



THE STATE OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

Coverage and Framing of Women in East African Media



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION
CANADA



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Media and Communications



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Representation, Coverage and Framing of Women in
East African Media

By

Graduate School of Media and Communications
Aga Khan University

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Hesbon Hansen Owilla, Nancy Booker PhD, George Nyabuga PhD, Shitemi Khamadi,
Alykhan Peermohamed, Clare Mogere, Diana Anyende and Pauline Muriuki

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Data collection supported by:

Joyce Omwoha, PhD, (Development of data collection tools and implementation), Lenox
Otieno, Simon Riitho, Elizabeth Amongin, Clinton Tumanye, Jenifer Julius and Hellen
Hartley

Review by Rose Kimani, PhD

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research examined the representation of women in East African news media organisations and the coverage and framing of women in top East African newspapers, TV and digital platforms. The study is premised on existent literature on the intricate interplay between media framing, coverage dynamics, the representation of women in newsrooms workforce given the consequential role all these play in shaping public perceptions of gender issues and shifting norms. Through a comprehensive methodology that incorporated content analysis, document analysis and interviews on the responsibilities and assigned roles of women in media organisations, the research presents findings from a content analysis of six newspapers, six TV stations, seven digital publishers in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and 54, 65 and 81 news media organisations from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania respectively whose documents and programming were analysed.

The study contends that the diversity of perspectives within newsrooms plays a pivotal role in shaping the frames used in media narratives on gender. Extant literature supports the argument that the presence of women in decision-making roles within news organisations significantly influences the framing of gender-related issues. To this end, the first research objective sought to describe the gender representation in East African media organisations' workforce. The findings indicate that the number of women in the media workforce is moderate, at more than a third in all the three countries, with Tanzania having the highest at 46%, followed by Uganda (44%) and Kenya (39.5%). The number of women in editorial leadership positions across the three countries is varied with Tanzania leading at 40% of the analysed media organisations followed by Uganda (33%), while Kenya has the lowest percentage (11%). Business leadership in media organisations in East Africa seem to be conspicuously skewed in favour of men with only 20% of media organisations in both Uganda and Tanzania headed by women business leaders while in Kenya only 10% of media organisations had a woman as the business leader.

The second objective sought to analyse the distribution of newsroom roles and responsibilities. The findings indicate that at the East African level, the number of women covering beats like politics (47%), business and economics (38%), topics of the day (41%) and

the women afforded the opportunity to write opinion editorials is relatively high in relation to the findings in previous studies. Across the three countries, about half of the prime time TV news bulletins are anchored or co-anchored by female journalists; with Tanzania at 55% of the bulletins, Uganda at 54% and Kenya at 43%. However, for newspapers, most of the stories featuring women are written by male journalists, especially in Kenya (66%) and Uganda (56%). Tanzania seems to have more newspaper stories covering women written by female journalists (52%), even though as the findings on framing suggest, more female journalists does not necessarily result in positive framing of women in news stories. This implies that it might not only be about the numbers but the inculcation of a culture that deliberately looks at the news process through a gender sensitive tinted lenses that is alive to the unconscious frame that favours men.

Objective three sought to analyse both coverage and framing of women in East African media. The first level of analysis for this objective, especially on coverage, focused on the headline stories in each and every newspaper published during the sampled period. The findings indicate that newspapers had fairly many days with no mention or coverage of women in the headline stories, especially in Uganda (55%) and Tanzania (39%). Even though Kenya had only 27% of the days with no mention or coverage of women in the headline stories, the East African average of 40% of headline stories with no women mentioned is relatively high. Newspaper headlines optimise the relevance of stories and direct readers to stories. Headline stories are considered significant and consumed with maximum processing effort because they ostensibly depict the most important events and news stories in a society (Kim & Chung, 2017). Therefore, the dearth of coverage of women in the headline stories suggests that women are omitted in stories that the newspapers have given optimum relevance and are deliberately directing readers to consume with optimal and enhanced attention.

A deeper dive into the stories that featured women based on the titles of the news stories indicates that over the three-month period and out of the 1,256 news stories that met the inclusion criteria, Kenya (41%) had more news articles with women mentioned in the titles of the articles followed by Uganda (30%) while Tanzanian newspapers had the least (29%).

TV coverage of women was also fairly limited given that for the sampled period women were covered in only 52% of the days in Kenya, 24% in Uganda and 24% in Tanzania. This limited coverage raises critical questions, especially because the study period was purposely selected to include the global 16 days of activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), marked every year from November 25th to December 10th. November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women while December 10th is Human Rights Day. Given the intense campaigns by different organisations during this period, the expectation was that women or issues to do with gender would make for newsworthy stories, but going by the findings, even if media houses did the coverage, it seems to have been limited on these issues and the attendant campaign against GBV.

In terms of treatment of stories, even though most newspaper stories were treated as hard news stories (Kenya 74%, Uganda 52%, Tanzania 80% and East Africa, 69%), 16% of stories that covered women were longer shelf life, news feature stories that go beyond the first four of the 5Ws and H of what, who, where and when to give in-depth coverage that focuses more on why and how. In Uganda, about a quarter of the stories (28%) featuring women were treated as feature stories. It is therefore safe to conclude that news stories in Ugandan newspapers were significantly in-depth and a lot more informative in their coverage of women. Unlike Kenya and Tanzania, Uganda also had a relatively good number of its TV news stories featuring women treated as features, even though across the six TV stations in East Africa none of the analysed 169 prime-time news bulletins in the six TV stations had explainers or broadcast editorials.

The findings also indicate that generally women are covered predominantly when they are at national events, and this is the trend across the three platforms in the three countries. Whereas politics, economics and entrepreneurship have a significant bearing on socioeconomic development, only 11% of the total number of newspaper stories covered women in political, business, entrepreneurship and economic events or activities and for TV the number is even lower at 9%.

However, even though women are not predominantly covered in critical spaces like politics, economics, business and entrepreneurship, in the spaces that they are covered, especially in national event spaces, newspapers, TV and digital publishers

seem to contribute to the women's agenda as far as prominence of stories are concerned. News stories featuring women were found to be generally prominent across the three platforms and women are also prominently placed in these stories across the three countries. Suffice to note, across newspapers (89%), TV (74%) and digital (89%) at the East African level, the news stories featuring women appear to have given women high prominence in these articles. This is expected given that the study sampled stories that had women in the titles of the stories or had words and phrases that suggested the stories were about women. However, even though most of the prominent stories featuring women had accompanying pictures, 21% of these stories with pictures had no woman in the picture.

The framing of women and their expertise in these stories that featured women in newspapers, TV and digital was generally positive. Most newspaper stories pronounced salient aspects of women that are progressive within the context of gender equity. Uganda had more stories with positive framing of women compared to Kenya and Tanzania, which despite having more female journalists penning the newspaper stories, generally had more stories that framed women in less positive light and the fewest number of stories that framed women as heroines. TV at the East African level also had more stories framing women as succeeding in what they do (24%); Women as heroines of success stories (12%) and women as breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women's success (11%). However, TV still had a fairly high percentage (21%) of the stories frame women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world and 7% framing women as the cause of problems and failures in different circumstances. Further, TV had a combined total of 55% of the stories that were written as feature stories framing women in a less progressive fashion.

The overall framing of women subjects, actors and their contribution to the society appears to be generally positive. Findings indicate that most of the stories were framed along seven dominant attributes and the responsibility or value-based frame emerged as the leading framing attribute with 22% framed along what Needham (2005) argues is a kind of story written to help readers attribute some sort of responsibility or challenges to women or state that women are in charge of solutions. Suffice to note, most stories featuring women seem to have pushed the interpretation that women are responsible and

are in charge of solutions in different circumstances which implicates the significant role of women in society either as responsible members or providers of solutions to challenges. The second most dominant framing attribute was the aspirational framing attribute (19%), followed by the reassuring frame (15%). These two attributes are positive and suggest that women

covered were not only aspirational and reassuring in their actions and contributions to society, but also encouraging to other women consumers of news in the way they were framed as aspiring for greater heights in whatever they do and in a manner that is reassuring.



INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges the media industry is grappling with today is diversity in newsrooms and increasingly, the coverage of marginalised groups and communities or communities at the risk of marginalisation. The question of diversity, specifically within the media workforce, has come into focus in the last two decades, with a landmark study by McKinsey and Company (2007) providing fact-based evidence indicating that companies with stronger representation of women have the best performance. Susanto et al. (2023) also note that gender diversity or lack thereof affect decision making in newsrooms. While these studies do not necessarily draw from the East African setting or the Global South for that matter, they do make a strong case for gender representativeness in the workforce. In the media representativeness is critical as the media should also be reflective of the public they serve. Therefore it is an issue requiring concerted efforts from a variety of stakeholders to accelerate parity.

Globally, gender representation in human resource in several sectors is skewed in favour of the male gender. In the media industry the skew is consequential given the importance of diversity in the newsroom if the media is to serve the diverse public interest concerns of the society. Studies have established that how the media frames gender issues reflects and crafts public opinion. Additionally, frames as the smallest units of interpretation of media text create legitimacy for interpretations of issues and how the society approaches the issues (Sheerin & Garavan, 2022; Susanto, Afif, Maharani, Yuliani, & Ab Aziz, 2023).

Susanto et al. (2023) argue that responsibility and the attendant emotional factors involved have an effect on the decision-making processes in newsrooms given the differential responsibility preferences by men and women.

The argument by Susanto et al. (2023) is that the media in coverage of women within the context of finance and investments legitimises certain interpretations by emphasising certain discourses at the expense of others. They further note that both genders have different preferences in making the decision on which frames to privilege. Therefore, more men in newsrooms would suggest that framing of issues in news stories are likely to lean towards the male privileged preferences. MacDonald (2019) argues that in most patriarchal societies, the political, economic, social, and religious contexts give men an edge over women. This seems to be the case in most newsrooms the world over, especially in editorial positions and generally business leadership in newsrooms (Siciliano, 2022). Other scholars have argued that this edge men have over women is entrenched in the daily lives of patriarchal societies, so much so that unless deliberate efforts are made to shift norms, institutions such as the media, through framing, might just perpetuate gender norms that are not progressive. This study sought to analyse the representation of women in the newsroom workforce and the coverage and framing of women in East Africa, as a way to make visible these unconscious frames if they exist, and in order to come up with evidence-based recommendations to enhance gender parity from a media perspective.

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Gender Representation in the Newsroom

As world leaders focus on tackling a growing chain of health, climate, economic and political challenges, the gains made in addressing these global challenges have intersected gender equity. Arguably, the journalism workforce matters because the diversity of the workforce or lack thereof contributes heavily to how newsrooms cover and frame these challenges. This has a long-term effect on crafting and legitimising norms and how society perceives such norms (Sheerin & Garavan, 2022). It is therefore critical to track who is represented at every level within the media house to ascertain the extent to which they represent the wider public in all its diversity, especially gender diversity.

In Kenya, gender representation and equity remain a very contentious issue. Despite the constitutional framework that provides for two thirds gender rule (Article 27(8) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010), which requires that not more than two thirds of any elective or appointive position in the government of Kenya shall be of the same gender, none of the 47 county assemblies and the bicameral parliament is constitutionally constituted. The two thirds gender rule together with a number of affirmative actions enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya (2010) were aimed at promoting parity and mainstreaming women in critical positions of leadership, and, most importantly, shifting gender norms that disenfranchises the voice and place of women in the society. However, that reality has remained elusive even after three election cycles since the constitution was promulgated.

In Uganda, Article 21 of the Ugandan Constitution is clear on the principles of equality before the law regardless of gender and other identities while Article 33 speaks to the rights of women. The challenge however is in the framing and enforcement of the dictates of the constitution as the clauses, for instance, state that the government must provide opportunities to enhance the welfare of women and enable them to reach their full potential, but without clarity on how this is to be attained. Further the clauses state that women have rights equal to men in areas including political, economic, and social activities, but like Kenya the legislative framework to operationalise these clauses in the constitution are lacking. There is progress though in legislation as the Ugandan parliament recently passed crucial bills (Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 2021).

Gender equality is enshrined in the Tanzanian Constitution and Afrobarometer notes that Tanzania has made strides in integrating gender equality in its national plans with women holding 37% of parliamentary seats and 35% of cabinet positions (Jahari, Mpapalika, & Msafiri, 2023). However, the gender challenges in land security, financial inclusion and relatively high rates of gender-based violence still persist in Tanzania. In the three countries, even though there are glimmers of progress, challenges still persist in the practical implementation of constitutional and legislative provisions to attain gender parity.

The media is of interest because as the public purveyor of information in a society characterised by the unconscious gender bias which continues to impact women in the workplace (International Labour Organization, 2017), the media needs to be deliberate and purposeful in covering and framing issues to mitigate the effect of the unconscious frame and the distinctive patterns that have the possibility of entrenching negative stereotypes. Ely and Meyerson (2000) conceptualise the unconscious frame as the “invisible barriers to women’s advancement which arise from cultural beliefs about genders and workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favour men” (p. 3).

The risk of the media advancing invisible barriers to women’s advancement is inherent in many countries. A study by Women in News mapped women in news leadership positions and established that in the 17 markets studied, none had the women holding top business leadership positions exceeding 25%. In other words, for 192 media companies in 17 countries studied, the country that had the highest number of media companies with women in charge or heading the business and operations of the media houses had 22%, and that was Philippines (Siciliano, 2022). Only two of the 17 countries, Philippines (78%) and Zambia (57%), had more women than men holding top editorial positions. These findings, especially on editorial leadership positions, are skewed to favour men (Siciliano, 2022).

In Kenya, studies show that there is dearth of women holding top leadership positions in the media, and the Women and Leadership in News Media (2023) established a trend where the percentage of women top editors in Kenyan newsrooms declined from 27%

in 2021 to 13% in 2023 (Eddy, Arguedas, Mukherjee, & Nielsen, 2023), which raises germane questions on editorial diversity. This is despite the fact that things are more positive at the journalist level. For instance, in a study that focused solely on gender desks, Kassova and Addy (2022) noted that women's by-lines stood at 49% for the period between April 2019 and June 2021 and this compared favourably with the findings from an earlier study that had established that 42% of journalists in Kenya were women (Hanitzsch, 2019, as cited in Kassova & Addy, 2022).

