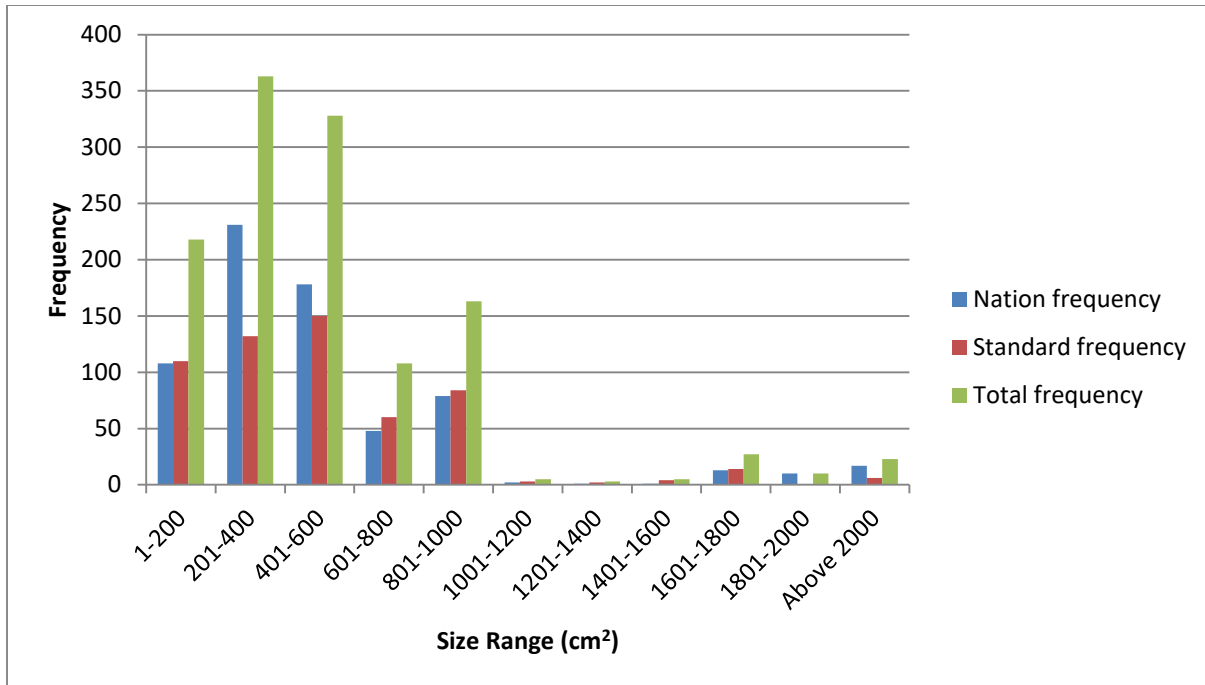


Figure 4.2 Size of COVID-19 stories

4.5 STORY PLACEMENT

Placement reveals prominence given to COVID-19 stories by the *Daily Nation* and *the Standard*. Both newspapers placed a total of 580 (46.4%) COVID-19 stories on the early pages – 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 to 22. The early pages are important pages for the two outlets and are used to sell the newspaper and set the agenda. Mainstream media allocate critical news to prime pages for prominence. Most of the news items were commentary and analysis (13.3%) and opinion pieces (10%) in the middle pages. In addition, there were 65 (5.2%) front page articles, 59 (5%), letters to the editor, 67 (5.1%), editorials, and 63 (5%) back page stories. Other COVID-19 stories were published on second page 43 (3.4%), page three 44 (3.5%), and as illustration (0.2%).

The *Daily Nation* placed 54% of the stories on the middle pages, 15% on the opinion page, 3.9% on page three, 3.8% on page two, and 5% on the front page as the cover story. The back page took 2.3% of the stories, while images took 3.8% of space alongside stories. The *Standard* gave prominence to 32 articles on the front page (5.5%), 47 on the back page (8.3%), 17 on page two (3%), and 17 (3%) on page three. Like *Daily Nation*, the *Standard* placed most COVID-19 stories

on the middle pages (37.1%). Overall, both newspapers published commentary, analysis, opinions, and letters to the editors in the early and middle pages (pages 13-18).

The findings indicate that the two publications considered COVID-19 stories relevant, significant, and important, able to inform and grab readers' attention by publishing 65 front-page articles about the pandemic, translating to 5.2% of the total coverage or a month of cover stories. This resulted in increased attention on COVID-19 coverage from both media outlets, as Table 4.4 shows the study findings.

