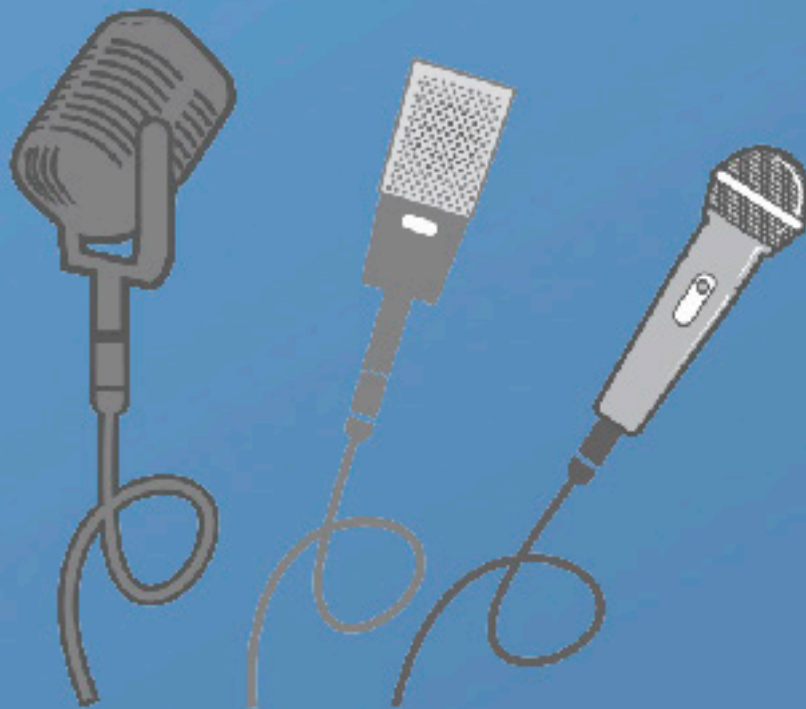




Journal of Media, Journalism & Mass Communication (JMJMC)

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1 (2026)



PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

The 2024 Local Government Election Issues in Rural and Urban Areas Reported by Mwananchi and Habari Leo Newspapers

Honorata Minde^{1*}, Fr Xavier N'Gatigwa², Peter Mataba²

Article Information

Received: September 10, 2025

Accepted: December 17, 2025

Published: January 18, 2026

Keywords

*Electoral Communication,
Local Government Elections,
Media Representation,
Newspapers, Rural-Urban Media
Coverage, Tanzania,
Voter Awareness*

ABSTRACT

Equitable media coverage is essential for informed voter participation; however, persistent disparities between rural and urban election reporting in Tanzania remain underexplored. Existing studies on election coverage largely emphasize national elections and urban-centered political discourse, leaving limited empirical evidence on how local government elections are framed across rural and urban constituencies. This study addresses this gap by analyzing rural–urban differences in media agenda-setting and framing during Tanzania's 2024 local government elections, using Mwananchi and Habari Leo newspapers as case studies. Guided by Agenda-Setting and Framing theories, the study employed a qualitative–quantitative content analysis of 180 newspaper issues published between July and October 2024. The findings reveal a pronounced imbalance in coverage: urban areas dominated election reporting, with emphasis on political competition, policy debates, and civic participation, while rural areas received limited and less prominent coverage focused mainly on voter registration, infrastructure, and community mobilization. The study innovatively applies rural–urban comparative framing analysis to local elections, highlighting how media narratives shape unequal electoral visibility. The findings imply that unequal coverage may limit rural voters' access to critical election information, potentially affecting participation and democratic inclusion. The study contributes to media and election studies by providing empirical evidence on rural–urban disparities in local election coverage and offers policy-relevant insights for promoting balanced and inclusive electoral reporting in Tanzania.

INTRODUCTION

Newspapers are a critical instrument in shaping political knowledge, voter awareness, and civic participation during local government elections, particularly where informed engagement is essential for democratic governance. By providing information on candidates, policies, local governance issues, and electoral processes, newspapers help citizens make informed voting decisions and participate meaningfully in democratic life (Adams, 2017; Bennett & Livingston, 2003). The presence of accessible, reliable, and timely election news supports transparency and accountability, reducing the risk of misinformation and promoting trust in electoral processes. When coverage is uneven across regions, however, information gaps can emerge, which may limit civic engagement and compromise the inclusiveness of the democratic process (Boateng, 2020; Bromley, 2022).