Uganda is also yet to embrace gender diversity within its media industry as statistics from the African Centre for Media Excellence indicate women working in the media industry comprise only an average of 20%. However, editorial leadership is just one aspect that possibly shapes the coverage and framing of content purveyed to the public, and which has the potential to legitimise norms. Other aspects that also call for an empirical study include the number of women producing and hosting news shows and content, the editorial content targeting women, and the opinion editorial voices given prominence. The qualification of women in newsrooms and the total number of women in the newsroom workforce are also critical. In Tanzania, for instance, Akpabio (2017) found that women constitute only 25% of reporters and just about a quarter of top management positions. The dearth of women in newsrooms is significant given that the individual level traits of journalists, reporters and media managers are consequential for newsmaking (Reese, 2019) and that includes the gender and the associated norms. To this end, the argument, therefore, is that the "backgrounds, attitudes, perceptions, biases, beliefs, training, and professional orientations in the process of news gatekeeping" (Reese, p. 48) matter.

In the African context, the media workforce distribution seems to be similarly skewed. According to International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF, 2018), in the Sub-Saharan region, women dominate the sales, finance and administrative category in which many support roles not directly related to news making are found. Women's representation in the newsrooms is much lower at only 29.2%. That speaks to a dearth of gender equity in editorial decision making from the journalists' and reporters' level (IWMF, 2018). With fewer women in the editorial division, the result is that the lenses through which public interest content is filtered to the citizenry lack diversity.

A media environment study in Namibia by Africa Media Barometer (2022) found that all heads of the country's newspapers are male; with men also heading hard beats of politics and finance. This is against recent data that records the majority of newspaper journalists in the country being female. Relatedly, in Rwanda, significant strides to bridge the gender divide in some sectors has resulted in one of the highest rankings in Africa. However, the media sector seems to be lagging with "women representation in the media at just 21.5%" (State of Gender Equality report of 2019). Whilst gender representation in Africa varies from country to country, these data point to a disparity that puts the male gender at an advantage.

Conclusively, therefore, it would be safe to argue that the content produced by the media industry is predominantly filtered through the male lens. Content that overlooks multiple perspectives that enrich and have the potential to enhance impact cannot be considered public good content. East African media organisations today, amid the multi-layered and compounding challenges of sustainability, convergence, audience segmentation and a fast-evolving technology landscape, finds themselves grappling with the question of gender representation within their human resource.

Media's Coverage of Women

Media coverage has been described as the power of both the legacy and new media and their contribution to increased attention and involvement of the audience in public interest subjects (Puijijik, 2009). Therefore, coverage can as well be simply understood as the presence of an issue or subject in the media for purposes of reaching and involving the audience on the subject or issue. Globally, studies on coverage have spanned many areas including coverage of women in politics with studies establishing that female candidates are often subjected to more negative and gendered assessments of their communication skills, intellectual ability and political expertise than are male contestants (Wagner, 2020; Van der Pas & Aldering, 2020). Further, coverage of women politicians has often been pronounced when they are involved in scandals and conflict (Ligaga, 2020).

In Uganda, a study by Maractho (2017) found that the media has been playing the role of an enabler and dis-enabler, successfully facilitating women's participation in public life, but also frustrating women's participation

in public life. Maractho's study also revealed that women's participation in the media and by extension media's coverage of women is not entirely a function of the media but also dependent on the industriousness of women. Therefore, an analysis of events and women's industriousness that attract media coverage and the framing of women and consequent influence on women getting media coverage is critical. Maractho's (2017) study further underscores the need for more positive coverage of women to allay the fears women have of the perceived perpetual negative coverage of women that has made women shy away from media coverage.

Ward and Grower (2020) note that analyses of portrayal of social groups in the media including portrayal of women, have focused on two issues: recognition and respect. While recognition addresses the quantity of representation, respect is more nuanced as it is the dimension that shifts norms or entrenches stereotypes. On the recognition front, studies have established that boys and men outnumber girls and women in media content. On the other hand, at the respect level, a study by Nduva (2016) in Kenya found that women are rarely portrayed in progressive light. Maractho (2017) found that women in Uganda consider the media as a double-edged sword, which explains their apprehension towards media coverage, while Omari (2008) found that the portrayal always depicts women as victims of circumstances, objects of beauty or in stereotypic and domestic roles that demeans and disrespects women or what Gaye Tuchman (1978) calls "symbolic annihilation" of women.

In Tanzania Akpabio (2017) found that women are marginalised and the media is dominated by male voices in the critical aspects of the economy. While women are big in 'soft' beats such as beauty, gender; and offer commentary in areas such as beauty, gender based violence, homemaking and sex work, men are dominant in areas such as mining, labour and housing (Akpabio, 2017). These findings by Akpabio in Tanzania suggest that the overall coverage and prominence of women in 'soft' news beats calls for further analysis of framing of women. Ely and Meyerson (2000) argue that the portrayal of women as found by Omari (2008) in Kenya, Maractho (2017) in Uganda and Akpabio (2017) in Tanzania is predicated on the unconscious frame and potentially advances it. To this end, unless the diversity of women in newsrooms is studied and

the dearth of diversity addressed, the unconscious framing which favours men and disadvantages women is likely to continue.

Recognition and the attendant quantity of representation gain significance in the second issue, respect, which Ward and Grower (2020) argue addresses "whether persons of each gender are presented in a way that reflects their complexity and humanity, or whether portrayals are reduced to one dimensional stereotype" (p. 3). Respect is to some extent a function of diversity in newsrooms, thus it is important that women are well represented in editorial positions. Therefore, the need to entrench a culture of addressing the underrepresentation of women and most importantly presenting women in their complexity without narrow stereotypes is urgent. More women in the newsrooms potentially guarantees that women will not be "defined solely on the basis of their appearance or their behaviour in relationships, and with limited personality traits and roles" (Ward and Grower, 2020, p. 3).

This critical role of the media in society implies that the society expects the media to highlight pertinent issues like gender equality, and promote its adoption in the work environment. This would eventually mean that women receive their fair share of opportunities at work for both advancement and remuneration. It follows therefore that this practice must start with the media itself. This makes the question "how gender representative is the media workforce?" worth investigating. Llanos and Nina, (2011) note that the media is powerful and plays a variety of important roles including providing frameworks for interpretation, mobilisation of the citizenry for critical societal issues, reproduction of the predominant culture, and entertainment. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to analyse gender representation in East African media and the attendant implications for equity and progress of gender representation, given the media's power to frame interpretations and reproduce culture.

Rationale for the Study

The need for diverse perspectives from a gender lens, social norms, values, different schools of thought amongst other elements of diversity in the media workforce cannot be overemphasised. Sustained efforts by multiple stakeholders across industry and

academia not only highlight gaps, but also contribute to strategies on how to achieve gender equity and enhance progressive coverage and framing of women. As organisations increasingly focus on their human resources in terms of performance, growth, corporate success and shareholder value, media organisations' measure of output and accomplishment is also likely to be directly proportional to their choice of employees.

Gender parity is a continuous dialogue for many sectors. Reports indicate that inequality is also evident in media institutions yet gender equality has been identified as a means to achieve sustainable development (Africa Gender Index Report, 2020; Siciliano, 2022). While more and more women are studying and joining the field of journalism today, they still face considerable challenges in terms of safety, support, and career advancement. Women also remain under-represented in the industry, especially at the higher decision-making levels despite constituting up to 40% of the journalism workforce in most media markets (Eddy, Arguedas,

Mukherjee, & Nielsen, 2023). Critical to note is the fact that gender inequality in the media is consequential in the society because women in media leadership and the editorial workforce can shift norms, while the dearth of women in media leadership and editorial workforces can entrench stereotypes and perpetuate gender inequalities (Ward & Grower, 2020).

Based on the foregoing discussion the purpose of this study was to establish the state of women in the media industry and the coverage and framing of women in East African media. The study specifically set out to:

1. Describe the gender representation in the newsroom workforce in East African news media organisations.
2. Analyse the distribution of newsroom roles and responsibilities to different genders in East African media organisations.
3. Analyse the coverage and framing of women in East African media.



METHODS

How was the data gathered?

This study broadly sought to establish the state of women in East African media and the coverage and framing of women in the news stories that feature women. The study was carried out in two phases and adopted a mixed method approach that entailed document analysis, telephone interviews and emails to collect information on the number of staff members and the distribution of staff in terms of gender, and quantitative content analysis of selected content.

The first phase of the study analysed documents such as human resources documents and records, documents that have roles of different editorial and non-editorial staff and the organograms. Further follow up interviews were conducted to collect quantitative data on the gender of the occupants of positions of business leader and editorial leader. The data from these interviews were predominantly quantitative and were analysed quantitatively and are presented in numbers. In this first phase 53 news media organisations in Kenya, 64 in Uganda and 81 in Tanzania were reached either through analysis of public documents and follow up interviews or both.

The second phase was purely quantitative content analysis and sampled six newspapers, six TV stations and seven digital publishers from the three East African countries. The content analysis focused on two different time periods for the three different platforms as follows. To start with, the top two newspapers in each of the three countries, based on circulation figures, were selected. The three months of July, August, and September 2023 were then purposively selected for review because they represented the first three months of the financial year 2023/2024 of each of these countries. The top two newspapers in Kenya selected were *Daily Nation* and *The Standard*; in Uganda *The Monitor* and *New Vision* newspapers were selected while in Tanzania *Mwananchi* and *Nipashe* were selected. As the next step, the top seven hard news stories per month from each newspaper (a total of 21 for each newspaper) were selected and followed on the top two digital platforms of each of the three countries in the same three-month period. The selected stories were purposely selected because they were high prominence hard news stories and the assumption was that they would be featured on the digital platforms. In Kenya these digital platforms were *Citizen Digital* and *Tuko*; in Uganda, *Monitor Digital*

and *New Vision digital* platforms while in Tanzania three were selected given that the top platform is more entertainment oriented. The three are *Millard Ayo*, *Mwananchi* and *Nipashe* digital platforms.

For television, the top TV stations that are part of media organisations that have all the three sectors of broadcast, print and digital were purposively sampled. In Kenya these were *NTV* and *KTN News*, in Uganda *Bukedde TV* and *NTV Uganda* while in Tanzania the study sampled *TBC* and *ITV*. For television, rather than sampling the same three-month period as the newspapers and digital platforms, a six-week period spanning part of November and part of December 2023 was selected for review. This period was purposely selected because it includes the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) which runs from November 25th to December 10th. November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women while December 10th is Human Rights Day. To encompass the lead-up to and follow-up from these sixteen days, the study sampled the period between November 11, 2023 and December 20, 2023.

Descriptive research design was adopted, as the researchers sought to describe the representation, coverage and framing of women without any manipulation of variables.

How was the data analysed?

Document analysis, as per Gross (2018), is a systematic procedure of analysing documents for answers that respond to specific questions. The first phase of the current study analysed the relevant records, documents and policies to establish gender representation in the East African media organisations (TV, Radio, Print, Digital) by focussing on five specific areas. The five areas are the number of prime-time news bulletins hosted by women, the number of talk shows hosted by women, the number of women opinion editorial columnists in the print newspapers, and leadership positions held by women in the media, that is the number of media organisations with women in editorial and business leadership.

The second phase of the study adopted descriptive content analysis to analyse the coverage and framing of women in the print, broadcast and digital media in East Africa. The content analysis as described by Jain,

Roy, Daswani and Sudha (2010) systematically and quantitatively describes manifest features of media content based on predetermined variables. Based on Krippendorff's (2004) argument, the researchers explicitly identified the context within which the analysis was conducted for valid inferences from text in relation to real world experiences. To this end, the researchers adopted directed content analysis in which case coding was based on identified categories which directed the analysis with a blueprint for initial codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The explicitly identified categories and the attendant analysis criteria are attached as appendices.

In the analysis of coverage of women, the analysis focused on the frequency of coverage of women in the top news stories (headline stories). Further, the analysis focused on other stories with women in the title or words that denote women, and analysed these stories based on the following predetermined categories: the beat, the journalists who wrote the story (whether male or female) and the type of story, conceptualised by Bappayo and Kirfi (2019) as news stories, features stories, editorials, opinion editorial, personal profiles, cartoons and pictorials. The stories were also analysed to assess the prominence given to the stories and the prominence of women in these stories. Last, in this section of the analysis of coverage the study looked at the nature of activity or event covered. The events or activities were pre-coded into five: national event or matter, private organisation event, women's' organisation event, political event and business, entrepreneurship or economic event.

In analysing the framing of women, the study focused on predetermined framing attributes which include: the overall dominant framing of women subjects and actors, the general framing of women expertise, the main actors in the articles that cover women, and the main actor roles in the articles. The overall dominant framing of women subjects and actors and their contribution to society was based on nine framing attributes identified from extant literature and operationalised to directing the coding of the news stories as outlined below.

The reassuring frame as conceptualised by Needham (2005) is a framing attribute in news articles that depicts women as actors in control. In the current study, stories that depict women as being in control

and reassuring in their contribution or activity in the society were coded as reassuring. The responsibility or value-based frame, also conceptualised by Needham (2005), was contextualised as stories that attribute some sort of responsibility or challenges to women or state that women are in charge of solutions. This also included articles that depict women as the ones to act or depicted them as acting responsive and responsible for the challenges and problems in the society, and as providing solutions including making positive contributions to the society. Credibility as conceptualised by Needham (2005) was adopted in this study as the framing attribute for stories that depict women as credible contributors in the society. Stories coded as having the credibility frame depicted women as subject matter experts in what they do without a mention that they are women and in domains that are not traditionally associated with women. Aspirational framing attribute (Needham, 2005) was assigned to articles that depict women as aspiring for greater heights in whatever they do in a manner that encourages other women to aspire for greater achievements.

