

Media Coverage of The 2016 Presidential Elections In Zambia: A Content Analysis Of The Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision And Daily Nation Newspapers (Paper ID: CFP/1195/2019)

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ABSTRACT: *This study is a content analysis of the state-owned Zambia Daily Mail and private-owned New Vision and Daily Nation's coverage of the 2016 presidential elections in Zambia. Principles of quantitative and qualitative analysis were blended to come up with the rich data presented in the study. The principal goal of the study was to examine on how the media, both state and private, covered the 2016 presidential elections with focus on the election coverage in terms of tone, fairness and dominance of stories. The study utilized the framing and agenda setting theories as the bases for the analysis of the stories. Data from interview questionnaires came from the public and private media personnel of a population size of 5 media respondents for qualitative content analysis. From newspapers, data came from a population size of all newspaper articles published by the Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and Daily Nation newspapers, with a sample of 108 articles identified and 167 stories analyzed from a constructed week within the study period (May to August 2016) for analysis. Excel data analysis was used to enter the data by coders and analyze findings. The data from these research tools was content and thematically analyzed within the context of literature review and the analytical framework adopted from Media framing and Agenda setting theories. Purposive sampling method was used to select respondents while stratified sampling method was used to select news articles. The findings indicated that despite the ideological differences of each newspaper audience, all the newspapers offered a similar coverage of elections. There was a correlation with newspaper content analysis and*

media survey analysis in which Hakainde Hichilema and Edgar Chagwa Lungu had more coverage including their political parties. Bias and subjectivity were evident in the number and type of stories, the number and type of pictures and accompanying captions, the number of stories about contesting presidential candidates and the usage of language (dominant tone) in the stories. Other findings based on self-administered questionnaires indicated that violence against journalists was one of the major stumbling blocks in coverage of elections and coverage was adversely affected by lack of both financial and human resources especially by the private media. This void of substantial news coverage undermines a newspaper's vital function. Furthermore, less substantive stories limit newspapers in their framing and agenda setting role. From the findings, the study recommends that the media must take deliberate measures to increase the coverage of topics relevant to citizens' choices of who and which party to vote for. The media must avoid the influence of commercialization of news and pressure to generate profit which push the media to preference 'horse-race' coverage as 'Profit making' kind of coverage which leave journalists open to accusations of bias, the media should also be neutral and not being pro-government in its functionality as watch-dog and mediator between the people and the government. Finally, media freedom should be exercised by the ruling government so as not to discourage reporters and editors for fear of being raided by the ruling party.

Keywords: *coverage, elections, watchdog, mediator, profit making, horse race, commercialization.*

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter gives a background of the study, defines statement of problem, looks at the research objectives and questions which shape the methodology of this study, highlighting the significance of the study, briefly reviews the theoretical framework of the study, then operational definitions of terms, and finally delimitation and limitations of study and then ethical considerations.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

From the reinstatement of multi-party democracy 1991 in Zambia, the media landscape has been liberalized. This too meant that access to diverse sources of information enhanced dramatically. It has seen the birth of more newspapers such as the Daily Nation, The Mast, The News Diggers, The New Vision etc. This includes Television stations such as MUVI TV, Zambezi Magic, Diamond TV, Prime TV to mention but a few including the expansion of ZNBC with TV1 and TV2 not forgetting the upcoming of new Radio stations such as Hot FM, 5FM, Power FM, Yastani, Sky, Maranatha Radio et cetera. Democracy has been characterized by regular elections every five years. As a matter of fact, Zambia can be considered as a standard for stable and peaceful democratic elections in Africa with minimal election-related violence, malpractice, transparency, free and fair and peaceful transition of regimes and governments not until now that violence has become the order of any election or political gathering.

The significant role of the media in covering presidential elections was undertaken following the 2016 General Elections which were the first in which Zambians would vote in five separate ballots. These elections consisted of elections for the President, 156-member National Assembly and over 1,600 Local Government Councils, as well for

the first time, directly electing Mayors/Council Chairs. Additionally, a Referendum on the Bill of Rights was conducted alongside the elections (Zambia COG Report FN 2016: Zambia General Elections and Referendum, p.5).

