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INFLUENCE OF MEDIA FRAMING ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF FEMICIDE: A CASE STUDY OF NAIROBI AND KIAMBU COUNTIES, KENYA

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my own original work and has not been produced in collaboration, nor has it been previously submitted for a degree or qualification at any other institution. I agree that this dissertation may be made available for reference and photocopying, at the discretion of the college.

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DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this research to my little girls, whose futures inspire my pursuit of knowledge and justice, and to all women whose voices, strength, and resilience continue to shape a more equitable world. May this work contribute, in some small way, to dignity, safety, and meaningful change.

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ABBREVIATIONS

GBV; Gender-Based Violence

IPV; Intimate Partner Violence

KNBS; Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

NGO; Non-Governmental Organization

SDG; refers to Sustainable Development Goals

PC4D; Participatory Communication for Development

UNODC; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UN Women; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

WHO; World Health Organisation

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of televised media framing in shaping public perceptions and participatory development responses regarding femicide within Nairobi and Kiambu counties. Grounded in the positivist paradigm, the study used a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional research design. The specific objectives of the study were to: *(1)* examine prevailing televised framing patterns in reporting femicide; *(2)* analyze the extent to which participatory communication approaches are integrated into programming; and *(3)* establish the relationship between media framing strategies and audience critical consciousness. Data were collected from a survey of *150* respondents aged 25-54 years across Nairobi and Kiambu counties (N=150), complemented by a content analysis of 67 television news reports broadcast on Kenyan television stations. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Key statistical findings indicate that episodic framing dominated 77.61% of reports, and correlation analysis demonstrated that thematic, contextual framing was associated with higher levels of audience critical consciousness (r = 0.2semicolon28, p = 0.005). Furthermore, the data show that traditional top-down framing structures restricted participatory development responses, whereas structured integration of dialogue-driven communication enhanced public engagement metrics by 80.80%. The study concludes that balanced editorial framing is moderately associated with improved critical civic feedback. Based strictly on these findings, the study recommends that broadcasters adopt targeted contextual reporting guidelines and integrate interactive community segments into mainstream news programs.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Content from the Kenyan media, especially television news, is a primary source of information, so it strongly influences how the public forms perceptions and responds to social issues. Although the media holds this power, its coverage of femicide tends to be episodic and sensational, which often overlooks or conceals the systemic drivers of gender inequality and structural violence (Mulupi & Blumell, 2024). This raises concerns about whether current media framing encourages informed civic discussion or limits substantive civic engagement. From a Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) standpoint, the role of the media goes beyond the circulation of information to facilitating dialogue and action. It is from this standpoint that the study examined the effects of media framing of femicide on the audience perceptions and participatory responses to the issue, thus providing a basis for understanding the issue and informing the study objectives.

1.2. Background of the Study

According to Wasuna (2019), femicide is the gender-related killing of women and girls, which has evolved from a privatised form of violence into a globally recognised human rights and development concern. For decades, violence against women was normalised within patriarchal social systems and excluded from formal policy discourse. However, sustained advocacy by global institutions such as UN Women and feminist movements has reframed femicide as a structural manifestation of gender inequality rooted in misogyny, power asymmetries, and systemic discrimination (Cecchi et al., 2022). While this global recognition marks progress, it often reflects Western-centric epistemologies that may inadequately capture the socio-cultural specificities of violence in non-Western contexts.

Femicide has emerged as a global development crisis. UN Women (2022) argues that gender-based killings are affecting women and girls in all regions, which is jeopardising the realisation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality. Recent statistics from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime have revealed an alarming rate of femicide in 2023: approximately 81,100 women and girls were intentionally killed, with an estimated 45 000 fatalities committed by intimate partners and other family members.

Despite being a worldwide issue, Africa is becoming a hotspot of the crisis of femicide. Variava and Dekel (2024) assert that the intimate partner/family-related homicide rate was

higher in Africa than the global one and was 2.5 deaths per 100,000 females, which is more than the global rate of 1.1 deaths per 100,000 females. These statistics show that there is a dire need to intervene effectively to lower the cases of femicide, especially in Africa.

Nationally, Kenya has witnessed a tremendous rise in cases of femicide, with 2024 recording the highest number of killings so far (International IDEA, 2025). Traditionally, legislation and institutional reforms have been the foci of gender-based violence interventions in Kenya, but they have been limited by the inability to enforce them and by ongoing socio-cultural values. More and more, femicide is mediated by means of mass media, which is a central aspect of shaping social reality. Drawing on framing theory (Robert Entman, 1993), media narratives shape audience perceptions regarding the causes, attribution of responsibility, and moral implications of an issue (Muir et al., 2021). With episodic framing, violence is often personalised, and structural factors are obscured, but thematic framing locates femicide in more extensive systems of inequality (Ndlovu and Mandiyanike, 2025). In the African Critical Consciousness frame, these practices of framing are neither neutral nor passive concerning the awareness of the collective and the prospects of civic action or apathy.

Nairobi and Kiambu Counties can be used as the suitable geographic background to analyse how mediated discourses of the television can shape public perception of femicide as it encompasses connected urban-periurban areas, with a diverse demography, a population density and massive exposure to mainstream media. These counties are thus chosen based on their analytical relevance and do not reflect all counties in Kenya.

Nairobi City County is the economic, administrative and communication hub of Kenya, being the capital of the country. According to the Nairobi County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), Nairobi is a highly urbanised county whose development is further influenced by its status as a major commercial and service centre in Kenya (County Government of Nairobi, 2023). The county is home to major national institutions, corporate organisations and media organisations and is the centre for national news production and viewing. Urban populations and the density of media organisations make the city of Nairobi a vital ground for exploring how audiences interpret media messages, particularly through television, on socially relevant issues such as femicide. In the same vein, the Media Council of Kenya (2024) indicated that Nairobi had the highest television viewership figures in the country, as 76% of those respondents residing in the county said they used television, reflecting the high exposure in the county to broadcast media content. Media Council of Kenya.

Kiambu County offers a complementary peri-urban setting because of its geographical vicinity and social-economic relations with Nairobi. The Kiambu County Integrated

Development Plan (CIDP) 2023-2027 states that the County has a mix of urban centers, emerging urban municipalities and various settlements with ongoing spatial and population changes. Urban Expansion, commuter links and being part of the Nairobi Metropolitan area have been growing because of its close proximity to Nairobi city. In the county, it would therefore be possible to see how national television messages are translated to audiences outside the main urban centre in another socio-spatial context. The Media Council of Kenya (2024) also reveals that peri-urban populations account for the highest television advertising spend, with peri-urban areas having the highest television viewership (66%) of all the areas compared to urban and rural areas at 62%. Media Council of Kenya.

Thus, the addition of Nairobi and Kiambu Counties allows the study to investigate media influence on viewers with similar content on national TV but in different city and peri-urban settings. This geographical orientation to the study is important, as the responses that audiences make to the messages they are absorbing and interpreting from the media can be influenced as much by their social, demographic, and communication settings as by what they are watching on television.

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) 2019 census indicates that Nairobi City County had a population of 4,397,073 and Kiambu County a population of 2,417,735, making the total 6,814,808. Of this total population, about 64.5% was in Nairobi and 35.5% in Kiambu. Nairobi offers a predominantly urban context and is Kenya's main administrative, economic, communication and media hub, and Kiambu offers a complementary peri-urban context with rapid urbanisation and tight socio-economic ties with Nairobi. Given that the two counties are so close geographically, and that they have different settlement characteristics, they make for an appropriate geographical context to understand how audiences in a mainstream television news context interpret media representations of femicide.

The relevance of these two counties is further reinforced by their high exposure to television media. According to the Media Council of Kenya (2024), television commands significant viewership in Nairobi, while residents in surrounding peri-urban areas similarly exhibit high rates of media consumption. Such features make Nairobi and Kiambu suitable forums in which to investigate how audiences make sense of the coverage of femicide in television programmes in related yet socially and geographically very different contexts. Therefore, Nairobi and Kiambu Counties have been included to examine how individuals who have access to the same TV message broadcast nationally may interpret the message differently because of their social, demographic, geographic and communication context.

Mass media, including newspapers, TV, film and radio, allow the transmission of massive amounts of information to masses of people, at any particular moment, without actually being in contact with the source or content itself (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2016). The media have been both a place of opposition and reproduction of dominant ideologies around the world. For instance, campaigns like #NiUnaMenos (Latin America), #HearHerStory (UN Women campaign), #AmINext (South Africa), and #NoExcuse show that strategic framing can be used to mobilise the public and influence policy (Gumucio and Tufte, 2023). Nevertheless, victim blaming and sensationalism are often reinforced by media presentations (UN Women, 2019), which do not allow deeper structural involvement. An Afrocentric criticism indicates that such representations do not always focus on the lived experiences of African women, which limits the transformative discourse.

At the local level, mainstream media outlets—including television, radio, and print — constitute a dominant agenda-setting force within Kenya's media landscape, particularly through its Kiswahili prime-time broadcasts. Grounded in Agenda-Setting Theory, the station significantly shapes public salience of issues, while framing processes influence interpretive schemas. Media monitoring by the Media Council of Kenya (2024) indicates a tendency towards episodic framing and sensationalism in reporting gender-based violence. From an Afrocentric and African Critical Consciousness standpoint, such framing may limit the development of critical public awareness necessary for collective action.

Despite growing activism and media coverage in Kenya, empirical research on how television framing influences public perception and civic action remains scarce. This study, therefore, situates femicide reporting within a PC4D framework, using mainstream media as a critical case to interrogate how media narratives shape responsibility attribution and the emergence of critical consciousness in addressing femicide.

The study adopts mainstream media as the case study because mainstream television stations collectively play a significant role in shaping public discourse, setting national agendas, and influencing societal perceptions of gender-based violence in Kenya. Rather than focusing on a single media channel, examining multiple mainstream outlets provides a broader and more representative understanding of how femicide is framed across widely consumed news platforms. Mainstream media also reaches diverse audiences across different demographic groups, making it suitable for analysing how televised narratives influence audience perceptions, civic engagement, and participatory responses toward femicide.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Despite increasing global attention to gender-based violence, femicide remains a persistent and under-examined social problem, particularly within media and development discourse (Mulambo et al., 2025). Being the extreme form of violence against women, femicide is not only a criminal justice concern but also a communication concern since the perception of such incidents mostly depends on how the media frames them (Booker et al., 2024; Sotirovic, 2000; Giles & Shaw, 2009). Although development communication theory holds that media can promote participatory social change, mass media reporting seems to individualise the cases of femicide (Ng'ang'a, 2021; Njoroge, 2025; Media Council of Kenya, 2024), which undermines structural understanding and mobilisation. These studies collectively operate on the premise that femicide is a systemic issue, that media framing shapes societal understanding, and that improving media narratives can influence social change, but current coverage is falling short and needs empirical scrutiny.

Existing literature predominantly focuses on mass media coverage of gender-based violence (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2016; Wasuna, 2019; Booker et al., 2024); however, empirical research examining the relationship between television news framing and participatory development responses remains scarce. In the absence of this analysis, it becomes difficult to say whether media coverage increases critical consciousness or voiceless androcentric narratives. While prior discussions establish that media framing shapes public perception, there is little empirical evidence on televised framing and its effect on participatory development responses. Existing studies often present fragmented insights, failing to sufficiently document how structural media biases contribute to or hinder critical public discourse. In the absence of this analysis, it becomes difficult to determine whether media coverage increases critical consciousness or propagates voiceless, androcentric narratives. This study directly addresses this empirical gap by linking televised reporting styles directly to audience-level outcomes.

1.4. Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

i. Identify and categorise the dominant media frames and narrative patterns used in mainstream media's femicide coverage from January 2022 to December 2025.
ii. Examine how mainstream media's framing patterns influence audience perceptions regarding the attribution of causality and responsibility for femicide.

iii. Evaluate ways in which mainstream media's femicide reporting influences participatory development responses based on the principles of Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D).

1.5. Research Questions

i. What are the dominant media frames and narrative patterns that characterise Mainstream media's reporting of femicide from January 2022 to December 2025?
ii. In which ways do Mainstream media's framing patterns influence audience perceptions of femicide?
iii. What does mainstream media say about femicide that allows or limits participatory development responses in line with the tenets of Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D)?

1.6. Rationale of the Study

The continuation and intensification of the femicide problem in Kenya requires an analytical focus outside the criminal justice discourse on the communicative dynamics by which the problem is publicised. Although femicide is a manifestation of systemic gender inequality, the mainstream coverage has often represented the cases as occasional and sensational crimes and blamed the victim (Ng'ang'a, 2021; Njoroge, 2025; Media Council of Kenya, 2024; World Association of Girl Guides, 2020). This kind of framing risks individualising blame while overlooking systemic forces such as patriarchal cultures, weak institutions and socio-economic inequalities. It is both theoretically and socially imperative to examine how these narratives are constructed and how they shape public interpretation.

Mainstream media is a critical focal point in the broadcasting industry in Kenya, especially in prime-time news. According to Ophir et al. (2021), established media houses are dominant agenda-setting actors, which makes their framing practices critical in influencing audience perceptions and behaviours on sensitive issues such as pandemics, femicide, or gender-based violence. Nonetheless, the available literature on Kenya, such as the study by King'ori and Bitrus-Ojiambo (2016), is more or less devoted to the mass media or has evaluated the contents of the media descriptively and has not formally attached patterns of framing to the perceptions and participatory effects among the audience.

This study aimed to address two gaps. In empirical terms, there is limited research on the effect of televised framing in terms of attribution of causality and civic participation. In theory, studies rarely incorporated the effect of Attribution on Framing Theory with the Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) because this theory predicts critical consciousness and collective agency. Conceptualising these frameworks, the study redefined media framing as a cognitive and developmental process that can limit or facilitate social mobilisation based on gender justice.

1.7. Significance of the Study

The study is an original contribution at the intersection of media effects and development communication. Theoretically, it extends Framing Theory beyond its customary cognitive fundamental attribution focus on responsibility by incorporating it with Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D). Such a synthesis places media framing not only as a process of interpretation, but as a possible stimulus or inhibitor of participatory agency. By so doing, the study contributes to the literature on the influence of mediated stories in shaping the comprehension and mobilisation of social injustices.

Empirically, the research addresses a gap in Kenyan media research by specifically studying the televised news and integrating content analysis with audience-based data. This research design reinforces analytical rigour, as it connects discursive patterns with lived interpretation. The results produce evidence that stems from the context that frames the understanding of perceptions of causality, accountability, and civic responsibility in the context of femicide.

At the policy level and professionally, the research provides evidence relevant to institutions like the Media Council of Kenya and to reporters who desire to improve the gender sensitivity of reporting. The research informs media reform along Sustainable Development Goal 5 by identifying the patterns of framing that reinforce an individualised narrative or foster structural awareness.

At the societal level, the study contributes to national dialogue on gender justice by interrogating the communicative conditions under which public consciousness and collective action emerge, thereby underscoring the developmental responsibility of mainstream media.

1.7.1. Justification of the Study

While extensive literature covers broad media effects, there remains a distinct scarcity of empirical evidence examining how televised framing directly shapes participatory development responses in regional broadcast contexts. In the absence of this investigation, media houses risk perpetuating voiceless, top-down narratives that fail to foster critical public engagement. This study is justified because it bridges this empirical void, offering actionable insights that help transition broadcast media from passive information channels into active catalysts for social transformation and accountability.

1.8. Scope of the Study

This study analysed prime-time news reports aired on mainstream media between January 2022 and December 2025. The temporal dimension encompasses a specific four-year period to allow systematic analysis of trends in media framing within a Kenyan situation in context. Empirically, the audience element is geographically limited to the counties of Nairobi and Kiambu, as they represent a high percentage of viewership and a socio-economic and demographic diversity, which lends an apt background to the study of the perception of the population on the televised news content (Media Council of Kenya, 2025). Geographically, the study was bounded by Nairobi and Kiambu Counties, as these counties offer contrasting but related urban and peri-urban settings with high mainstream TV news exposure. The results, accordingly, give a contextual understanding of the perception of the audience within these counties and not generalisation across the whole of the country.

Theoretically, Framing Theory and the Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) are the theoretical limits of the study. These frameworks informed the study on how media discourses are constructed and how audiences interpret and conceptualise those discourses in the social setting they live in. The methodology used in the research combines quantitative content analysis of news broadcasts with survey data. This triangulation approach strengthens and increases the credibility and depth of the findings, and it is consistent with the stated theoretical and geographical limitations of the study.

1.9. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Limitations refer to inherent constraints beyond the study's control that may affect the validity, reliability, and generalisability of findings (Theofanidis and Fountouki, 2018).

However, rigorous methodological choices can reduce their impact and enhance analytical robustness.

One of the limitations is related to the period (January 2022-December 2025), which might not adequately reflect longitudinal changes in the media frame. Since media narratives are fluid and context-dependent (Chahbane and Chahbane, 2024), the study overcomes this by using systematic sampling over time across the entire period to ensure variation in patterns of framing is captured. Instead of purported historical generalisation, the study is a context-bound interpretivist approach, which places findings in particular frameworks of socio-political events and, in this manner, maintains analytical validity.

The exclusive focus on mainstream media limits the generalizability of these findings across broader institutional contexts. Nevertheless, the quantitative study design methodologically justifies this by subjecting mainstream media to the consideration of a strategically important case since the case has a national scale and an agenda-setting impact. The research consequently emphasises analytical generalisation more than statistical representativeness, as is the norm in qualitative research in media.

Relying on self-reported survey data introduced potential risks of social desirability bias and recall distortion (Ried et al., 2022). In response to this, the research merged two methodologies, audience survey and systematic content analysis, to facilitate cross-validation of results. Furthermore, survey instruments were structured to minimise bias in responses and increase internal consistency using neutrally framed survey instruments.

Delimitations, by contrast, are intentional boundaries established by the researcher to ensure feasibility and analytical depth (Theofanidis and Fountouki, 2018). The scope of media that the study focused on was TV news, which enabled the analysis of an influential broadcasting platform in a context-based approach. This was also enhanced by an explicit explanation concerning television as an agenda-setting power in Kenya.

Analytically, the emphasis on the Kiswahili broadcasts warranted analytical coherence and interpretive richness, and the explicit specification of results to Kiswahili-language media contexts. Geographically, Nairobi and Kiambu Counties are chosen for their geographical diversity and exposure to media, which made results on the urban audience more transferable without overemphasising national representativeness. Lastly, the sample was limited to adults aged 25 to 54 years, which aligned the sample with core viewership demographics (Rurii, 2026) and ensured conceptual consistency between the research problem and population.

Overall, the study had methodological reflexivity that not only recognised its limitations but also systematically incorporated strategies to reduce their impact, thus enhancing the credibility and interpretive rigour of the research.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Femicide: The term ‘femicide' is used in this study in an agenda-setting manner, which means that the killing of women and girls due to their gender is understood as a form of Structural violence against women, unequal power relations and gender inequality. Specifically used to differentiate gender-motivated killings from other types of violence against women and general homicide. Mainstream television media's representation and construction of meanings surrounding cases of femicide in Kenya are explored.