The study also contextualised the conflict frame and human-interest frame by Semetko and Valkenberg (2000). These two scholars note that the conflict frame is assigned to news articles that depict actors or subjects in disagreement or generally showcases disagreements between parties, individuals, groups or countries. Articles that situated women at the centre of disagreements or tension between parties were coded for the conflict frame. The human-interest frame on the other hand provides a human example or "human face" of the issue covered and uses adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion (Semetko & Valkenberg, 2000). These are articles that further emphasised how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem. The use of the human face and an emotional angle make people regard an issue as serious.

The overall dominant framing of women was also analysed along what the study conceptualised as the feminised stereotypical frame and the masculinised trait frames (Van der Pas & Aaldering, 2020). The feminised stereotypical frame was assigned to news articles that paid excessive attention to the personal life, personality and appearance of women news subjects and actors

in a manner that perpetuates the stereotype of women as lacking the wherewithal to break the traditional norms that privilege men. The masculinised trait frame on the other hand was assigned to news articles that depicted women as tough, arrogant, assertive, confident, ambitious, controlling, stubborn and suggest that they are succeeding in whatever they are doing because they have traits traditionally associated with men. Finally, the economic consequences frame by Becken (2014) was adopted as the framing

attribute assigned to news articles that are told within the context of financial issues and specifically mention women actors in financial gains or losses.

The general framing of women expertise, the main actors in the articles that cover women, and the main actor roles in the articles are explained in context with the presentation of data in the respective sections that follows.



RESULTS

GENDER REPRESENTATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSROOM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For the first two objectives, the study sought to analyse the gender representation in the newsroom workforce and the distribution of roles and responsibilities in East African news media organisations. The study focused on five specific areas, that is, the number of women in the newsroom workforce (TV, Radio, Print, Digital), the number of prime-time news bulletins hosted by women, the number of talk shows hosted by women, the number of women opinion editorial columnists in the print newspapers, and leadership positions held by women in the media, that is, the number of media organisations with women in editorial and business leadership.

The findings indicate that the average percentage of women in the news media organisation workforce in Kenya is 39.5% (N=53) with the media organisations or media houses with the highest number of women in their workforce having 48%. These findings suggest a slight reduction from 42% as assessed by Hanitzsch (2019 as cited in Kassova & Addy, 2022). In leadership, 20% of the sampled media organisations in Kenya have women as the editorial leaders while only 11% of the Kenyan media organisations have women as business leaders. The TV stations in Kenya appear to have less than half of their prime-time broadcast news bulletins anchored by women, with a total of 43% (N=8) of all the TV prime time news bulletins in a week having a female anchor either as the main anchor or co-anchor. An analysis of shows/segments in the 31 sampled radio stations in Kenya indicates that 55% of the shows in these radio stations had 55% of the shows either hosted or co-hosted by a female presenter. Numbers are much lower on the newspaper front: the top seven newspapers in Kenya have a total of 269 opinion editorial columns in a week dedicated to experts and writers from different expertise and disciplines and out of these, only 42 (16%) are consistently dedicated to women opinion editorial writers. Kenya had approximately 173 radio stations, 72 TV channels and 19 newspapers and 13 online news sites as at 2021 (Media Innovation Centre, 2021), which suggest that the numbers for radio and TV sampled in this study may not strongly representative.

In Uganda, the average percentage of female staff in the media organisations' workforce is 44% (N=64) with the media with the highest number of female staff having 80% female staffers. This appears to be an improvement given that in 2019 the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) found a lack of diversity in Ugandan media. As per the ACME study, women comprised only 20% of the media workforce. Thirty three percent (33%) of media organisations in Uganda have female editorial leaders while only 20% of the media organisations have female business leaders. TV in Uganda has 54% (N=21, total number of TV stations in Uganda, 40 according to MIC, 2021) of the prime-time news bulletins in a week anchored by female anchors. In Uganda, the study also analysed the programming schedule of 35 radio stations whose total number of shows or segments was established to be 277. Out of all these shows female hosts or co-hosts are in 45% of all the shows/segments on these radio stations. However, Uganda has the highest number of radio stations in East Africa with the MIC (2021) study establishing approximately 199 radio stations in Uganda, which suggest that the numbers may not be strongly representative of the situation in Uganda. The top eight newspapers in Uganda have a total of 29 opinion editorial columns in a week dedicated to experts and writers from different expertise and disciplines and out of these, only 34% are dedicated to women opinion editorial writers.

In Tanzania the average percentage of female staff in the media organisations' workforce is 46% (N=81) and the organisations with the highest number of females in the staff workforce had 80% female staffers. Forty percent (40%) of media organisations in Tanzania have female editorial leaders while only 20% of the media organisations have female business leaders. Tanzania has the highest percentage of women (55%, N=8) anchoring prime-time news bulletins in a week compared to Kenya (43%) and Uganda (54%). Radio in Tanzania also seem to have female radio presenters hosting or co-hosting most of the shows or segments (77%), even though the number of radio stations analysed is comparably small (N=26). Tanzanian newspapers, like Ugandans, do not seem to have many opinion editorial columns but the top three newspapers have 54% of the opinion editorial columns in a week dedicated to female experts and writers from different expertise and disciplines. These findings on the radio, TV and newspapers should be

understood within the context of the population of 183 radio stations, 43 TV stations, 229 newspapers and magazines in mainland Tanzania (Katunzi & Spurk, 2020), which suggests a limitation in generalisation.

COVERAGE AND FRAMING OF WOMEN IN EAST AFRICAN MEDIA

The third objective of the study sought to analyse the coverage and framing of women in East African media. This section presents findings on newspapers, television and digital media coverage and framing of women from the content analysis of two newspapers, two TV stations and two digital publishers from each of the three countries in East Africa. In Kenya the researchers analysed *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers, *KTN News* and *NTV*, and *Citizen Digital* and *Tuko News*. In Uganda the researchers analysed *Daily Monitor* and *New Vision* newspapers, *Bukedde TV* and *NTV Uganda* and *Monitor Digital* and *New Vision* digital platforms. In Tanzania, the selected outlets were *Mwananchi* and *Nipashe* newspapers, *TBC* and *ITV*, and *Millard Ayo*, *Mwananchi* and *Nipashe* digital platforms.

COVERAGE OF WOMEN IN EAST AFRICAN MEDIA

Newspapers: News Articles with Women Mentioned in the Titles of the Articles

The study analysed all the news articles in the newspapers that had women mentioned in the titles,

or topics where women were likely to be featured. Broadly the inclusion criteria had three broad categories of articles: (1) articles that had titles that had female names as used in the respective countries, (2) articles that had in the titles terms or topics that suggested the involvement of women, for instance, feminism, sex and gender and (3) articles that had titles with the term woman or terms used to imply women like madam, female and mom among others. Therefore, generally the researchers sampled news articles that had in their titles words which included women, woman, female, madame, mom, grandma, she, her, gender, sex, feminism/feminist or instances where a proper noun that is commonly identified as a name of a woman was in the title.

The findings indicate that in the three-month period of July, August and September, 2023, a total of 1,256 news articles met the inclusion criteria for analysis with Kenya's *Daily Nation* newspaper (24%) having the highest number of news articles that featured women in the titles followed by Tanzania's *Nipashe* (20%) and Uganda's *Daily Monitor* (18%) as shown in Table 2 below. At the country level 41% of the stories are from Kenyan newspapers, 30% from Ugandan newspapers and 29% from Tanzanian newspapers.

Table 1: News Articles with Women mentioned in the Titles of the Articles

Newspaper Brand	Country	Number of News Articles featuring women in the title/topic	Percentage
Daily Nation	Kenya	306	24%
The Standard	Kenya	204	17%
Daily Monitor	Uganda	230	18%
New Vision	Uganda	147	12%
Nipashe	Tanzania	255	20%
Mwananchi	Tanzania	114	9%
Total		1,256	100%

Digital: News Articles Published on the Digital Platforms Sampled from the Prominent Newspaper Articles

The researchers sampled the most prominent news articles from the newspaper articles and traced the same stories to the most popular digital news platforms in the three countries. The findings indicate that not many articles published on the print newspapers and given prominence were published on the digital platforms. A total of 21 most prominent hard news stories from each print newspaper (seven for each month) were sampled and traced to the digital platforms. Only 47 out of 126 news stories on women published in the six newspapers from the three countries were traced and found on the digital platforms of the top digital news sites in these three countries as shown

in Table 2 below. The limited number of prominent hard news stories of the day on the popular digital publishers' platforms, including in instances where the print newspaper publisher and the digital platforms belong to the same media news organisation, seems to suggest that the stories published on the digital platforms are different from the hard news stories of the day. Most stories on the digital platforms were leaning more towards entertainment and political stories. One notable exception was Uganda's Monitor newspaper and Monitor Digital, where out of the 21 identified prominent stories in the newspaper, 17 were published on the digital platform. The 47 news articles were analysed, and the findings are presented later in this report.

Table 2: News Articles Published on the Digital Platforms

Digital platform brand	Country	No. of stories
Citizen Digital	Kenya	2/21
Tuko News	Kenya	5/21
Nipashe	Tanzania	12/21
Millard Ayo/Mwananchi	Tanzania	5/21
Monitor Digital	Uganda	17/21
New Vision	Uganda	6/21
Total		47/126

Television: Prime Time News Stories featuring Women

The study sampled the period between November 11, 2023, and December 20, 2023, which included the last 20 days of November and the first 20 days of the month of December 2023. The period was purposely selected to include the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) which runs from November 25th to December 10th. November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women while December 10th is Human Rights Day. The sampling of this period was therefore purposive as it presupposed intense coverage of women: it encompassed the fortnight leading up to

the 25th of November, the 16 days of activism against GBV, and the ten days after this period of activism.

Again, stories that featured women in the headlines or had women as newsmakers at various points of the TV broadcast news packages were recorded and analysed. A total of 169 TV broadcast news stories were selected from an analysis of news bulletins between November and December 2023.

The findings indicate that Kenya had the most number of days that women were featured in prime time TV news bulletins (52%) during this period and the highest number of stories featuring women (88).

Table 3: Analysed Stories on TV

TV Station	No of Days Women Covered in Prime-Time News Stories (N=20)	Total No. of Stories featuring women
Kenya	52%	88
Uganda	24%	41
Total Tanzania	24%	40

Coverage of Women in Headline Stories

The study sampled newspapers for a period of three months in 2023, that is July, August, and September. First the study analysed headline stories in the six newspapers for the three months, a total of 92 days for each newspaper, to ascertain whether these headline stories covered or mentioned women. Papacharissi (2019) notes that headlines turn news into stories. Headline stories are always on the first page of a newspaper which Kim and Chung (2017) argue depict the most important events and news stories in a society. Among the many functions of newspaper headlines, most scholars agree that headlines optimise relevance of stories and direct readers to stories with tacitly assembled words that enhance readers' construction of optimal, contextual interpretation (cf. Dor, 2003; Papacharissi, 2019; Nwala & Akpevweoghene, 2017; Kim & Chung, 2017). Simply put, newspaper headlines attract the reader's attention and skilled news readers scan for headlines before they read the stories. It is therefore important that women are covered in headline stories because

such stories not only attract readers, but also by virtue of being headline stories are considered significant and consumed with maximum processing effort.

The findings show that for the selected three-month period, Kenyan newspapers had on average more days with headline stories that covered or mentioned women (73%) with The Standard newspaper (78%) particularly having comparably more days with headline stories covering or mentioning women. Tanzania followed with 61% of the days having headline stories that mentioned or covered women, while Uganda had the least number of days (45%) that had the newspaper headlines cover or even mention women in the three-month period as shown in Table 4 below. At the East African level, and from all the six newspapers' publications over the three months, women were covered or mentioned in headline stories in 60% of the days with 40% of the 552 cumulative days having no mention or coverage of women in the headline stories.

Table 4: Coverage of Women in Headline Stories

	Days in the three-month period	No. of days with women covered or mentioned in the headline story	No. of days with no coverage or mention of women in the headline stories
Nation	92	57 (62%)	35 (38%)
The Standard	92	78 (85%)	14 (15%)
Kenyan Sample	184	73%	27%
Monitor	92	46 (50%)	46 (50%)
New Vision	92	36 (39%)	56 (61%)
Ugandan Sample	184	45%	55%
Mwananchi	92	56 (61%)	36 (39%)
Nipashe	92	56 (61%)	36 (39%)
Tanzanian Sample	184	61%	39%
East African			
Total	552	60%	40%

Beat of News Stories

Newspapers

The findings indicate that most of the stories featuring women in the newspapers in East Africa fell in the general news beat (43%) followed by the sports beat (21%) with politics coming third at 10%. The trend also appears to be the same at the individual country level as almost half of the news articles featuring women across Kenya (39%), Uganda (43%) and Tanzania (48%) fell within the general news beat. However, while

the sports beat comes second at the East African level, in Kenya (37%) and in Uganda (16%), in Tanzania, politics (17%) was the second most prominent beat after general news as shown in table 5 below. Also worth noting is that while in Uganda and Tanzania the news articles featuring women were distributed across diverse beats, in Kenya the two main beats where women featured were general news and sports. Stories featuring women made up less than 10% of each of all the other beats.

Table 5: Newspapers: Beat of News Stories

	Kenya (N=510)	Uganda (N=377)	Tanzania (N=367)	East Africa (1254)
Current Affairs	7%	4%	11%	8%
General News	39%	43%	48%	43%
Politics (local or foreign politics)	4%	11%	17%	10%
Economics and Business	3%	7%	10%	6%
Opinion editorials that give perspective and slant on women or gender issues	6%	12%	7%	8%
Culture/Religion	3%	5%	2%	3%
Sports	37%	16%	4%	21%
Other	1%	2%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The findings in the current study also indicate that at the East African level, the number of women covering beats like politics (47%), business and economics (38%), topics of the day (41%) and writing opinion editorials is relatively high in relation to the findings in previous studies. Whereas most studies that have focused on coverage generally have found that female journalists cover softer beats like beauty, gender, homemaking and sex work (Akpabio, 2017), the current study, though focused on stories featuring women, seems to present a progressive trend with relatively more women covering the 'hard' beats featuring women.