Differences in access to newspapers between urban and rural areas further shape voter knowledge and engagement. In urban areas, populations often have greater access to newspapers, resulting in more detailed and frequent coverage of local elections, enabling citizens to follow developments in candidate positions, party manifestos, and governance issues (Curran, 2019; Green, 2021). By contrast, rural populations frequently face infrastructural barriers, lower literacy levels, and limited distribution networks, which restrict access to print media and impede political awareness (Hughes, 2018; Kizito, 2021). In Tanzania, for instance, data from the

Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA, 2022) indicate that while 70% of urban voters receive election-related information through newspapers, only 40% of rural voters have similar access. Furthermore, TCRA (2023) reports that nearly 60% of rural villages lack reliable newspaper distribution networks, resulting in delayed or absent election news. Such disparities in access affect voter engagement, contributing to information asymmetry and potentially skewing electoral outcomes by limiting awareness of candidates, policy issues, and governance debates (Majani *et al.*, 2023; Mwaifuge, 2018). The 2024 Local Government Elections in Tanzania offer an opportunity to investigate how leading newspapers such as Mwananchi and Habari Leo report electoral issues across urban and rural areas. While both newspapers reach a wide audience, urban populations enjoy more consistent and timely access, whereas rural readers often experience limited circulation and delayed reporting, reducing the practical utility of election coverage (Kimario, 2020; Mande, 2021). Understanding these disparities is critical for policymakers, election monitoring bodies, and media practitioners seeking to ensure equitable access to information and foster informed political participation across all regions (Johnson, Sharma, & Kumar, 2021; Ojebode & Adegbola, 2021). Examining the differences in issue coverage between rural and urban populations can help identify gaps in information flow and inform targeted interventions to enhance voter knowledge and engagement.

¹ Senior Information Officer, Kigamboni Municipal, Tanzania

² Senior Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Saint Augustine University of Tanzania, Tanzania

* Corresponding author's e-mail: bapropsk@gmail.com

This study adopts the perspective of Agenda-Setting Theory, which posits that media influences public perception by highlighting specific issues, thereby shaping what audiences consider important in their decision-making (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Entman, 1993). In this context, newspapers act as gatekeepers of political information, determining which local government election issues are emphasized and how they are framed, ultimately affecting public awareness and voter priorities (Goffman, 1974; Latif *et al.*, 2022). By analyzing the coverage of election issues in Mwananchi and Habari Leo, this study seeks to explore the extent, depth, and consistency of reporting in rural and urban areas, and how these patterns influence voter knowledge and participation. The study therefore provides insights into media performance, identifies structural barriers to information access, and contributes to strategies for improving democratic engagement in Tanzania's local government elections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory to examine both the selection of issues covered in newspapers and how those issues are presented. Agenda-Setting Theory, introduced by McCombs and Shaw (1972), posits that the media influences public perception not by dictating what to think, but by highlighting what to think about. By prioritizing specific issues, newspapers can shape the public agenda, directing voter attention and framing priorities during electoral processes. This perspective is particularly useful in analyzing election coverage, as it allows an understanding of how newspapers determine which issues gain prominence and thereby influence voter knowledge and decision-making (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 2020; Curran, 2019). While this theory effectively illustrates the media's agenda-setting role, it has limitations, notably its assumption of a uniform audience response and its limited consideration of the changing landscape shaped by digital and social media platforms. Framing Theory complements this perspective by focusing on how issues are presented in the media. Originally proposed by Goffman (1974) and later elaborated by Entman (1993), Framing Theory emphasizes that the way media frames a story affects audience interpretation, highlighting specific aspects and perspectives while downplaying others. Frames can shape perceptions, emotional responses, and judgments about political events, influencing public understanding and political engagement (Yousaf & Ahmad, 2020; Zawawi, 2023). In the context of elections, framing provides insight into not only which issues are covered but also how they are portrayed whether as urgent, controversial, or policy-driven which in turn affects voter awareness and priorities. Together, Agenda-Setting and Framing theories provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing both the selection and presentation of election issues in print

media, offering a lens to understand potential disparities between rural and urban media coverage.