Media Framing of Femicide: Media framing about femicide is the way that mainstream television news processes select, emphasise, exclude, and present some facts about the issue and helps audiences interpret it appropriately. Media framing in this study is measured by factors such as type of frames demonstrated (episodic or thematic), actors cited (individual or systemic) in the reports, pattern of the narrative, tone of the report, and the utilized of sensational elements in television news reporting. The study focuses on prime time (PT) television news reporting from January 2022 to December 2025.

Episodic Framing: Episodic framing is a way of reporting that shows that femicide is a random occurrence, providing attention primarily to the individual victim, the perpetrator, the nature of the relationship between the two, and the circumstances immediately surrounding the crime. Content analysis indicators are used to measure episodic framing in the current research, which focuses on personalised narratives and individual-level explanations of femicide.

Thematic Framing: Thematic Framing is the media framing of a phenomenon that places it in a social, cultural, institutional and structural context. In this study, the thematic framing refers to the recognition of news narratives which include: gender inequalities, gender-based violence patterns and institutional failures, patriarchy and femicide.

Audience Perception: Audience perception means how television audiences interpret, understand, and give meaning to femicide in TV representations. Audiences' perception in this study is measured by how they think about and perceive the reasons for femicide, whom they think is responsible, attitudes toward victims of femicide, perception of gender equality/inequality and perception of media construction of stories.

Responsibility Attribution: The responsibility attribution is contained in how audiences and media narratives explain the cause and who is responsible for the femicide incident. For this study, responsibility attribution involves identifying a primary cause of femicide as individual actors, the victim(s) situation, the perpetrator(s) or, as a consequence of these, the broader system of circumstances including institutional weaknesses, social inequalities and patriarchy.

Sensationalism in Media Reporting: Sensationalism is the raising of awareness of femicide through a reporting style that exaggerates, dramatizes, is emotionally charged or graphically intense and is mainly focused on shock and personal reaction. This study operationalises sensationalism in the form of content analysis of television news content and teasers in the form of dramatic presentation techniques, romanticized headlines, graphic descriptions and personal details of victims and perpetrators.

Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D): Participatory Communication for Development is a type of communication that highlights the importance of dialogue, inclusion, empowerment, critical awareness and collective action in the process of tackling social issues. For this study, PC4D is defined by the degree to which the narrative within the media enables audiences to participate in civic dialogue, advocacy, policy support, community action or mass response to the issue of femicide.

Participatory Development Responses: Participatory development responses are used to describe the actions and intentions of the audiences in relation to the press on femicide. In this paper, these responses are quantified by using indicators of willingness to participate in civic conversations, support gender justice initiatives, participate in advocacy activities, support policy change, and participate in community-based interventions in relation to gender-based violence.

Mainstream Media: Mainstream media are widely used television news outlets that play a key role in providing the public with information and agenda-setting in Kenya. For this study, mainstream media is defined as prime-time television news programs that were analysed in terms of femicide coverage from January 2022 to December 2025.

Prime-Time Television News: Prime-time television news is broadcast during specific times in the evening when audiences are large and serve as an important forum to help shape public debate. The media units in this study are the prime-time news broadcasts that are analysed to look for trends in the construction of a story of femicide.

Critical Consciousness: An audience with critical consciousness can perceive, understand and challenge deeper social structures that contribute to inequality and injustice. In

this study, critical consciousness is explored from the perspective of the audience in their understanding of femicide not only as criminal incidents but also as a structural gender issue.

Media Exposure: The exposure to mainstream TV news content, that is, how often and how much individuals view this content. Media presence is quantified by the number of times the respondents consumed news on television screens in prime time and their engagement with femicide media.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the conceptual and contextual groundwork of the research by placing femicide as a manifestation of systemic gender inequality and a growing social issue in Kenya. It suggests that media coverage, especially news on television, shapes the cultural understanding of femicide, causality, responsibility and suitable response. Grounded in Framing Theory and Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) theoretical frameworks, the chapter posits that media narratives either individualise violence through episodic framing of the violence, or situate it within broader systemic inequality frameworks through thematic framing.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature on media framing and its influence on public perceptions of femicide. It examines the theoretical frameworks guiding the study, particularly Framing Theory and Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D), and explores how the media defines and represents femicide. The chapter also analyses empirical studies on media coverage of gender-based violence and identifies gaps in existing research, especially within the Kenyan context. This chapter also presents the conceptual framework that underpins the study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides the foundational structure for a study by integrating validated theories, concepts, and definitions to guide the research design, data analysis, and interpretation of findings (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). This structure is important because it helps to explain a phenomenon through a particular lens and challenges and extends existing knowledge within the limitations of that lens. In addition, the framework shapes the types of questions asked, guides the method by which the study collects and analyses data, thereby informing the discussion of the results of the study (Luft et al., 2022). This research is anchored in the combination of Framing Theory and Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D). Collectively, these theoretical perspectives provide a framework for understanding both the cognitive and developmental implications of media narratives.

2.2.1 Framing Theory

Robert Entman's (1993) Framing Theory holds that the media shape the audience's interpretations and perspectives by highlighting specific aspects of reality while overlooking others. The main idea behind the theory states that how information is presented by selecting some facts and leaving others out plays a critical role in shaping people's perception of a particular issue. Entman (1993) defines framing as the act of choosing certain aspects of perceived reality and highlighting them in a communication text to advance the desired definition of problems, causality, moral judgment and treatment advice. Therefore, frames typically identify, appraise, and recommend a point analysed most comprehensively.

As Entman (1993) posits, framing involves defining problems, diagnosing their underlying causes, rendering moral judgments, and proposing remedies. Through these functions, the media does not just report events but constructively creates interpretive schemas,

influencing the public's understanding and perspectives. In the article, Entman (1993) uses an illustration of the Cold War coverage to show that frames have at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. Communicators choose and highlight information using the cognitive schemata, texts incorporate these options discursively, and audiences read them differently. Interpretive frames are provided by culture. A combination of these processes determines the construction and understanding of problems, causes, evaluations, and solutions (Entman, 1993). As such, framing has a central influence on the interpretation of cases of femicide as either isolated crimes of passion or symptoms of an overall systemic gender inequality.

Another major contribution to the framing research is Iyengar's (1991) differentiation of episodic and thematic framing. Episodic frames deal with specific events or narratives in a person's life, whereas thematic frames put the issues in the context of the overall social situation and the scheme of things. Iyengar's research shows that episodic framing urges the audience to hold individuals accountable, whereas thematic framing encourages them to hold institutions or society responsible. When applied to femicide coverage, episodic accounts that focus on jealousy, relationship conflicts, or individual disagreements can prompt the viewers to perceive violence as a family issue between couples (Aldrete & Fernández-Ardèvol, 2023). Conversely, thematic reporting that brings out trends of gender-based violence, institutional failures, or patriarchal standards may promote a structural understanding of the issue. This is especially important to development communication as various strategies of framing can affect the probability of popular mobilisation or policy requests.

2.2.3 Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D)

Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) is both a theoretical and practical framework that explains how communication can facilitate inclusive and transformative social change. Servaes and Malikhao (2011) argue that PC4D is not confined to the traditional linear thinking of communication that emphasises one-way information flow between experts and passive audiences. On the contrary, it focuses on dialogue, involvement, and shared interaction as the key elements of development processes. Baau (2025) goes further to suggest that PC4D is concerned with communication practices and media platforms that allow diverse voices, especially those of the marginalised groups, to be heard and incorporated in decision-making. Communication in this regard is not simply about the exchange of information but the creation of negotiation, understanding and empowering spaces.

The history of PC4D is based on the criticism of previous theories of modernisation and diffusion, which made communities passive receivers of externally produced knowledge. According to scholars like Jan Servaes (1996), such models have ignored the role that local knowledge, cultural specificity and power relations play in determining the outcome of development. The participatory paradigm, on the contrary, encourages horizontal communication, where communities actively participate in the process of defining their needs and co-producing solutions. Elouahabi (2019), who adds that participatory methods help to increase ownership, relevance, and sustainability since they view people as agents of development rather than subjects of development initiatives, supports the rationale behind this.

One of the main intellectual sources of PC4D is the theory of Freirean critical pedagogy created by Paulo Freire in 1970 (Fischman & McLaren, 2005). Freire views communication as a dialogical process through which people acquire critical consciousness, the ability to think critically about social realities and understand oppressive structures. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), Freire rejects the 'banking' model of education, in which knowledge is deposited in the minds of passive students (Thomas, 2009). Instead, he suggests a problem-posing method based on dialogue, reflection, and action (praxis). In this context, communication is empowering, and people and societies can question dominant ideologies and engage in social change.

Scholars like Jan Servaes (1996; 2008), Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron (2001) and Thomas Tufte (2005; 2017) advanced the theory further by emphasising that sustainable development results from participatory communication processes that encourage dialogue, local ownership, and stakeholder participation. These scholars hold that effective communication must enable governments, media, civil society organisations and communities to work together in tackling complex social issues. PC4D does not measure the success of communication by measuring increased participation, empowerment, collective action and social transformation and not just the dissemination of messages.

PC4D's propositions are relevant to this study. First, the theory proposes that communication should be dialogical, enabling the audience to engage in the discussion and interpretation of social issues, rather than being a mere recipient of media messages. Secondly, it asserts that participation is crucial to any meaningful and sustainable development, as individuals are more willing to support initiatives they have actively contributed. Third, PC4D focuses on empowerment through critical consciousness, in which communication helps people recognise structural inequalities, which motivates them to advocate for social change. Finally, the theory proposes that communication should enable collective action, thereby

encouraging communities to engage in civic action, policy advocacy, and social mobilisation to solve social issues.

These propositions intimately align with the present study. TV news coverage can do more than just inform viewers about femicide; it influences how they understand the causes of femicide, allocate blame, and determine appropriate responses. Thematic and development-focused frames in media coverage can increase audiences' critical awareness and promote involvement in advocacy, community discussion, and policy support. Conversely, sensational and episodic reporting can individualise femicide, perpetuating victim-blaming narratives, and discouraging substantive civic participation. Thus, PC4D is a suitable theoretical approach to analyse whether there is critical consciousness and a participatory development response to mainstream media framing of femicide among the audiences of Nairobi and Kiambu Counties.

While PC4D has been used extensively in development communication, it has also attracted criticism. Authentic participation can be hindered due to unequal power dynamics, political agendas, or media ownership and institutional constraints, which can prevent certain voices from being heard in the public sphere (Servaes, 2020). However, the theory remains very timely due to the focus it places on communication as a way to empower citizens, enhance democratic participation and facilitate social change. In the context of this study, PC4D complements Framing Theory by extending the analysis beyond cognitive media effects to examine whether media narratives stimulate public participation and collective action against femicide.

2.3 General Literature

2.3.1 Conceptual and Analytical Foundations of Key Constructs

Terms used in discussing femicide are not a semantic decision, but a political and diagnostic intervention. It is imperative to understand that the language the media and legal institutions are using creates the same reality that it is supposed to represent (Jhunjhunwala & Verma, 2024). Terms such as femicide, feminicide, media framing, audience perception and Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) are the analytical scaffold of the current study.

While violence against women (VAW) encompasses a broad range of abuses, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, femicide refers specifically to the intentional killing of women because of their gender (Nabwoba, 2025). Unlike general violence, femicide is rooted in systemic gender inequalities, power imbalances, and patriarchal

norms. Therefore, while all femicides are forms of violence against women, not all violence against women constitutes femicide. This distinction is critical for this study, which focuses specifically on how the media represents gender-motivated killings rather than broader categories of violence. The wider body of literature on femicide indicates a developing attempt at conceptualising gendered killings as a specific kind of violence that is entrenched within the framework of structural power encounters (Njeri, 2023; Mirimo, 2023; Nabwoba, 2025). Early feminist scholarship defined femicide as the killing of women by men motivated by misogyny or a sense of ownership (Caputi & Russell, 1990). Equally, Njoroge (2025) would perceive femicide as the premeditated killing of women because they are women. This theoreticalisation highlighted the gendered aspect of the crime and opposed the propensity to consider such murders as a normal homicide.

Most studies define femicide as the killing of females by males because they are females (Caicedo-Roa et al., 2020; Cecchi et al., 2022; Walby, 2022), which is the most lethal end of the gender-based violence spectrum. UN Women and UNODC refine this definition to 'intentional killing, with a gender-related motive' to highlight the structural causes, which include stereotyped gender roles, discrimination, and unequal distribution of power, not merely the subjective motive of the individual perpetrator (UNODC and UN Women, 2022).

In Kenya, femicide is poorly understood and mishandled in the justice system because it is not explicitly defined in the national policy and legal framework. Section 203 of the Penal Code, which relies on the general elements of homicide (malice aforethought, death, and causation), lacks the fourth element of 'gender motivation' to ensure legal recognition of femicide (National Council for Law Reporting, 2023). Moreover, the Protection against Domestic Violence Act (2015) does not criminalise domestic violence but only offers civil relief, which contributes to such murders commonly being thought of as private personal affairs. This generates a conflict between Universalist indicators, which pragmatically record the sex of the victim as data, and particularistic strategies that aim to reveal the root causes of misogyny. Without alignment with the UN framework, state responses remain inadequate, as media framing continues to minimise femicide as "lovers' quarrels".

In the Kenyan literature, the major issues are, firstly, the problem of defining femicide and debates about the appropriateness of the term 'femicide', and secondly, poor data collection systems, the invisibility of femicide as a result of underreporting, biases in data gathering and poor data governance. Menjívar and Walsh (2017) used the term 'feminicide', in contrast to 'femicide', to highlight the role of institutional or state violence and to focus on the complicity of the state in institutional violence, misogynistic and discriminatory practices in the deaths of

women. In doing so, Menjívar and Walsh (2017) distinguish between patterns of 'in action', which include indirect mechanisms such as failure to provide 'prevention, protection, and prosecution'. This conceptualisation was made to highlight the gender aspect of the crime and review the practice of making such murders appear as normal homicides.

In the African context, femicide is frequently placed in the context of wider debates of gender inequality, socio-economic susceptibility and institutional frailty. According to Abrahams et al. (2024), in 2017, the rate of IPF was 4.9 per 100,000 females, which is more than 4 times the estimated global rate for intimate partner and family-related homicide, and higher than the rate for any other country. However, South Africa is the only country that has collected femicide data with a dedicated national survey, and it is possible that rates in other countries would be shown to be higher with more accurate estimations. Ndlovu and Mandiyanike (2025) revealed that in South Africa, high rates of intimate partner femicide are related to experiences of domestic violence and institutionalised patriarchal values. This study demonstrates that the killings that are based on gender cannot be well explained without looking at the conditions that exist in the culture and the structure that supports gender-based violence.

Media framing is defined as the process by which media outlets set information, selecting specific aspects of an issue to highlight, emphasise, or omit to shape public perception. Entman (1993) defines framing as the selection of certain dimensions of a perceived reality and elevating them to a more salient position in a text in order to advance a certain definition of a problem, interpretation of causality, moral judgment, and recommendation of treatment. This works in the dichotomy of episodic and thematic frames in the reporting of femicide (Ng'ang'a, 2021). Episodic framing minimises systemic violence to single cases of individual deviance or crimes of passion, but thematic framing contextualises these deaths in broader social patterns and social institutional breakdowns.

The conceptualisation of audience perception is a sociocognitive process that allows individuals to make sense of their experiences and make judgments of values based on their experiences, cultural background and interpretive schemas that the media offer. Perception is not a passive reception of information but an active decoding that may lead to dominant, negotiated or oppositional readings of a text (Minnema et al., 2022; Kleitsika, 2024). Lastly, Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) refers to a dialogic process which is intended to result in conscientization, the creation of critical awareness, which results in collective action and transformation. The dependent variable in this research is PC4D, which

can be described as the ability of media narratives to facilitate or hinder the audience's ability to have civic discourse and to insist on institutional change.

2.3.2 Framing of Femicide in Media

Although there has been an increased international awareness about the issue of femicide as a severe human rights concern, the influence of media accounts in fostering the way people perceive the issue is debatable. Media scholars hold that news coverage often reflects patriarchal assumptions, through either emphasising sensational elements of crimes or making implicit assumptions as to why people found themselves in such situations (Muir et al., 2021). These stories can make violence trivial and deemphasise systemic processes that cause gender inequality.

In Kenya, there has been increasing criticism by feminist activists and civil society organisations in Kenya of the media reports on femicide as being over-sensationalised and victim-blaming. According to the Media Council of Kenya (2024), reports tend to focus on dramatic crime information more than structural analysis, which further suggests the narrative that femicide is a problem in isolated situations but not indicative of gender injustice. This observation is true because Ng'ang'a (2021) also added that Kenyan newspapers frame femicide through sensationalism, victim-blaming, and romanticising relationship lenses. In her study, she demonstrates that the newspaper headlines concentrated on the perpetrator's background instead of the crime itself, thereby transferring liability from systemic GBV.

In addition, UN Women (2021) added that the continued justification of murders by positioning victims as accomplices in their murder due to personal and lifestyle choices, such as involvement in a sugar daddy/sponsor culture, which they claim is common in Kenya among college-going girls and older men, is problematic reporting of intimate partner femicide in newspapers. As such, the poor framing when reporting femicide cases by the print media is insensitive and perpetuates harmful stereotypes that normalise violence against women.

2.4 Empirical Framework

The empirical environment of femicide in Kenya demonstrates an ongoing conflict between the role of media as a watchdog in society and its propensity to reproduce patriarchal discourses. Although the conceptual definition of femicide is the intentional killing of women due to their being women, empirical studies emphasise the existence of significant differences in the manner in which these crimes are mediated. This part drew a critical review of the new research to identify the gaps in research.

A qualitative mixed-method research by Ng'ang'a (2021) investigated how the Daily Nation and The Standard covered the case of the Sharon Otieno and Monica Kimani murders. Ng'ang'a used both quantitative content analysis and interviews to determine that the frames of responsibility and alleged perpetrator were most common and tended to individualise the crimes. More importantly, the research discovered that the victim frame often transformed into a kind of sponsor support frame where the lifestyle of the victim was put under scrutiny to suggest that she was partly to blame for her death. This is also consistent with the exploratory research of 78 articles by Wasuna (2019), which found that Kenyan print media is still predominantly androcentric, imposing a burden of prevention on the victims instead of a systemic one.

Njoroge (2025) carried out a qualitative case study of online print media to extend this to online spaces. The results indicated that legal dramatisation is one of the main narrative tools, in which the reporting revolves around the technicalities of a courtroom and the procedural fights of high-profile suspects. According to Njoroge (2025), this attention shifts the seriousness of the offences and strengthens gender inequalities since female suspects are usually presented more sympathetically than males, which perpetuates the conventional gender roles.

Contrastingly, Okech (2021) explored the utility of "rage" in digital counterpublics, specifically analysing hashtags like #TotalShutDown, #TotalShutDownKe, #StopKillingUs, #EndFemicide, #EndFemicideKe, #JusticeForSharon and #MenAreTrash. Through discursive analysis, Okech (2021) found that while mainstream media often relies on "morality" and "respectability" tropes to justify violence, digital activism serves as a site of resistance. This digital rage acts as a catalyst for building transnational feminist communities that challenge hegemonic power and push for state accountability.