Television

Across the six sampled TV stations in East Africa, the top two beats that featured women are the general news beat (57%) and the sports beat (19%). The findings further indicate that Kenyan TV stations had more women covered in TV news stories that focused on the current affairs (16%). This seems to suggest that Kenyan TV compared to Ugandan and Tanzanian TV stations features more women in the top agenda issues of the day.

Table 6: Television: Beat of News Stories

	Kenya (N=88)	Uganda (N=41)	Tanzania (N=40)	East Africa (N=169)
Current Affairs	16%	0%	0%	8%
General News	41%	80%	67%	57%
Politics (local or foreign politics)	2%	0%	10%	4%
Economics and Business	6%	3%	13%	7%
Culture/Religion	7%	3%	0%	4%
Sports	28%	7%	10%	19%
Other	0%	7%	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Digital

The number of stories on the digital platform were few and therefore did not provide sufficient data for a representative country-by-country analysis. Nevertheless, the findings seem to follow the trends

in the newspapers and TV, with more stories featuring women falling in the general news beat (55%), but unlike in the newspapers and TV, the digital platform has politics (17%) as the second most dominant beat with stories that feature women.

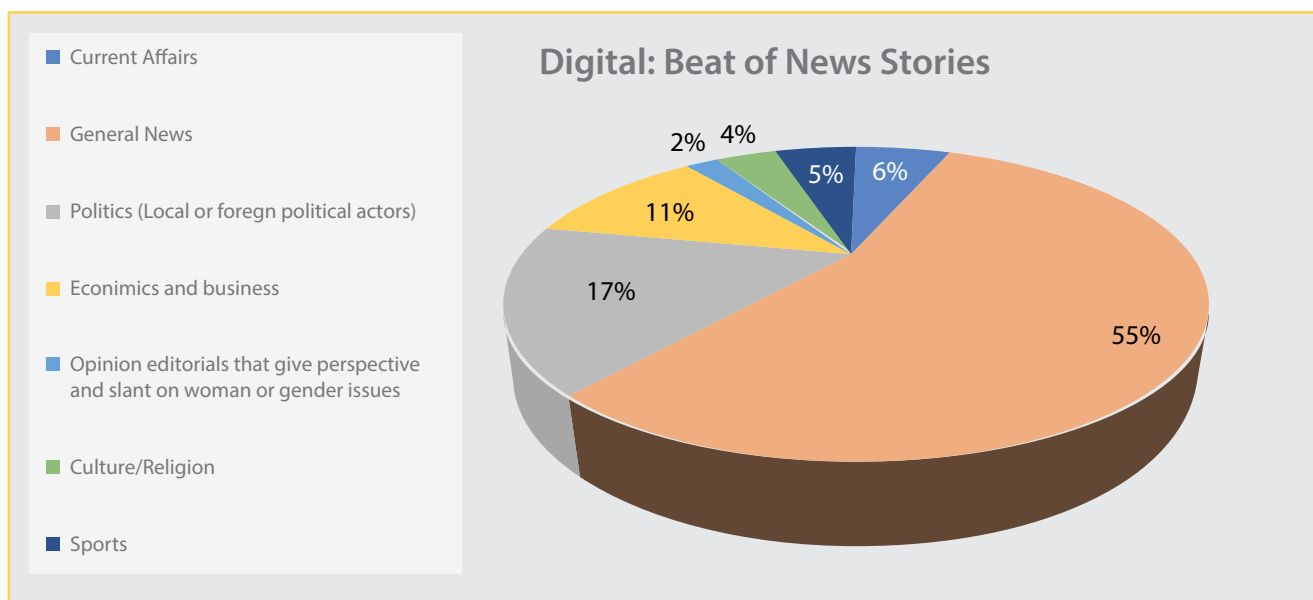


Figure 1: Digital: Beat of News Stories

Bylines of Stories Covering Women Newspapers

Across East Africa, most of the stories featuring women in the newspapers are written by male journalists as the findings indicate that in the selected time period, 55% of the bylines were by male journalists, 29% by female journalists while 16% of the stories either had

no byline or had agencies or the media houses as the writers. However, unlike Kenya (17%) and Uganda (24%), Tanzania seems to have more stories covering women written by female journalists; more than half of all the stories analysed (52%) from the two Tanzanian newspapers had female journalists' bylines.

Table 7: Newspapers: Bylines of Stories Covering Women

	Kenya (N=510)	Uganda (N=375)	Tanzania (N=368)	East Africa (N=1253)
Female journalists	17%	24%	52%	29%
Male journalists	66%	56%	39%	55%
No byline or other	17%	20%	9%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Television and Digital

Across East Africa, the findings indicate that male journalists covered more than 50% of the stories featuring women on both TV and digital platforms. The findings on the bylines for both television and

digital news stories follow the print trend across the region with slightly more male journalists (59%) doing television stories featuring women. There were more stories on the digital platforms with either no byline or bylines that were neither male or female (26%) compared to newspapers (9%) and TV (5%).

Table 8: Television and Digital: Bylines of Stories Covering Women

	Television (N=169)	Digital (47)
Female journalists	36%	23%
Male journalists	59%	51%
No byline and other	5%	26%
Total	100%	100%

The television data at a country level (see table 9 below) shows that Tanzanian TV stations have a comparably high number of female journalists covering stories that feature women (70%). In fact, the number of female

journalists covering women's stories in Tanzania was more than double the number in Kenya and almost five times the number in Uganda.

Table 9: Television Bylines at the Individual Country Level

	Kenya (N=88)	Uganda (41)	Tanzania (N=40)	East Africa (N=169)
Female journalists	31%	15%	70%	36%
Male Journalist	69%	65%	30%	59%
No byline/Other	0	20%	0%	5%

Uganda's low number of female journalists covering stories featuring women in both newspapers and TV and the fact that Tanzania seems to have relatively more, especially for TV stories, can perhaps be explained by the political situations in these two countries. While Tanzania has a female president which might encourage the embedding of more female journalists to cover her events, Uganda's history of political intolerance and clampdown on the media and journalists could be the reason why there are fewer female journalists covering news stories, especially for TV given that in TV news gathering, a journalist with camera crew is a conspicuous figure for any would-be attack on journalists. Cases of journalists targeted especially during the electioneering period probably explains the few numbers of female journalists covering especially TV news. In Kenya the findings depart from previous findings by Kassova and Addy (2022) which had established that of the stories produced by the gender desk of a leading Kenyan media house, nearly 50% of bylines were by female journalists. In the current study, on the contrary, across newspapers, TV and digital the percentage of female journalists' bylines is 17%, 36% and 31% respectively. However, unlike gender desk stories which were the main focus of the study by Kassova and Addy (2022), the stories featuring

women in the current study are not necessarily gender desk stories and are representative of the general trend of story assignment in newsrooms. The current study also found that women's representation in Kenyan news media organisations' workforce is 39.5% which is close to Kassova and Addy's (2022) finding of 42%. To this end, therefore the findings in Kenya of quite low numbers of bylines by female journalists in newspapers, TV and digital on stories about women suggests that female journalists are not assigned as many stories as their male counterparts.

Types of Stories Newspapers

Across the three countries, most of the newspaper stories featuring women were hard news stories with Tanzania (80%) having the highest percentage of the stories covering women as hard news. Uganda had almost a third of the stories (28%) treated as feature stories which seems to suggest that compared to Kenya (13%) and Tanzania (8%) a relatively high percentage of stories featuring women in Uganda were given in-depth coverage that goes beyond the first four of the 5Ws and H of what, who, where and when to why and how.

Table 10: Newspapers: Type of Stories

	Kenya (N=510)	Uganda (N=375)	Tanzania (N=368)	East Africa (N=1253)
Hard News Story	74%	52%	80%	69%
Features stories	13%	28%	7%	16%
Editorials/Opinion editorial	9%	9%	4%	7%
Personal profiles	3%	6%	4%	4%
Cartoons and pictorials	0%	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	4%	4%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Television and Digital

Most of the stories covered by the six TV stations in the three countries and featuring women were hard news stories (85%) while 14% were feature stories. None

of the TV stations had an editorial/explainer featuring women or women's issues over the sampled study period which included the 16 Days of Activism against GBV between 25th November to 10th December.

Table 11: Television: Type of Stories

	Kenya (88)	Uganda (N=41)	Tanzania (N=40)	East Africa (N=169)
Hard News Stories	89%	63%	100%	85%
Features stories,	11%	32%	0%	14%
Personal profiles	0%	5%	0%	1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

The findings above also indicate that Kenya and Tanzania have a very high percentage of stories as hard news while Uganda appears to have invested significantly in treating stories featuring women (32%) as feature stories. Suffice to note, feature stories are a lot more informative and go beyond the basics of news to more research-based information to answer the questions of Why and How of events and actions that are newsworthy including personalities. Therefore, the fact that Uganda had more feature stories in both its newspapers and TV bulletins suggests that the print newspapers and TV in Uganda invest more in informing the public about women related issues, events and

newsworthy actions beyond just the basics of what happened, who it happened to, where it happened and when.

On the digital platforms, again, more stories were hard news stories (81%) as shown in Figure 2 below, which is consistent with the trend across print and television. Further and consistent with Ugandan publications' proclivity for feature stories, Ugandan digital platforms accounted for 88% of all the feature stories published on digital platforms of the seven sampled digital news publishers in East Africa.

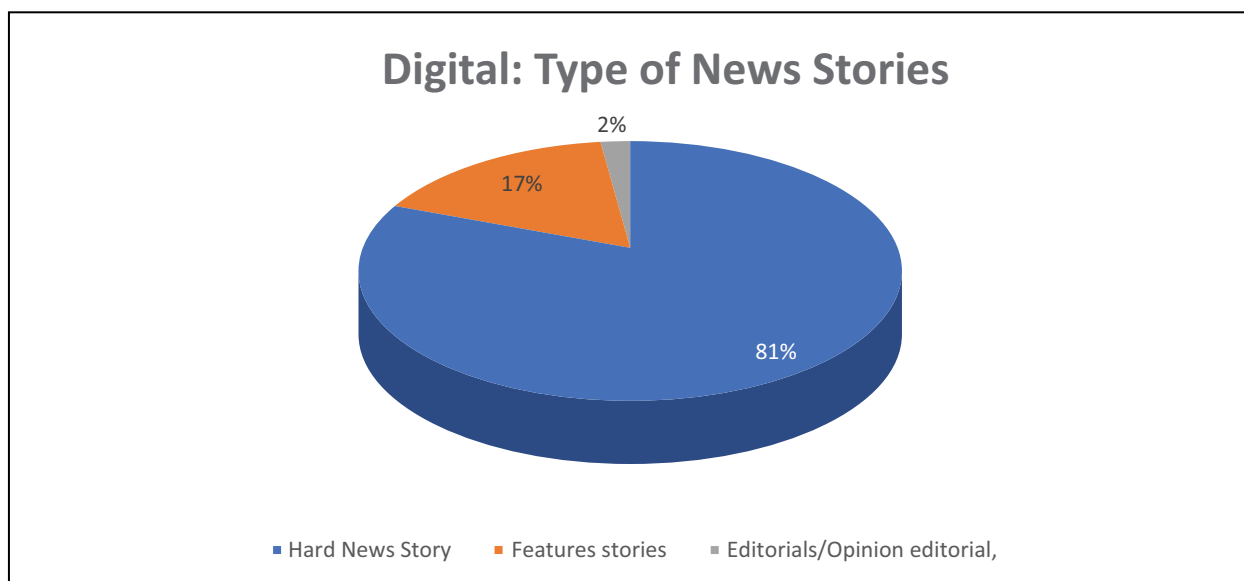


Figure 2: Digital: Type of Stories

The Nature of Activity/Event Covered Newspapers

The study sought to establish the nature of events or activities that women in the news articles were involved in and the extent to which politics, which is about the distribution and allocation of resources, economics, and entrepreneurship were at the centre of events or activities covered in these news articles that featured women. The findings indicate that whereas politics, economics and entrepreneurship have a significant bearing on socioeconomic development, only 11% of the total number of stories analysed from the six

newspapers in East Africa covered women in political, business, entrepreneurship and economic events or activities. Most of the women were covered in national events or matters by the six newspapers (40%). At the country level, the two Kenyan newspapers had almost half their stories featuring women drawn from national events or matters (54%), while Tanzania had the least number at 28%. Although the number of stories covering political events featuring women was low across all three countries, Tanzania, possibly because of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, had comparably more stories covering political events (9%).

Table 12: Newspapers: The Nature of Activity/Event Covered

	Kenya (N=510)	Uganda (N=376)	Tanzania (N=368)	East Africa (N=1254)
National event or matter	54%	32%	28%	40%
Private organisation event	2%	14%	15%	9%
Women organisation event	2%	6%	4%	3%
Political event	3%	3%	9%	5%
Business, entrepreneurship or economic event	4%	8%	7%	6%
Other	35%	37%	37%	37%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Television and Digital

Across the three countries and the six TV stations, slightly less than half of all the TV news coverage of women featured them in national events or matters (48%). The findings at individual country level shows that whereas Kenyan TV stations appeared to focus on covering women predominantly in national events or matters (77%), Tanzania's and Uganda's TV stations covered women in a broader variety of events and activities. For Uganda, other than private organisation events (15%), a total of 63% of the coverage of

women is spread on many other platforms and arenas with none having more than 2%. Tanzania on the other hand appears to have a moderately distributed focus on different platforms beyond the national but with more stories focused on women in private organisation events (40%), women organisation events (18%) and business, entrepreneurship or economic events (17%). Generally, across the three countries, similar to the trend seen in newspaper coverage, TV stations appear to have very few stories of women in political events, even in Tanzania where the president is a woman.