Table 4.4 Story placement

Publica tion		F/Pg Lead	Pg 2 Lead	Pg 3	Back Pg.	Edito rial	Com mentary &Ana lysis	Opinion	Letters	Middle Pgs.	Image	Fillers
Daily Nation	No	34	26	27	16	14	26	102	45	370	26	2
	%	5	3.8	3.9	2.3	2	3.8	14.8	6.5	53.8	3.8	0.3
Standard	No	31	17	17	47	53	93	64	14	210	19	0
	%	5.5	3.0	3.0	8.3	9.4	16.5	11.3	2.5	37.1	3.4	0
Total	No	65	43	44	63	67	119	166	59	580	45	2
	%	5.2	3.4	3.5	5	5.1	9.6	13.3	4.7	46.4	3.6	0.2

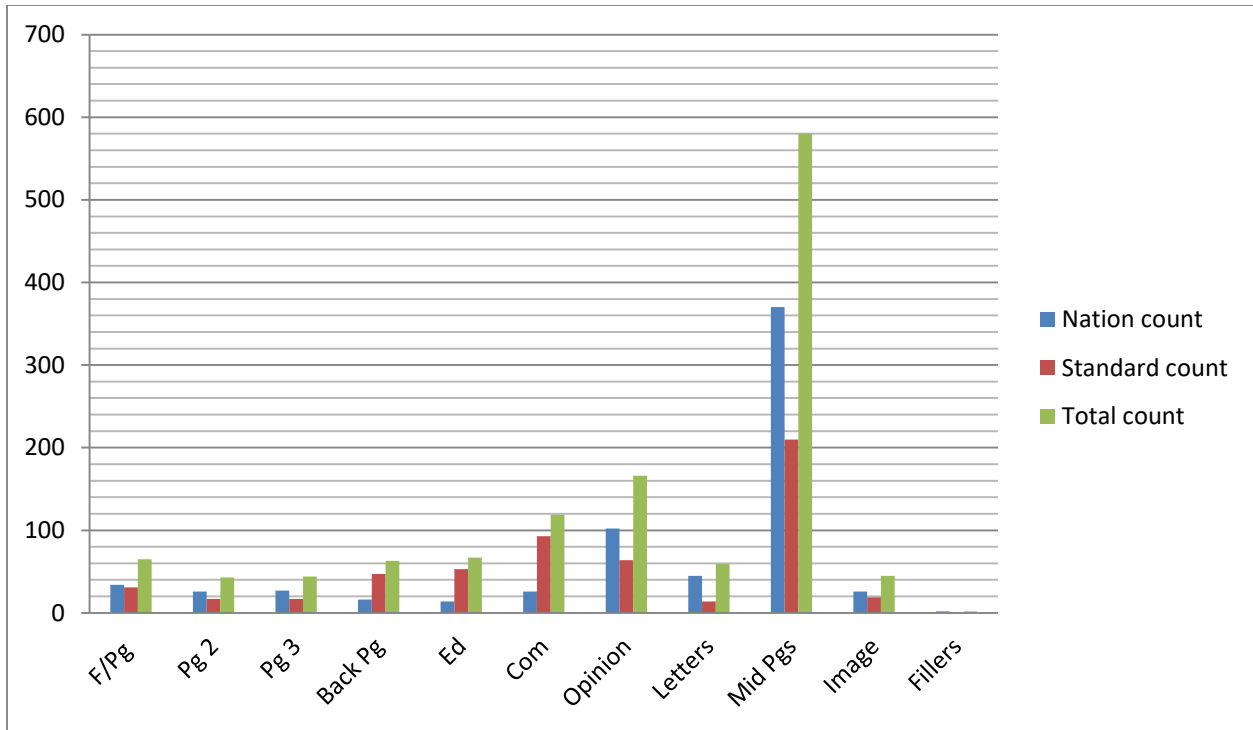


Figure 4.3 Story Placement Count

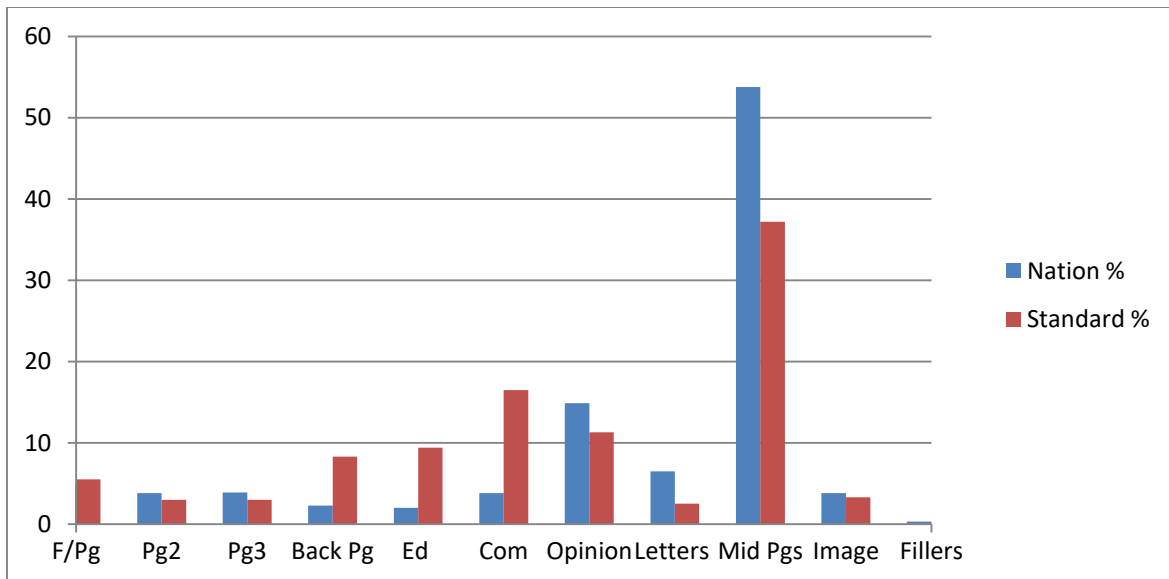


Figure 4.4 Story placement count (%)

4.5 SOURCES

The findings indicate stories about COVID-19 on both *Standard* and *Daily Nation* newspapers originated from journalists and the media houses, representing more than half of the pandemic articles in the period under study.