The 2016 presidential elections took place some 18 months after the last Presidential By-election, in which the PF won by a very slim majority (1.66 per cent of votes) (ibid, p.5). In retrospect the 2016 elections were widely expected to be a two-horse race between the PF and the UPND, following the disintegration of the MMD; notwithstanding the presence of other parties having nominated candidates, all indicators pointed to the possibility of competitive elections between the incumbent PF and the opposition party, the UPND. These circumstances added to political tensions as Zambia held one of the most highly anticipated and fiercely contested general elections in recent times, in which scrutiny of the performance and conduct of the media was expected to be at its highest. The general evidence showed that the trends of polarization were at their worst in the weeks and days towards and after the 11th August 2016 poll as portrayed in the content carried by various media. This was more so especially when it came to the coverage and reporting on various political bodies in the country. The political environment leading up to the 2016 elections was highly polarized, particularly between the two main political party leaders, the ruling PF's Edgar Lungu and the main opposition party leader, the UPND's Hakainde Hichilema. Zambia COG Report FN 2016: Zambia General Elections and Referendum (2016) report that: "...the stakes were very high for both leading contenders owing to their personal circumstances: UPND Leader Hakainde Hichilema was running for President for the fifth time and viewed the election to be his best shot at victory yet, especially against the backdrop of the closeness of the last election results and the country's current challenging economic indicators

that militated in his favour. On the PF side, President Lungu was looking to consolidate his position after 18 months in the State House, following a fractious leadership battle in the aftermath of President Sata's death." (p.5-6).

Without any misgiving, the 2016 election period comes off as debatably the most crucial period in the history of the media in Zambia in terms of media's performance and election related violence. Coverage of elections was not balanced according to empirical evidence in the MISA Zambia media monitoring report released after the elections. According to the report, "...the PF was given undue coverage across all public media as nearly half of the coverage was dedicated to it. UPND received less than 30% of the coverage across all public media outlets with ZNBC TV1 and ZNBC Radio 2 allocating the least coverage to it." (MISA 2016, p.11). Media houses such as the Post Newspaper, Komboni Radio, Itezhi Tezhi Radio and Muvi TV, had their licenses suspended this was for what the IBA termed as "unprofessional conduct posing a risk to national peace and stability". The IBA cited section 29 (1) (j) of the IBA amendment act of 2010 which cites that "the IBA board may cancel a broadcasting license if the cancellation of the license is necessary in the interest of public safety, security, peace, welfare or good order"(ibid). On 21 June 2016, The Post newspaper, whose reporting was considered by many stakeholders to have a strong critical voice over the years, was closed by the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) over a K53.8 million (GBP £4.3 million) unpaid tax bill. (Zambia COG Report FN 2016: Zambia General Elections and Referendum, 2016, p.32). Stakeholders however, believed the move was politically motivated due to The Post's criticism of the incumbent Government. It should be noted that the Post continued limited publication throughout the election period (ibid). Subsequently, the decision of revoking the licenses was later rescinded and the broadcasting licenses

were given back to the affected media houses except for The Post Newspaper.

Scholars have been analyzing the media and its influence on political elections for over 40 years. Studies have provided strong evidence that the media not only tells the public how to think, but what to think about (Cohen, 1963; Entman, 1993; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Notably, the media prefers less substantial, tactic stories over more in-depth policy coverage, and it bears a slightly negative tone (Graber, 1976; Just, Crigler, & Buhr, 1999; Patterson, 2002). Most importantly, the topic and tone coverage that a candidate receives, or how he or she is framed by the media, can have an impact on public opinion (Graber, 1988; Ross, 1992; Golan & Wanta, 2001). For instance, in a recent study carried out on an evaluation of the influence of the electronic and print media to voter participation during elections in Zambia, Banda's findings were that voter participation is influenced by the electronic and print media (Banda, 2016, p.49). Media coverage is often the primary source of political information for citizens. Therefore, the role of the media in covering campaigns and elections is a critical element in the process of electing a president. The obligation of the media to provide accurate and enough information to voters is paramount.