Table 13: Television: The Nature of Activity/Event Covered

	Kenya (N=88)	Uganda (N=41)	Tanzania (N=40)	East Africa (N=169)
National event or matter	77%	22%	10%	48%
Private organisation event	1%	15%	40%	14%
Women organisation event	0%	0%	18%	4%
Political event	0%	2%	5%	2%
Business, entrepreneurship or economic event	5%	2%	17%	7%
Other	17%	59%	10%	25%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

For the seven digital publishers across East Africa, the bulk of stories featuring women were in the area of national events (38%), followed by 13% and 11%

covering women in private organisation events and political events respectively.

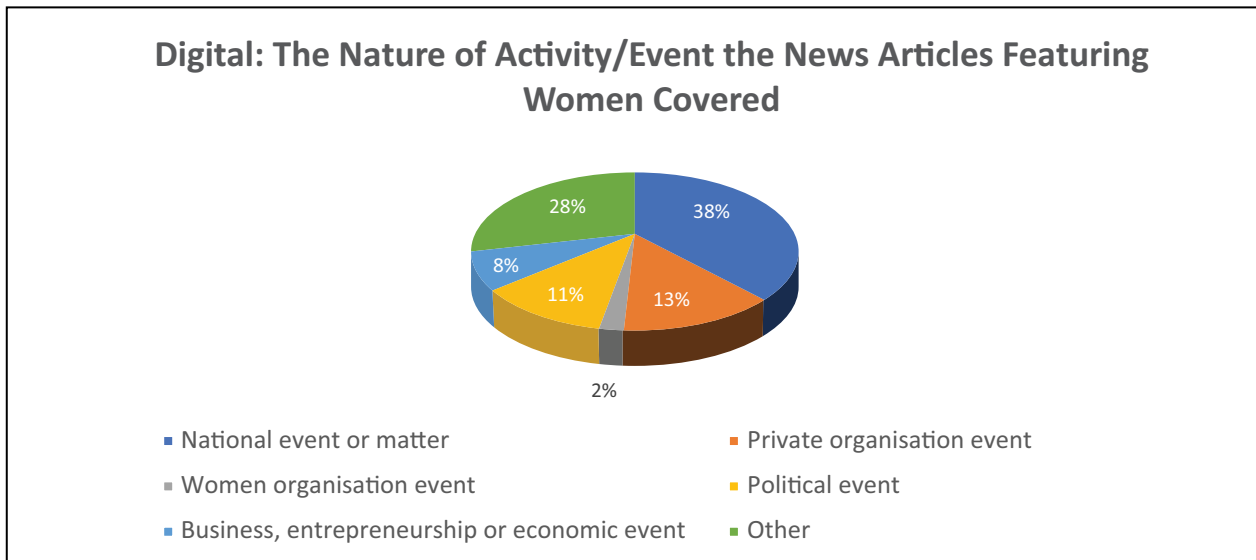


Figure 3: Digital: The Nature of Activity/Event Covered

The findings on the nature of activity or events where women are covered suggest that in East Africa, women are most likely to be covered at national events. At the country level, there seems to be a pronounced focus on national events or matters in Kenya, a fairly distributed coverage of events beyond the national events or matters in Tanzania while Uganda has the most pronounced distributed coverage of events or matters beyond national events, especially for TV.

The Prominence of the Stories Covering Women Newspapers

The study sought to establish the prominence given to stories featuring women in the selected newspapers. Prominence was operationalised into three distinct categories. High Prominence was conceptualised as the placement of stories in the cover page or the first

seven pages of the newspapers and with more than 600 words. Stories that were inside the newspaper pages after the seventh page, were longer than 200 words but less than 600 words were categorised as Medium Prominence stories while Low Prominence were stories that appeared in inside pages of the newspaper and were less than 200 words. The findings indicate that half of the stories (50%) featuring women in the analysed East African newspapers were medium prominence stories while a significant 35% of these stories were high prominence stories.

At the country level, Tanzania had more high prominence stories (48%) while Uganda had the least number of high prominence stories (24%). Generally, Kenya had a relatively high number of low prominence stories (22%) while Tanzania (5%) had the least number of stories featuring women as low prominence stories.

Table 14: Newspapers: The Prominence of the Stories Covering Women

	Kenya (510)	Uganda (376)	Tanzania (367)	East Africa (1253)
High prominence story	34%	24%	48%	35%
Medium prominence	44%	62%	47%	50%
Low prominence	22%	14%	5%	15%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The prominence given to news stories either in terms of the length of the story or placement in conspicuous pages is fairly important as an agenda setter. Longer stories and stories placed in conspicuous pages like the cover page and the top half of the newspaper and on odd number pages attract the attention of the readers and suggest that those stories are important. Therefore, the findings seem to suggest that Tanzanian newspapers appear to give more stories featuring women high prominence which essentially leads to more attention to these stories. Even though generally, across the three countries the stories featuring women are relatively prominently placed, the two sampled

Kenyan newspapers seem to give more stories less focused attention with regards to the prominence.

Television and Digital

TV news bulletins, compared to newspapers (35%) at the East African level appear to have a relatively high percentage of stories featuring women as high prominence (46%). At the individual country level, the findings indicate that Kenya and Tanzanian TV news bulletins had more stories featuring women as high prominence stories while Uganda had relatively fewer stories as high prominence.

Table 15: Television: The Prominence of the Stories Covering Women

	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	East Africa
High prominence	55%	19%	58%	46%
Medium prominence	37%	71%	42%	47%
Low prominence	8%	10%	0%	7%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

The digital platforms had more medium prominence stories (53%) and from a comparative analysis of the prominence given to news articles and stories across the three platforms in the three countries it is safe to conclude that the publishers gave news articles that cover women fairly prominent placement on the

newspapers and pronounced prominence on both TV news bulletins and the digital platform. It is newspapers that had comparatively more articles covering women accorded low prominence and at 15% there are clear indications that news articles and stories covering women were fairly prominent.

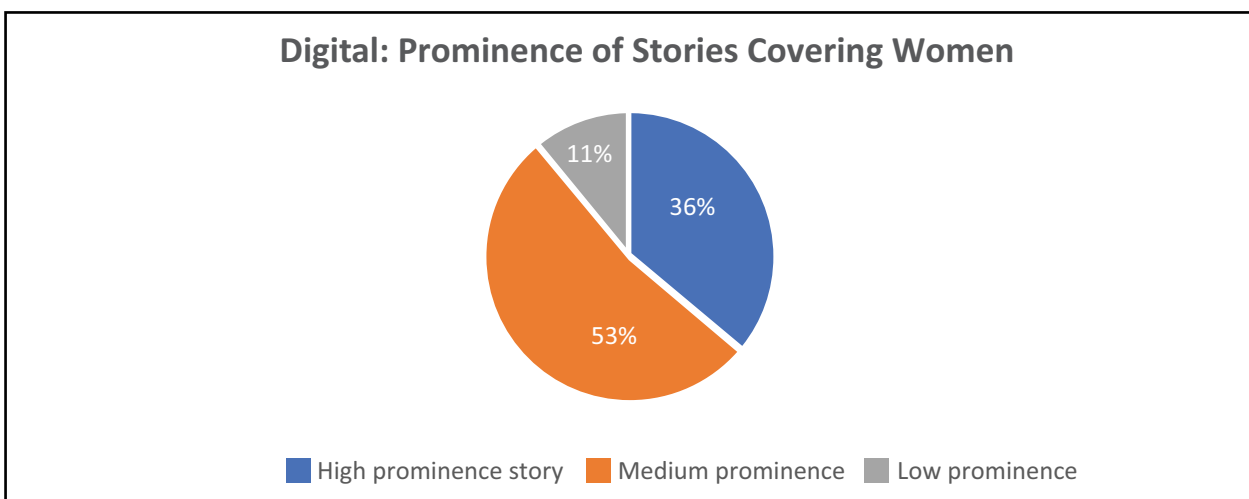


Figure 4: Digital: Prominence of Stories Covering Women

PROMINENCE OF WOMEN IN THE STORIES COVERING WOMEN

This study also sought to establish how prominent women are in stories featuring women. Prominence of women in the news articles was operationalised along different indicators depending on the medium in question. For newspapers, prominence of women in the story was operationalised into four indicators. High prominence of women in the story means that women featured in the first three paragraphs. Moderate prominence of women in the story means that women were not featured until after the first three paragraphs while Low prominence of women in the story means that women were only featured in the last three paragraphs. The last indicator of prominence of women in the stories covering women were stories that had women in the title or the pictures accompanying the story, but women featured nowhere else in the news story.

Prominence in broadcast news stories is a function of how a broadcast story is packaged. Typically, a TV broadcast news package has a reader which is what the news anchor reads to the audience, a voice over by the reporter in the field, a sound on tape which refers to the field footage that has a newsmaker

speaking and a voice over wrap or piece to camera (PTC), which refers to the sign off by the reporter in the field. Therefore, high prominence featuring of women in broadcast news stories means that women not only feature in the reader but also appear prominently in the sound on tape as speaking on the issue covered in the news story. Moderate prominence means that women feature in the reader and sound on tape, they are seen in the footage but are not speaking to the issue being covered in the news story. Low prominence in the TV news story means that women are only mentioned in the reader and nowhere else.

Newspapers

The findings indicate that in East Africa, women featured prominently in stories in which they were covered, with 89% of the stories having high prominence of women in the story. Only 2% of the news stories gave women in those news articles low prominence and only 1% had women in the title of the story and not anywhere else in the news articles. The trend is the same at the individual country level with Kenya having relatively more news articles (98%) giving women high prominence in the story.

Table 16: Newspapers: Prominence of Women in the Stories Covering Women

	Kenya (N=511)	Uganda (N=376)	Tanzania (N=367)	East Africa (N=1254)
High prominence of women in the story	98%	86%	83%	89%
Moderate prominence of women in the story	1%	11%	15%	8%
Low prominence of women in the story	1%	2%	2%	2%
Women featured in the title of the story, but not anywhere else in the news story	0%	1%	0	1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Television and Digital

The findings indicate that at the East African level, the six TV stations in the three countries had more news stories that featured women prominently (74%) and only 6% of the stories only mentioned women. At the individual country level Tanzania had almost

all the stories featuring women giving women high prominence in the story (98%) while Uganda had close to half of all the stories featuring women either given medium or low prominence (49%). Uganda had the highest number of stories that gave women low prominence (17%).

Table 17: Television: Prominence of Women in the Stories Covering Women

	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	East Africa
High Prominence: women featured prominently in the story	74%	51%	98%	74%
Moderate Prominence: women featured moderately	23%	32%	2%	20%
Low Prominence” Women only mentioned in the reader	3%	17%	0%	6%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

The digital platforms also had more stories giving women high prominence in the news articles (89%). The prominence of women in the stories on the

digital platforms was measured in the same way as in newspapers.

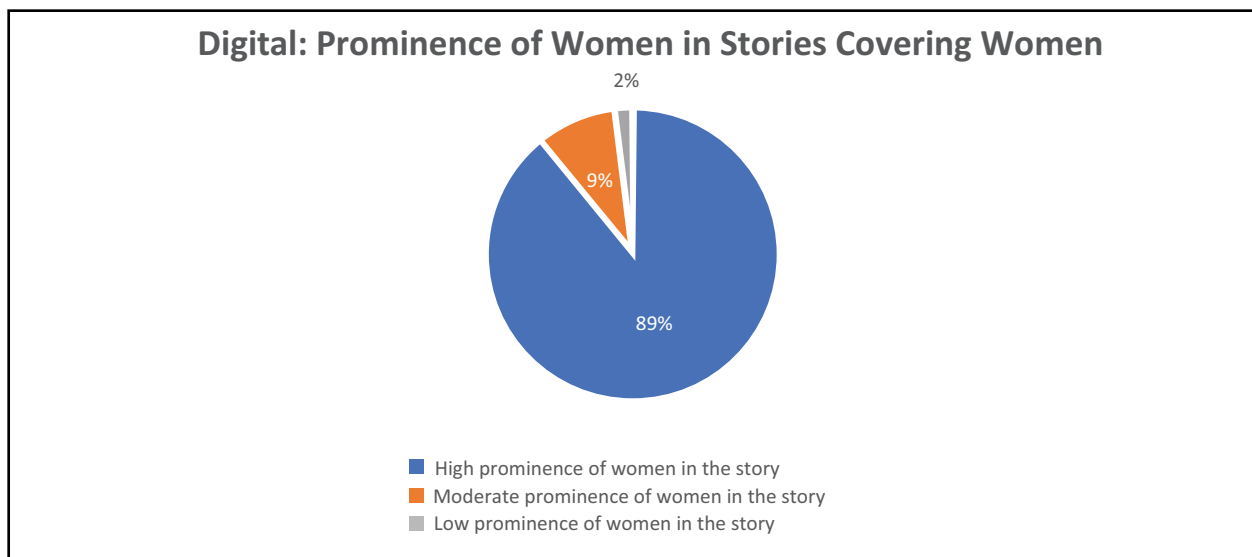


Figure 5: Digital: Prominence of Women in Stories Covering Women

Generally, at the East African level and across newspapers (89%), TV (74%) and digital (89%) the news stories featuring women appear to have given women pronounced prominence in these articles. This is expected given that the study sampled stories that had women in the titles of the stories or had words and phrases that suggested the stories were about women. However, the fact that 26% of the news stories about women on TV did not give women high prominence in the stories raises concerns given the power of the audiovisual medium that TV is.

Use of Photos and Pictures in News Articles Covering Women
Newspapers and Digital

The use of photos and pictures contributes to the

prominence of a news article in a newspaper and so does the use of soundbites and on-location footage in broadcast news. The study sought to find out the extent to which photos and pictures were used in news articles featuring women and the number of news articles featuring women that had women in the photos and pictures used in the articles. The findings indicate that only 16% of the news articles featuring women did not have photos and pictures or any cartoon or graphic, meaning that most of the articles (84%) were prominent and caught the attention of the reader because of the use of photos, pictures, cartoons and graphics. However, much as women were in 62% of the pictures used with these articles that featured women, 21% of stories that featured women had photos and pictures but with no woman in the picture.