Daily Nation journalists originated 42.8% stories about COVID-19 compared to 41.2% by journalists from the *Standard* newspaper. *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* also generated 20.7% and 21.2% of the pandemic stories, respectively.

News columnists initiated 45 (6.6%) articles in the *Daily Nation* and 14 (2.5%) in the *Standard*. In contrast, International media agency: Reuters, Xinhua, BBC, AP, and AFP were sources of 100 (18%) stories in the *Standard* and 59 (8.6%) in the *Daily Nation*. Given international media had already covered the pandemic for three months before the first outbreak in Kenya, stories from their news agencies provided depth and scope to COVID-19 issues. It also helped guide local media about emerging issues, and to some extent, it set the local news agenda.

In both newspapers, a sizeable number of articles were from media and communication experts, government, politicians, medical practitioners, international organisations, and lawyers, which were between one and four per cent in both newspapers. Chief executive officers, chairs, and managing directors from private companies and parastatals were sources of 4.3% of stories about the pandemic in both papers accounting for the highest number of articles from experts. They were followed by academicians who originated the 33 articles (5.7%).

Daily Nation carried a majority of the articles authored by academicians. These stories originated from lecturers (1.2%), universities (0.6%), professors (1.2%), and university students including PhD students (0.7%). Likewise, lecturers were sources of 0.7% of the pandemic stories in the *Standard* newspaper, while professors, the universities, and university students originated 0.4%, 0.2%, and 1% of the stories, respectively.

Politicians, parliamentarians, and governors were sources of only 1.1%, 0.5%, and 1.3% of COVID-19 stories in both newspapers. However, many of them preferred to pen for the *Daily Nation* as opposed to the *Standard*. Only 0.8% of the stories came from clergy, while articles sourced from WHO was 1%. This is regrettable as the public would have liked to hear more from medical experts and politicians.

The Ministry of Health stood out as it originated 3.5% of the articles during the study period – minister of health (2.6%), chief administrative secretary (0.9%). Medics were sources of 2.4% of stories – 1.5% in the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard*. Articles from readers were also noticeable. They originated 4.2% of the stories in the *Daily Nation* and 1.8% of those published by the *Standard*.

These findings indicated that a significant number of the articles were produced in-house by journalists and editors in mainstream media, with few expert voices. Thus, media failed to share adequate knowledge and fact about the pandemic from experts despite dealing with a global pandemic that had a massive impact on the economy and lives and required assurance from all quotas. Also, the government was a primary source of information about the pandemic. Table 4.5 shows the findings of the study.

Table 4.5 Sources of COVID-19 stories

Institution	Official	Frequency (%)	
		Nation	Standard
Presidency	President/statehouse	1(0.1%)	4(0.4%)
	government spokesperson	2(0.2%)	4(0.4%)
Government	Parliament	2(0.3%)	1(0.2%)
	Politician	5(0.9%)	1(0.2%)
	Governor	4(0.6%)	4(0.6%)
MoH	Minister	7(1%)	10(1.6%)
	CAS	0	5(0.9%)
	Medic	10(1.5%)	5(0.9%)
The Cabinet	Ministry of interior security	0	1(0.2%)
	Ministry of Sports	1(0.1%)	1(0.2%)
	Registrar of political parties	0	1(0.2%)
International Organisation	WHO	4(0.6%)	2(0.4%)
	UN	2(0.3%)	1(0.2%)
	FAO	1(0.1%)	1(0.2%)
	US Embassy	1(0.1%)	1(0.2%)
	EU	0	2(0.4%)
Media	Media house	145(21.2%)	115(20.7%)
	Journalist	293(42.8%)	229(41.2%)
	Newspaper Columnist	45(6.6%)	14(2.5%)
	International media agency	59(8.6%)	100(18%)
Corporations	NGO	1(1.3%)	2(0.4%)
	Partnerships	5(0.7%)	2(0.4%)
	Government Agency	2(0.3%)	1(0.2%)

	KNA	0	3(0.5%)
	Clergy	2(0.3%)	3(0.5%)
	KQ	1(0.1%)	2(0.4%)
Education	MoE	0	2(0.4%)
	KUPPET	1(0.1%)	3(0.5%)
	KNUT	0	1(0.2%)
	University	4(0.6%)	1(0.2%)
	Professor	8(1.2%)	2(0.4%)
	Student	5(0.7%)	1(0.2%)
	Lecturer	8(1.2%)	4(0.7%)
Public	Reader	29(4.2%)	10(1.8%)
	Economist/researcher	1(0.1%)	2(0.4%)
	Other (s)	8(1.2%)	2(0.4%)
Judiciary	Lawyer/Advocate	2(0.3%)	1(0.2%)
Experts	Data technology	3(0.4%)	1(0.2%)
	HR	0	2(0.4%)
	CEO/MD	18(2.6%)	10(1.7%)

4.6 FRAMING IN TERMS OF STORY DIRECTION

All articles in the 180 newspaper editions were analyzed for the tone to determine the story direction. The study categorized directionality in three parts: positive frame, neutral frame, and negative frame. This helped determine the general mood of coverage of pandemic stories in the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard*. *Daily Nation* and the *Standard*'s coverage was loaded with neutral frames, especially hard news, feature stories, opinion and commentary, and international news.