Nevertheless, in January 2024, amid the atrocious murders of Scarlet Wahu and Rita Waeni, an analytical overview of reporting by the Media Council of Kenya (2024) revealed a worrying trend of falling into a Taliban-like type of reporting. The MCK observed an eruption of sensationalism whereby journalists were playing the role of romance writers by providing a romantic touch to criminal activity, with such headlines as Crimes of Passion. Multiple sources were mentioned to have violated moral precepts by reporting on "gory details" that were likened to a butchery situation, which compromised empathy and could contribute to a media contagion effect due to copycat murders.

The news is not the only source of the cultivation of attitudes towards violence. Kung'u and Kamau (2023) employed content analysis and focus group discussions to observe the

Kenyan soap operas, such as Mother-in-Law. They discovered that the most common frames were male dominance and victimisation, and that the most striking frame was a symbolic destruction of particular types of violence, such as child abuse. The scripts did not always have realistic legal implications for perpetrators, making violence trivial in the eyes of the audience.

Table 1

Summary of Previous Empirical Studies, Methodologies, Key Findings, and Research Gaps

Author/Year	Methodology	Key Findings	Research Gap
Wasuna (2019)	Content analysis of Kenyan newspapers	Media coverage was largely androcentric and often blamed victims.	Focused only on print media.
Ng'ang'a (2021)	Mixed-method analysis of Daily Nation and The Standard	Femicide stories were framed through responsibility and victim-blaming narratives.	Did not examine audience perceptions.
Okech (2021)	Discourse analysis of feminist hashtags	Digital activism challenged dominant media narratives and promoted accountability.	Focused on social media rather than mainstream television.
UN Women (2021)	Review of media reports on intimate partner femicide	Media reports often normalise violence through stereotypical narratives.	Did not empirically assess audience effects.
Kung'u and Kamau (2023)	Content analysis and focus groups	Television dramas reinforced gender stereotypes and normalised violence.	Focused on entertainment media rather than news.
Muir et al. (2021)	International media framing study	News reports frequently sensationalise violence against women.	Did not focus on the Kenyan context.
Media Council of Kenya (2024)	Analysis of Kenyan media coverage	The media frequently used sensational and romanticised reporting styles.	Did not investigate audience interpretation.
Njoroge (2025)	Qualitative study of online news reporting	Courtroom-centred narratives shifted attention away from structural causes of femicide.	Focused only on online media.
Abrahams et al. (2024)	National survey on femicide in South Africa	Gender inequality and patriarchal norms were major contributors to femicide.	Did not examine media representation.
Aldrete and Fernández-Ardèvol (2023)	International framing analysis	Thematic framing enhanced public understanding of structural causes of femicide.	Did not assess participatory responses.

Author/Year	Methodology	Key Findings	Research Gap

Note. The table synthesizes empirical studies on media framing of femicide, highlighting methodological approaches, key findings, and identified gaps that inform the current study

2.4.1 Identified Research Gap

Despite the depth of existing literature, several critical gaps are prominent. First, there is the medium specificity as demonstrated in most studies (Ng'ang'a, 2021; Njoroge, 2025; Wasuna, 2019) that focused on print or online newspapers. While television is the dominant source of information for most Kenyans, there is a total lack of systematic evidence regarding televised news framing, which utilises visual metaphors and dramatic audio on public perception.

The second gap is the lack of PC4D Integration because most of the existing studies focused on the cognitive "media effects" (framing influence on perception). There is no empirical research evaluating how these frames allow or limit "Participatory Communication for Development" (PC4D). Scholarship has yet to determine if televised narratives foster the "critical consciousness" and "collective action" necessary to transform gendered power relations.

The final loophole is the absence of regional focus. Audience perception studies are rarely grounded in specific urban-suburban hubs like Nairobi and Kiambu, which are hotspots for both media consumption and femicide incidents. This study on mainstream media's prime time news aims to bridge these gaps by connecting televised framing patterns directly to participatory development responses, providing the evidence needed for gender-sensitive journalism reform.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a schematic layout of significant variables and ideas on which research is carried out. Its purpose is to classify, define concepts pertinent to the research, and visualise connections between them (Luft et al., 2022). In this study, Framing Theory and Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) inform the conceptual framework, which collectively explains how media representations influence audience interpretations and subsequent social responses.

According to ***Figure 1*** below, the framework comprises one independent variable and two dependent variables. The independent variable is Media Framing of Femicide, which encompasses the framing patterns and narrative techniques employed by mainstream media when reporting femicide cases. The dependent variables are Public Perception and

Participatory Development Responses. Public perception refers to how audiences interpret the causes of femicide, assign responsibility, develop attitudes towards victims, and understand gender inequalities. Participatory development responses refer to the actions undertaken by audiences in response to media coverage, including civic engagement, advocacy participation, support for policy reforms, and community action against gender-based violence.

The framework assumes that the manner in which femicide is framed in the media influences how audiences perceive the problem and subsequently shapes their willingness to participate in initiatives aimed at addressing violence against women. Consequently, the study seeks to establish whether media framing contributes to variations in public understanding of femicide and participatory responses within Nairobi and Kiambu Counties.

The framework further recognises that the relationship between media framing and participatory responses may be influenced by moderating variables such as education level, cultural beliefs, religious beliefs, gender, age, media exposure, media literacy, and socio-economic background. These factors shape the extent to which audiences accept, negotiate, or resist dominant media narratives.

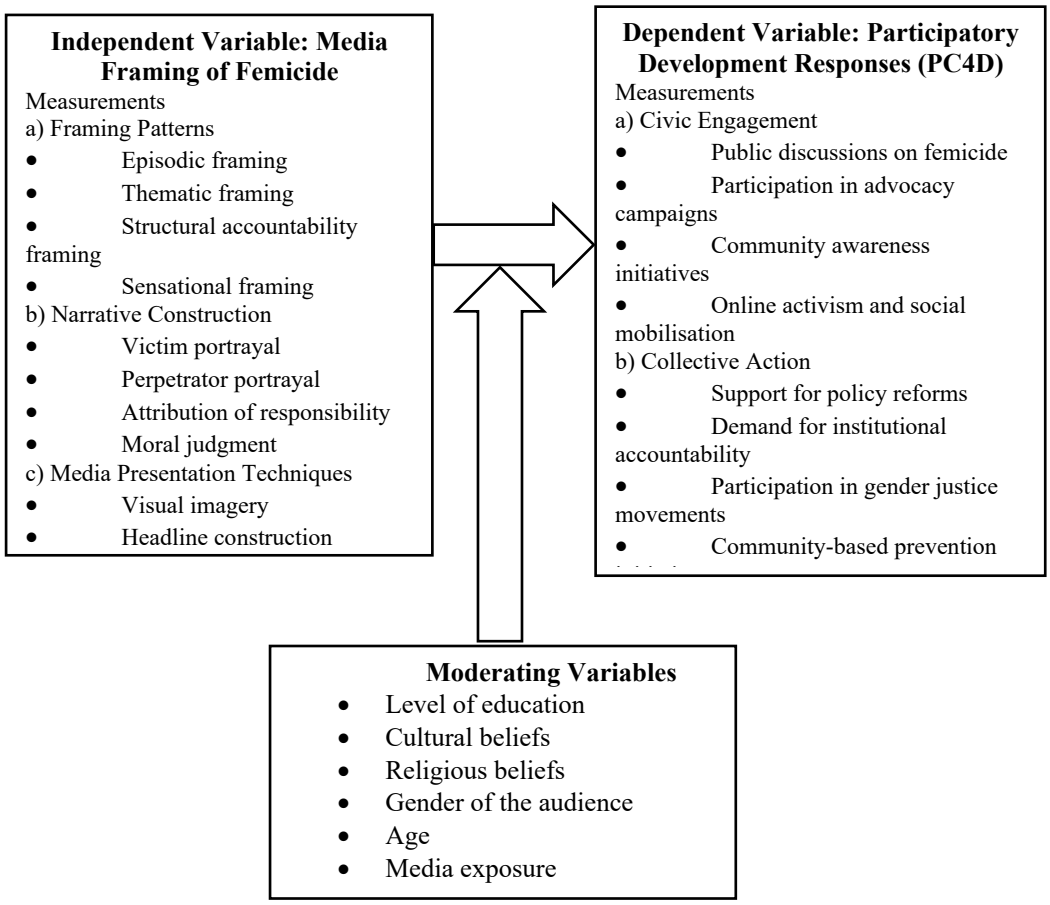


Figure 1 *Conceptual Framework*

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The chapter outlines the research methods adopted in the study, including the research design, philosophical foundations, population and sampling techniques, and sample size determination. It further describes the data collection methods employed, as well as the procedures for data analysis and integration. In addition, the chapter explains how reliability and validity were ensured and highlights the ethical considerations guiding the study. Overall, it provides a comprehensive account of the methodological approach used to examine media framing of femicide and its influence on audience perceptions in Kenya.

3.2. Research design

According to Takana (2023), research design refers to the general plan or the blueprint that guides the manner in which a study is carried out, with a consideration of the data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation methods to help answer the research questions effectively. This research adopted a quantitative research design to investigate the framing of femicide in the mainstream media and its impact on how people perceive it. The study was based on content analysis to measure patterns, themes, and frames in the coverage of femicide by mainstream media in a systematic way, whereas the survey entailed the gathering of numerical items related to perceptions of the audience. These approaches allow the research to have both strong and quantifiable results of the media content and the reactions of the people (Takona, 2023). By running both strands simultaneously, it is possible to collect data effectively, ensure methodological rigour and offer a strong basis for the statistical analysis to establish the connection between media framing and popular perception.

The study used a quantitative descriptive cross sectional research design. When a study aims to measure variables objectively, identify patterns among variables or test relationships among variables, a quantitative approach is suitable (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In the field of Quantitative research, social phenomena can be translated into measurable constructs, and statistical techniques can be applied to understand the magnitude and direction of relationships between variables. The deployment of quantitative methods in this study seems appropriate, since “femicides” was operationally defined, media framings thereof were measurable, and audiences' perceptions and participatory development responses also were measurable and thus could be analysed statistically.

A descriptive cross-sectional method was chosen because it enables the study to gather data from a selected population at a particular time to describe and determine the nature of variables and their relationship in the study and requires no experimental control of the study environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The main advantage of the cross-sectional design in social research is that it is used to investigate relationships between variables as they occur in the population at a particular time. Hence, this design allowed the study to analyze the association between exposure to various framing patterns in the media and the audience's interpretation of femicide and level of intention to act in a participatory manner. The design also facilitated the use of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis to show relationships between media framing of an issue, public perception of the issue and participatory development responses.

Two quantitative data collection techniques were employed: quantitative content analysis of mainstream television broadcast news reports on femicide and structured questionnaires filled by adult television news viewers in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties. Since quantitative content analysis can be used to examine communication materials by systematically making them measurable, amenable to categorization, frequency and pattern, it is suitable to analyse the communication materials statistically (Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis was applied in this study to allow the study to objectively identify and measure dominant frames, narrative patterns, responsibility attribution, and tones used in TV coverage regarding femicide. The second strategy adopted was structured questionnaires to elicit audience perceptions and participatory responses. Structured questionnaires are appropriate for quantitative research as it ensures the use of fixed wording that allows for the collection of similar data from interviewees and helps the statistical analysis to establish relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This research employs a questionnaire that assessed the audience's interpretation of femicide, perception of causality and responsibility, critical consciousness and willingness to engage in civic actions against gender-based violence. With the two quantitative tools combined, the study was able to analyse media representations and audience interpretations, to obtain a complete profile of the relations between media representation and public perception in relation to participatory development answers about television.

Table 2

Overview of the Research Design and Integration Strategy

Research Strand	Methodology	Objective	Integrated Outcome
Quantitative	Content Analysis of News	Identify the frequency of episodic vs. thematic frames.	Correlation between frame frequency and public blame.
Quantitative	Audience Survey/Snowball	Analyse perceptions of causality and agency.	Rich quantifiable data on how viewers interpret media bias.
Integrated	Convergent Synthesis	Merge results to identify convergences or divergences.	A comprehensive understanding of the media-audience dialectic.

Note. The table below details the integration of the two strands of quantitative research that were used in this study: The use of content analysis of televised news and findings from the audience survey to meet the research objectives. The integrated outcome represents the fusion of media framing patterns and audience interpretations to gain a holistic picture of the relationship between the reporting of femicides on TV and audiences' perceptions.

The Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D) framework also justifies the research design. Since PC4D focuses on communication as the means of raising awareness and transforming society, the research design provided the opportunity to hear the voice of the audience in a way that cannot be reduced to mere survey checkboxes (Baú, 2025). While PC4D emphasises the dialogue conceptually, this study operationalised participation through measurable indicators of civic engagement. As Boermans et al. (2024) recommend for the effective design of a survey questionnaire, the study ensured the design was not only a technical decision but also ideological.

3.3 Population

Population is the general group of people or items that have certain attributes (or characteristics) of interest to the researcher and from whom the more specific subset may be narrowed. This study involved both a human population and a media-content population. These

included residents of Kiambu County and Nairobi City on the one hand and the mainstream TV news content in Kenya on the other.

The Kenya Population and Housing Census (2019) numbering of Kenya's citizens recorded 4,397,073 inhabitants within Nairobi City County as well as 2,417,735 inhabitants within Kiambu County, which totals 6,814,808 people (KNBS, 2019a). The numbers represent the total number of people in the area in which the audience for the study was included. They make no assumptions about the fact that every resident was eligible to participate, as eligibility was later limited by television-news exposure and age.

The second population included mainstream TV news reports from January 2022 to the end of December 2025 in Kenya. Television news was relevant because the media can serve as a medium that plays a role in conveying and analysing social issues. A study among Kenyan adults found that users consume both traditional and digital news, and that traditional mainstream media channels were still significant information sources (Tully, 2022). The population thus served as the general environment of the human conditions and media from which the target units for this study were drawn.

3.4 Target Population

The target population was the particular segment of the broader population having the characteristics desired for the objectives of the study. The audience part was made up of Nairobi city and Kiambu County residents aged 25-54 years who watched mainstream TV news. The age distributions from the 2019 census showed that Nairobi had about 1,928,916 persons and Kiambu had 1,003,254 persons aged between 25 and 54 years; this gave an age-defined target population of 2,932,170 persons (KNBS, 2019b). These included the demographic target population; actual eligibility further stipulated television-news exposure.

The Counties of Nairobi and Kiambu were targeted because of their high number of residents coupled with a documented relevance to the femicide problem. In 2024, Nairobi County recorded the highest number of reported femicide cases at 54, while Kiambu County recorded 29 cases, placing both counties among those with the highest reported numbers of femicide cases nationally (Technical Working Group on Gender-Based Violence Including Femicide, 2026). This provided a stronger substantive basis for their selection than choosing a neighbouring county solely because of geographic proximity. While some counties like

Murang'a have been grappling with high levels of gender-based violence, Nairobi and Kiambu had the combined benefits of large population sizes and recorded cases of femicide.

Thus, with the purpose of recruiting those who meet the criteria of residence, age and television-exposure, a purposive sampling technique has been applied. The population of interest for the media was also a purposive sampling of reports over the period of January 2022 to December 2025 that especially mentioned the topic of 'femicide' or gender-related killing substantively in prime-time. This option is backed by studies which indicated that the understanding of femicide, responsibility and its social context in Kenya is experienced through media framing (Njoroge, 2025; Opiyo, 2026).

Table 3

Target Population for the Audience Component

County	Total county population, 2019	Population aged 25–54	Basis for inclusion
Nairobi City	4,397,073	1,928,916	Highest reported femicide cases in 2024 and large population
Kiambu	2,417,735	1,003,254	Among counties with high reported femicide cases and large population
Total	**6,814,808**	**2,932,170**	

3.3. Sampling Techniques

For the media content, the purposive sampling method was used in the selection of 67 news broadcasts for the specified 2022-2025 term. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. Purposive sampling was first used to select Nairobi and Kiambu counties based on media accessibility and demographic diversity, followed by stratified random sampling to categorize respondents by age and location. In this case, purposive sampling is suitable for this study because it is not interested in any news (Robinson, 2024), but specifically in the news frames on femicide or intimate partner violence (IPV). The broadcasts are chosen according to their relevance to the research purpose, as priority was given to the parts that were significantly aired in the media or featured high-profile cases that evoked national discussions. This ensures comprehensive analyses of the sampling units with the highest chances of influencing how people think.

For the survey participants, the research employed a voluntary response sampling technique (self-selection sampling) to recruit approximately 150 participants. This non-probability sampling method involved inviting individuals to participate through an online survey link shared on social media platforms, with participation being entirely voluntary (Ting et al., 2025). The survey link was distributed through social networking platforms, including Facebook and WhatsApp, enabling broad and cost-effective access to individuals aged 25 years and above residing in Kenya. This sampling approach was appropriate because it facilitated the collection of data from a diverse population within a relatively short period while allowing respondents to participate anonymously and at their convenience.

Given that femicide and gender-based violence remain highly sensitive topics in Kenya, voluntary participation through an anonymous online survey was expected to encourage more honest and candid responses by reducing fears of judgement, stigma, or social desirability bias (Chenane & Hammond, 2021). Although voluntary response sampling was susceptible to self-selection bias and limited the generalisability of the findings, it was considered suitable for this exploratory study due to its practicality, accessibility, and ability to reach a geographically dispersed population through widely used social media platforms.

3.4. Sample Size

Sample size determination in this study was a delicate balance between statistical strength and depth of the survey research (Guthrie & Abeysekera, 2006). For the media content component, while the initial methodological threshold was established at a minimum of 50 prime-time news broadcasts to ensure longitudinal representativeness, the final comprehensive census captured and analyzed a realized sample of N = 67 televised news reports broadcast between January 2022 and December 2025. This sample is useful as it is like a narrow-angle census of high-impact reporting, and one can critically analyse the patterns of framing across time.

For the audience perception survey, the sample size of N = 150 respondents was determined using statistical parameters appropriate for correlational and regression analyses. Utilizing Cochran's formula for sample size determination in unknown or large populations:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

- **n** = required sample size
- **Z** = standard normal deviation corresponding to the desired confidence level
- **p** = estimated proportion of the population possessing the characteristic of interest
- **(1-p)** = proportion not possessing the characteristic
- **e** = acceptable margin of error (level of precision)

Where Z is the critical value at a 95% confidence level (1.96), p is the estimated proportion of an attribute (assumed at 0.5 for maximum variability), and e is the acceptable margin of error (0.08). This calculation yields a baseline analytical requirement, which was fulfilled by the sample of 150 completed surveys, providing adequate statistical power to conduct Pearson correlation tests and multiple regressions without violating assumptions of normality. This warrants an adequate level of quantitative reliability as well as an abundance of primary responses (Monti et al., 2024). The selected sample size corresponded to comparable studies on gender-based violence and public opinion, which contributes to the high level of methodological validity and topicality of the study.