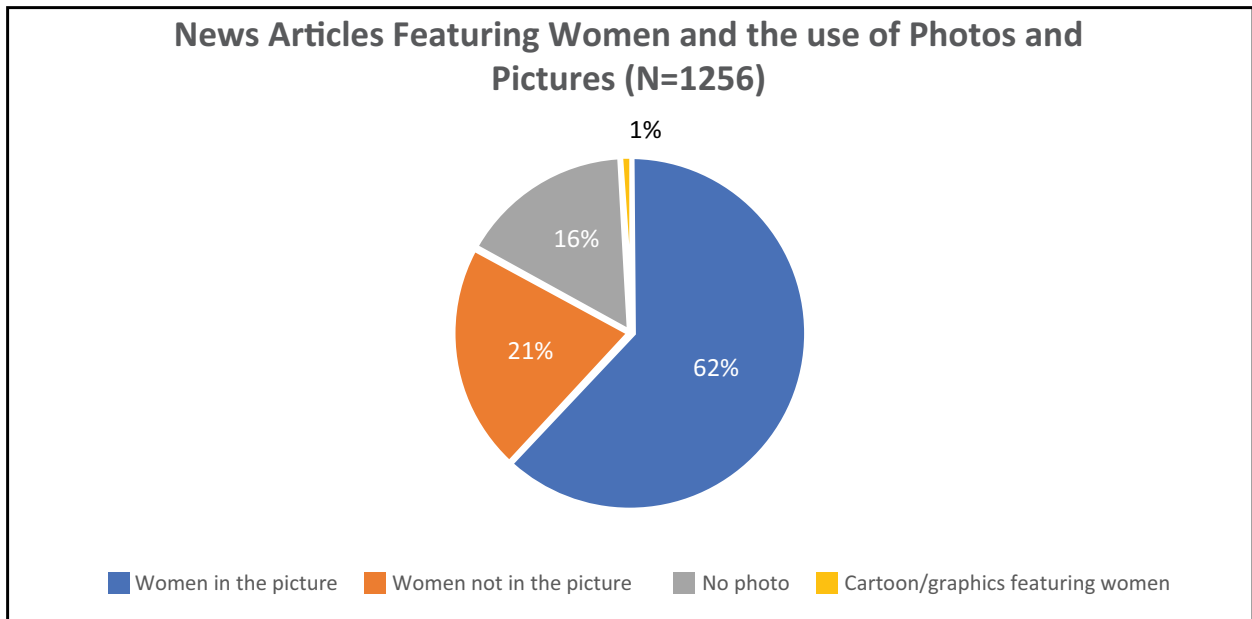


Figure 6: Newspapers: News Articles Featuring Women and the use of Photos and Pictures

For the digital platform stories, the study analysed how many of the stories featuring women and which had accompanying photos and pictures actually had

women in the pictures. The findings indicate that 26% of these stories about women with photos and pictures had no women in the pictures.

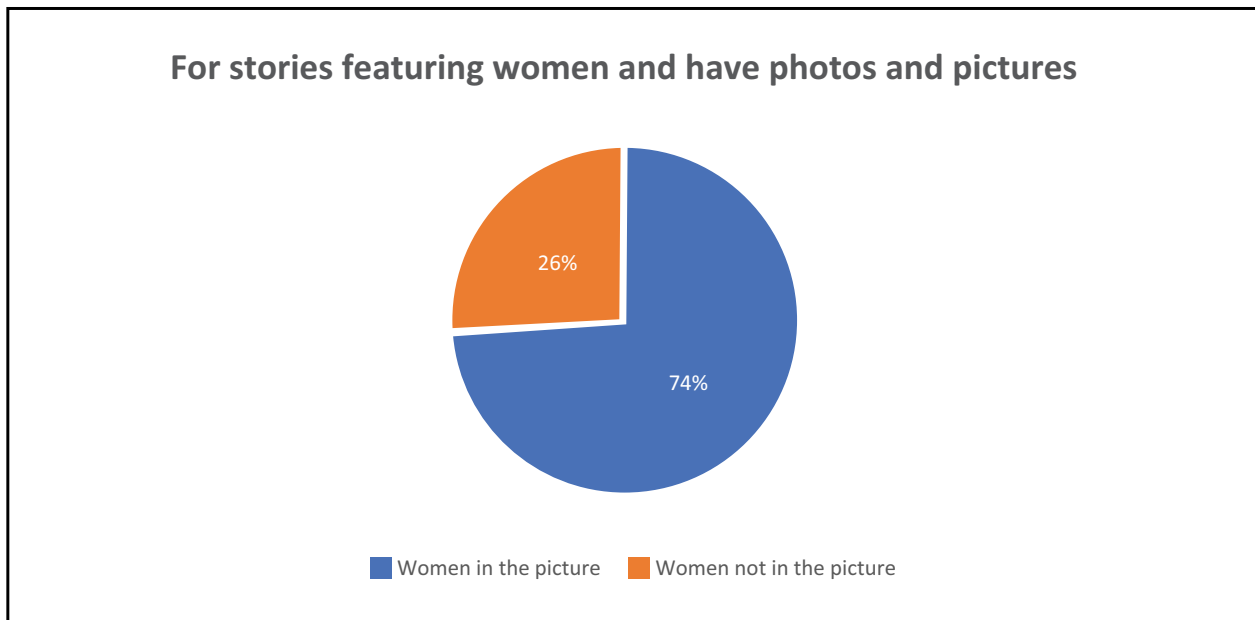


Figure 7: Digital: Stories featuring Women and have Photos and Pictures

FRAMING OF WOMEN IN EAST AFRICAN MEDIA COVERAGE

As discussed in detail in the methodology section, the study sought to analyse the framing of women in East African media along nine framing attributes. The **reassuring frame**, which depicts women as actors in control, and reassuring in their contribution or activity in the society; the **responsibility or value-based frame**, which refers to stories that attribute some sort of responsibility or challenges to women or state that women are in charge of solutions; the **credibility frame**, which applies for stories that depict women as credible contributors in the society, such as where they are framed as subject matter experts in what they do without a mention that they are women and in domains that are not traditionally associated with women; the **aspirational framing** attribute which was assigned to articles depicting women as aspiring for greater heights in whatever they do in a manner that encourages other women to aspire for greater achievements; the **conflict frame**, which was used for articles that situated women at the centre of disagreements or tension between parties; the **human-interest frame** for articles that emphasised how individuals and groups are affected by an issue or problem, and which used an emotional angle to make people regard the issue as serious; the **economic consequences frame**, which was assigned to news articles that were told within the context of financial issues and specifically mentioned women actors in financial gains or losses; the **feminised stereotypical frame**, which was assigned to news articles that paid excessive attention to the personal life, personality and appearance of women news subjects and actors; and the **masculinised trait frame**, which was assigned to news articles that depicted women as tough, arrogant, assertive, confident, ambitious, controlling, stubborn

and suggest that they are succeeding in whatever they are doing because they have traits traditionally associated with men.

Overall dominant framing of women subjects and actors and their contribution to society Newspapers

The study sought to find out the overall dominant framing of women subjects and actors and their contributions to the society in the stories that featured women. The frame analysis had nine framing attributes. Analysis of the selected newspapers indicates that most of the stories were framed along seven dominant attributes. The responsibility or value-based frame emerged as the leading framing attribute in the analysed stories with 22%, followed by 19% of news articles that were framed along the aspirational framing attribute and 15% of news articles that were framed along the reassuring frame and the human-interest frame respectively.

The newspapers in each of the three countries seemed to have different framing approaches. In Kenya the two analysed newspapers had more news articles framing women subjects and actors and their contribution to society as aspirational (31%), whereas in Tanzania the two analysed newspapers had predominantly framed women subjects and actors along the responsibility or value-based frame (38%). In Uganda there was a more distributed balance in framing women subjects and actors along the three overall dominant framing attributes of reassuring (18%), credibility (19%) and human-interest frame (19%).

Table 18 : Newspapers: Overall dominant framing of women subjects and actors and their contribution to society

	Kenya (N=510)	Uganda (N=375)	Tanzania (N=358)	East Africa (1254)
Reassuring frame	15%	18%	11%	15%
Responsibility or value-based frame	16%	14%	38%	22%
Credibility – women framed as credible contributors in the society as subject matter experts	6%	9%	2%	6%
Aspirational – Women framed as aspiring for greater height in whatever they do	31%	19%	2%	19%
Conflict frame - Women depicted as central actors/ subjects in disagreements between parties- individuals-groups-countries	7%	4%	3%	5%
Human-interest frame - The story provides a human example or “human face” of the issue covered	9%	19%	20%	15%
Feminised stereotypical – Perpetuates the idea of women as incapable of breaking the traditions norms	8%	1%	3%	4%
Other	8%	16%	21%	14%

At the East African level, the findings suggest that the framing of women as subjects and actors in news articles and their contribution to the society is generally progressive and advancing a positive understanding of women’s contributions. Up to 71% of the analysed stories had progressive framing. The responsibility framing attribute, which accounted for 22% of the stories, constituted stories that were found to have depicted women as acting responsive and responsible for the challenges and problems covered in the story, providing solutions and making positive contributions to the society. Stories in this category of framing attribute had clarity on how women are responsible for aspects or responsibilities that contribute to a better society.

Further, 19% of the stories were framed along the aspirational framing attribute. These are stories that projected women as aspiring for greater heights in whatever they do in a fashion that encourages other women to aspire for greater achievements. In addition, a combined total of 30% of the stories had the reassuring framing attribute and the human-interest framing attribute which essentially means that these stories depicted women as reassuring and in control of what they are involved in and their contribution to

making the society a better place; and women gave a human face and emotional angle to make people regard an issue as serious.

The findings above also show that relative to Kenya and Uganda, the aspirational frame is conspicuously low in the framing of news articles in Tanzania (2%) whereas the responsibility frame is high (38%). Tanzania has a female president and probably the focus is on holding the president responsible and looking at her as an actor or news subject through the lenses of her responsibility. Kenyan newspapers had comparably more news articles framed along the feminised stereotypical frame (8%) which suggests that compared to the two other countries, there is a tendency for Kenyan newspapers to perpetuate the idea of women as incapable of breaking the traditions norms. Even though it is just 8%, this is significant.

Television and Digital

The TV findings indicate that the top four frames focusing on women subjects and actors and their contribution to society were the reassuring frame (18%), the responsibility or value-based frame (18%), the human-interest frame (18%) and the aspirational frame (15%).

Table 19: Television: Overall Dominant Framing of Women Subjects and Actors and their Contribution to Society

	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	East Africa
Reassuring frame	26%	5%	13%	18%
Responsibility or value-based frame	6%	29%	33%	18%
Credibility	10%	5%	0%	7%
Aspirational	26%	5%	0%	15%
Conflict frame	11%	17%	0%	10%
Human-interest frame	11%	19%	30%	18%
Feminised stereotypical frame	5%	0%	0	2%
Others	5%	20%	24%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The trend for the digital platforms appears to be slightly different as the reassuring frame is not as dominant in the stories published by the seven digital publishers analysed. The other three top framing attributes on the newspaper and TV news stories are also the

top framing attributes used in the stories covering women on the digital platforms: *responsibility or value-based frame (28%) human-interest frame (21%) and aspirational (19%) frame.*

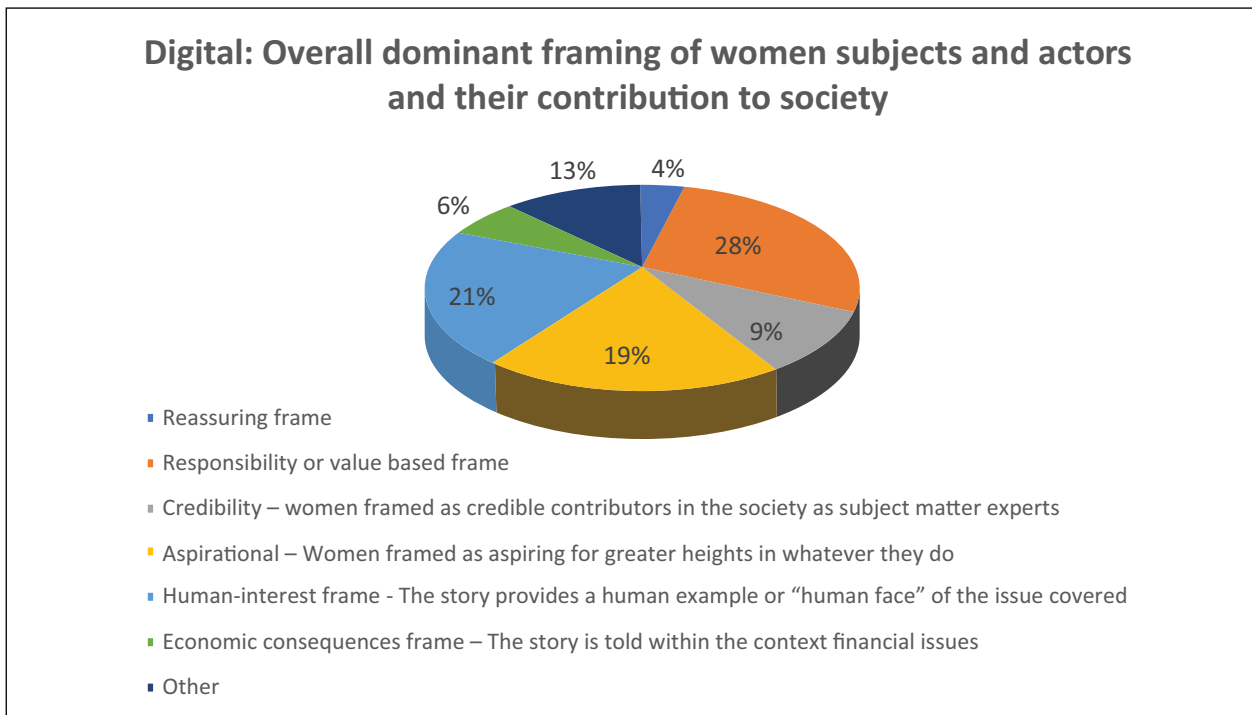


Figure 8: Digital: Overall Dominant Framing of Women

General Framing of Women in the News Articles

Besides the overall dominant framing of women as subjects and actors and their contributions in the society along the nine framing attributes, the study also sought to analyse the general framing of women expertise and whether women are depicted and projected in progressive light considering what they

are involved in or lack thereof. The general framing attributes of women expertise were pre-coded into ten framing categories which include women as succeeding in what they do; women as subservient/submissive to men; women as breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success; women breaking the glass ceiling, but the framing entrenches the unconscious frame that favours men;

women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world; women as heroines of success stories; women as the cause of problems and failures in different circumstances; society wants women to succeed and is supportive of women's advancements; women's lack of advancement is due to societal biases that inadvertently favour men and not clear or other category.