Daily Nation newspaper generally had 44.2% negative frames (mostly commentary, letters to the editors, and features), 37.8% neutral frames, and 18% positive frames. On the contrary, the *Standard* newspaper was impartial (48.7%), with 18.6% of the news reports having positive frames and 32.7% negative frames.

Articles with neutral loaded frames in the *Daily Nation* were general news (24.2%), general news, features (22.4%), county news (7.3%), international news (9.6%), and opinion (7.7%). In contrast, the *Standard* newspaper had 14.9% (international news), 17.5% (hard news), 9.1% (editorial), 30.4% (opinion and commentary), and business news (7.3%) neutral stories. Commentaries and opinions in the *Standard* had the highest neutrality (30.4%) compared to *Daily Nation* (11.5%).

The negativity was related to the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, caseloads, infections, and job losses. It also included adverse effects of lockdown and curfew, among other mitigation measures.

Positivity focused on frontline workers, testing, closure of schools and churches to contain the spread of the virus, e-commerce, e-learning, use of cashless transactions, and the economic stimulus package.

Neutral frames implied measures by the Ministry of Health in curbing the spread of the pandemic, such as social distancing, quarantine, isolation, wearing masks and sanitizing, and other containment measures and pandemic threats or consequences.

The study findings indicate that *Daily Nation* coverage was alarmist, focusing on the pandemic's negative effects, perhaps encouraging adherence to public health guidelines. The *Standard*, on the other hand, adopted a neutral tone.

Table 4.6 Directionality by Story Type

	Positive (%)		Neutral (%)		Negative (%)	
	Daily Nation	Standard	Daily Nation	Standard	Daily Nation	Standard
Hard news						
(general news)	12(9.6%)	8(7.6%)	63(24.2%)	48(17.5%)	31(10.2%)	17(9.1%)
Editorial	0(0%)	6(5.8%)	5(1.9%)	25(9.1%)	6(1.9%)	15(8%)
Commentary	8(6.5%)	25(23.8%)	10(3.8%)	57(20.6%)	14(4.6%)	28(15%)
Opinion	30(24.3%)	18(17.1%)	20(7.7%)	27(9.8%)	52(17.1%)	17(9.1%)
Letters	12(9.7%)	4(3.8%)	17(6.5%)	3(1.1%)	22(7.3%)	8(4%)
Features	16(12.9)	5(4.8%)	58(22.4%)	10(3.6%)	35(11.5%)	12(6%)
International						
News	7(5.6%)	8(7.6%)	25(9.6%)	41(14.9%)	23(7.6%)	16(8.5%)
Sport news	4(3.2%)	8(7.6%)	18(6.9%)	28(10.2%)	21(6.9%)	12(6%)
Business news	7(5.6%)	5(4.8%)	16(6.2%)	20(7.3%)	20(6.6%)	7(3.8%)
Cartoons	1(0.8%)	1(0.9%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(1.3%)	2(1%)
Advertisements	5(4.0%)	1(0.9%)	0(0%)	1(0.4%)	10(3.3%)	9(7.6%)
Classified	1(0.8%)	0(0%)	1(0.4%)	2(0.7%)	10(3.3%)	2(1.1%)
County News	6(4.8%)	3(2.9%)	19(7.3%)	4(1.5%)	18(5.9%)	12(6%)
Supplement	10(8.2%)	8(7.6%)	7(2.7%)	6(2.2%)	26(8.6%)	17(9.1%)
Illustration	4(3.2%)	5(4.8%)	1(0.4%)	3(1.1%)	12(3.9%)	11(5.7%)
Other News	1(0.8%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