Table 4

Summary of Study Components, Sample Sizes, and Rationale.

Component	Target sample	Rationale
News Broadcasts	At least 50 segments	Longitudinal representation of key framing trends (2022–2025).
Audience Survey	150 participants	Sufficient for descriptive stats and qualitative meaning saturation.
Geographic Sites	2 Counties	Comparative data between the Nairobi metropolitan and the Kiambu peri-urban.

Note: Sample sizes and study components were determined based on the research objectives and methodological requirements

The sampling method was flexible enough to enable the study to repeat the participant recruitment process until the information acquired became redundant and no additional information was obtained, to guarantee that the results captured the diversity of public opinion (Negrin et al., 2022). Considerations like the heterogeneity of the Nairobi and Kiambu population and the sensitivity of the topic necessitated a larger sample than a more neutral study, but the goal was achieving theoretical saturation, not exhaustive statistical representation.

3.5. Reliability

Reliability in research is the accuracy and consistency of measurements, and how often the process of research may be repeated to give the same results (Trabelsi et al., 2024). Reliability in this study was addressed through certain procedures concerning the content analysis as well as the survey instrument.

To ensure the reliability of the quantitative content analysis, intercoder reliability was formally established. A second independent coder, trained in the coding protocol, independently coded a random subsample of 15% (n = 10) of the television news segments. Cohen's Kappa coefficient (k) was calculated to measure intercoder agreement across categorical variables (framing typology, tone, and responsibility attribution). A score of $k = 0.85$ was achieved, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 in quantitative media research (Trabelsi et al., 2024), thereby confirming high coding reliability and consistency.

3.6. Validity

Validity is the degree to which a research instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, and yields results that reflect the actual nature of what that research is studying (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In other words, validity ensures the research instruments accurately measure what they are designed to measure and that the results mirror the social reality of femicide in Kenya. In this study, validity needs to be considered in terms of the integration of data and on a single strand because it is multidimensional (Grand-Guillaume-Perrenoud et al., 2023). The study used the triangulation approach to ensure validity. Methodological validation is the cross-verification to determine whether the "episodic frames" identified in the media content are mirrored in the "individualistic perceptions" of the audience. If the two data sources converge, the validity of the findings is significantly enhanced.

Lastly, the strategy of survey validation was content validity (Expert Review). The draft questionnaire was submitted to academic supervisors and media communication experts to

evaluate the clarity, relevance, and representativeness of each item relative to the research objectives. Modifications were made based on their feedback. In addition, the study conducted a pilot study with a small demographic subset (n = 15) of television viewers matching the target characteristics in a neutral location outside the primary study site. The pilot data were tested for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding an overall coefficient of alpha = 0.82, confirming that the instrument reliably measured public perception and attribution constructs.

3.7. Data Collection Procedures

The study utilised two main sources of data collection: a systematic content analysis and a structured audience survey to provide a thorough representation of the interrelationship that exists between media production and audience reception. These procedures are executed simultaneously to ease triangulation.

The theoretical frameworks of Entman (1993) and Iyengar (1991) were considered in the deductive coding sheet of the content analysis. The sampled broadcasts were analysed to find both manifest content (direct statements and graphics) as well as latent content (implicit biases, tone, visual metaphors). Key variables covered in the coding sheet were framing typology (episodic or thematic), narrative actors (who are free to speak and whose voices are marginalised), responsibility attribution (victim or systemic factors), and sensationalism (use of dramatic background music, graphic re-enactments and romanticised headlines) (see Appendix 1).

The structured survey questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions and Likert scale questions. The survey structure was split into three parts: demographics and media consumption, perception, attribution, critical consciousness, and agency (see Appendix 3). Perceptions of causality (individual vs systemic), attribution of responsibility, moral judgement and intention to perform civic or participatory actions were measured in the questionnaire. Quantifiable response patterns that could be analysed statistically were generated using Likert scales. The online character of the survey, which was distributed via WhatsApp and Facebook, is especially efficient in Kenya, where 93% of the population is online, thus reaching as many people as possible and achieving as high a response rate as possible.

The questionnaire was shown as an anonymous online questionnaire in Google Forms, which was distributed via WhatsApp and Facebook (Chenane & Hammond, 2021) using voluntary response sampling. The first participants in the sample who were purposely identified

and invited were those who met the inclusion criteria (between 25 and 54), who were residents of Nairobi and Kiambu, and were regular viewers of prime-time news; they were then asked to share the survey link with all their contacts (Ting et al., 2025). Built-in screening questions were used to filter the responses to only qualified ones. With the rules of research ethics, the survey included an informed consent statement, which ensured voluntary participation, and no identifiable data was collected to guarantee confidentiality when discussing a sensitive issue like gender-based violence.

3.9.1 Study Site and Study Population

The study was undertaken in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties of Kenya. These counties were chosen due to their similarity in location, elements of contrast in the type of urban and peri-urban realities, being a target for mainstream media, and for their contextual significance in analysing the interpretation of femicide reporting on television. As the economic, administrative and communication hub, Nairobi City County receives multiple national media companies and is a main production and consumption centre for televised news content (County Government of Nairobi 2023). The county is very urbanised and has a high density of media institutions, making it a relevant context for exploring how audiences interpret and react to narratives presented on television on issues like femicide.

The dominance of Nairobi and mixed urban, peri-urban and rural settlement patterns in Kiambu County made it eligible to be included. Kiambu has had an increasing population from the wider Nairobi metropolitan area, which in turn has led to urbanization and population growth (County Government of Kiambu, 2023). These urban and peri-urban attributes create a suitable backdrop for exploring the question of whether those outside the central urban space have different understandings regarding the TV representations of femicide than Nairobi dwellers. In addition, both counties are highly exposed to the broadcast media and digital platforms, which makes them significant for the study of media influence on public perception (Media Council of Kenya, 2024).

The study population consisted of adult TV news consumers in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties who watch mainstream TV news and social issues reporting as regular TV news. The respondents were chosen because they consider the consumption of televised news information indispensable when evaluating its impact on perceptions about femicide, causal responsibility attribution, and participative reactions to combat gender-based violence.

3.9.2 Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis followed the logic of a convergent design, where the two datasets are analysed separately and then integrated at the interpretation stage. All quantitative data were analysed using SPSS (see Appendix 2).

Data collected via questionnaires were cleaned, coded, and analyzed using statistical software (such as SPSS) to generate descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) and inferential statistics (correlation coefficients). These summarise dominant media frames and audience perception patterns in Nairobi and Kiambu. Further analysis involved inferential statistics, particularly correlation analysis, to examine relationships between episodic vs thematic media framing and audience perceptions of causality, responsibility, and civic engagement (Shreffler & Huecker, 2021). In the final stage, results from both strands were merged using a joint display approach. This enabled direct comparison to identify convergence, divergence, or complementarity between media content and audience interpretations, thereby generating integrated conclusions about the influence of media framing on public understanding of femicide.

The research objectives guided the research data analysis, which was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. For the first objective, descriptive statistics, mainly frequencies and percentages, were used to identify and summarise the prevailing media frames around the reporting of femicide. To answer the second objective, the Pearson correlation and Chi-square tests were used to analyse the relationship between the media framing and public perception of femicide. Lastly, multiple regression analysis was performed to assess how much media framing accounts for participatory responses. These analytical techniques facilitated both descriptive and inferential interpretation of the data.

Media exposure and framing characteristics identified in the content analysis (independent variables, such as episodic vs. thematic dominance and sensationalist tone) were linked to audience responses (dependent variables, such as individual responsibility attribution, perpetrator empathy, and civic motivation) through matched survey self-reporting on media consumption habits. Specifically, respondents' reported exposure frequencies to prime-time bulletins were cross analysed against their perceptual scores using bivariate Pearson correlation coefficients (r) and multiple regression models to evaluate the direct predictive power of media framing styles on audience cognitive and participatory outcomes.

The study systematically triangulated analyzed data by ‘talking back’ to the specific research objectives, the empirical literature, and the core theoretical framework (Framing Theory and Participatory Communication for Development). This juxtaposition ensures that statistical findings are critically interpreted against existing academic discourse and the original research gaps

3.7.3. Ethical Consideration

Researching femicide and gender-based violence (GBV) in Kenya involves many ethical considerations because it touches on trauma, safety concerns, and inequalities. As such, this research adhered to the principle of ‘Do No Harm’, which is based on the national and international standards (Hammett et al., 2022). In this context, ‘Do No Harm’ goes beyond avoiding direct harm; it involves actively anticipating and mitigating potential risks such as re-traumatisation, emotional distress, stigma, or retaliation. Given the vulnerability of individuals affected by GBV, the study is carefully designed to minimise intrusive questioning, avoid triggering language, and ensure that participants are not placed in unsafe situations during or after data collection. The research adhered to ethical research principles by obtaining informed consent and ensuring that participants understood that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Additionally, the participants' confidentiality, privacy, and protection were paramount during the research process. Since violence against women, including femicide, is a sensitive topic, ethical precautions were taken to reduce the possibility of psychological distress, stigma, or unintentional disclosure of participants' information. When researching violence-related issues, the study must be aware of the importance of confidentiality, informed consent, safeguarding the participants, and providing suitable support, as there could be an ethical breach resulting in further harm to participants (Peterman et al., 2023). Thus, the study ensured anonymity via a process that de-identified the information and kept research data secure, as well as through the use of a private data collection procedure. This is because confidentiality is especially relevant to studies on gender-based violence (GBV), where the consequences of reporting and data management need to be considered to ensure that there is no reinforcement of harm or a violation of the dignity of affected persons, as brought up by Bringedal Houge (2023). While this study did not directly address media framing or life experiences of the survivors of this gender-based crime, it focused on the perceptions of the audience; the study acknowledged that the discussion of femicide was at times emotionally uncomfortable to the participants. Therefore, all participants were reminded of their right to be involved voluntarily

and given information about appropriate support services when needed. Furthermore, the study secured ethical clearance from the Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (SPU-ISERC), and scientific clearance from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). These procedures guaranteed adherence to accepted ethical guidelines in the conduct of human subject studies and gave added credibility and integrity to the study.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology that guided the study. It has described the quantitative descriptive cross-sectional research design, the target population, sampling techniques, sample size, reliability and validity procedures, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, data analysis plan, and ethical considerations. The chapter demonstrates that the selected methodological approach is appropriate for examining how mainstream media framing of femicide influences audience perceptions in Kenya. The next chapter will present and analyse the findings obtained from the content analysis and audience survey.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents empirical results, statistical analysis and data-driven interpretations of a quantitative study exploring televised media framing of femicide in Kenya and its subsequent impact on public perception and participatory development responses. Data used in this study were collected simultaneously using two primary data collection instruments: a systematic content analysis of mainstream television news segments aired between January 2022 and December 2025 (N = 67 coded cases), and a structured digital survey (audience perception) of adult viewers (25–54 years) in Kiambu and Nairobi Counties (N = 150 respondents).

The chapter presents findings systematically in accordance with the research protocol. It begins with the demographic and baseline consumption analysis of the respondents of the survey, followed by descriptive and cross-tabulated analysis of the data obtained from the media content analysis. The chapter then explains the descriptive findings of the audience perception variables, safety perception variables, and participatory metrics.

Finally, it presents inferential statistical analysis: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) and significance testing (p) to establish empirical relationships between media exposure, cognitive attributions, and civic motivation.

4.2. Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.2.1. Demographic Profile of Audience Survey Respondents

To put the results of the audience survey into perspective, the demographic profile of the respondents (N = 150) was analysed on four variables: county of residence, age bracket, highest level of academic education, and frequency of watching the prime-time news broadcast.

County of Residence

Geographic distribution shows that the Nairobi metropolitan area has a higher concentration of respondents (68.21%), with a significant percentage of respondents in the neighbouring peri-urban and urban areas of Kiambu County (29.80%) (See **Figure 2** below). The spatial distribution observed represents the central mainstream television viewing market in Kenya.

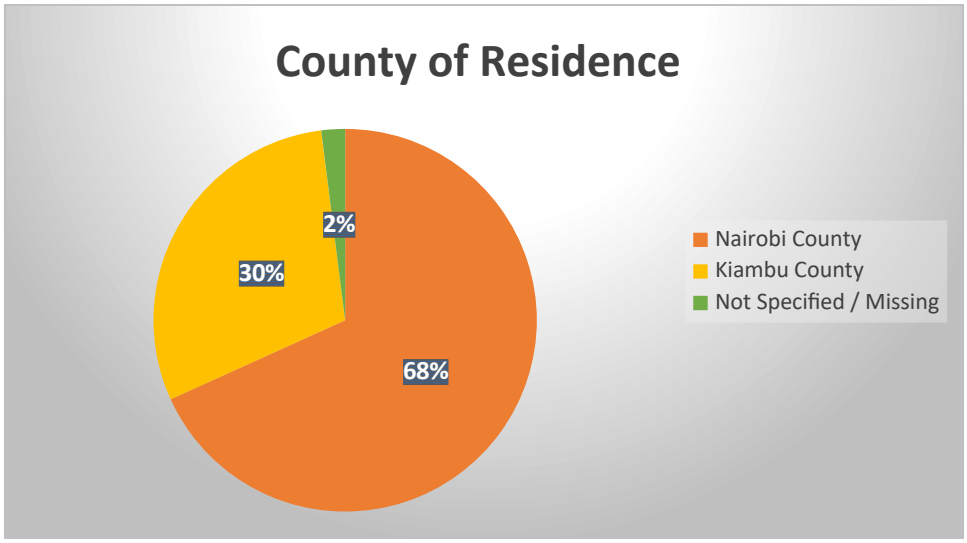


Figure 2 *Responsibility Attribution*

Age Bracket

The age distribution shows that a majority of the sample population was young to middle-aged adults, as 46.36% of respondents were aged 35-44, while 38.41% were aged 25-34 (See **Figure 3** below). The people are a working and informed populace.

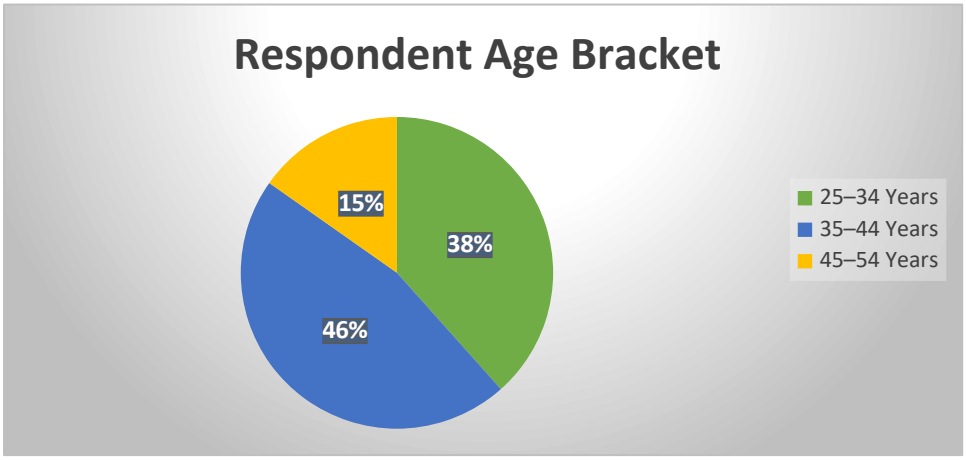


Figure 3 *Respondent Age Bracket*

Education Level

The educational attainment of the sample was also very high, with 38.41% having a Bachelor's degree, 35.10% a vocational or professional diploma, and 17.88% a Postgraduate qualification (See Figure 4 below). High literacy rates indicate an enhanced capacity for critical media analysis and the interpretation of complex societal issues.

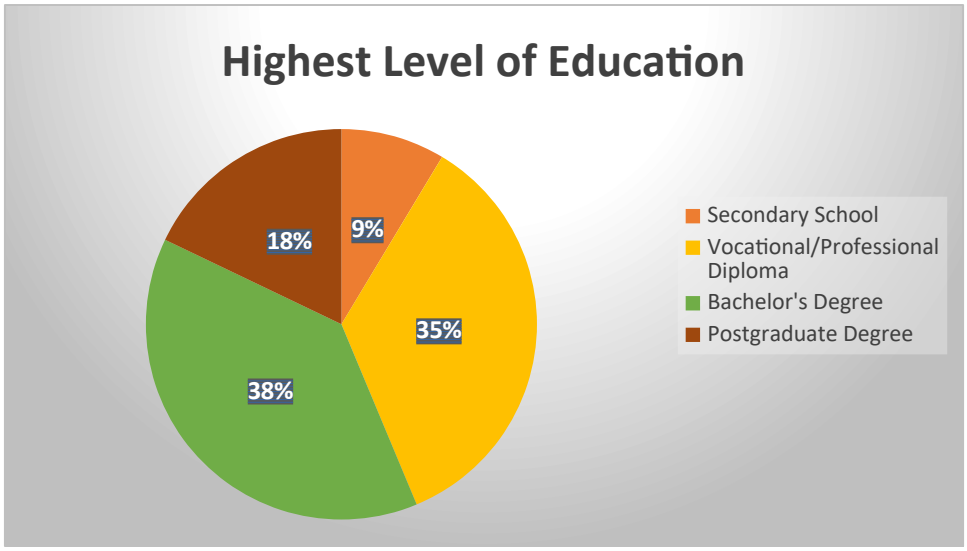


Figure 4 *Highest Education Level of Respondents*

Frequency of watching mainstream news

Media consumption is also heavy: 47.68% of the respondents indicated that they watch prime-time Swahili news on each day they watch TV, while another 37.09% indicated they watch it 3-4 times per week (See Figure 5 below). The high level of exposure suggests that the television programmes examined in this research can be seen as important information providers, which directly influence local public discourse and collective consciousness.

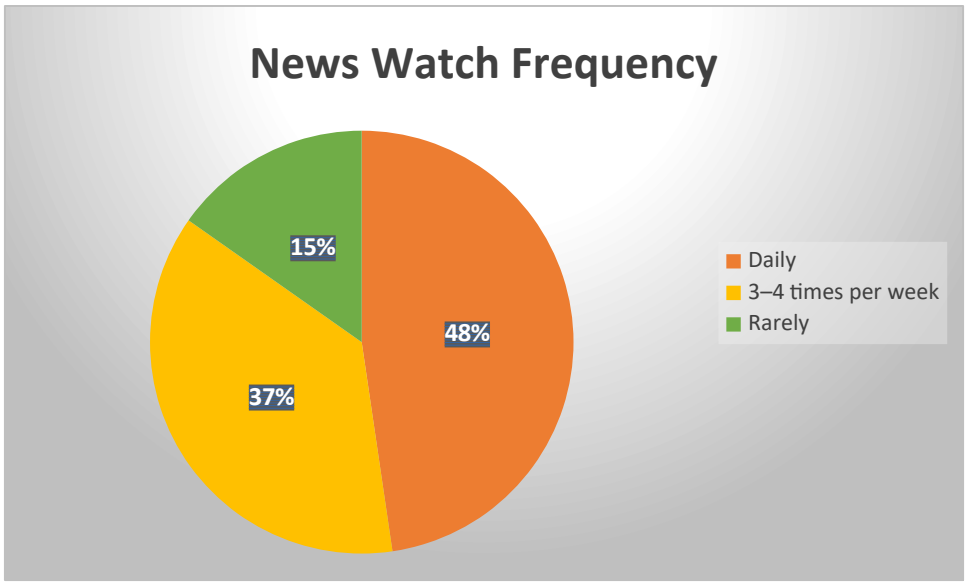


Figure 5 *Frequency of watching mainstream news*

4.2.2. Quantitative Content Analysis of Televised News Coverage

For content analysis, the research reviewed and coded a sample of 67 news segments representing prime-time televised coverage of femicide cases in Kenya using a deductive sheet.