Newspapers

The findings across the three countries show that the six analysed newspapers framed women in the news articles by largely pronouncing salient aspects of women that are progressive within the context of gender equity. Cumulatively, half (50%) of the articles framed women in a very positive and progressive light. That is, 19% of the articles framed women as succeeding in what they do, 12% framed women as breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success, 11% framed women as heroines of success stories, and 8% of the articles framed women in such a way that the readers see a society that wants

women to succeed and is supportive of women's advancements.

At the country level Uganda (27%) compared to Kenya (17%) and Tanzania (14%) had a higher percentage of articles that framed women as succeeding in what they do. Further Uganda (8%) compared to Kenya (19%) and Tanzania (20%) had fewer news articles that framed women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world. Generally, the findings show that Uganda appears to have relatively and comparably more positive framing of women in news articles while Tanzania has relatively more stories that frame women in less progressive light. For instance, Tanzania, despite having a woman president, had only 4% of news articles projecting women as heroines of success stories. Tanzania also seems to have a wider variety of frames for the general framing of women expertise as 41% of the framing attributes fall outside the nine predetermined categories conceptualised in the current study.

Table 20: Newspapers: General Framing of Women in the News Articles

Framing attribute	Kenya (510)	Uganda (376)	Tanzania (368)	East Africa (N=1254)
Women as succeeding in what they do	17%	27%	14%	19%
Women as subservient/submissive to men	1%	1%	2%	2%
Women are breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success	11%	16%	8%	12%
Women breaking the glass ceiling, but the framing entrenches the unconscious frame that favours men	4%	1%	2%	2%
Women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world	19%	8%	20%	16%
Women as heroines of success stories	16%	10%	4%	11%
Women as the cause of problems and failures in different circumstances	8%	6%	3%	6%
Society wants women to succeed and is supportive of women's advancements	12%	8%	5%	8%
Women's lack of advancement is due to societal biases that inadvertently favour men	2%	2%	1%	2%
Not clear and other	10%	21%	41%	22%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

The findings above on the framing of women in newspaper articles seem to suggest that for newspapers to contribute towards gender equity in the coverage of women, there is still room to increase the number of articles framed in a progressive fashion that would project women as succeeding in what they do and also increase articles that normalise the success stories of women breaking the glass ceiling. Further, the findings seem to suggest that there is room to increase articles that frame women as heroines of their own success stories and at the same time decrease articles that frame women as the cause of problems and failures in different circumstances and as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world.

Television and Digital

The findings from the TV data indicate that the framing of women in news stories, just like in newspapers, was largely progressive within the context of gender equity with 24% of the stories in the selected six TV stations across the three countries framing women as succeeding in what they do. Further, 12% framed

women as heroines of success stories and 11% framed women as breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women's success. Almost a quarter - 21% of the TV stories - frame women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world and 7% frame women as the cause of problems and failures in different circumstances.

At the country level Kenya had comparably more stories framing women as succeeding in what they do (29%) and women as heroines of success stories (16%), which gives a combined total of 45% compared to Uganda (30%) and Tanzania (25%). Tanzania on the other hand had more stories that suggest a positive societal approach to progressive coverage of women, with more TV stories framing women as breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success (23%) and stories framed in a way that depicts a society that wants women to succeed and is supportive of women's advancements (18%), a combined sum of 41% compared to Kenya's 11% and Uganda's 7%.

Table 21: Television: General Framing of Women in the News Items

	Kenya (N=88)	Uganda (N=41)	Tanzania (N=40)	East Africa (N=169)
Women as succeeding in what they do	29%	25%	15%	24%
Women as subservient/submissive to men	0%	2%	0%	1%
Women are breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success	9%	2%	23%	11%
Women breaking the glass ceiling, but the framing entrenches the unconscious frame that favours men	8%	0%	0%	4%
Women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world	24%	20%	18%	21%
Women as heroines of success stories	16%	5%	10%	12%
Women as the cause of problems and failures in different circumstances	1%	17%	8%	7%
Society wants women to succeed and is supportive of women's advancements	3%	5%	18%	7%
Women's lack of advancement is due to societal biases that inadvertently favour men	1%	0%	0%	1%
Not clear and other	9%	24%	8%	12%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

The digital publishers also had more news articles with progressive framing overall. Of all the stories across publishers in East Africa, 26% framed women as succeeding in what they do, 13% framed women in light of a *society that wants women to succeed and*

is supportive of women's advancements, 11% framed women as *heroines of success stories* and 10% framed women as *breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success*. This is a combined sum of 70% as shown in Table 16 below.

Table 22: Digital: General Framing of Women in the News Articles

Women as succeeding in what they do	26%
Women as subservient/submissive to men	0%
Women are breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success	10%
Women breaking the glass ceiling, but the framing entrenches the unconscious frame that favours men	0%
Women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world	13%
Women as heroines of success stories	11%
Women as the cause of problems and failures in different circumstances	13%
Society wants women to succeed and is supportive of women's advancements	13%
Women's lack of advancement is due to societal biases that inadvertently favour men	0%
Not clear and other	14%
Total	100%

General framing of women in the news article and Type of News Stories

The findings indicate that 100 or more articles were framed along five framing attributes. These five attributes were cross tabulated with the type of news stories to ascertain whether these framing attributes

were treated in in-depth coverage or in the hard news types of stories that focus on what, who, where and when. The findings indicate that most of the news articles framed along the five attributes were treated as hard news stories as shown in Table 17.

Table 23: General framing of Women in the News Article and Type of News Stories

Framing attribute	Type of News Story					
	Hard News Story	Feature stories	Editorials/ Opinion editorial,	Personal profiles	Cartoons and pictorials	Other
Women as succeeding in what they do	60%	23%	6%	8%	1%	2%
Women are breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success	69%	18%	2%	6%	0%	5%
Women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world	75%	14%	6%	4%	0%	1%
Women as heroines of success stories	60%	21%	10%	9%	0%	0%
Society wants women to succeed and is supportive of women's advancements	68%	10%	18%	1%	1%	2%

The findings above also show that even though most of these stories were treated as hard news stories, the six newspapers analysed across the three countries seem to have paid in depth attention to stories that framed women as *succeeding in what they do* (23%), stories that framed *women as heroines of success stories* (21%) and stories that framed *women are breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success* (18%). All the stories with these three framing

attributes had close to or slightly more than 20 percent of the stories treated as feature stories. Suffice to note, unlike hard news stories, feature stories are much more informative and go beyond what, who, where and when to add depth to a story by adding research based on the why and how aspects of the story. Therefore, it is safe to argue that these positive framing of news articles featuring women and treated as feature stories heighten a more nuanced understanding of issues

of women's success, women's success stories and women as breaking the glass ceiling in a progressive fashion. The onus is therefore on stakeholders to push for more feature stories.

It is also important to note that 18% of stories that were framed to suggest that the *society wants women to succeed and are supportive of women's advancements* were Editorials/Opinion editorial. Opinion editorials are written by experts who are afforded opportunities to speak to issues of public interest in a newspaper publication while editorials are articles in a newspaper written by the publisher (the editorial board) and often speak to what the publisher considers to be the most important issues in the society to warrant their attention and speaking to the issue in the interests of the public. Therefore, the findings seem to suggest that newspaper's editorial columns have a fairly good number of authoritative voices that are supportive of women's advancement and want women to succeed.

However, for TV news stories, even though the analysed stories were not as many as the newspaper stories, a combined total of 55% of the stories that were written as feature stories were framed in a less progressive fashion. That is, 34% of the TV feature stories that covered women framed women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world, 17% framed women as the cause of

problems and failures in different circumstances and a further 4% framed women as subservient/submissive to men. Feature stories have more informational value and their framing influences understanding. Therefore, the fact that the findings indicate that only 4% and 23% of the TV feature stories framed women as heroines of success stories and as succeeding in what they do respectively should be a cause of concern. TV is a powerful medium given its audiovisual nature and its stature as a national mass medium. Therefore, it is on TV that more feature stories would be needed to help debunk the stereotypical unconscious frame that presents the invisible barriers to women's advancement which arise from cultural beliefs about genders, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favour men.

General Framing of Women in News Articles and Gender of the Journalists

The study cross-tabulated the general framing of women in news articles and the gender of the journalists who had written the stories. The findings indicate that there is no significant difference whether the stories are written by male and female journalists in the framing of women in the news articles along the nine framing attributes. However, the findings indicate that compared to female journalists (6%), more stories written by male journalists (12%) framed women as *heroines of success stories*.

Table 24: General Framing of Women in News Articles and Gender of the Journalists

	Female journalists	Male journalists
Women as succeeding in what they do	17%	19%
Women as subservient/submissive to men	1%	2%
Women are breaking the glass ceiling in a fashion that normalises women success	12%	11%
Women breaking the glass ceiling, but the framing entrenches the unconscious frame that favours men	2%	2%
Women as victims of circumstances including victims of a male dominated world	18%	18%
Women as heroines of success stories	6%	12%
Women as the cause of problems and failures in different circumstances	4%	7%
Society wants women to succeed and is supportive of women's advancements	10%	8%
Women's lack of advancement is due to societal biases that inadvertently favour men	2%	2%
Not clear and other	28%	19%
Total	100%	100%

Main Actors in the News Article

The study sought to establish the main actors in news articles featuring women and their roles. Main actor was conceptualised as the person or entity mentioned or referenced most in the news articles, either as the subject of the events or issues covered or the source of most of the information in the article. For TV, main actors were also coded for the persons who featured most in the video footage besides the persons who spoke on the video as a source of news or the newsmaker. Actors in events have a bearing on the newsworthiness of the event, the coverage, the nature of coverage and the prominence given to the news stories and even the framing news publishers afford a news story on the event.

Newspapers

The newspaper findings indicate that most of the news articles had ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities (33%) as the main actors followed by women in powerful positions in

government/corporate or business world including NGOs (28%). However, at the individual country level there are differences with a comparably higher percentage of news articles from Tanzanian newspapers (41%) having women *in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs* as main actors while in Uganda and Kenya a relatively higher percentage of news articles (47% and 37% respectively) had ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities as main actors in the news stories.

In Kenya, a relatively high percentage of news articles (29%) as compared to Uganda (9%) and Tanzania (4%) *had women as victims of different circumstances and women as heroines in different circumstances* as the main actors. As expected, given a female head of state, Tanzanian newspapers had a relatively high percentage of news articles (16%) with female political leaders as main actors compared to Kenya (2%) and Uganda (2%).

Table 25: Newspapers: Main Actors in the News Article

	Kenya (N=510)	Uganda (N=376)	Tanzania (N=367)	East Africa (N=1253)
Women in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs	15%	32%	41%	28%
Men in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs	6%	3%	8%	5%
Ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities	37%	47%	12%	33%
Ordinary men in the society involved in news making activities	6%	4%	6%	5%
Female political leaders	2%	2%	16%	6%
Male political leaders	1%	1%	2%	1%
Male religious leaders	0%	0%	0%	0%
Women as victims of different circumstances	13%	3%	3%	7%
Women as heroines in different circumstances	16%	3%	1%	8%
Other	4%	5%	11%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The findings above seem to suggest that Tanzanian newspapers privilege coverage of events involving women when women in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs are involved in the events or are the main actors. Uganda on the other hand appears to have a higher proclivity to cover events featuring ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities while in Kenya stories of women as victims and heroines are

privileged alongside stories of ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities.

Television and Digital

The findings at the East African level indicate that just like for newspapers, most of the TV stories that featured women had ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities (33%) as the main actors in the events in the news stories, followed by

women in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs (28%). At the country level, Kenya TV stations appear to have had a fairly diverse array of actors while Tanzania had quite concentrated and limited main actors with comparably

more women in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs as main actors (43%). Uganda on the other hand had comparatively more stories covering ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities (44%).

Table 26: Television: Main Actors in the News Articles

	Kenya (N=88)	Uganda (N=41)	Tanzania (N=40)	East Africa (N=169)
Women in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs	20%	32%	43%	28%
Men in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs	16%	5%	17%	14%
Ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities	31%	44%	40%	36%
Ordinary men in the society involved in news making activities	5%	15%	0%	6%
Female political leaders	1%	0%	0%	1%
Male political leaders	1%	2%	0%	1%
Women as victims of different circumstances	9%	2%	0%	5%
Women as heroines in different circumstances	14%	0%	0%	7%
Others	3%	0%	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The trend of the main actors in news articles takes a different shift for stories on the digital platforms as the findings indicate that on the digital platforms 43% of the stories had women in powerful positions in government/corporate or business world including NGOs as the main actors and 28% had ordinary women in the society involved in news making activities.

main actors. At the country level Tanzanian newspapers had comparably more news articles (24%) portraying women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation” of women (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Tuchman, 1978) relative to Kenya (10%) and Uganda (7%).