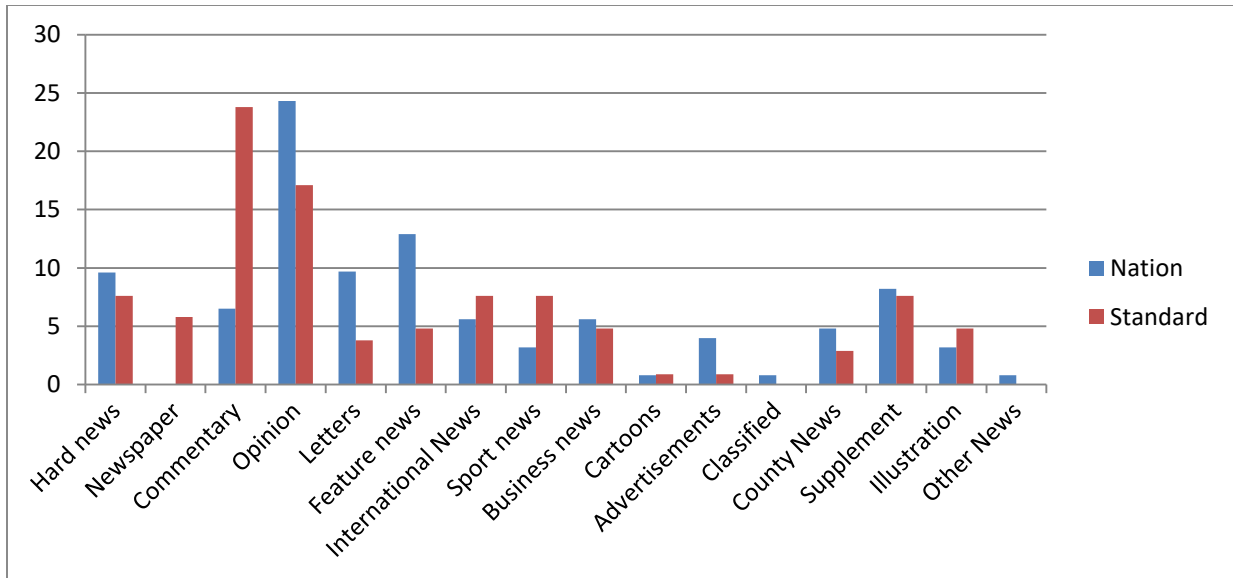


Figure 4.5 Positive (%)

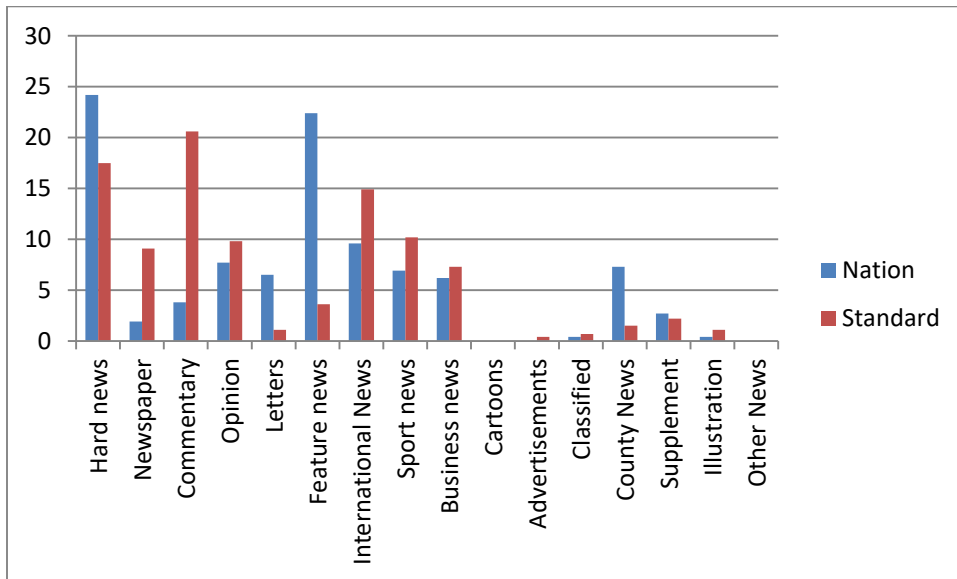


Figure 4.6 Neutral

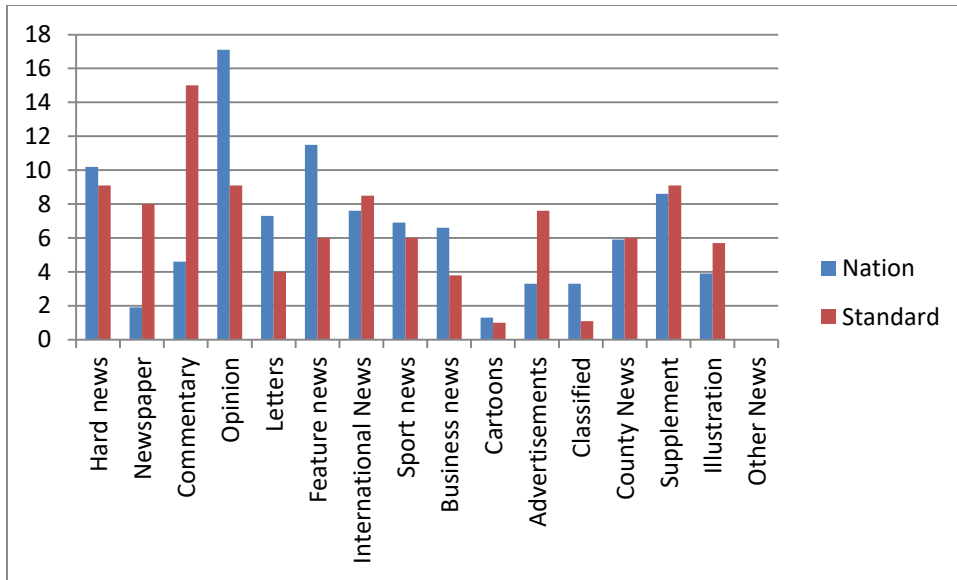


Figure 4.7 Negative

5. CHAPTER FIVE: KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's key findings as per the set objectives and highlights the study's recommendations, suggestions, and limitations.

5.2 SUMMARIES OF THE KEY FINDINGS

Media uses different approaches, including photographs, themes, metaphors, naming, and personification, to represent issues in ways audiences can easily relate (Höijer, 2010). The study used framing and agenda-setting theories to understand how *Daily Nation* and the *Standard newspapers* approached coverage of the pandemic. Different story types in the newspapers were reviewed by exploring various themes, frames, space allocation, sources, and placement to determine coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya.