Recent developments in election related violence and media influence on democracy have heightened the need for media content study. Newspaper content analysis of presidential election coverage is a classic need in current studies due to the nature of political landscape and environment in Zambia and elsewhere. Previous research carried out with explicit focus on content analysis of media outlets like ZNBC TV 1 main News, MUVI TV main News, the Post Newspaper, Times of Zambia and Zambia

Daily Mail, the findings indicated that 31 percent of news contents were election-related

stories that included campaign events, and 28 percent of the stories focused the electoral processes as 9 percent of the stories were personal attacks on candidates (MISA 2011). These findings did indicate that the media in its coverage did not cover most developmental issues in the country. Most issues covered as can be seen from MISA research of 2011 are electoral processes and violence related. Media essentially is supposed to give a balanced point of view of democratic issues. Political tension sometimes results from injection of news into the masses because the audience cannot get a balanced view of democratic issues so that people can exercise their democratic rights with full knowledge. People choose to remain democratically ambivalent in the face of critical moments of deciding for the future of the nation.

The journalistic coverage of elections is more than a news-story, as electoral process involves crucial decisions about the future of a nation. Critics commonly suggest that television and newspaper should fulfill certain goals, such as raising public awareness about AIDS, encouraging interest in international affairs, or stimulating community activism. In addition, media is believed by many that it has a responsibility to strengthen democracy, through political coverage that should educate the public about the major issues, inform citizens about the contenders for office, and mobilize people to turnout. The role of the media in covering politics, and specifically electoral contests, remains central to political communication research (Stromback et al, 2008).

Scholars have examined election coverage across different countries and across different elections. Many empirical studies have focused their interest on the process of elections – the game frame – which concentrates on personalities, opinion polls and electoral tactics against coverage of policy matters. The influence of commercial pressures on media coverage cannot be overstated. Commercialization of news and pressure to

generate profit are seen to be the reasons in pushing media outlets to preference ‘horse-race’ coverage as was the case between the incumbent president, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu and the main opposition party president, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema. While commercial sensitivity might be considered a concern for the privately-owned print sector, it has been contended that, shackled by regulatory requirements for balance and fairness, the broadcast media may be even more inclined to favor game coverage. In this regulated environment offering interpretation on policy matters can leave journalists open to accusations of bias (McNair, 2000). When there is a requirement for a certain amount of ‘public interest’ news, there is an incentive to make this as commercially viable as possible, thus reducing the likelihood that election coverage will be centered on discussion of substantive policy issues.

The news media, and more precisely print media, serve as valuable sources of information and powerful modes of communication (Cissel, 2012). The media play a vital role in every democracy and their importance in politics is indispensable. The Canadian-based International Development Research Centre (IDRC, 2008) for example, postulates that the free flow of information is the lifeblood of democracy. The commencement of democratic and constitutional governance in Zambia under the 6th Republican has seen the media play cardinal roles such as getting the citizenry informed on issues about politics, especially during election periods.

Studies by Mughan and Gunther (2000), verify that democratic citizens everywhere mostly depend on the media and less on family, community and other intermediary institutions as a primary source of political information. Modern political communication practices are extremely mediated, and the mass media play a critical role as a foremost source of political information for most citizens (Norris, 2000). Albeit other methods of

direct communication exist, they have by no means substituted the mass media (Plasser & Plasser, 2002). Zambia as a democratic state or country is a classic example of these assertions thus it is not surprising that during election periods, most people are glued to their television and radio sets, newspapers and currently the social media for information. The newspaper, unlike television or radio, produces information that the reader can interpret at their leisure without any time constraint (Carter, 2000). Davis (2004, p. 7) for instance argues that: Newspapers may not have the reach of the broadcast media, but they are important for at least three reasons. First, newspapers are likely to be the media of choice among 'opinion-makers' who may influence others in their community. Secondly, newspapers provide a deeper analysis than is often possible on radio and television. Thirdly, the press has an investigative capacity unrivalled by the broadcast media – major stories often 'break' in the press and are then taken up by broadcast journalists.