Empirical Literature

Empirical studies consistently reveal differences in how newspapers cover election issues in rural and urban contexts. Deacon, Pickering, and Golding (2017) conducted a content analysis of 100 newspaper articles in the UK, finding that urban newspapers focused predominantly on national politics, economic policies, and party agendas, while rural newspapers prioritized local development, infrastructure, and community services. The study highlighted geographic disparities in the scope of coverage, though it was limited in its focus on smaller rural newspapers and lacked a longitudinal dimension. Similarly, Makenzi, Kumalo, and Mthembu (2019) analyzed 300 newspaper articles in South Africa, observing that urban newspapers emphasized broader national and security concerns. In contrast, rural newspapers concentrated on local governance and community needs. These findings underscore the tendency of print media to cater coverage to audience location and immediate relevance, while also pointing to the need for research extending to digital platforms and wider geographic regions.

Studies in African and Asian contexts reinforce this trend. Ntiwunka, Mutua, and Njiru (2020) compared 200 newspaper articles in Kenya, confirming that urban newspapers foreground national politics while rural newspapers addressed local concerns such as water supply, education, and employment. Johnson, Sharma, and Kumar (2021) similarly found in India that urban newspapers focused on party conflicts, national governance, and economic policies, whereas rural newspapers highlighted local development and public service issues. Appannamma (2024) combined surveys and content analysis to show that newspaper coverage influences voter awareness differently: urban voters were exposed to a wider range of national issues, shaping broader political opinions, while rural voters engaged more with community and infrastructure topics, reinforcing localized political understanding. Despite these contributions, these studies often neglect socio-economic factors influencing media access and consumption, an important determinant of voter engagement and awareness. Collectively, this body of research emphasizes that election coverage is both geographically and contextually differentiated, shaping public understanding and participation in complex and location-specific ways.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach, complemented by quantitative measures to assess the extent of election coverage in print media. A case study design was adopted, as it allowed for an in-depth examination of election reporting from multiple sources while focusing on critical elements of media coverage. This approach facilitated the collection of detailed and contextually grounded data,

providing insights into both the content and patterns of newspaper reporting.

The study purposively selected Mwananchi and Habari Leo newspapers due to their wide circulation, accessibility, and status among the most-read publications in Tanzania (MOM, 2024; MOM, 2025). The target population included all 365 copies of each newspaper published during the 2024 local government election period. From this, a sample of 180 copies was drawn -90 from Mwananchi and 90 from Habari Leo covering the campaign and election months of July to October 2024. This period was selected to capture the most relevant election-related reporting.

The unit of analysis focused specifically on hard news articles, as these are central to conveying factual election

information to the public. Data collection was conducted through documentary review, systematically examining the sampled newspaper copies. A structured content analysis checklist and coding sheet were used to assess the scope, focus, and frequency of election coverage in both rural and urban contexts. Quantitative data were used to determine coverage patterns, while qualitative analysis provided insight into the thematic priorities and framing strategies employed by the newspapers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study sought from content analysis to find out issue on the 2024 local Government Election from rural and urban areas in Tanzania reported by Mwananchi and Habari Leo newspapers. Table 1 shows the results.

Table 1: Distribution of Reported Issues in Rural vs. Urban Areas (July–October 2024)

Category of Issue	Mwananchi (Urban focus)	Mwananchi (Rural focus)	Habari Leo (Urban focus)	Habari Leo (Rural focus)
Voter registration & lists	18	35	20	38
Campaigns & party politics	42	12	38	10
Infrastructure & services	8	20	6	22
Election irregularities	20	10	18	8
Community participation	12	23	18	22

From Table 1 above, it is evident that Habari Leo newspaper prioritized rural coverage with a total of 38 stories mainly on voter registration and lists compared with Mwananchi newspaper which had 35 stories from rural areas of the same item. However, in total, both two newspapers from July to October 2024 reported 100 stories based on rural issues and 100 stories on 2024 local elections in Tanzania. In the findings, stories on infrastructure & services count minimum in urban areas with eight stories from Mwananchi and six stories from Habari Leo. The findings indicate the differences in infrastructural development and service delivery in urban and rural areas. Poor infrastructural development and poor service delivery have been critical agenda in rural areas in Tanzania.