Framing in coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in both newspapers was loaded with neutral frames (42.8%) mainly around adherence to public health measures indicating they played a role in managing the spread of the virus. Positive frames accounted for 18.3% of coverage by both papers, while 38.9% of all articles were framed negatively. The *Standard newspaper* maintained a positive coverage mainly through commentaries and analysis. Experts and the public shared messages of hope and assurance, including the need to adopt e-learning and e-commerce to show the country was winning the fight. On the other hand, *Daily Nation's* coverage was loaded with negative frames (24%) compared to 14.8% in the *Standard*. The *Daily Nation* emphasized the impact of the pandemic in the economy, infection rates, job cuts, and implementation of containment measures like lockdown, causing panic and fear.

In summary, coverage by *Daily Nation* was alarmist in nature. This finding concurs with Ogbodo et al.'s (2020) research on the media framing of COVID-19. The authors opine that audience's perception and interpretation of the COVID-19 stem from how the media frames it—adding that the pandemic's constructive coverage would help the public cope with the Coronavirus' fear. In contrast, shortcomings in the evolving COVID-19 pandemic report could trigger more global health concerns as the nature of the pandemic's media framing may accentuate the public's fear or lack of it.

In general, both newspapers covered COVID-19 stories based on themes around trends witnessed and the actions taken by the government and institutions. For instance, news reports during the first two months of the pandemic focused on infection cases, containment measures, and how people were adjusting to the new normal. News reports in the third month of the pandemic focused on recovery and treatment, contact tracing, and the impact of the pandemic in various sectors of the economy, for instance, in education, transport, and arms of the government. The dominant themes in the study were containment measures, trade, economy, contact tracing and spread of the virus, and COVID-19 treatment and vaccine development, with a combined coverage of 71.2%. The two papers also played the watchdog role, highlighting police brutality and calling for support for the disabled, the vulnerable, and those suffering from domestic violence and mental health in 2% of the articles. The findings indicate that media took upon itself to inform the public about the pandemic and encourage compliance to public health guidelines, among other control measures. Lin et al. (2014) opine that communication behaviours, 'such as information seeking, news exposure, and perceived trust in the information sources,' are linked to solid adoption measures. Therefore, he recommends providing information about recommended prevention measures in a timely fashion and a manner that is reachable and understandable to the public to increase the public's awareness and promote adherence to effective preventive behaviours.

In total, *Daily Nation* and *the Standard* had about 486.01 A3 pages allocated to stories about COVID-19, translating to about 11 newspaper editions. Assuming an entire newspaper has 40-44 pages in total. The finding indicates that the media prioritized coverage of COVID-19 by allocating a lot of space. This means the issue was of great importance to the media.

Regarding placement, 10% or 1 in 10 stories about COVID-19 were allocated to the front page (the first page) and pages 2 and 3. Other runners were 4,5, 6,7, to 18 and back page, indicating COVID-19 was a single important event that media used to build an agenda. *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* published 65 stories on the first page from March 13 to June 10, translating to 34 in the *Daily Nation* and 31 in the *Standard*. The results show that the two papers set public agenda through placement and repeating news about the pandemic over and over in all 180 editions published between March 13 and June 10. This, in turn, increased the number of commentaries, letters, and opinions (6.5%) published by the two newspapers from May 2020 to June 10. The findings confirm publishing routines in mainstream print media allow public discourse by

providing topics of general interest-oriented on facts (Holt, 2019). The findings tie in with Manaf et al. (2017); McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (2014); and Wu and Coleman (2009) analysis on agenda setting in media, noting that media prompts audiences on the importance of news through the size of the headings and the positioning the news report. The media rates coverage appearing on the first page of a newspaper as very important compared to news stories published on page five onward. The selection and constant repetition of a few issues in the news make audiences perceive them as more important than others resulting in the media agenda becoming a public agenda. Manaf et al. (2017) also observe that more exposure to media agenda makes the issue top of mind in the audience's mind and later prominent in public opinion as audiences believe that the issue is indeed important.

On story sourcing, *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* relied on articles originated by reporters and editors (62.7%), opinion and commentaries from columnists (4.7%), and syndicated news from international agencies (12.7%). Medics, officials from the Ministry of Health (MoH), including the minister, corporate executives, and academia, originated 15.9% of stories on COVID-19. Articles from Politicians, parliamentarians, and governors only accounted for 2.9% of news reports. The findings indicate *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* dedicated enormous internal resources to coverage of COVID-19 in terms of staffing. In summary, coverage of the pandemic was largely local (87.3%), apart from 159 (12,7%) stories syndicated from foreign media. The findings show that COVID-19 was a local event that met the news values of news, as it was happening closer home, was timely, prominent, new, and had extremes. However, there was uniformity in coverage by both local and international media. Each relied on one another to tell the global aspect of the pandemic. The results concur with Wu's (2021) study on COVID-19 coverage by elite media in the US and China, which observed that in coverage of a single event, in this case, the COVID-19 pandemic, agenda-setting is often limited to local news sources because the news reports involve only domestic events (Wu, 2021).