In the 2016 general elections the petition from the opposition party UPND was based on arguments pertaining to both the electoral environment, such as bias in the public media, restrictions on movement and campaigning, as well as alleged irregularities during polling, counting, tallying, transmission and announcement of results (MISA, 2016). This study focuses on the print media in Zambia regarding examining how the unprecedented 2016 presidential elections was framed and the agenda set by the state owned newspaper (Zambia Daily Mail) and private-owned newspapers (New Vision and Daily Nation) Newspapers with focus on level of prominence, level of fairness and dominant tone of election stories.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The nature of the 2016 elections and the post protest of election results presented a test case for many institutions in the country. Not only was the country's judicial system put to the test, but the media was also faced with a challenge on reporting on an issue that had no precedence. MISA Media Alert, 3rd August 2016 quarter report that media environment was not devoid of journalists being harassed physically and otherwise. Noted, were increased instances of hostile rhetoric by candidates, politically-motivated violence by supporters, and provocative media reporting, which had an impact on the pre-election environment and the ability of all parties and contestants to campaign without hindrance. The Media Institute of Zambia (MISA) found that the media continued to receive sharp criticism from several quarters, especially the opposition political parties, due to its overly favorable coverage of the ruling party in the news. Stakeholders questioned the role of the IBA if it could not reign in on open abuse of the airwaves by various broadcasters despite IBA having issued directives that the media should remain impartial as the country headed towards the elections or else could go a long way in remedying the status of media polarization (MISA 2016). There is an increasing concern that the media is not performing in accordance to principles of watchdog, mediator between the government and the public and that the majority citizens are being disadvantaged. Since media organizations have considerable influence on what and how people think about the candidates and the issues related to presidential elections, this raises an important question: Are the media presenting a fair and balanced picture? A study was needed to examine on how the media covered the 2016 presidential elections and what could be suggested on future coverage of elections using an analysis of three daily newspapers the Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and the Daily Nation.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Main objective

The main goal of this study was to investigate how the media, both state and private, covered the 2016 presidential elections in Zambia with focus on the election coverage in terms of prominence, fairness and dominant tone of election stories.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.0 Overview

This study examined how the Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and Daily Nation newspapers covered the 2016 presidential elections in Zambia pre and post. This chapter explains the method used for collecting data for the study and discusses the research design, sampling procedure, units of analysis, coding scheme and procedure for data analysis. To be able to respond to the research questions within the theoretical perspective of framing and agenda setting, the study was conducted using mainly quantitative content analysis but also supplemented by a qualitative content analysis for balanced results.

3.1 Research design

When examining media coverage in presidential elections, many past studies do so with a content analysis (Just et al, 1999; Benoit et al, 2005; Coleman & Banning, 2006; Golan & Wanta 2001; Ross 1992). The content analysis method was used to identify common themes and elements that constituted the composition of media content during the campaign, election and post-election period. This helped to create a picture that shows how the media performed in terms of the focus and diversity of their content. Further, the data gathered as such gave insights on the various media-related issues that occurred and either directly or indirectly

impacted on the media, journalists and their smooth undertaking of their journalistic duties.

3.2 The news function Analysis of news in content research method

The news function Analysis of news media is used to study how the distribution of news sources, gatekeeping, agenda-setting and agenda-building, framing, and priming explain the functions of news in the context of daily politics, elections, and civic engagement in democratic societies. In this study the focus was on framing and agenda setting. Through systematic examination of what the news media cover, we learn how the gatekeeping function influences what is relevant for political discussion. It is possible to explain what editors block out from the coverage by comparing media coverage with information from other sources. In combination to the newspaper content analysis, in this study a questionnaire survey was used; analysis of the topics covered in news allows researchers to show how the news media play a role in setting the political agenda.