Type of Main Actor Role in News Articles Featuring Women Newspapers

Slightly more than half (54%) of all the analysed articles from the six newspapers in the three countries had women acting in non-traditional roles as experts and treated as experts first and not women experts as the

The role of men in news articles featuring women seems to be less significant as findings indicate that at the East African level the negative roles of men as actors in these articles was 6% with 2% of the articles portraying men acting in the traditional male stereotypical roles that are dominant and 4% portraying men acting in ways that suggest that they are frustrating women’s efforts in overcoming the unconscious barriers to women’s advancement.

Table 27: Newspapers: Main Actor Role in News Articles featuring Women

	Kenya (510)	Uganda (375)	Tanzania (368)	East Africa (1253)
Women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation” of women.	10%	7%	24%	13%
Women acting in non-traditional roles as experts and are treated as experts first and not women experts	60%	64%	36%	54%
Men acting in the traditional male stereotypical roles that are dominant	2%	3%	2%	2%
Men acting in supporting women come out of the unconscious frame which seems to create barriers for women and favour men	5%	0%	4%	4%
Men acting in ways that suggest that they are frustrating women’s efforts in overcoming the unconscious barriers to women’s advancement	6%	0%	5%	4%
Other	17%	26%	29%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The relatively high number of articles portraying women acting in non-traditional roles as experts who are treated as experts first and not women experts, especially in Kenya and Uganda suggest some encouraging framing that could be crucial in deconstructing the unconscious frame that naturally associates women with traditional roles and expertise as homemakers. The projection of women as experts in non-traditional roles and the attendant framing that gives prominence to their expertise helps the media consumers perceive women in a fashion that normalises women’s roles in these non-traditional roles, a situation that encourages a new generation of women who will discern such roles and expertise as a function of ability and not gender.

Television and Digital

The findings show that TV news stories, just like the news articles in newspapers, predominantly had stories that *projected women as acting in non-traditional roles as experts who are treated as experts first and not women experts* (59%). However, unlike newspapers, a fairly high number of stories on TV across East Africa (21%) *had women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation” of women and another 9% had men as main actors frustrating women’s efforts in overcoming the unconscious barriers to women’s advancement*. At the individual country level, Ugandan TV seemed to have a relatively high number of news stories (43%) framing women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation” of women as shown in Table 22 below.

Table 28: TV: Main Actor Role in News Articles featuring Women

	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	East Africa (N=169)
Women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation” of women.	13%	43%	17%	21%
Women acting in non-traditional roles as experts and are treated as experts first and not women experts	63%	32%	75%	59%
Men acting in the traditional male stereotypical roles that are dominant	6%	5%	0%	4%
Men acting in supporting women come out of the unconscious frame which seems to create barriers for women and favour men	3%	10%	8%	6%
Men frustrating women’s efforts in overcoming the unconscious barriers to women’s advancement	14%	10%	0%	9%
Other	1%	0%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	40	100%

The digital platforms across East Africa like newspapers had more stories with women acting in non-traditional roles as experts who are treated as experts first and not women experts (55%). Further, and like TV and

unlike newspapers, a fairly high percentage of digital stories (19%) had women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation”.

Table 29: Digital: Main Actor Role in News Articles featuring Women

	Frequency
Women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation” of women.	19%
Women acting in non-traditional roles as expert who are treated as experts first and not women experts	55%
Men acting in the traditional male stereotypical roles that are dominant	11%
Men acting in ways that suggest that they are frustrating women’s efforts in overcoming the unconscious barriers	4%
Other	11%
Total	100%

Main Actor Role and the Byline Newspapers

A cross tabulation of the main actor roles and the journalist who wrote the news articles showed that while 56% of the stories written by male journalists had women acting in non-traditional roles as experts who

are treated as experts first and not women experts, a lower percentage was written by female journalists (43%). Female journalists wrote slightly more stories (19%) that projected women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation” of women compared to their male counterparts (12%).

Table 30: Main Actor Role and the Byline

	Female journalists (368)	Male journalists (686)
Women in traditional roles such as homemaker, or in “symbolic annihilation” of women.	19%	12%
Women acting in non-traditional roles as expert who are treated as experts first and not women experts	43%	56%
Men acting in the traditional male stereotypical roles that are dominant	1%	3%
Men acting in supporting women come out of the unconscious frame which seems to create barriers for women and favour men	4%	4%
Men acting in ways that suggest that they are frustrating women’s efforts in overcoming the unconscious barriers	2%	5%
Other	31%	20%
Total	100%	100%

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While there is a moderate representation of women in East African news media organisations, leadership roles still exhibit gender disparities, with the percentage of women at the top getting to barely 30%. The findings in the current study underscore the need for continued efforts to address gender imbalances in leadership and editorial positions if a culture of gender diversity and equitable representation across media platforms is to be inculcated.

Media leaders, especially female editorial leaders with newsroom experience have underscored the need for gender diversity arguing that gender diversity “not only affects the immediate workspace but also impacts the way news is seen and told” (Shabbir, 2020). Silveirinha, Lobo and Basilio (2023) in their ethnographic study of gender in newsrooms corroborate the fact that “gendered power dynamics shape newsroom culture, often via tacit, ostensibly ‘commonsensical’ norms, values, and beliefs” (Silveirinha et al., 2023, p. 12 citing Carter et al. 2019). Therefore, the dearth of this leadership in media organisations can potentially entrench a gendered culture that disadvantages the minority gender in media leadership.

Silveirinha et al. (2023) further note that while male leaders are more aggressive and louder, women leaders have a finely nuanced range of linguistic skills and are more effective at using this array of skills. What comes out clearly is that with the dearth of women in leadership positions in East African media organisations, comes the dearth of the finely nuanced range of skills that women bring. But perhaps the most critical aspect drawn from Silveirinha et al.’s study on the need for diversity in newsrooms is their conclusion that newsroom staff draw from the leadership behaviour to inculcate a culture that is often unanimous. This emergent culture shaped by leadership behaviour tends to agree on what is considered newsworthy, which stories matter and which ones do not, the angles to take with no real newsroom management debates because of what they conceptualise as dispersion of power that dissolves into power rituals. These emergent newsroom power rituals consequently craft public opinion and legitimise interpretations and essentially call for entrenching a culture of gender diversity in the leadership at the business and most importantly editorial levels (Sheerin & Garavan, 2022; Susanto et al., 2023).

The study also unearths notable variations in coverage of women and the number of stories featuring women in publications across East African media outlets. While Kenya features more stories, the coverage of women in East African newspapers is generally fair, with the majority focusing on hard news. Digital platforms on the other hand have limited coverage of women, often mirroring prominent stories from newspapers but certainly more focused on political stories with most stories that feature prominently in print newspapers not published on the digital platforms. TV had relatively many days (40%) that featured no women’s stories in prime-time news bulletins. Both Uganda and Tanzania TV stations exhibited low coverage of women during the crucial sampled period that included 16 days of activism against GBV between November and December 2023. These findings are consistent with earlier findings by Kassova (2022) who notes that women are not only underrepresented in editorial leadership roles, but also in news coverage that pretentiously mutes their voices.

A high percentage of stories about women are written by male journalists, though Tanzania presents an encouraging trend of more female-authored stories. Uganda stands out for an alarming shortage of female journalists covering stories featuring women, especially on TV. However, even though most news stories are written by male journalists, across platforms, positive framing of women is evident in Ugandan media.

Notably, East African TV has over half (55%) of news stories framed in a less progressive fashion, portraying women as victims, causing problems, or being subservient/submissive, which when looked at against the backdrop of the audiovisual power of TV raises major concerns. Nuanced and more diverse and positive portrayals of women in media coverage might possibly benefit from having more female journalists writing or producing stories about women.

Despite having comparably fewer female journalists covering stories on women, Ugandan newspapers and TV seem to have relatively more of the stories featuring women framed positively compared to Kenya and Tanzania. Tanzania with more female journalists presents an intriguing case of more stories with women framed in less progressive light. Underscored herein is the fact that representation which Ward and Grower (2020) conceptualise as recognition is only a

means to equality or equity and not an end because representation in numbers means nothing unless the attendant framing of women in news moves away from the traditional “symbolic annihilation” of women (Tuchman, 1978; Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Training and sensitisation on gender sensitive reporting could provide pathways for progressive framing of women regardless of the gender of the journalists writing or producing the news stories.

The significant gap in the coverage of women in political, economics, business, and entrepreneurial spheres across the three platforms in the three countries is of concern, given that these are key spheres in the allocation and distribution of resources in the society. Conspicuous coverage of women when they are in national events coupled with a dearth of women in political, economic and business events, potentially primes and frames women as less important contributors in these critical spaces. Entman (2007), for instance, argues that bias when situated within the context of content and decision, that is, the content that is covered and the decision to have that content covered the way it is covered, can influence meaning and interpretation of power dynamics. The framing and the agenda set by the dearth of women in political, economics, business and entrepreneurial events and activities can normalise the thinking and behaviour of exclusion, especially if what is covered consistently and conspicuously has women covered in spaces other than politics, economics, business, and entrepreneurship.

Nevertheless, the study has established a progressive trend of women journalists writing or producing relatively more stories in ‘hard’ beats like politics, economics and business that have traditionally been associated with male journalists. Suffice to note though, is the reality that while there is a positive trend in framing women in progressive light, there is also need for increased representation of women in diverse roles and contexts. In TV the urgent need to increase the number of feature stories that frame women in progressive light cannot be gainsaid. To successfully journey toward gender equity in coverage and framing of women, media should be alive to news that might favour one gender at the expense of the other (content bias) and motivations and mindsets of journalists who might inadvertently produce biased content (decision making bias) (Entman, 2007). Addressing these

gaps can contribute to a more inclusive and accurate portrayal of women’s roles and contributions in society. Actors in news stories covering women and their roles reveal a complex portrayal of women in East African media. While progress is evident in depicting women as experts and professionals, there is room for improvement in avoiding stereotypical portrayals of women in roles that are akin to symbolic annihilation of women. To this end, the role of journalists, particularly in shaping these narratives, also comes to light, underscoring the need for diverse perspectives in media coverage to challenge stereotypes and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of women’s roles in society. Further, the consistently high prominence of women in news stories across East African media platforms reflects a deliberate or probably inadvertent effort to highlight women’s roles. It is safe to conclude that these stories and the high prominence of women have the potential to prime the issues in these stories, crafting public opinion around these issues, and influencing interpretation based on the dominant frames in these stories. While the findings are encouraging, prominence, especially if the framing of women or issues does not advance the greater good of women, is not sufficient to address the negative stereotypes.

Therefore, even though the findings suggest that the general framing of news stories featuring women and the women in these stories highlights progressive and salient features, ongoing efforts should encourage diverse portrayals of women and promote accurate representation in media coverage to challenge stereotypes and foster gender inclusivity.

Worthy to note is the fact that a significant number of stories that framed women in progressive positive light as heroines, succeeding in what they do and breaking the glass ceiling were feature stories with more of them in Uganda. Feature stories in-depthly engage with news consumers and this deep engagement is very critical given that previous studies have since established that the meaning constructed from the media content is an interaction between media frames and the consumers’ preexisting knowledge (Tayeewa, 2017; Omoke, 2017).

In conclusion, comprehensive analysis provides nuanced insights into the multifaceted representation, coverage and framing of women in East African media.

While positive trends include increased deployment of female journalists to cover key beats, high prominence of stories featuring women in the publications coupled with prominent placement of women in these news stories, and a fairly positive framing of women and women's expertise and their role in the society; challenges persist in gender imbalances and limited

coverage of women in critical events or activities such as politics, economic and business. Moreover, despite progress in the numbers, a lot still needs to be done to entrench the framing and crafting of public opinion in progressive ways that create pathways toward gender equity not just in the newsroom but in the society.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Leadership Equality:** Media development organisations, policy makers and stake holding civil society should actively work with media organisations towards achieving gender balance in leadership roles and fostering an inclusive and diverse environment that encourages movement up the career ladder for all. Gender balance at the representation or what Ward and Grower (2020) call the recognition level is the first step towards the second level that they call respect, which is critical in shifting norms and stereotypes.
2. **Promoting Female Voices:** Encourage media outlets to increase the visibility of female experts and writers, both in news reporting and opinion editorial columns. Female experts, opinion editorials by female journalists and women in critical spaces like politics, economics and business can be enhanced. This study recommends not just the enhancement of these voices, but also continuous sensitisation to help both female and male voices advance progressive norms or shift from stereotypical coverage and framing.
3. **Continuous Monitoring:** Regularly assess and monitor gender representation in newsrooms to identify areas for improvement and track progress over time.
4. **Industry Collaboration:** Collaborate with industry stakeholders to develop and implement initiatives that promote gender equality and empower women in the media sector.
5. **Gender Diversity in the newsroom:** Actively promote gender diverse assignment of responsibilities among journalists to ensure a more balanced representation in storytelling.
6. **Coverage Improvement:** Develop strategies to enhance the coverage of women in political, business, and economic events, ensuring a more comprehensive reflection of their diverse contributions in these key spheres.
7. **Framing Sensitivity:** Provide targeted training for journalists on gender-sensitive framing and storytelling to ensure accurate and nuanced portrayals.
8. **Feature Stories Emphasis:** Encourage the production of more feature stories to provide in-depth coverage, especially for stories about women, fostering a deeper understanding of their experiences.
9. **Visual Representation:** A quarter of the stories about women and featuring women had photos and pictures that featured no woman. Such representation whether by design or otherwise might present a skewed perceived reality through what Entman (2007) calls culling. Culling is a process that assembles a few elements of reality through omission and inclusion of salient elements to promote a particular interpretation. In this case that interpretation may not favour women if they are excluded. The study therefore recommends deliberate efforts to ensure that visual elements, especially in stories covering women, align with the content of stories, to promote accurate and empowering portrayals of women in media.
10. **Stakeholders, particularly media owners and leaders, should invest in supporting networks of women in the media industry at different levels. Such support should focus on peer networks of women in leadership, a framework for exchange of expertise and insights; and mentorship networks and spaces to nurture the next generation of female journalists and business and editorial leaders.**

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