On media originating 62.7% of stories about COVID-19 or 6 in 10 articles, Valenzuela & McCombs (2019) opine that both media and prominent persons can set media agenda. This is because the pattern of news coverage that defines the media's agenda results from exchanges with news sources, the daily interactions among news organisations themselves, journalism's norms

and traditions, and social media trends. While public officials, for example, presidents and prime ministers, are chief agenda setters. Public relations practitioners also influence news agenda. MoH emerged as a key source for media stories among local institutions, accounting for 3.5% of the stories. This could be explained by the number of press releases issued for the MoH. In April 2020, APO (2020) issued 157 press releases for MoH pro bono. For instance, from April 1, 2020, to May 25, 2020

Daily Nation and the *Standard* effortlessly covered the first pandemic in decades without prior training but by playing two historical functions of media: information sharing and education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings indicate that *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* played a significant role in controlling the spread of COVID-19 through agenda-setting and framing. The study revealed this through the frequency of pandemic stories in two newspapers and the framing of news stories coverage with neutral and negative loaded frames, perhaps to encourage positive behaviour change. Media also deployed all its resources to help sensitize the public on the pandemic: staff, time, and space. In addition, they were open to publishing opinions from readers and columnists to encourage public discourse. Thus, the pandemic called for media to come and play a historic role of informing and sensitization to manage the pandemic. The findings show the two newspapers played this role exceptionally.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Expanding Sources to Enhance Objectivity

Journalists, editors, and columnists authored most articles about COVID-19 in both *the Standard* and *Daily Nation* newspapers. The two papers also relied on news events or occurrences, such as press releases from the Ministry of Health and news reports from international media to report on COVID-19, going by the findings in this study on story sources. Although it's commendable, the research recommends that the media expand its sources to include reports and publications, agencies such as WHO, and scientists to help audiences understand the issue deeper. The findings indicated that mainstream media reporting was influenced by external forces such as columnists, readers, international media, and the Kenyan Ministry of Health. The ministry issued 157 press releases on COVID-19 from April 1, 2020, to May 25, 2020. According to Van (2015), media

framing is influenced by advertorial and press releases from public relations practitioners' select information, highlight it, organize it, then feed it to media, avoiding negative news about products and services.

b. Encourage More Experts to Pen Articles

COVID-19 is a health issue, and support from all quotas of the society is necessary to curtail the diseases. Experts such as politicians and health specialists should be encouraged to pen more articles to support journalists in mainstream media outlets to control the spread of COVID-19. Articles authored by politicians and governors were negligible, yet they commanded tremendous support among the electorate. They must contribute to the debate by writing opinion pieces or commentaries on COVID-19 in the future.

c. Encourage Positive Coverage

Coverage of the pandemic by both the *Daily Nation* and *Standard* newspaper used neutral and negative frames. Scholars note that negative coverage of pandemics often elicits fear or the lack of it among the audience. Although media used negative coverage to warn the public of the impact of the pandemic and get them to comply with public health regulations, the study recommends positive coverage. For instance, the media could highlight stories on counties with reduced COVID-19 cases and how they reduced the spread. Such coverage will encourage behaviour change without instilling fear.

5.4 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH STUDIES

Following the study's limitation, future research should examine the pandemic coverage by other local media outlets, including electronic media outlets. The findings will provide a comparison and contrast of how the all-media outlets covered the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, this study did not investigate the influence of COVID-19 coverage on audiences. Other research studies should assess the impact of media coverage on COVID on audiences. Future studies could also survey COVID-19 coverage from the onset of the pandemic to when it is contained. This study did not explore a lengthy period due to limitations in time and resources.

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3.7 APPENDICES

CODEBOOK

Mainstream Print Media Coverage of COVID-19 In Kenya: A Comparative Content Analysis of *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* Newspapers

The study analyzes published content in two Kenyan print media outlets (*Daily Nation* and the *Standard*). Search for articles with the words 'COVID-19' and 'Coronavirus' published between March 13, 2020, and June 10, 2020. The 'story' is the basic unit of analysis and refers to the online content, which may be text, customarily grouped around one headline. All short stories equal to, or less than a couple of sentences long, should also be discarded. Instead, include cartoons, news, adverts, opinion pieces, and editorials. *Indicate the appropriate choice by ticking the most appropriate box per article.*

Part 1:

Name of the Newspaper publication

Daily Nation	1	
The Standard	2	

Part 2: Placement

Where is the story found or placed?

Front page (headline/lead story)	1	
The second page (second lead)	2	
Page 3	3	
Back page story	4	
Editorial (it appears in the opinion section)	5	
Commentary & Analysis	6	
Opinion piece	7	
Letters to the Editors	8	
Middles pages (Any page apart from those listed in the codebook))	9	
Image (does the story have an accompanying image or photo? Please describe what is in the photo)	10	
Fillers	11	

Part 3: Type of Article

What is the type of content? Content should be classified by the name given to the content page.

Hard news (hard-hitting stories with no emotions. Most important aspect of the news are in the first paragraph, i.e., the five Ws – who, where, what, why, how, when)	1	
Newspaper editorial	2	
Commentary & Analysis	3	

Opinion	4	
Letters to the Editor	5	
Feature (emotional stories)	6	
International News	7	
Sport news	8	
Business news	9	
Cartoons (is the Cartoon about COVID-19 or Coronavirus?)	10	
Advertisements (Is the advert about COVID-19?)	11	
Classified (Are there any classifieds about COVID-19?)	12	
County News	13	
Supplement/Pullout magazines	14	
Photos/Images/Illustration	15	
Other News	16	

Part 4: Size of the Article (Length/size)

Measure the size of the article (width and length) using a 30 cm ruler to determine the size.