The analysis focused on three main aspects of the media production: framing type (*episodic versus thematic*), attribution of responsibility (*individual versus systemic*) and presentation tone (*sensationalist versus dispassionate*).

The first dimension examined was framing typology, which distinguishes between episodic coverage, focused on specific, isolated criminal events and personal details, and thematic coverage, which contextualises violence within broader structural, institutional, and social trends. The data indicate a higher episodic framing because it accounted for 52 of 67 cases (77.61%), with thematic framing accounting for only 15 cases (22.39%) (See Figure 6 below).

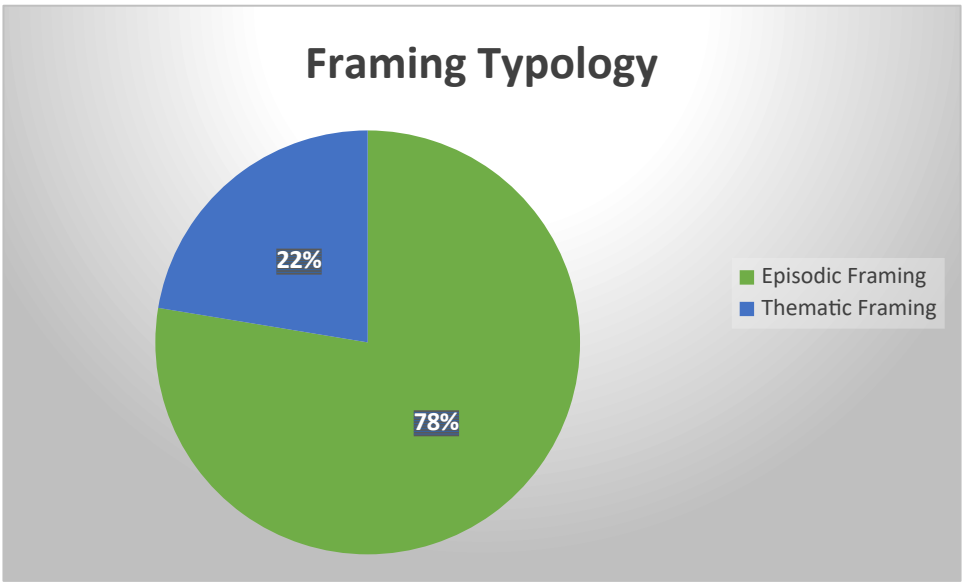


Figure 6 *Prominent Femicide Framing Typology in Mainstream Media*

This episodic focus corresponds to a high rate of individual responsibility attribution, where 74.63% of responsibility is attributed to the immediate actors (perpetrator or victim) or to the lifestyle choices of the victim (See Figure 7 below). Only 23.88% of the cases attributed responsibility to failures in the system and society. These uncommon attributions of responsibility to systemic failures link these acts of violence to patriarchy, to a lack of justice, to police complicity or to the absence of the state.

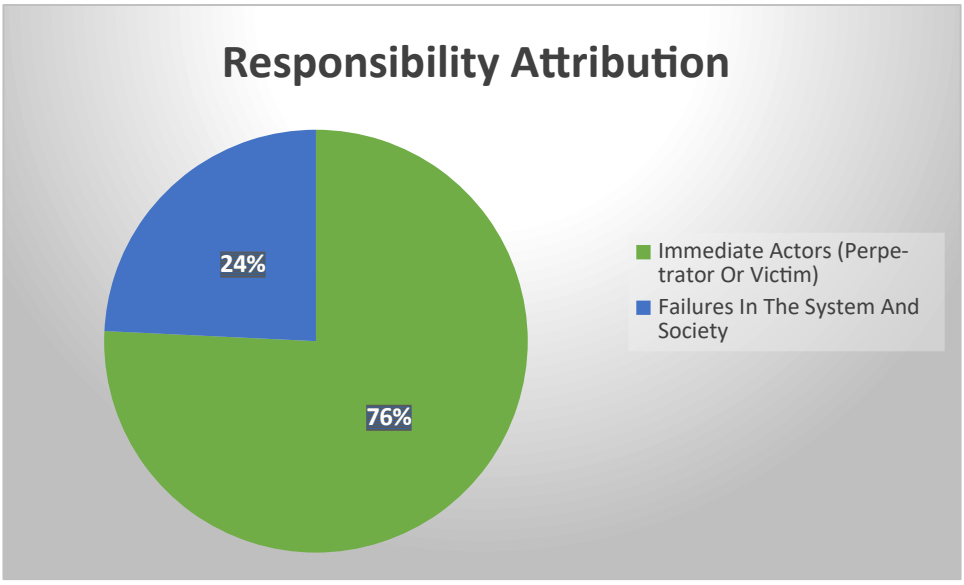


Figure 7 *Prominent Femicide Framing Typology in Mainstream Media*

In addition, the visual and auditory style of these broadcasts is extremely sensational (77.61%), with dramatic background music playing, graphic re-enactments, and on-screen lower-third headlines like ‘Love Gone Sour’ and ‘Phone Feud Turns Fatal’.

Table 5: Quantitative Content Analysis of Televised News Coverage

Case Name / Victim	Broadcast Date	Segment Duration	Framing Type	Responsibility	Tone	On-Screen Headline
Sheila Lumumba	17/04/2022	01:11	Episodic	Individual	Sensational	Murdered woman buried
19-Year-Old (Thome)	02/03/2024	02:51	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Thome apartment murder
Starlet Wahu	06/01/2024	06:01	Episodic	Individual	Sensational	Secrets of Starlet's Killer
Lilian Achieng'	02/11/2024	01:12	Thematic	Systemic	Sensational	The femicide crisis
Rita Waeni	25/01/2024	03:00	Episodic	Systemic	Sensational	Rita Waeni murder case
Seth Nyakio	15/12/2025	02:33	Thematic	Individual	Sensational	Seth Nyakio Murder Case

Rebecca Cheptegei	05/09/2024	02:30	Episodic	Systemic	Sensational	Ugandan athlete succumbs
Ivy Wangeci	03/03/2023	03:35	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Ivy Wangeci's killer speaks
Naomi Wangare	23/03/2025	00:53	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Embakasi Murder Probe
Susan Nabwire	24/08/2025	03:54	Episodic	Individual	Sensational	Phone Feud Turns Fatal
Virginia Wayua	29/10/2025	02:15	Thematic	Systemic	Dispassionate	Machakos Suspect Arrested
Rose Muthoni	12/09/2025	08:39	Episodic	Individual	Sensational	Inside Rose Muthoni Murder
Purity Wangechi	10/06/2025	01:10	Thematic	Mixed	Dispassionate	Emotions run high in court

Note. The table presents selected televised femicide news segments analysed according to framing type, responsibility attribution, tone, and headline construction. The coding categories were used to assess narrative patterns and media representation of femicide coverage.

News program durations varied considerably, with a greater proportion of airtime allocated to high-profile, sensationalised stories. The reporting, for instance, of the murder of Naomi Chebet was for 9 minutes and 12 seconds, whereas Rose Muthoni's murder in Juja got 8 minutes and 39 seconds. Likewise, in the South B Airbnb case of Starlet Wahu, it was covered in a detailed segment running for 6 minutes and 1 second (see *Table 4* above).

Conversely, the cases that had more of a concept or theme, or did not have sensational interpersonal components, were accorded very brief and compressed airtime. For example, Belinda Wekesa's case in Juja was only covered for 47 seconds, while Margaret Wanduma Maina's case in Kirinyaga received only 44 seconds. Regarding the primary actors highlighted, the coverage focused heavily on the suspects, such as John Matara or Naftali Kinuthia, or on the graphic details of the victims' bodies. Occasionally, key institutional state actors, like detectives or police commanders, appeared, but mostly as neutral authorities confirming arrests rather than addressing or highlighting systemic failure. The primary sources interviewed in these news segments were police spokespersons, government pathologists and the immediate family members or neighbours. Interviews with legal experts, gender-based violence advocates or civil society representatives were very limited and occurred in less than 25% of the analysed broadcasts.

4.2.3. Cross-Tabulation of Media Content Variables

For an in-depth comprehension of the relationship between framing typology, responsibility attribution, and tone in televised coverage, cross-tabulations were carried out on the content analysis data (N = 67).

Table 6

Cross-Tabulation of Media Content Variables

Framing Typology	Individual Responsibility	Systemic Responsibility	Mixed Responsibility	Total Coded Segments
Episodic Frame	40 (76.92%)	12 (23.08%)	0 (0.00%)	52 (100.00%)
Thematic Frame	10 (66.67%)	4 (26.67%)	1 (6.67%)	15 (100.00%)
Total	50	16	1	67

Note. For the coded femicide news segments, the cross-tabulation between framing typology and responsibility attribution is provided. Values indicate frequencies (in % in parentheses) and correspond to the distribution of responsibility assignment within each framing category.

According to the cross-tabulation, a strong connection between episodic framing and individual responsibility attribution. For instance, for an episodic segment, 76.92% (n = 40) blamed the crime on the actions, lifestyles, or personal disputes of the individuals involved, rather than looking at broader social factors.

Interestingly, even when thematic framing was employed, 66.67% of those segments (n = 10) still focused on individual responsibility (see *Table 5* above). This demonstrates that even when televised media attempts to cover broader trends, the narrative structure is frequently limited to individual acts of action and personal responsibility and does not highlight the need to address systemic inequalities.

Table 7

Relationship between Framing Typology and Tone

Framing Typology	**Dispassionate Tone**	**Sensationalist Tone**	**Total Coded Segments**
Episodic Frame	4 (7.69%)	48 (92.31%)	52 (100.00%)
Thematic Frame	11 (73.33%)	4 (26.67%)	15 (100.00%)
Total	15	52	67

Note. The table shows the correlation between the news framing typology and tone of coded femicide news segments on television. Values represent absolute frequencies of observed dispassionate and sensationalist tones, while parenthetical figures indicate their respective percentages within each framing category. The relationship between framing typology and tone shows a very clear division in how stories are presented (see *Table 6* above). A remarkable 92.31% (n = 48) of the episodic news segments adopted a very sensationalist tone, which was characterised by dramatic background music, graphic descriptions of injuries, and speculative headlines.

By contrast, 73.33% (n = 11) of thematic segments were delivered dispassionately, objectively and analytically. This distinct correlation suggests a system in the making of television news: episodic news structures tend to lead to sensationalist presentation styles, and thematic news frames to more sober, analytical news.

4.2.4. Survey Frequencies and Percentage Distributions of Audience Perception

The structured audience survey (N = 150) examined the degree to which the public's understanding of femicide is influenced by televised news frames. Participants rated themselves on a 5-point Likert scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree*) in response to six statements.

Table 8

Survey Frequencies and Percentage Distributions of Audience Perception

Likert Scale Survey Item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean (μ)	SD(σ)
Q1: Femicide cases are primarily isolated 'crimes of passion' resulting from individual relationship disputes.	3.97%	10.60%	5.96%	45.70 %	33.77%	**3.95**	1.09
Q2: The victims' personal lifestyle choices (eg, 'sponsor culture') significantly contribute to these violent outcomes.	5.96%	7.95%	12.58%	40.40 %	32.45%	**3.86**	1.14
Q3: The rise in femicide is a systemic failure of the Kenyan judicial and law enforcement systems.	4.64%	11.92%	22.52%	26.49 %	34.44%	**3.74**	1.19
Q4: Mainstream media's reporting often makes me feel that the victim is partially responsible for the incident.	19.21%	30.46%	20.53%	24.50 %	5.30%	**2.66**	1.19
Q5: The use of dramatic music or graphic re-enactments in news segments makes the violence seem more like "entertainment" than a social crisis.	11.26%	33.77%	14.57%	22.52 %	17.88%	**3.02**	1.32
Q6: I feel more	19.21%	23.84%	11.26%	25.83	19.21%	**3.02**	1.44

sympathetic toward the perpetrator when the news highlights their personal struggles, such as unemployment or "heartbreak".		%

Note. The table shows the frequency distributions and percentage responses, as well as means (μ) and standard deviations (σ), for audience perceptions based on Likert-scale items. Percentages are outside each category of responses and can indicate the percentage of those that have selected each option; mean and standard deviation values are displayed and can give an overall indication of the general pattern of response and its diversity.

The descriptive statistics reveal a high level of individualised explanatory models within the general population. From the table above, 79.47% of respondents agree or strongly agree that femicide is an isolated 'crime of passion' which is related to personal relationship conflicts (Q1, \ Mean (μ) = 3.95) (see ***Table 7*** above).

Additionally, 72.85% (Mean (μ) = 3.86) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that the personal life choices of a victim, for instance, taking part in 'sponsor culture,' play a significant role in the violent outcomes (Q2) (see ***Table 7*** above). This suggests that individualist and victim-blaming attributions are common among viewers in Nairobi and Kiambu.

Meanwhile, the audience exhibits a high level of systemic awareness. The majority of the respondents (60.93 %) agree that the increase in femicide is a sign of systemic failures of the Kenyan judicial and law enforcement systems (Q3, \ Mean (μ) = 3.74). These are elements of a cognitive conflict: viewers are aware of the lack of state institutions, but they also believe that personal choices of the victim and the perpetrator are the immediate cause of femicide.

When asked about the effect of media presentation, 29.80% of respondents agree that the victim is somewhat responsible for the situation due to the way the news is presented (Q4: \ Mean (μ) = 2.66). Overall, the average score was lower, but it was clear that almost a third of the audience believes that victim blaming is actively encouraged by the media.

Moreover, 40.40% of viewers find the dramatic music and graphic recreations of real-life violence entertaining (Q5, \ Mean (μ) = 3.02). This suggests that sensationalist presentation techniques have a significant impact on audience engagement.

Finally, 45.04% agreed they were more sympathetic toward the perpetrator when news reports included details of personal problems, like unemployment or heartbreak (Q6, \ Mean (μ) = 3.02) (see ***Table 7*** above). This high rate of empathy for perpetrators points to the powerful role of episodic, personalised narratives in shifting moral judgment away from the crime.

4.2.5. Safety Perceptions and Interpersonal Discussion Frequencies

In addition to cognitive attributions, the survey also assessed how televised news coverage affects viewers' personal feelings on the safety of women and how often they discuss femicide with others.

Safety Perception Post-Exposure

The data indicates that the viewer's perception of the safety of women is significantly influenced by the televised reports of femicide. After watching reports on femicide, a combined 77.48% of respondents feel women are not safe: 54.97% feel 'Unsafe' and 22.52% 'Extremely Unsafe' about the safety of women in Kenya (see **Figure 8** below). The high level of fear illustrates the potential of sensationalist and episodic media to breed ongoing fear and vulnerability among viewers.

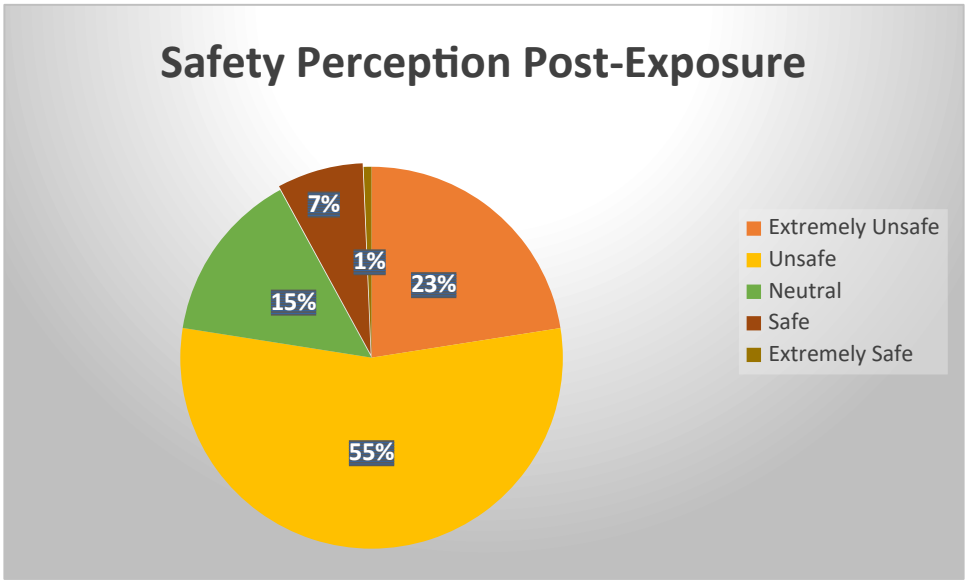


Figure 8 *Safety Perception Post-Exposure*

Interpersonal Discussion Frequency

According to the data, intrapersonal communication is very active among the target audience. The data shows that 80% of the participants talk about the causes of femicide with

family members or peers after watching news segments, either 'Occasionally' (49.67%) or 'Frequently' (31.13%) (See **Figure 9** below). This high level of discussion represents a valuable opportunity for community-led dialogue and the development of collective awareness.

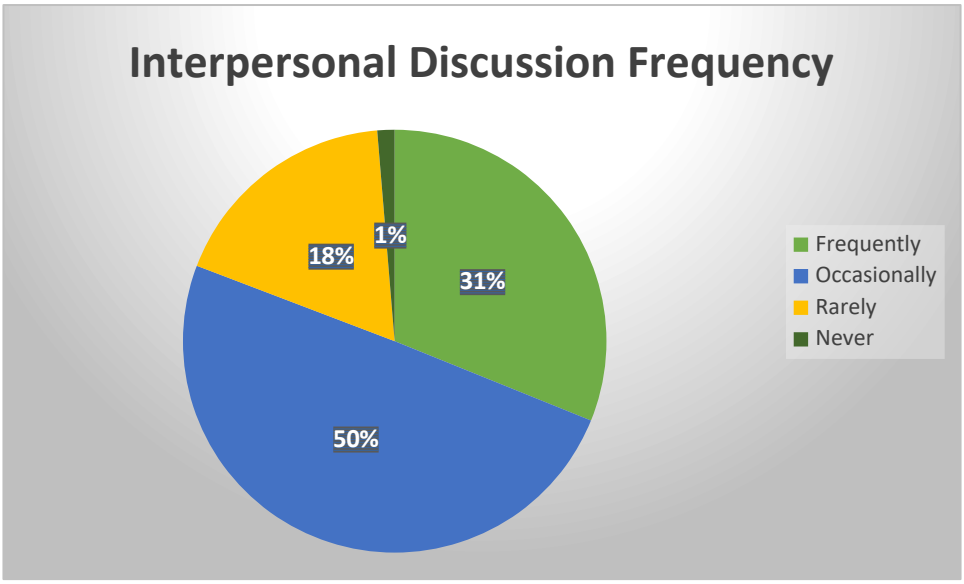


Figure 9 *Interpersonal Discussion Frequency*

4.2.6. Participatory Motivation, Barriers, and Preferred Media Interventions

To evaluate the potential of current media coverage in influencing social change and development in combating femicide, the survey surveyed what actions viewers felt motivated to take, the barriers preventing them from participating, and the reporting changes they believed would be most effective in encouraging public action.