Moreover, the findings revealed noticeable differences in the frequency and emphasis of coverage between rural and urban election contexts in both Mwananchi newspaper and Habari Leo newspaper. Mwananchi newspaper placed greater attention on urban election issues, especially in key cities such as Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Arusha, and Mbeya, where political competition was intense and drew national attention. Conversely, Habari Leo newspaper provided more balanced coverage, featuring both rural and urban news items. However, although Habari Leo newspaper included rural voices more consistently, its rural stories were often shorter and less detailed, suggesting an implicit hierarchy where urban stories were considered more newsworthy.

For example, Mwananchi newspaper highlighted urban electoral vibrancy with the headline: “Dar es Salaam Wagombea wa Serikali za Mitaa Wajitokeza kwa

Wingi” (in English: Dar es Salaam Local Government Candidates Appear in Large Numbers) (Mwananchi newspaper, October 12, 2024, p.3), emphasizing how urban participation consistently dominated front-page coverage. Another urban-focused story, “Mivutano ya Wapinzani Yatikisa Jiji la Mbeya ”(in English Rival between Opposition Rock Mbeya City) (Mwananchi newspaper, October 15, 2024, p.2), illustrated the intensity of political competition in major cities, framing elections as high-stakes contests in urban centers. This trend continued with reports such as “Arusha: Wanawake Vijana Wajitokeza Kugombea” (Arusha: Arusha: Young Women Come Out to Contest) (Mwananchi newspaper, October 18, 2024) and “Changamoto za Uchaguzi Zatajwa Kariakoo” (in English Election Challenges Mentioned in Kariakoo) (Mwananchi newspaper, October 22, 2024, p.3), which emphasized the dynamism of urban political life, highlighting both active citizen participation and the social challenges inherent in densely populated areas.

Similarly, reports on opposition disputes reflected the contested nature of urban politics. For instance, Mwananchi Digital reported on August 13, 2024, under the headline: “Chadema Yada Viongozi Wao Kupigwa, Polisi Yajibu”(in English : CHADEMA Claims Their Leaders Were Beaten, Police Respond) (Mwananchi newspaper, August 13, 2024), noting that Chadema leaders alleged physical assault by police during detentions in Mbeya. The summary explained: “Chadema yada viongozi wake wakuu walipigwa na polisi wakati wakikamatwa mkoani Mbeya” (in English: Chadema claims its senior leaders were beaten by police while being arrested in Mbeya region) (Mwananchi newspaper,

August 13, 2024), highlighting tensions between political actors and law enforcement. Such coverage reinforces a frame of conflict and contested legitimacy, portraying urban electoral spaces as sites of both vigorous political engagement and occasional confrontation, consistent with Bratton's (2010) observations that African urban elections often attract media attention for conflict-driven narratives. These reports collectively demonstrate Mwananchi's focus on urban dynamics, showcasing both electoral enthusiasm and the challenges of political competition in Tanzania's major cities.

On the other hand, Habari Leo newspaper gave room to rural electoral participation, though often in less prominent sections of the paper. An example is the headline: "Wananchi wa Kijiji cha Kiteto Waahidi Ushiriki Mkubwa Uchaguzi wa Serikali za Mitaa" in English: (Kiteto Village Residents Promise Massive Participation in Local Government Elections) (Habari Leo newspaper, October 13, 2024, p.4), which highlights the commitment of rural voters. Similarly, "Kijiji cha Namtumbo Chashuhudia Kampeni za Kipekee" (in English: Namtumbo Village Witnessed Unique Campaigns) (Habari Leo newspaper, October 17, 2024, p.6) and "Msimamizi wa Uchaguzi Kigoma Atangaza Wajumbe 120 Kutoka Vijijini" in English: Kigoma Returning Officer Announces 120 Delegates From Rural Areas) (Habari Leo newspaper, October 20, 2024, p.7) presented rural political participation as central, even if not placed in the most visible pages. Other examples such as "Wakulima wa Mpwapwa Walalamikia Vizuizi vya Kampeni" in English: Mpwapwa Farmers Complain About Campaign Restrictions (Habari Leo newspaper, October 23, 2024, p.8) and "Kata za Ruangwa Zazidi Kuona Mapambano ya Kisiasa" (in English: Ruangwa Wards Are Increasingly Seeing Political Struggles) (Habari Leo newspaper, October 25, 2024, p.9) reinforced the inclusion of rural perspectives.