Multiply the result and write down the size in cm square

Part 5: Source

What is the source of the story? Indicate the origin of the story.

President/PSCU/Statehouse	1	
Deputy President	2	
Government Spokesperson/Government	3	
Chief Justice	4	
Speaker (National and County)	5	
Member of Parliament (MP)	6	
Senator	7	
Governor	8	
Member of County Assembly (MCA)	9	
Journalist	10	
Media house	11	
Newspaper columnist	12	
WHO	13	
UNICEF	14	
UN	15	
FAO	16	
Pfizer	17	

IOM	18	
Astrazeneca	19	
Sputnik	20	
Johnson & Johnson	21	
GAVI (Vaccine Alliance)	22	
Moderna	23	
COVAX	24	
OXFORD Institute	25	
Serum Institute	26	
Novavax	27	
Minister of Health/Ministry of Health	28	
Data/technology expert	29	
Chief Administrative Secretary of Health	30	
KEMRI	31	
CDC	32	
LANCET (Laboratory)	33	
Red Cross	34	
World Bank	35	
Private Hospital	36	
Mission Hospital	37	
National/Referral Hospital	38	
County Hospital	39	
Minister of Education	40	
PS of Education	41	
Minister of Agriculture	42	
Minister of Finance	43	
Minister of Transport	44	
Minister of Trade	45	
Minister of Interior Security	46	
Minister of Foreign Affairs	47	
Minister of Sports	48	
University/Institution of Higher Learning	49	
Independent Policing Authority (IPOA)/Police Service	50	
COVID Emergency Response Fund (Kenya)	51	
Economist/Researcher	52	
Kenya Airways	53	
Medical Practitioner/Medic	54	
Scientist	55	
Nurse	56	
Professor	57	
Lecturer (of a university/Institution)	58	

Teacher (Primary school)	59	
Teacher (secondary school)	60	
ECD (Early Childhood Education teacher)	61	
KUPPET	62	
KNUT	63	
COTU/Workers Unions	64	
Student/ business Association	65	
HR/ Management experts	66	
Jubilee party	67	
UDA party	68	
NASA party	69	
ODM	70	
Reader	71	
Public relations/Communications specialist/International Relations/Partnerships	78	
Lawyer/Advocate	79	
Judges	80	
SUPKEM	81	
Policy Analyst	82	
KNA	83	
Clergy	84	
CECs	85	
United Kingdom (UK) Embassy or High Commission	86	
Danish Embassy	87	
Ethiopian Embassy	88	
US Embassy	89	
Corporate Entity- private or intergovernmental or NGO	90	
CEO/MD	91	
International Media Agency	92	
Government Agency or State Corporation	93	
Politician	94	
National Council of Churches (NCCCK)	95	
IMF	96	
PhD student/ University Student	97	
Other (please specify)	98	
Parliament	99	
European Union/G-20	100	
Registrar of political parties	101	

Part 6: Tone

Would you say that the tone of the story was mainly:

1. Negative: words or phrases that indicate accusations, allegations, loss. E.g., the disease is having a negative impact, such as lockdown, economic impacts, job losses, spread, and death
2. Positive: words or phrases such as reopen, safety nets, vaccine development and rollout, cure, recovered cases
3. Neutral: social distance, wear masks, test, frontline workers, the reduced infection rate

Indicate the relevant tone per article.

Positive	1	
Neutral	2	
Negative	3	

Part 7: Theme

Indicate the theme of the story by reading the headline and the first two paragraphs of the story. (Tick one central theme per article. DO NOT select two themes per article.)

Containment measures (Curfew, lockdown, social distancing, wearing a mask, hand washing, hygiene)	1	
Quarantine	2	
Isolation	3	
Fear/Panic	4	
New COVID-19 cases/Infection	5	
Spread/Contact tracing	6	
Trade/Economy (Impact of COVID on trade & economy)	7	
Resources for COVID facilities in hospitals	8	
Equipment for the fight against COVID in hospitals	9	
COVID-19 recovery/ COVID-19 treatment	10	
COVID-19 vaccine development, testing, and production, vaccination	11	
Stimulus package for COVID-19 (Budget allocation, donations from other countries, Economic recovery)	12	
World Bank monetary support toward COVID-19	13	
Relief loans during the pandemic	14	
Support to the needy during COVID (by Government and Counties)/ Poverty	15	
Travel Restrictions/ movement restrictions and ease	16	
Health (Mental health, maternal and well-being)	17	
School closure/ Opening/ Education	18	
Job loss/unemployment/ pay cut	19	
Domestic violence	20	
Insecurity	21	

Working online/Technology/E-commerce	22	
Police brutality	23	
Death/burial/Culture	24	
Entertainment	25	
Fear/Panic	26	
Sports	27	
Online learning/e-learning	28	
Others	29	
Politics	30	
Food shortage, food security, agriculture	31	
Information sharing	32	