Participatory Motivation (Multiple Responses)

The survey examined the specific actions respondents were motivated to take following exposure to news coverage on femicide. In the provided options, most respondents (60.93%) felt motivated to educate others in their social circle about gender equality as a direct consequence of watching news reports on femicide (see **Figure 10** below). In addition, the data indicate that 48.34% of respondents reported that they felt motivated to participate in digital activism, signing online petitions, digital petitions, or joining hashtag campaigns such as #EndFemicideKE, making it the second most popular action respondents could take in combating femicide after watching the news.

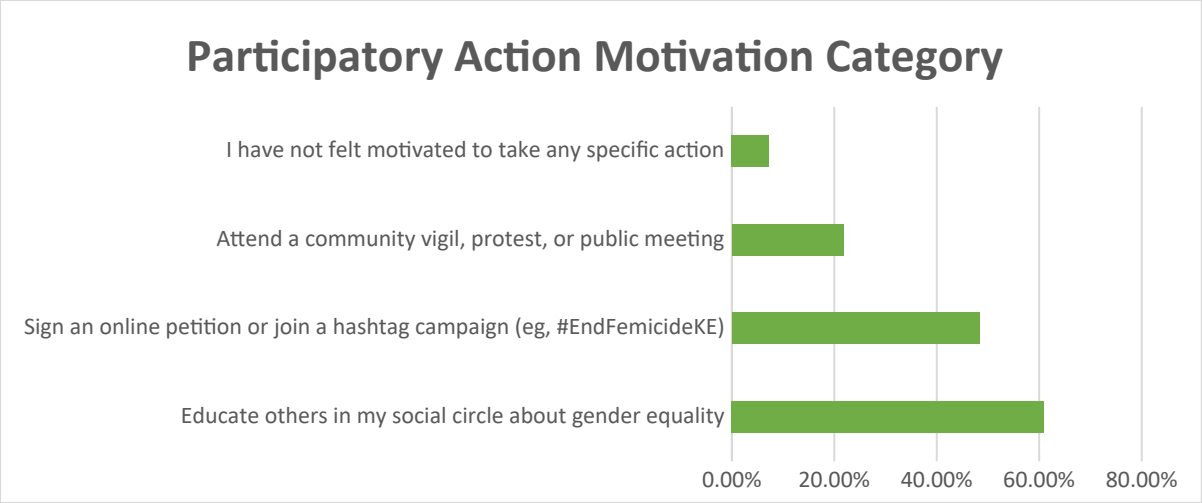


Figure 10 *Participatory Action Motivation Category*

However, only 21.85% of respondents feel motivated to participate in physical actions, such as attending community vigils, protests, or public meetings. This gap between digital engagement and physical mobilisation highlights critical barriers to collective action in the real world.

Barriers to Participation

In assessing why respondents might not participate in community activities or advocacy related to ending femicide, 41.22% of respondents pointed out that time and resources are the biggest obstacles. In addition, 18.92% reported that feeling unsafe or compromising personal privacy was a concern, which mirrors the high anxiety generated by televised violence (see **Figure 11** below).

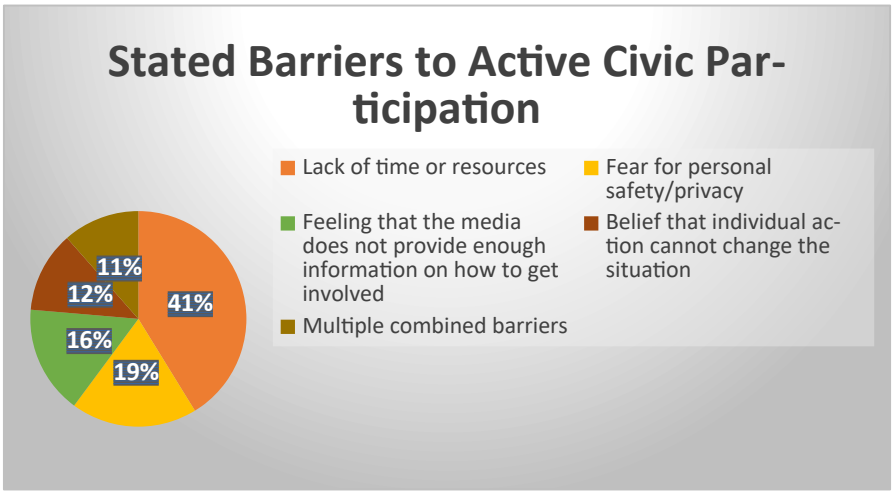


Figure 11 *Stated Barriers to Active Civic Participation*

Notably, 16.22% of respondents say that the media does not provide enough information about how to get involved. This reveals a major failure in media practice: televised news reports events but fails to provide the actionable information needed to support civic engagement and community-led solutions.

Preferred Media Intervention

In response to these shortcomings, respondents suggested several specific changes they would like to see in the way the TV media covers femicide. In the provided options, most respondents (38.67%) selected adding more interviews with gender advocates and more survivors than with police spokespersons (see **Figure 12** below). In addition, 37.33% of respondents suggested that the media should shift the focus of news coverage from individual crime details to broader systemic, social and patriarchal causes.

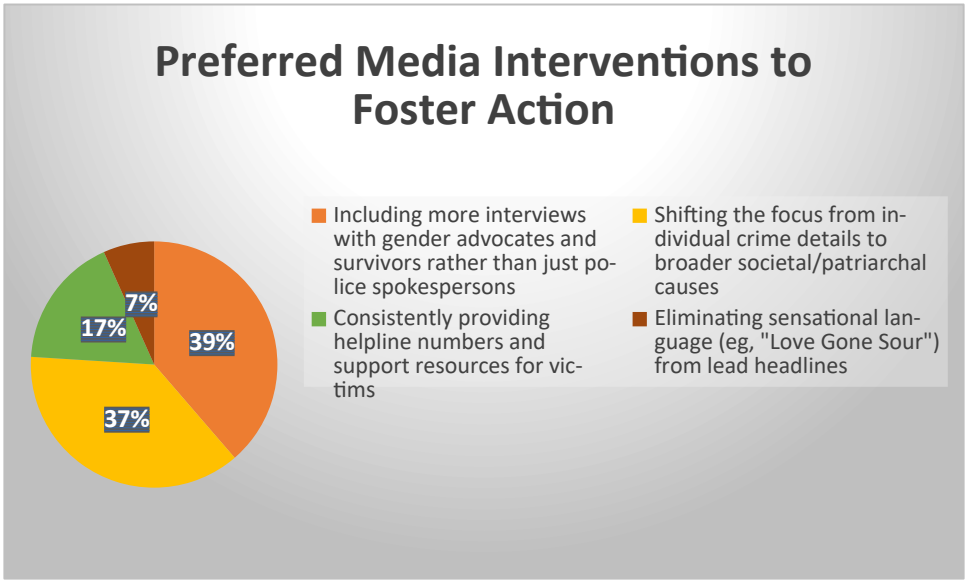


Figure 12 *Preferred Media Interventions to Foster Action*

Additionally, 17.33% of respondents want to see helpline numbers and support resources consistently included in news segments. These preferences demonstrate that the public prefers more sensitive, informative, and structurally focused reporting on femicide.

4.2.7. Inferential Statistical Analyses and Correlation Coefficients

The study conducted Pearson product-moment correlation analyses (r) to examine the statistical relationships between exposure to televised femicide reports, public perceptions, and emotional reactions.

Table 9

Inferential Statistical Analyses and Correlation Coefficients

Correlation Variable Pair	Pearson Coefficient (r)	Statistical Significance (p)
Watch Frequency\times Safety Perception	-0.067	0.411
Watch Frequency\times Discussion Frequency	-0.04	0.625
Q4 (Victim Blame Perception)\times Safety Perception	-0.044	0.596
Q5 (Sensational Tone)\times Q6 (Perpetrator Sympathy)	0.228	0.005
Q1 (Passion Crime View)\times Q2 (Sponsor Culture View)	0.447	0
Q3 (Systemic Failure View)\times Q4 (Victim Blame Perception)	0.001	0.992

Note. The table contains Pearson correlation (r) values and the significance (p) for the relationships between media exposure and the audience's perception and the participatory response indicators. Relationships are represented by positive and negative coefficients, and p-values indicate statistical significance (at the 0.05 level).

The analysis revealed that the correlation between the frequency of watching the news and perceptions of the safety of women was not statistically significant ($r = -0.067$, $p = 0.411$). This suggests that concerns about women's safety in Kenya remain high across the population irrespective of how often respondents watch prime time television reporting issues such as femicide.

Similarly, there was no significant correlation between discussing root causes of femicide and the frequency of watching the news ($r = -0.040$, $p = 0.625$). This observation reveals that just watching mainstream media reports on femicide does not trigger interpersonal discussions on the subject; instead, the conversations are motivated by other factors, including the gravity of individual cases, a personal concern or the social status of the victim or perpetrator.

Importantly, the result of this analysis showed a statistically significant positive correlation between the perceived use of dramatic music or re-enactments (Q5) and feelings of

sympathy for the perpetrator (Q6) ($r = 0.228$, $p = 0.005$). This significant relationship suggests that sensationalist presentation techniques can act as cognitive distractors. These techniques of framing real-world violence as dramatic entertainment reduce the viewers' critical defences and make them feel empathy towards the aggressor if their problems, struggles or 'investments' are emphasised.

Moreover, there is a highly significant positive correlation between viewing femicide as an isolated "crime of passion" (Q1) and attributing blame to the victim's lifestyle choices (Q2) ($r = 0.4474$, $p < 0.001$). This strong relationship indicates that individualist attributions are cognitively connected. When mainstream media adopts episodic framing and reports news on femicide as an isolated personal dispute, it triggers victim-blaming attitudes among viewers.

4.3. Key findings

For the first research question on the most prevalent media frames and narrative patterns covering mainstream media reporting of femicide in the period January 2022-December 2025, the results of the content analysis indicated the use of episodic and sensationalist framing in television news coverage. The results revealed that 77.61% of all reports analysed followed episodic and sensationalist narratives, highlighting details and events of individual victims and perpetrators, and including speculative information, but not much on social and systemic issues related to femicide. Moreover, individual responsibility attribution was found to be the dominant source of the mainstream media texts (74.63%). This trend indicates that femicide often was framed as an individual interpersonal conflict and "crime of passion", but not as a matter of structural gender inequality, institutional inadequacies and gender-based violence. The findings thus suggest that mainstream television story based on individualised storytelling was the predominant framing pattern used in the Kenyan media to report and make sense of femicide, reflexively answering the first research question about the dominant framing pattern used in the Kenyan' mainstream television reports.

In addition, episodic framing is systemically associated with sensationalist reporting. Sensationalist language was used in a startling 92.31% of episodic news programs. On the other hand, 73.33% of reports that were thematically framed were objective and analytical. A significant majority of the respondents (79.47%) perceive femicide as an isolated personal conflict (Q1), and 72.85% feel the victims' lifestyle choices contribute considerably to these results (Q2). These results reveal the pervasive occurrence of individualistic and victim-blaming attitudes.

In relation to the second research question that aimed to assess the role of the mainstream media's framing patterns of the event on the perspectives and perceptions of the audience, the results of the audience survey showed that there were significant relationships between the mainstream media framing patterns and public perceptions of responsibility and blame of a femicide event. There was a strong positive correlation between perception of femicide as a “crime of passion” and responsibility for the victim's life ($r = 0.4474$, $p < 0.001$). This discovery indicates that episodic media framing, de-emphasising the structural reasons of femicide and focusing on the details of individuals and personal dispute of the victims, is linked to audience interpretation perceiving the shift in focus from structural to individual factors in cases of femicide. In addition, positive relationship with the use of sensationalist reporting techniques like some dramatic presentation styles and emphasis on the hardship or struggles of the perpetrators and increased empathy toward offenders ($r = 0.2247$, $p = 0.0059$). The results in this study suggest that specific story techniques in conventional TV news production can impact on the moral moralisation of the audience, thus affecting the understanding of who is responsible, who is the victim and who is the perpetrator. Thus, the results offer empirical evidence to respond to the second research question, showing that there is a significant association between the media framing patterns and the audience interpretations of causality, responsibility and moral answers on femicide.

Although 60.93% of respondents acknowledge systemic flaws in the law enforcement, executive and judicial systems (Q3), this systemic understanding does not supersede the individualist attributions produced by mainstream television’s episodic coverage of femicide. After watching the mainstream news reports of femicide, a combined 77.48% of respondents felt unsafe or extremely unsafe, indicating a very high level of concern about the safety of women in Kenya. Regardless of how frequently people watched the mainstream news on femicide, this concern is still strong throughout the sample ($p = 0.3012$).

In the case of the third research question, on how media reporting of femicide facilitates or hinders participatory development responses based on the principles of Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D), the findings showed that while media coverage had some success in raising public debate, there was a lack of success in moving from awareness into collective action. The findings from the survey indicated that after news reports, many respondents (80.80%) surveyed "talked about" femicide "occasionally or frequently," suggesting that fatalities covered on TV news help to foster conversations about and awareness of femicide. The results, however, also show that the road to communication and participation

has yet to open to the largest groups, as there was very little interaction with the physical aspects of the mobilisation (21.85%), while signing online petitions was the most common form of participation (48.34%). The patterns indicate that there is room for talking about issues in mainstream media, but both dominant narratives and institutional conditions, such as safety, lack of action options, and inadequate knowledge about the issues, may limit more substantive forms of civic engagement. From the PC4D point of view, the results reveal that while communication can trigger awareness and subsequently dialogue, there is a need for more to spur empowering action, mobilisation of collective action and ongoing social change that empowers transformative responses against femicide.

4.4. Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive analysis of the two research datasets, demonstrating how television framing of femicide shapes public attitudes and responses across Nairobi and Kiambu Counties. The data shows that sensationalist and episodic framing, which places a strong emphasis on individual blame and victim blaming, dominates prime-time television news on mainstream channels.

The audience's sentiments reflect this individualised portrayal, with a substantial association between victim-blaming and episodic perceptions. Additionally, the data demonstrates how sensationalist tactics can inadvertently desensitise viewers and foster misplaced compassion for offenders, especially when the reports highlight their struggles, challenges, sense of betrayal or loss after ‘investment’.

Finally, the findings highlight a key disconnect in communication: while the audience is concerned and frequently discusses the issue, televised news fails to provide the structural focus and actionable information needed to support collective civic action.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter contextualizes the study's empirical findings, within the theoretical and conceptual frameworks established in the literature review in Chapter 2. It integrates the quantitative content analysis findings with the findings from the perception survey by the audience into the Framing Theory and Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D).

The discussion is structured systematically, starting with the assessment of key results for each research objective while linking it to the existing literature on media representations of femicide and gender-based violence. Next, it highlights the study's primary conclusions, addressing the extent to which the research questions have been answered.

Lastly, it proposes practical recommendations for media practitioners, regulators, and development communication stakeholders and suggests directions for future research.

5.2. Summary of Key Findings

5.2.1. Dominant Media Frames and Narrative Patterns in Femicide Coverage

The first objective of this study was to identify and categorise the predominant media frames and narratives framing mainstream television coverage of femicide. The study found that televised femicide reporting was predominantly characterised by episodic and sensational framing, with considerable emphasis placed on individual actors rather than broader structural factors. This suggests that mainstream television coverage frequently presents femicide as isolated criminal events rather than as manifestations of wider gender, social, and institutional inequalities. These results are consistent with Robert Entman's (1993) Framing Theory, which contends that the media choose certain facts while omitting others in order to influence the audience's opinions. By emphasising episodic, event-based coverage, televised news often characterises femicide as an isolated criminal episode rather than a systematic human rights concern.

The mainstream media uses sensationalised language extensively, characterised by sensational phrases such as 'Love Gone Sour' and 'Phone Feud Turns Fatal'. The Media Council of Kenya (2024) has criticised this packaging of violence for sensationalising severe crimes, reducing complicated systemic concerns to spectacular human disputes. The study's revelation of highly episodic and sensationalised reporting patterns in the mainstream media

aligns with earlier studies on gender-based violence in Kenya. This can be seen in the case of print media, where a study by Ng'ang'a (2021) and Wasuna (2019) shows that the print media also tends to individualise femicide, portraying its victims' lives and producing ‘sponsor culture’ narratives.

Focusing specifically on broadcast news reveals a heightened dynamic: sensationalist presentation techniques in television systematically reinforce episodic framing. The findings further indicated a strong relationship between episodic and sensational reporting approaches, suggesting that dramatic presentation styles reinforce individualised interpretations of femicide and limit attention to systemic explanations. This implies that media companies present femicide as dramatic entertainment due to the commercial needs of television news, which prioritise high viewership and stunning graphics. By concealing the larger patriarchal norms, court delays, and law enforcement shortcomings that let these crimes persist, this strategy downplays the systemic aspect of the violence.

5.2.2. Influence of Framing Patterns on Audience Perceptions

The study’s second objective entailed examining how the mainstream media’s televised framing patterns of femicide in the news affect the audience's perceptions of the cause and responsibility for femicide. The results showed that individual-level explanations dominated the audience's understanding of femicide; many reported connecting individuals rather than structural circumstances to audience conceptions of femicide. This suggests that dominant media representations can influence audience responsibility perceptions and gender-based violence cause perceptions.

The episodic framing and the individual interpretation of femicide are indicated by the relationship between audience perceptions, suggesting that episodic framing fostered individualised interpretations of femicide, which supports the argument that media frames influence audience responsibility for social problems. This strong correlation demonstrates how episodic televised framing can activate victim-blaming attitudes. This connection provides empirical support for Shanto Iyengar's (1991) attribution theory, which holds that episodic framing causes people to hold individuals accountable while thematic framing causes people to hold institutions accountable.

Viewers in Nairobi and Kiambu naturally place the blame on the decisions made by individual victims and offenders because mainstream television news rarely contextualises femicide within larger socioeconomic patterns. Although 60.93% of respondents concur that

systemic flaws in the legal system are responsible for the rise in femicide (Q3), this systemic knowledge does not take precedence over the individualist attributions motivated by daily news intake, creating a cognitive conflict.