When analyzed side by side, these examples show that while Mwananchi newspaper leaned heavily towards urban-focused reporting, Habari Leo newspaper provided more consistent rural visibility, albeit with fewer details. The imbalance in coverage frequency implies that readers of Mwananchi newspaper were more likely to view urban elections as the main battlegrounds for political power, while Habari Leo readers were presented with a broader view of Tanzania's electoral landscape. This reflects a common media bias identified in election reporting literature, where urban issues are often given priority due to easier access for journalists, concentration of political actors, and higher perceived news value (Nyamnjoh, 2017; Wasserman, 2020).

Consequently, this selective emphasis risks reinforcing the perception that urban elections are politically more significant than rural ones, despite the fact that rural communities constitute the majority of the Tanzanian population and play a crucial role in determining electoral outcomes. As scholars such as Berger (2019) and Mwesige (2021) argue, such trends perpetuate rural marginalization

in media representation, reducing the visibility of grassroots concerns in national political discourse.

Theoretical Interpretation

The findings reveal a clear divergence in newspaper coverage between rural and urban election issues, illustrating how both Mwananchi and Habari Leo newspapers exercise agenda-setting power. Consistent with Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), the media influenced public perceptions by prioritizing certain topics. Urban areas received prominent coverage, particularly in Mwananchi, which frequently highlighted voter turnout, opposition disputes, and campaign dynamics in major cities like Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Arusha, and Mbeya. By repeatedly presenting these issues, the newspaper signaled their importance, thereby guiding readers to perceive urban electoral contests as the focal point of political activity. In contrast, rural issues such as infrastructure, voter registration, and community participation, while reported, received relatively less prominence and shorter coverage, particularly in Mwananchi. This disparity demonstrates how media outlets can shape the public agenda, amplifying urban narratives while underrepresenting rural concerns.

Framing Theory (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993) further explains how newspapers not only select issues but also present them in ways that influence interpretation and perception. Urban stories in Mwananchi were often framed around political competition, conflict, and electoral vibrancy, portraying cities as centers of political intensity. Headlines emphasizing opposition disputes or high voter turnout reinforced a narrative of contestation and active civic engagement, which aligns with the concept of conflict framing observed in other African urban elections (Bratton, 2010). Conversely, Habari Leo offered greater rural visibility, framing stories around participation, community commitment, and localized challenges. Although rural reports were often placed in less prominent sections and provided fewer details, they nonetheless highlighted grassroots involvement and the socio-political realities of rural voters. These framing choices implicitly communicate the perceived relevance and newsworthiness of urban versus rural issues, shaping audience understanding and emotional response.

The combined application of Agenda-Setting and Framing theories underscores a dual process in media influence: newspapers not only determine which electoral issues attract attention but also shape how audiences interpret and prioritize them. Urban-focused coverage emphasizes political dynamism and stakes, while rural coverage, although present, risks being marginalized due to its less detailed and less visible presentation. This reinforces longstanding disparities in political awareness and engagement between urban and rural populations, consistent with prior studies highlighting rural underrepresentation in media reporting (Boateng, 2020; Nyamnjoh, 2017; Wasserman, 2020). The findings suggest that rural communities, despite forming the majority of

the population, may be framed as peripheral actors in national elections, limiting the public's understanding of the full electoral landscape and potentially influencing voter perceptions and behavior.

The study demonstrates that newspapers act as both gatekeepers and interpreters of electoral information. Urban issues dominate the agenda and are framed to highlight contestation and intensity, while rural issues, though present, are less prominent and often framed in terms of participation or challenges. This has implications for democratic engagement in Tanzania, indicating a need for media practices that balance issue salience and framing to ensure equitable representation of both urban and rural electorates, thereby enhancing informed political participation and reducing informational inequalities.