In comparative studies, systematic analysis of content is used to study similarities and differences and how they relate to differences in media and political systems. Content analysis is often the method of first choice in framing studies, with scores of studies evident in the literature. From a source perspective, political communication scholars have used content analysis to explain how complex political issues are presented and packaged in accessible forms or as “clusters of messages” (i.e., news frames; Entman, 1993). Whereas, from a receiver perspective, scholars have used the analysis of news content to show how some meanings are preferred over other competing meanings, thereby influencing public opinion and voting behavior (Iyengar, 1991; Semetko & Valkenburg 2000). Analyses of news content in the studies on distribution of news sources and news frames have explained how

government officials and authoritative sources get them message out and become primary definers of the political issues.

Through a series of studies using content analysis, Lance Bennett and others have shown that news content with political import is “indexed” to statements by official sources and more specifically the governing elites (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2006). Even though large-scale studies have not shown strong evidence of news media bias, content analysis of news outlets has shown evidence of bias toward partisan ideology or slant in political coverage to nationalism and political party (Schiffer, 2006).

3.3 Justification of quantitative and qualitative research method

Graber (2004) explains the dual nature of content analysis as being both qualitative and quantitative: Often, it is a mixture of both designed to take advantage of the strengths of each approach qualitative analysis has the advantage of allowing researchers to employ many of the intuitive skills for message interpretation that humans possess. “These skills include understanding the connotations that are attached to messages, sensing their emotional impact, and spinning out widely believed implications and their consequences” (Graber, 2004, p. 53).

Graber also points out that while qualitative interpretation can be subjective, it can be done accurately with systematic interpretation and well-defined criteria. (Graber, 2004, p.53). Quantitative analysis provides this necessary framework. “[It] involves establishing readily measurable, minimally judgmental, criteria for defining the message elements to be detected and the indicators that signal the presence or absence of these elements. Selection criteria are then used for systematic examination of the chosen content” (Graber, 2004, p. 54).

Furthermore, Neuendorf and Kamar (2015, p.4) explain that, “Quantitative and qualitative approaches should be viewed as complementary. However, there are crucial differences in the sampling methodologies—message sampling in quantitative content analysis tends to be probability-based, to satisfy the requirement of external validity.” They further add that, “Sampling in qualitative approaches is purposive, and theoretically informed. It is also informed by context, structure, process, and form of political message. For example, political messages in news, blogs, comments, speeches, and advertising are shaped by organizations and by structural constraints of the medium (e.g., newspaper, cable TV, broadcast TV, talk radio, public radio, online news sources, social media, etcetera.)” (ibid). It allows for recalibration as consequence of reflexivity and constant comparison. Consequently, the reliability of a qualitative coding scheme is dependent on the researcher. The validity lies in theoretically informed design and protocols, including clear presentation of the rationale for sampling, unit of analysis, coding scheme, and textual analysis (including constant comparison and contrast). (Neuendorf and Kamar, 2002)

3.4 Quantitative content analysis

A quantitative content analysis method was chosen because it is one of the most practical methods for examining media content (Rife et al, 1998). There are several definitions for content analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Neuendorf (2002) defines content analysis as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics while Krippendorf (2004) defines it as a research technique that is used for making replicable and valid references from data to their context. Also, the method of content analysis can be defined as “the systematic assignment of communication content to categorize according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving

those categories using statistical method” (Riffe et al, 2005, p. 3).

In cognizance of the notion that content analysis is the methodology for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of message the researcher considered it most appropriate to identify and quantify framing patterns in the newspaper coverage of the 2016 presidential elections. Babbie (2009) asserts that content analysis is among the most appropriate methods for studying processes or events occurring over a long period of time. Babbie’s assertion also influenced the selection of the content analysis.

3.5 Qualitative content analysis

Interview schedules in form of self-administered questionnaire method was used to place an emphasis on the authenticity and quality of words coming from source rather than the numbers and percentages in the collection of data. The sources in this case were deemed to experts in the field of Journalism. As Babbie (2010) argued, “this approach of data collection primarily stresses on inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the emphasis is on the generation of theories.” This approach (qualitative method) in addition to newspaper content(quantitative method), was used on basis that quantitative findings alone would not tell much about the nature of media coverage of elections, therefore it was important to provide more analysis by highlighting some salient aspects that characterised the coverage of elections. Qualitative analysis of the findings was cardinal to give perspective to the coverage. “Qualitative methods rely on the interpretation and analysis of what people do and say without making heavy use of measurement or numerical analysis (Horning, 1996. p.5). The study therefore analysed various aspects such as level of prominence of news stories, level of fairness and tonal bias to assess

whether the stories were positive, neutral or negative. Creswell amplifies qualitative research as follows: Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports, detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting, (Creswell 1998, p.15). In this regard, this study employed a combination of content analysis and in-depth interviews in form of self-administered questionnaires.