Furthermore, the study revealed an inverse relationship between sensationalist presentation techniques and audience empathy, demonstrating that heightened sensationalism diminishes emotional engagement. The significant positive correlation ($r = 0.2247$, $p = 0.0059$) between the perceived use of dramatic music/re-enactments (Q5) and feelings of sympathy for the perpetrator (Q6) indicates that sensationalised coverage can desensitise viewers. By framing real-world violence as dramatic melodrama, television news can inadvertently lower viewers' critical barriers, fostering sympathy for perpetrators when their personal struggles are highlighted. This desensitisation limits the development of the critical consciousness needed to confront femicide and general violence against women.

5.2.3. Influence of Media Reporting on Participatory Development

The third objective of the study was to evaluate how mainstream media's televised coverage of femicide influences participatory development responses, under the tenets of Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D)

According to PC4D, communication is not limited to information transmission; it should enable horizontal dialogues and discussions that raise critical awareness (Freirean conscientization) and empower communities to take collective action in addressing social issues. The results indicated that the use of a television report raised awareness of and interpersonal discussion about femicide, but this awareness did not necessarily lead to any meaningful collective participation. This demonstrates a current shortcoming in television news' ability to inspire people to take part in society.

The results, however, show that there is a gap between awareness created through the reporting of femicides in the television media and the activation of the public. Media coverage may provoke discussion of femicide and raise awareness of the issue as a social matter, but this does not necessarily lead to empowerment of audiences to take collective action. Understandable through the framework of Participatory Communication for Development (PC4D), this limitation can be understood by the need to communicate effectively, which is achieved by the use of dialogue, empowerment and access to pathways of action. The results indicate, therefore, that the practices of television reporters in their reporting at the moment

might raise awareness and concern but do not provide enough support for the audience to be active players in combating cases of femicide and gender-based violence.

Summarily, the results indicate that the mainstream televised news functions primarily as a top-down, linear transmission system. It exposes the public to sensationalised and dramatised violence, which causes high anxiety and fear, but it fails to give the structural background, resource listings, and hotline information needed to facilitate community-led responses. Television news unintentionally desensitises the audience and restricts active civic engagement by omitting information on useful resources and emphasising sensationalised themes. Instead of encouraging the active community interaction that Freirean critical communication pedagogy envisions, this sensationalised episodic reporting upholds a passive audience paradigm.

5.3. Conclusion

The study concludes that mainstream television media framing is important in the creation of audience understandings of femicide and the subsequent attribution of responsibility for gender-based violence. The results indicated that the majority of television programs were episodic and sensationalistic, paying more attention to the details of the individual victim, perpetrator, interpersonal conflict and dramatic details than to the social, institutional and cultural conditions which are linked to femicide. This kind of framing can sometimes facilitate a person-centred perspective on femicide, which can distract from structural issues related to gender inequality, patriarchy, institutional gaps and defaults and in the prevention and justice arenas.

The study also shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between framing of the media and perceptions of audience regarding causation and responsibility. Episodic media formats were linked to individual level interpretations and victim-blaming attitudes and in some cases also to higher sympathy towards the perpetrator with the use of sensational presentation techniques. While a significant percentage of the respondents identified with the fact of systemic shortcomings that surfaced in the context of femicide, individual explanations continued to play a prominent role. Thus, the results confirmed the use of Framing Theory in the Kenyan television context by showing that there is a link between the dominant framing patterns and how the audience understands femicide.

Concerning Participatory Communication for Development, the study found that the TV coverage helps people to become aware of femicide, but not to easily participate in real

practice. There was an appetite to speak about femicide, and some degree of civic mobilisation online was observed by respondents, but somewhat less civic mobilisation that was more direct. The conclusions thus suggest a disconnect between awareness building and action in the masses. Combining Framing Theory and Participatory Communication for Development, the study illustrates that media communication can rather inhibit or enhance a critical consciousness and participatory responses, depending on how social problems are framed and if audiences are given the proper context and means to participate.

5.4. Recommendations

Given the study findings and conclusions, recommendations are provided to the media practitioners, the media editor, organisations working as regulators, civil society organisations and stakeholders involved in the field of development communication.

First, mainstream television outlets must adopt a more thematic, contextualized, and gender-sensitive framework when reporting on femicide. There should be news coverage of a specific case, and that information should include trustworthy information on social, cultural, institutional and gender aspects regarding femicide. This would allow the viewers to view the topic of femicide not only as some individual cases of crime but as a broader social and development issue.

Second, journalists and editors should reduce language and presentation techniques that convey sensationalism and reduce violent events to romance, and language that can implicitly blame a victim, through their descriptions. Reporting instead should focus on perpetrator accountability, institutional responsibility, preventive measures and structural aspects that may contribute to Gender Based violence. A professionalization of reporting in these areas could encourage a greater public understanding and less dissemination of damaging stereotypes.

Thirdly, the media should include participatory communication elements in the reporting of femicide. Reporting avenues for citizens to engage in: programmes should showcase relevant institutions dealing with gender-based violence, community initiatives, systematic platforms for advocacy and support services to audiences through television coverage, making practical information available to audiences. Public knowledge of such information can help fill the discrepancy found in this study between public knowledge and substantive civic engagement.

Fourth, the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) and partner regulatory bodies must expand existing capacity-building initiatives and institutional guidelines to rigorously enforce gender-sensitive reporting standards. Awareness of how to frame a theme, how to sensitively represent victims, how not to tell a victim-blaming narrative, how to use visual and dramatic elements responsibly, and the developmental function of journalism in fostering public awareness and holding parties responsible should be emphasized.

Finally, the actors in the field of development communication – those working in civil society and media institutions – need to work in more concerted fashion with regard to designing communication activities which inspire dialogue, critical consciousness and collective action. This collaboration would go beyond the "information giving" role of television, and would offer room for the audience to engage in talk and action related to femicide and gender violence. In this regard, the study offers empirical support from the Kenyan broadcast landscape demonstrating how combining the framework of framing with participatory communication can be used to create more socially committed uses of media.

5.5. Recommendations for Further Studies

Despite the evidence presented in this study about media framing, audience perceptions, and participatory responses to femicide, there are opportunities for future research because of the geographical, methodological, and media limitations. Further research is needed to broaden the scope of the current study to other populations, communication contexts, geographical locations and research configurations to gain a more in-depth understanding of the media – response to femicide nexus.

Considering the findings and limitations of the present research, the following can be proposed for future studies:

- Comparative rural/peri-urban/urban studies: Future studies could compare how audiences interpret the broadcasting of stories about femicides in rural, peri-urban and urban contexts. The selected Counties in the present study comprised of Nairobi and Kiambu Counties, which had predominantly urban and peri-urban settings. Comparative studies could identify if cultural values, social institutions, media consumption or local experiences affect audience perceptions of media frames and therefore the responsibility which they give to the offenders.
- Further studies on the participation of digital activism and collective action to respond to femicide should be taken into account. The present study found that discussion based

and online forms of participation by mothers exceeded physical mobilisation-based participation. Future research might focus on how platforms and manifestations like #EndFemicideKE relate to, revise, and/or subvert narrative being circulated in mainstream TV, as well as if the digital engagement degenerates into governmental or institutional activism.

- Femicide framing, especially through thematic, gender-sensitive, and participatory methods, could be subject to future studies exploring audience reactions, because it offers alternative approaches to further improve the television experience. Experimental or quasi-experimental studies might test audience reactions to episodic and thematic news reports, and compare them to analyze if different framing strategies impact responsibility attributions, critical awareness, attitudes to gender-based violence and, lastly, willingness to engage in collective actions.
- Longitudinal studies of media influence: The present study used cross-sectional design, future empirical studies should be longitudinal to determine if there are significant changes in people's attitudes, critical consciousness and participatory behaviour after repeated exposure to specific frames. These studies would yield more substantial evidence related to the sense of association between media representations and responses to femicide in the longer term.
- Comparative studies across media platforms: More studies should be conducted on comparative studies of television reporting with radio, newspaper, online news platform, podcasts and social media. This would allow us to get an idea if there are some differences between the use of particular communication platforms and how they are being used to frame texts and if this results in different interpretive and participatory patterns on the part of the audiences.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Media Content Analysis (Code Sheet)

Code Sheet

Section	Variable	Coding instructions/Categories
A. Metadata	Date & Duration	DD/MM/YYYY; Total minutes of the news segment.
	Lead Headline	Transcribe the primary on-screen "lower-third" text.
B. Framing	Framing Type	1. Episodic: Event-based, focused on individuals. 2. Thematic: Structural, focused on social/institutional trends.
	Responsibility	1. Individual: Blame on the victim/perpetrator "lifestyle". 2. Systemic: Blame on patriarchal culture/state failure.
	Tone	1. Sensationalist: Dramatic music, graphic re-enactments. 2. Dispassionate: Factual, analytical reporting.
C. Actors	Primary Actor	Who is the central figure? (Victim, Suspect, State Official).
	Main Source	Who is interviewed? (Police, Advocate, Relative, Legal Expert).
D. Treatment	Visual Cues	Use of graphic imagery, "romanticised" headlines (e.g., "Love Gone Sour").
	Call to Action	Does the report mention protests, policy changes, or resources? (Yes/No).

Completed Code Sheet

Sheila Lumumba	17th April, 2022	1 minute 11 seconds	Murdered woman buried.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/OXN_3aTYcuQ?si=R93eKr4u6x-4p0-Q	Yes
Police Probing the death of a 19 year old girl in Thome	2nd March, 2024	2 minutes 51 seconds	Thome apartment murder.	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Suspect	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/f2nKxMV7w1k?si=antxagl0zKb4xJF2	Yes
Starlet Wahu	6th Jan, 2024	6 minutes 01 second	Secrets of Starlet's Killer by NTV.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Woman who was also assaulted, Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/DOrKzBKun3k?si=7nB0UEYdGRKOUrhg	Yes
Lilian Achieng'	2nd November, 2024	1 minute 12 seconds	The femicide crisis	Thematic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Suspect	Investigators from Kasarani police station	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/l6A41OWn8mM?si=nVheWAVt8JY5oC03	Yes
Rita Waeni	25th Jan, 2024	3 minutes	Rita Waeni murder case by K24.	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Victim	Government Pathologist Johansen Oduor	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/LalALpDb8wM?si=XqoaIKZpbQUtk8dN	Yes

Seth Nyakio	15th December, 2025	2 minutes, 33 seconds	Seth Nyakio Murder Case-TV 47	Thematic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Legal expert	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/21ihZfmCazw?si=3ewCLF1XZ973t3SS	Yes
Damaris Muthee Mutua	20th April, 2022	3 minutes, 16 seconds	A blow to Athletics by NTV	Episodic	Individual	Dispassionate	Suspect	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/F1mk0c7w_NM?si=QYSUGyD1prDrffGl	Yes
Rebecca Cheptegei	5th September, 2024	2 minutes 30 seconds	Ugandan athlete succumbs	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Suspect	Parents	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/0WdrnL09GhA?si=poNAofQ_K1cndJL4	Yes
Ivy Wangeci	3rd March, 2023	3 minutes 35 seconds	Ivy Wangeci killer speaks by KTN.	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Suspect	Naftali Kinuthia (Perpetrator)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/v5HdtgCQoxw?si=HdkP4NSPyYYe_DTy	Yes
Risper Ng'endo	10th February, 2025	3 minutes 33 seconds	Risper Ng'endo murder probe.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/CJBSARFbdRQ?si=PSk7iqEgp9eUP3XA	Yes
Naomi Wangare	23rd March, 2025	0:53 seconds	Embakasi Murder Probe.	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Suspect	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/qNPzAisoFz0?si=WsrdgM0pi6ME7eYL	Yes
Faith Musyembi	13th May,	3 minut	Murder Suspect Detained by TV	Epis	Individual	Sensati	Suspect	Police	Graphic imagery,	https://youtu.be/jZh1EcAgAzw?	Yes

	2024	es, 24 seconds	47.	odic		onalist			romanticised headlines	si=mYuldb_EKRth6Jp3	
Unidentified woman	14th January, 2024	3 minutes, 31 seconds	Murder in Roysambu	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Airbnb owner, Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/5g-t2XR8FBA?si=NG1Wo_8yZtH1wsfp	Yes
Sylvia Kemunto	4th April, 2025	3 minutes, 20 seconds	Student Death Probe by KTN.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/3mMWZXYY2os?si=ahX2oq6oQxAfZHu4	Yes
Belinda Wekesa	9th February, 2025	0:47 seconds	Murder in Juja	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Suspect	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/Xy-AbmkhfgU?si=xAOpwr7aCLyw4iSh	Yes
Susan Nabwire	24th August, 2025	3 minutes, 54 seconds	Phone Feud Turns Fatal by NTV.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Phyllis Makokha (Relative), Joan Achieno (Relative), Festus Tarigo (Police)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/DuoqoIdRNRQ?si=fJiTZH3H3Gk60mz4	Yes
Harriet Moraa	10th January, 2024	3 minutes, 12 seconds	Machakos University Murder	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Witness, neighbour, caretaker, Nzioka Singi (Police)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/1xq5Sv8MxnI?si=CYR_T89i0GxVGPZ0	Yes
Virginia Wayua	29th October, 2025	2 minutes 15 secon	Machakos Murder Suspect Arrested	Thematic	Systemic	Dispassionat	State Official	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/h5Nc-56aMJY?si=rDGyeZPXvNHMC2wB	Yes

		ds		c		e					
Victoria Mumbua Muloki	9th October, 2024	4 minutes, 50 seconds	Taxi Driver Murder Probe	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Suspect	Johansen Oduor (Pathologist), Caroline Mbithe (Relative), Lance (Taxi-driver)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/BACUQ66qFW4?si=NjTJwnt-rKM68aIS	Yes
Lydia Tokesi	12th January, 2025	2 minutes, 42 seconds	Murder in Ongata Rongai	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Daniel Shikoli (Brother/Relative)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/Q7Iu8ieDmto?si=FQoWG3FMkPV7wZsL	Yes
Rael Cherop Biwott	13th July, 2024	1 minute 15 seconds	Eldoret Murder Probe	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Suspect	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/kQILhaXSqyQ?si=jWLwEZ29tFcsRpKv	Yes
Virginia Njeri, Florence Mueni, Vera Moraa and Alice	19th August, 2024	4 minutes, 28 seconds	Nakuru ‘serial killer’ arrested	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Relatives of victims, Wilberforce Sicharani (Police), Nyumba kumi elder, relatives of perpetrator	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/U-ViQJcEzgU?si=xHGwvJq4WMwPipg2	Yes
15-year-old girl	28th March, 2025	2 minutes, 42 seconds	Landi Mawe Murder Probe	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Victim	Authorities, Residents	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/u3_SWiBGTHs?si=QL-_vdDubPZDhrLq	Yes
Lucy Njambi	12th April, 2024	1 minute, 33 seconds	Former MCA Jailed for 30 years by NTV.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Joel Ngugi (Judge)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/KtEqkaMirSE?si=l3CJCE2YQWGzhS2s	Yes
Faith Kemunto	4th	2	Body of	Ep	Indivi	Sen	Vict	Relatives	Graphic	https://youtu.be/	Yes

	September, 2025	minutes, 01 second	University Student Exhumed In Nyamira by TV 47	isodic	dual	sationalist	im		imagery, romanticised headlines	62OyMGTeF14?si=UUI_9SRG5Aq3CwIB	
62-year-old woman	19th December, 2024	2 minutes, 11 seconds	Ruiru Murder Probe	Thematic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/REDPcuW4I-4?si=AcSxml5OIhJufhaK	Yes
Nancy Boke Chacha	18th January, 2025	2 minutes, 36 seconds	Another Femicide Case.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Detectives, Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/Ch7WnFGFe9k?si=n8Y_nchkrvQrbn5M	Yes
A woman and two girls	25th October, 2024	2 minutes, 35 seconds	Autopsy for Eastleigh 3 by KTN.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Johansen Oduor (Pathologist)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/ZaIRXkGjqrc?si=Q06qsUMHF5Fx2aeX	Yes
Deka Gorane	8th November, 2024	2 minutes, 13 seconds	Femicide: More Suspects arrested.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/8qgyOV08z04?si=zbi7lQkLa2MEBh28	Yes
Jackline Mmbone	22nd August, 2025	1 minute, 54 seconds	Kericho Murder Probe	Thematic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Victim	Sister to the victim (Relative)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/2F97vWetB1Q?si=HlI_nUVZ3dT2s6Xj	Yes
Gaala Aden	7th May,	0:58 secon	Justice for Gaala: The fight Begins	The	Individual	Dispas	Suspect	Advocate, Magistrate, Women Rep, Chairperson,	Graphic imagery,	https://youtu.be/se5PbhU_Tsc?	Yes

	2025	ds	by Tv47.	matic		sionate		activists	romanticised headlines	si=IbuB4Zxhabs_SAVz	
Tabitha Wambui	31st December, 2024	1 minute, 10 seconds	Suspects in Nakuru Murder by KTN.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Legal expert	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/KUJrk_KCa-o?si=YOTTmgyJzcUeaEkH	Yes
Martha Njeri	5th July, 2024	2 minutes, 14 seconds	Murder in Narok	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Sister, neighbours (Relative)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/9if2D6U9-as?si=7b_dVjDx1ryMC-QQ	Yes
Lucy Boke	12th November, 2023	1 minute, 57 seconds	Crime Watch by KBC.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Caretaker, friend, neighbours, Isaac Kimwele (Police)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/IvLjKy4lGjI?si=yHVPnGIky6WHCf2t	Yes
Jane Atila	28th October, 2025	4 minutes, 7 seconds	Serial Rapist in Kikuyu.	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Suspect	Victims, relatives, Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/KeFQK557rJE?si=9FQo4av6AlGEV9EP	Yes
Margaret Wanduma Maina	15th December, 2025	0:44 seconds	Kirinyaga Granny Killing.	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionate	Suspect	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/VSsgufBEkjU?si=cVo8pyVD5J0L91Kb	Yes
Lucy Wamaitha	25th March, 2025	1 minute, 41 secon	In Pursuit of Justice by KBC.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Nancy Mungai (Mother), Daniel Kamau (Reverend), Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/Mla12Q2nxSw?si=3Il5uGnwxfTu	Yes

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Lucy Wambui Jennings	25th January, 2024	0:52 seconds	Lucy Jennings Dies.	Episodic	Individual	Sensational list	Suspect	Njehia Mbugua (Brother/Relative)	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/9AAViqLzMFc?si=ae7HTJe_iKHA9K-c	Yes
Felister Kitua	7th June, 2025	3 minutes, 16 seconds	Killer Ex-Lover	Episodic	Individual	Sensational list	Suspect	Relative, boss, witnesses	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/bhVigXmx0eo?si=zcshyirx4UKZl6AJ	Yes
Joy Fridah Munani	22nd January, 2025	3 minutes, 30 seconds	Murder Most Foul	Episodic	Individual	Sensational list	Suspect	Police, family of victim, family of suspect	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/nwe425gcxbM?si=P_IPeCVVq5frLBuI	Yes
Patience Mumbe	9th December, 2025	2 minutes, 11 seconds	Defiled then killed by NTV.	Episodic	Individual	Sensational list	Victim	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/rfdRPJXzyt8?si=paOyk6eaTMVX7228	Yes
Mother and her two daughters	22nd October, 2024	2 minutes, 45 seconds	Mother, Daughters Murdered.	Episodic	Individual	Sensational list	Victim	Relative of the victims	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/aRsiD0T0-o0?si=CvRhThl5znJtmSJy	No
An unknown woman	13th July, 2022	1 minute, 44 seconds	Woman killed, beheaded by assailants in Baruk area.	Episodic	Systemic	Sensational list	Victim	Police, Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/up4SwrbMwLE?si=jRhu3hzfaeKJmbCs	Yes
Naomi Chebet	13th April,	9 minut	Naomi Chebet Murder by TV47.	Epis	Individual	Sensati	Suspect	Harrison Koech (Brother/Relative),	Graphic imagery,	https://youtu.be/YHYWOqdTUH	Yes