Policy implication

The findings of this study have significant implications for electoral communication policy and media regulation in Tanzania. First, the pronounced urban bias in newspaper coverage underscores the need for targeted policies that promote equitable media attention across rural and urban areas. Given that rural populations constitute the majority of voters, underrepresentation in election reporting risks limiting their political awareness and engagement, which may undermine the inclusiveness and fairness of the electoral process. Policymakers and regulatory bodies, such as the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), should encourage media outlets to adopt guidelines that ensure balanced coverage of electoral issues, including rural infrastructure, voter registration, and local governance concerns.

Second, the framing of issues in urban-centric narratives highlights the need for capacity-building initiatives among journalists and editors to enhance awareness of rural perspectives. By promoting editorial standards that value both issue selection and framing equity, media organizations can ensure that rural voices are not marginalized in public discourse. This could include incentivizing investigative reporting in rural constituencies, providing rural correspondents with logistical and financial support, and integrating rural electoral issues into high-visibility sections of newspapers. Third, these findings have broader implications for civic education and voter engagement strategies. Government institutions and civil society organizations can use insights from media coverage patterns to design interventions that address informational gaps in rural areas. For example, complementary channels such as community radio, mobile platforms, or local newsletters could be strategically used to disseminate election-related information that newspapers may underreport. This integrated approach would enhance rural voters' access to information, improving informed participation and reducing the urban-rural disparity in electoral awareness.

CONCLUSION

Tanzanian newspapers play a pivotal role in shaping

public understanding of local government elections, yet there is a noticeable bias toward urban electoral issues. Urban elections are consistently framed as dynamic, competitive, and politically significant, often featured in front-page headlines and emphasizing political rivalry, policy debates, and active citizen engagement. This framing reinforces the perception of urban centers as the primary arenas of political activity, potentially enhancing political participation in these areas through heightened awareness and public discussion. In contrast, rural electoral coverage, while present in newspapers such as Habari Leo and Mwananchi, tends to appear in less prominent sections and focuses on administrative processes, voter registration, or logistical matters rather than substantive political debates. The narrower framing and limited visibility of rural news risk reducing political consciousness and engagement among rural citizens, reflecting structural and editorial tendencies in Tanzanian media that favor urban centers. Through the lens of Agenda-Setting and Framing theories, these patterns illustrate how media not only select the issues considered important but also shape public interpretation, reinforcing urban-centric narratives while marginalizing rural perspectives.

To address these disparities, media organizations should implement editorial policies that ensure more balanced coverage of both rural and urban electoral issues. Journalists should be encouraged to highlight rural political debates, community participation, and voter mobilization efforts, giving these stories comparable prominence and narrative depth to urban coverage. Capacity-building initiatives, including training programs on equitable political reporting and rural-focused journalism, can strengthen the ability of media practitioners to produce inclusive and context-sensitive content. Moreover, media regulatory bodies and policymakers should consider guidelines or incentives that promote fair representation of rural constituencies in both print and digital media. Such interventions would improve access to relevant election information, foster more informed political participation across Tanzania, and reinforce democratic principles by ensuring that all citizens, regardless of location, are equally empowered to engage in the electoral process.

REFERENCES

- Adams, P. (2017). Media priorities in electoral coverage: The role of editorial choices and audience interests. *Journalism and Media Studies*, 22(4), 411-426.
- Appannamma, S. (2024). Election media coverage and public awareness in urban and rural areas: A study in India. *Journal of Political Communication*, 28(1), 99-115.
- Bennett, L., & Livingston, S. (2003). Print media coverage and its influence on political opinions: An overview. *Journalism Studies*, 4(4), 397-411.
- Boateng, R. (2020). The rural-urban divide in media access and electoral participation in Ghana. *Ghanaian Journal of Political Studies*, 22(4), 55-70.