	2025	es, 12 seconds		odic		onalist		neighbours, friends, landlord	romanticised headlines	Y?si=Y2L9FY_RFxlYRjUj	
Naomi Wambui	7th September, 2025	1 minute, 52 seconds	Insecurity in Kiserian.	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Victim	Witness, neighbour, Kajiado Woman Representative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/1Oyx2uoU7fI?si=Xd_M7CtVkAz55qOK	Yes
Abigael Wina Wanjiku	21st June, 2025	2 minutes, 20 seconds	Mwiki Murder Probe.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Relative, witness, Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/2GmC825qRyE?si=423UOmkAfSTlwBEB	Yes
Mercy Kwamboka	23rd October, 2024	1 minute, 52 seconds	A Country of Mysterious Murders.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/nju2n_bm410?si=M8l-f6DcCbEbsORV	Yes
Sharon Atieno aka Nicole	13th November, 2024	1 minute, 38 seconds	Sharon Atieno Murder Probe by TV47.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Room-mate, owner of farm, relative, Police, pathologist	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/w812_gEMZ_Y?si=c8zHzrjuwZrabLRn	Yes
Jane Achieng'	16th March, 2025	2 minutes, 33 seconds	A Family In Agony.	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	State Official	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines		No
Six female adults	12th July, 2024	3 minutes, 38 secon	Pile of bodies, who killed them?	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	State Official	Witnesses, ODPP	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/fbuUy20elJg?si=zWu8n9FeLwzkZZqG	Yes

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Wilkister Ososo	24th August, 2024	3 minutes, 32 seconds	Kware killings, family in agony.	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/Rnds-0V7h9k?si=PYPd4vnBzkHTqCbj	No
An identified woman	19th September, 2023	2 minutes	Murder in Mombasa.	Episodic	Systemic	Sensationalist	Victim	Witnesses	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/ghTXhke2GE4?si=wqVYnCZbPcqQTwKE	Yes
Nun Anselime Karimi	14th October, 2025	2 minutes, 44 seconds	Meru Nun's Morbid Premonition by NTV.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative, Magistrate	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/2E8EafpFl2E?si=3ChdvvEENmpVEQqS	Yes
Lucy Wambui	17th November, 2025	3 minutes, 50 seconds	Lucy Wambui Death Case by KTN.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Relative, Technologist, clinic employee	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/4HQy8KXQLgE?si=0wPJJK8MlxNCN90x	Yes
Shirleen Nyangweso	31st December, 2025	3 minutes, 37 seconds	Man Kills Teen Daughter.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/KhKbNzdcpGU?si=ReBPsqnvnTDoKwb1	Yes
Margaret Mbitu	8th February, 2024	3 minutes, 59 seconds	Kang'ethe escape shames police.	Thematic	Systemic	Dispassionate	State Official	Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/CA4Q9FidWl8?si=jeYC3mUEnMAbILjc	Yes
Susan Njoki	23rd July,	2 minut	Mental Care or Murder Cover-	Epis	Individual	Dispas	Suspect	Pathologist, Relative	Graphic imagery,	https://youtu.be/qh0GDhgryJc?	Yes

	2025	es, 42 seconds	Up? By NTV.	odic		sionate			romanticised headlines	si=lLd7A30BSPSYbZYz	
Tamara Kabura	30th May, 2025	1 minute, 41 seconds	Tamara Kabura Murder Probe.	Episodic	Systemic	Dispassionate	Victim	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/BiQsLzFoS4w?si=Fosdq4shw6pKSNh7	Yes
Naomi Wangari	8th September, 2025	1 minute, 28 seconds	A Family Seeks Justice.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Victim	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/V61JPCnR3yc?si=1Rm1SOpzHpKGnhuf	Yes
Catherine Waceke Kimotho	12th November, 2024	3 minutes, 51 seconds	Elderly Woman Murdered.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Witness	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/H6kUzLI2iXY?si=bvcoRfdIR7NMmENP	Yes
Mellen Kwamboka	30th March, 2025	1 minute, 58 seconds	Raped and Murdered	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/99oBDTw2QsA?si=i0U_WviVWsQA7SSi	Yes
Joyce Munanye	7th February, 2025	1 minute, 55 seconds	Joyce Munanye murder by KBC	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/Hym36wlq_2g?si=Xw77nn_tSI_mXhbg	Yes
Caroline Akinyi Ochieng	17th December, 2025	1 minute	Arraigned for Murder by KTN.	Thematic	Individual	Dispassionat	Suspect	Legal expert	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/lHwMH0xc7b4?si=G9VZ55zT7XWy1dh9	Yes

				c		e					
Rose Muthoni	12th September, 2025	8 minutes, 39 seconds	Inside Rose Muthoni Murder by TV47.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative, witness	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/7Mxtta1AhFY?si=bVMbEbv56ScebgiL	Yes
Catherine Wanjiru	13th May, 2025	3 minutes, 45 seconds	Murder Most Foul by KTN.	Episodic	Individual	Sensationalist	Suspect	Relative	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/saU6LXcxEp4?si=hmofpMSm_HLIVKp8	Yes
Angeline Maina	14th January, 2023	2 minutes, 25 seconds	Justice for Angeline by NTV.	Episodic	Individual	Dispassionate	Suspect	Relative, Police	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/BHlDOnJXcdc?si=SHg_LGc2UZWZ7_4m	Yes
Purity Wangechi	10th June, 2025	1 minute, 10 seconds	Emotions run high in Court by TV47.	Thematic	Individual/ Systemic	Dispassionate	Unknown	Relatives, friends, classmates	Graphic imagery, romanticised headlines	https://youtu.be/va_PJgj_zuk?si=4MiJ_1M-QMiiMCAv	Yes

Appendix 2: Inferential Statistical Analyses and Correlation Coefficients

Correlations

		How often do you watch Mainstream media's news (7:00 PM news)?	Femicide cases are primarily isolated "crimes of passion" resulting from individual relationship disputes	The victims' personal lifestyle choices (e.g., "sponsor culture") significantly contribute to these violent outcomes.	The rise in femicide is a systemic failure of the Kenyan judicial and law enforcement systems	Mainstream media's reporting often makes me feel that the victim is partially responsible for the incident	The use of dramatic music or graphic reenactments in news segments makes the violence seem more like "entertainment" than a social crisis.	I feel more sympathetic toward the perpetrator when the news highlights their personal struggles, such as unemployment or "heartbreak	Impact on Perception of Safety: After viewing reports on femicide on TV, how would you describe your perception of women's safety in Kenya?	Discussion Frequency: How often do you discuss the root causes of femicide with your family or peers after watching a segment on TV?
How often do you watch Mainstream media's news (7:00 PM news)?	Pearson Correlation	1	.073	-.010	.113	-.157	.112	.045	-.067	-.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.376	.900	.165	.054	.173	.582	.411	.625
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Femicide cases are primarily isolated "crimes of passion"	Pearson Correlation	.073	1	.447**	.051	-.204*	.196*	.223**	.034	-.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.376		.000	.531	.012	.016	.006	.680	.465

resulting from individual relationship disputes	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
The victims' personal lifestyle choices (e.g., "sponsor culture") significantly contribute to these violent outcomes.	Pearson Correlation	-.010	.447**	1	-.023	-.113	.047	.208*	.061	-.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.900	.000		.782	.169	.568	.011	.462	.564
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	149	150	150
The rise in femicide is a systemic failure of the Kenyan judicial and law enforcement systems	Pearson Correlation	.113	.051	-.023	1	-.001	.293**	-.032	-.356**	.262**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.165	.531	.782		.992	.000	.694	.000	.001
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Mainstream media's reporting often makes me feel that the victim is	Pearson Correlation	-.157	-.204*	-.113	-.001	1	-.042	-.082	-.044	.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.012	.169	.992		.606	.317	.596	.752

partially responsible for the incident	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
The use of dramatic music or graphic reenactments in news segments makes the violence seem more like "entertainment" than a social crisis.	Pearson Correlation	.112	.196*	.047	.293**	-.042	1	.228**	-.049	-.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.173	.016	.568	.000	.606		.005	.548	.845
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
I feel more sympathetic toward the perpetrator when the news highlights their personal struggles, such as unemployment or "heartbreak	Pearson Correlation	.045	.223**	.208*	-.032	-.082	.228**	1	.120	-.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.582	.006	.011	.694	.317	.005		.143	.300
	N	150	149	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

Impact on Perception of Safety: After viewing reports on femicide on TV, how would you describe your perception of women's safety in Kenya?	Pearson Correlation	-.067	.034	.061	-.356**	-.044	-.049	.120	1	-.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.411	.680	.462	.000	.596	.548	.143		.272
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Discussion Frequency: How often do you discuss the root causes of femicide with your family or peers after watching a segment on TV?	Pearson Correlation	-.040	-.060	-.048	.262**	.026	-.016	-.085	-.090	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.625	.465	.564	.001	.752	.845	.300	.272	
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 3: Participant Information and Consent FormAudience Perception Survey

Participant Information and Consent Form

Study Title: Influence of Media Framing on Public Perception of Femicide in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties, Kenya.

Study: Cynthia Anyango Opiyo – MACSNRB336725 Master of Arts in Development Communication, St. Paul's University

Supervisor(s):

Dr. Ukaiko Ojiambo (Lead Supervisor)

Evelyn Wekesa (Co-Supervisor)

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study examining how media coverage of femicide influences public perceptions and civic responses in Kenya. Before deciding whether to participate, please read the following information carefully. The purpose of this form is to help you understand the study and your rights as a participant.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to investigate how mainstream television news frames femicide and how such framing influences public perceptions regarding causes, responsibility, and responses to femicide. The findings will contribute to academic research, media practice and policy discussions on gender-sensitive reporting and public engagement in addressing gender-based violence.

Why You Have Been Invited

If you agree to participate, you will complete an anonymous online questionnaire. The survey contains questions about:

- Your television news consumption habits;
- Your views on media coverage of femicide.
- Your perceptions of the causes and responsibility for femicide, and
- Your opinions regarding public awareness, civic engagement, and responses to gender-based violence.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline participation or discontinue the survey at any time before submitting your responses without penalty or disadvantage. You may also choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

Some questions relate to femicide and gender-based violence, which may be emotionally sensitive. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, you may skip any question or discontinue participation without explanation.

Benefits of Participation

While there may be no direct personal benefit, your participation will contribute to a better understanding of how media reporting influences public awareness and responses to femicide. The findings may help inform improvements in media practices, public education, and policy interventions addressing gender-based violence.

Confidentiality and Privacy

The survey is anonymous. No personal identifiers such as your name, email address, phone number, or physical address will be collected. The study will treat all information provided confidentially and used solely for academic purposes. Data will be stored securely and accessed only by the study and supervisors. Findings will be presented in aggregate form so that no individual participant can be identified.

Ethical Approval

This study has received ethical clearance from the St. Paul's University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (SPU-ISERC) and research authorization from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) (**License ref: 569362**).

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:

Study: Cynthia Anyango Opiyo, Master of Arts in Development Communication, St. Paul's University

Supervisor: Dr. Ukaiko Ojiambo, St. Paul's University

Participant Consent Statement

By **PROCEEDING** to the questionnaire, you confirm that you have **READ AND UNDERSTOOD** the information above and **CONSENT** to participate in this study.

Audience Perception Survey

This survey will be administered digitally to residents of Nairobi and Kiambu Counties (Ages 25–54).

Section A: Demographics & Consumption

County of Residence: [ ] Nairobi [ ] Kiambu.
Age Bracket: [ ] 25–34 [ ] 35–44 [ ] 45–54.
Highest Level of Education: [ ] Secondary School [ ] Diploma [ ] Bachelor's Degree [ ] Postgraduate Degree.
How often do you watch Mainstream media's news (7:00 PM news)? [ ] Daily [ ] 3-4 times/week [ ] Rarely.

Section B: Responsibility Attribution and Perception (Likert Scale)

Please rate your level of agreement on a scale of 1–5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree):
Femicide cases are primarily isolated "crimes of passion" resulting from individual relationship disputes.
[ ] Strongly Agree
[ ] Agree
[ ] Neutral
[ ] Disagree
[ ] Strongly Disagree.
The victims' personal lifestyle choices (e.g., "sponsor culture") significantly contribute to these violent outcomes.
[ ] Strongly Agree
[ ] Agree
[ ] Neutral
[ ] Disagree

[ ] Strongly Disagree.

The rise in femicide is a systemic failure of the Kenyan judicial and law enforcement systems.

[ ] Strongly Agree

[ ] Agree

[ ] Neutral

[ ] Disagree

[ ] Strongly Disagree.

Mainstream media's reporting often makes me feel that the victim is partially responsible for the incident.

[ ] Strongly Agree

[ ] Agree

[ ] Neutral

[ ] Disagree

[ ] Strongly Disagree.

The use of dramatic music or graphic reenactments in news segments makes the violence seem more like "entertainment" than a social crisis.

[ ] Strongly Agree

[ ] Agree

[ ] Neutral

[ ] Disagree

[ ] Strongly Disagree.

I feel more sympathetic toward the perpetrator when the news highlights their personal struggles, such as unemployment or "heartbreak".

[ ] Strongly Agree

[ ] Agree

[ ] Neutral

[ ] Disagree

[ ] Strongly Disagree.

Section C: Critical Consciousness and Agency (Closed-Ended)

Impact on Perception of Safety: After viewing reports on femicide on TV, how would you describe your perception of women's safety in Kenya?

[ ] Extremely Unsafe

[ ] Unsafe

[ ] Neutral

[ ] Safe

[ ] Extremely Safe.

Discussion Frequency: How often do you discuss the root causes of femicide with your family or peers after watching a segment on TV?

[ ] Frequently

[ ] Occasionally

[ ] Rarely

[ ] Never.

Participatory Motivation: Which of the following actions have you felt motivated to take as a direct result of viewing news reports on femicide? (Select all that apply)

[ ] Sign an online petition or join a hashtag campaign (e.g., #EndFemicideKE).

[ ] Attend a community vigil, protest, or public meeting.

[ ] Educate others in my social circle about gender equality.

[ ] I have not felt motivated to take any specific action.

Barriers to Participation: What is the main reason you might NOT participate in community activities or advocacy related to ending femicide?

[ ] Lack of time or resources.

[ ] Fear for personal safety/privacy.

[ ] Belief that individual action cannot change the situation.

[ ] Feeling that the media does not provide enough information on how to get involved.

Preferred Media Intervention: In your opinion, which change in reporting would most effectively encourage the public to take action against femicide?

[ ] Shifting the focus from individual crime details to broader societal/patriarchal causes.

[ ] Including more interviews with gender advocates and survivors rather than just police spokespersons.

[ ] Consistently providing helpline numbers and support resources for victims.

[ ] Eliminating sensational language (e.g., "Love Gone Sour") from lead headlines.

Appendix 4: Ethical Approval

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 Limuru,
Kenya
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728-669000
(0) 736-424440

REF: SPU/782/2026 **Date: 15th June 2026**

TO: Cynthia Anyango
St. Paul's University

Dear Cynthia,

==========

REF: Influence of Media Framing and its Impact on Public Perception of Femicide in Kenya: Case Study of Citizen TV

==========

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 792, for the period between 15th June 2026 – 15th June 2027 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification.
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours.
i. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.

ii. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
iii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU-Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iv. Should there be any publications from your research, note that you are supposed to anonymize the particulars of the respondents, the identifiers and the name of institution (s) where you collected data.
v. Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site. All research is subject to post approval monitoring. Kindly provide a closure report after the research.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) if you are collecting data in the country - https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke **or obtain other clearances needed in the country where you will collect your data from.**

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD
Chairperson
SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
(ISERC)
APPROVAL WITH
CONTIGENCIES
RESEARCH
DIRECTORATE
INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Appendix 5: Research License

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **569362**

Date of Issue: **19/June/2026**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Miss.. CYNTHIA ANYANGO OPIYO of St. Paul's University, Kenya, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kiambu, Nairobi on the topic: Influence of Media Framing and its Impact on Public Perception of Femicide in Kenya: Case Study of Citizen TV for the period ending : 19/June/2027.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/26/4191456**

569362

Applicant Identification Number

Ag. Director Général
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013 (Rev. 2014)
Legal Notice No. 108: The Science, Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing) Regulations, 2014

The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, hereafter referred to as the Commission, was the established under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 (Revised 2014) herein after referred to as the Act. The objective of the Commission shall be to regulate and assure quality in the science, technology and innovation sector and advise the Government in matters related thereto.

CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH LICENSE

1. The License is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, and other relevant laws, policies and regulations. Accordingly, the licensee shall adhere to such procedures, standards, code of ethics and guidelines as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Act, or prescribed by provisions of International treaties of which Kenya is a signatory to.
2. The research and its related activities as well as outcomes shall be beneficial to the country and shall not in any way;
   i. Endanger national security
   ii. Adversely affect the lives of Kenyans
   iii. Be in contravention of Kenya's international obligations including Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN).
   iv. Result in exploitation of intellectual property rights of communities in Kenya
   v. Adversely affect the environment
   vi. Adversely affect the rights of communities
   vii. Endanger public safety and national cohesion
   viii. Plagiarize someone else's work
3. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
4. Neither the license nor any rights thereunder are transferable.
5. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the research at any time during the research period if in the opinion of the Commission the research is not implemented in conformity with the provisions of the Act or any other written law.
6. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Governor before commencement of the research.
7. Excavation, filming, movement, and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies.
8. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
9. The Commission may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project for the purpose of assessing and evaluating compliance with the conditions of the License.
10. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy, and upload a soft copy of their final report (thesis) onto a platform designated by the Commission within one year of completion of the research.
11. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice.
12. Research, findings and information regarding research systems shall be stored or disseminated, utilized or applied in such a manner as may be prescribed by the Commission from time to time.
13. The Licensee shall disclose to the Commission, the relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee, and the relevant national agencies any inventions and discoveries that are of National strategic importance.
14. The Commission shall have powers to acquire from any person the right in, or to, any scientific innovation, invention or patent of strategic importance to the country.
15. Relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee shall monitor and evaluate the research periodically, and make a report of its findings to the Commission for necessary action.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation(NACOSTI),
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