- Bromley, P. (2022). Media access and political participation in rural communities. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 36(1), 25-40.
- Brown, D. (2018). Defining media coverage: Understanding the role of print media in electoral processes. *Media and Society*, 28(2), 230-245.
- Brown, J. (2023). Descriptive survey design: A methodical approach to data collection. *Journal of Educational Research*, 45(2), 105-120.
- Chaponde, M. (2020). Research approaches and strategies in academic inquiry. Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Chen, Y., & Wang, L. (2023). Descriptive research designs and their application in social sciences. *Journal of Social Science Research*, 11(1), 34-49.
- Chitkara, M. (2020). Quantitative research methods in the social sciences. London: Academic Press.
- Clark, J. (2019). The influence of media priorities on electoral issues coverage: A comparative study of urban and rural media practices. *Media Influence Review*, 15(1), 92-107.
- Curran, J. (2019). The role of print media in shaping political attitudes. *Media and Society*, 45(2), 139-156.
- Deacon, D., Pickering, M., & Golding, P. (2017). Election issue coverage in rural and urban print media: A UK study. *Journalism Studies*, 18(3), 287-306.
- Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (2020). The dynamics of voter engagement and media coverage in local elections. *Political Communication Review*, 27(3), 48-62.
- Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58.
- Fitzgerald, J. (2021). Alternative media in rural America: The role of radio in political engagement. *Media, Culture & Society*, 43(3), 387-405.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Northeastern University Press.
- Green, M. (2021). How print media covers elections: The scope and focus of newspaper coverage. *Journalism Studies Quarterly*, 18(3), 305-317.
- Habermas, J. (1962). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. MIT Press.
- Harvey, B. (2021). Rural disenfranchisement: The effect of media accessibility on voter turnout. *Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs*, 34(1), 29-42.
- Heller, W., & Dunning, C. (2007). The role of local governments in democratic governance. *Local Government Review*, 32(1), 47-59.
- Hughes, M. (2018). Rural media access and its effect on voter knowledge in local elections. *Journal of Media Studies*, 26(4), 81-95.
- Huppert, F. (2016). *Research methodology: Validity and reliability in social sciences*. Oxford University Press.
- Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (2020). The influence of media on public opinion in U.S. elections. *American Political Science Review*, 63(1), 100-118.
- Johnson, A., Sharma, S., & Kumar, R. (2020). Comparative analysis of election issue coverage in rural and urban print media in India. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 20(4), 234-245.
- Johnson, A., Sharma, S., & Kumar, R. (2021). Examining media influence on voter awareness: A study of urban vs. rural print media coverage in Kenya. *African Journalism Review*, 22(2), 78-94.
- Kimario, A. (2020). Media ownership and its impact on the coverage of Tanzanian elections: State vs. private outlets. *Journal of African Media and Politics*, 15(4), 101-118.
- Kizito, F. (2021). Print media access and voter knowledge in Uganda: The rural-urban divide. *African Communication Journal*, 15(2), 34-49.
- Kumaraswamy, M. (2018). *Sampling techniques in research: A comprehensive guide*. Springer.
- Latif, S., Aslam, N., & Iqbal, R. (2022). The role of media framing in Pakistan's 2018 elections: Economic and security issues in voter perception. *Journal of Political Communication*, 24(3), 78-92.
- Lichter, S. R., & Noyes, R. (2017). Media access in rural America: A barrier to informed political participation. *Media and Democracy*, 29(2), 65-80.
- Majani, M., Mwita, L., & Kijazi, S. (2023). The frequency of election-related content in urban and rural print media in Tanzania: A social capital theory perspective. *Tanzanian Journal of Media Studies*, 5(2), 143-159.
- Makenzi, L., Kumalo, R., & Mthembu, Z. (2019). Media representation of election issues in rural and urban areas of South Africa: A content analysis. *South African Journal of Political Studies*, 44(1), 54-69.
- Mande, L. (2021). Radio vs. print: Understanding the role of radio in rural Tanzania's election information dissemination. *Tanzanian Journal of Broadcasting*, 12(2), 63-81.
- McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.
- McNair, B. (2019). Print media and political engagement in urban settings. *Urban Media Review*, 41(2), 76-90.
- Miller, R. (2020). Print media coverage of elections: How newspapers shape political discourse. *Election Studies Journal*, 13(4), 234-249.
- Mukhongo, L. (2022). Challenges in print media distribution in rural Uganda: Impact on election coverage. *East African Journal of Media Studies*, 8(1), 67-81.
- Mwaifuge, A. (2018). Election coverage in urban vs. rural Tanzania: The case of Mwananchi and Habari Leo. *Media Studies in East Africa*, 10(1), 22-37.
- Neuman, W., Guggenheim, L., & Jang, S. (2021). The role of digital media in the Indian general elections: Facilitating democratic discourse. *Journal of Political Communication*, 19(2), 140-155.
- Ngwilizi, M. (2019). Media bias and voter trust in Tanzania's electoral process. *African Political Journal*, 23(4), 58-74.
- Ntiwunka, J., Mutua, W., & Njiru, F. (2020). Coverage

- of election issues in rural and urban print media in Kenya: A comparative study. *Journal of Media and Politics*, 26(2), 123-138.
- Ntiwunka, J., Mutua, W., & Njiru, F. (2022). The influence of socio-economic factors on election media coverage in Kenya: A mixed-methods analysis. *Journal of Communication Studies*, 35(1), 110-124.
- Ojebode, A., & Adegbola, R. (2021). Media accessibility in rural Ghana and its effect on political engagement. *African Communication Studies Journal*, 14(2), 121-136.
- Osei, S., Boateng, R., & Mensah, C. (2019). Disparities in media access and voter knowledge in rural Ghana. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 28(1), 10-24.
- Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS survival manual: A step-by-step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (7th ed.). Routledge.
- Rego, M. (2021). *Research design: Theory and practice*. Global Academic Publishing.
- Sanga, R. (2022). The overshadowing of policy discussions by political advertisements in Tanzanian media. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 18(1), 101-115.
- Schneider, A., & Schmitz, M. (2006). Decentralization and the role of local governments in the political system. *Politics and Governance*, 9(1), 11-26.
- Seaton, J. (2020). Political endorsements in print media: A study of local elections. *Journal of Political Communication*, 18(4), 155-170.
- Semetko, H., et al. (2000). News framing and media influence on elections. *Political Communication*, 17(3), 199-214.
- Shanto, R. (2019). Urban media advantages and political participation: A study of diverse viewpoints in local elections. *Journal of Political Behavior*, 45(2), 220-235.
- Smith, R. (2019). Election issues: The central topics in electoral campaigns and media coverage. *Political Science Review*, 22(3), 111-124.
- Smith, T., & Johnson, P. (2020). Media representation of election issues in urban vs. rural areas. *Journal of Political Communication*, 33(1), 56-70.
- Smith, T., & Richards, D. (2022). Traditional media's role in Nigerian elections: Shaping the public sphere during the 2020 elections. *Media and Politics*, 17(1), 40-54.
- Sorensen, E. (2005). The impact of local government autonomy on democratic governance. *Journal of Local Government Studies*, 30(2), 67-79.
- Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). (2022). *Study on media access and election information distribution in urban and rural Tanzania*. Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority.
- Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). (2023). *Report on media access to election information in Tanzania: Challenges and opportunities*. Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority.
- Taylor, J. (2021). Election issues and media influence on public perception. *Journal of Political Science*, 25(1), 102-115.
- Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). (2021). *Report on the state of media penetration in Uganda's rural areas*. Uganda Communications Commission.
- Wang, L., & Zhang, X. (2020). Print media's impact on election issues in rural and urban areas of China: A comparative analysis. *Chinese Journal of Political Science*, 21(4), 315-331.
- Wang, X., Chen, Z., & Zhang, Y. (2021). Chinese media and agenda-setting during political campaigns: A study of public awareness during elections. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 31(2), 243-256.
- Wilson, D. (2023). *Understanding research designs: A comprehensive guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yousaf, M., & Ahmad, M. (2020). Media framing of political instability in Pakistan: An analysis of mainstream media coverage. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 18(3), 112-128.
- Zawawi, C. (2023). Framing of the 2020 U.S. presidential elections by the media: A focus on healthcare and racial justice issues. *Political Communication Review*, 25(4), 375-391.