3.6 Target population of study

Target population was designed for both newspaper media content and respondents from the media practitioners.

3.6.1 The universe or population for newspaper content

The universe or population for this study was all newspaper articles published by the Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and Daily Nation newspapers within the study period. I chose 36 editions of the Zambia Daily Mail, 36 editions of the New Vision and 36 of the Daily Nation which totals to 108 articles. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000), determining an adequate sample size is one of the most controversial aspects of sampling. But studies in content analysis reveal that there is no standard for determining a representative sample. However, Wimmer and Dominick (2000) explain that the sample size may largely be determined by factors such as the type, purpose, complexity of study, the amount of acceptable sampling errors as well as time and financial constraints.

3.6.2 The universe or population for respondents

The universe or population for this study for media respondents was 05. What determine the population is resource availability because larger

samples in the case of Media studies are costlier and involve a lot of bureaucratic procedures which consumes time stalling the research process. However, if precision of estimates are required, larger samples are better for more precision.

3.7 Sampling methods

In this study, I used both purposive and stratified sampling methods. These methods rely on the judgment of the researcher in selecting the units to be studied, (Lund and Lund, 2010). The motivation for using purposive sampling is that it enriches data (Gay and Airasian, 2000) by enabling the person doing a study to experience a multitude of points of view on an issue being studied (Manning, 2000). In this vein, the researcher starts with the assumption that context is critical and purposely selects people to interview and/or events to observe, which are expected to provide a rich array of information. Nevertheless, purposive sampling has limitations. O'Leary (2004), for example, forwards two major weaknesses of purposive sampling: unintentional biasness and non-representativeness. Stratified sampling on the other hand allows the researcher to select a sample which may largely be determined by factors such as the type, purpose, complexity of study, the amount of acceptable sampling errors as well as time and financial constraints (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000).

3.8 Media content sample

Quantitative frameworks for interpretation are often laid out in a codebook guide, one of the most important aspects in any content analysis. "Preparing a codebook that describes in detail how the research must be executed is a crucial aspect of content analysis because the ultimate value of most studies hinges on the insight and skill with which variables that are important for the investigation have been identified and defined." (Graber, 2004, p.55). According to Newbold et al. (2002) in *Media-Content Analysis*, Asia Pacific Public

Relations Journal, 6(1), 1–34, sampling for media content analysis comprises three steps, propose: 1. Selection of media forms (i.e. newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, film) and genre (news, current affairs, drama, soap opera, documentary, and so on); 2. Selection of issues or dates (the period); 3. Sampling of relevant content from within those media (pp. 80–81).

3.8.1 Sample size and Sampling procedure (Newspapers and Dates)

Taking into consideration the various factors (especially time) that influences a sample size as explained by Wimmer and Dominick (2000), the sample size for this study was 36 editions of the Zambia Daily Mail, 36 editions of the New Vision and 36 of the Daily Nation which totals to 108 articles. The selection of media houses had a national scope. The targeted articles in this study were general presidential election stories taken from The Zambia Daily Mail, The New Vision and Daily Nation newspapers. While the analysis examined election news stories that is hard news, letters to the editor, opinions etcetera (soft news) was excluded.

The sample for the study was based on the most read and circulated newspaper in Zambia. In addition, the three newspapers were chosen because of their different perceived ideologies based on their ownership. The selection of state-owned media is very strategic to facilitate analysis in terms of content. The Zambia Daily Mail covers almost all the parts of the country and The Daily Nation was selected owing to being one of the largest private owned Newspaper that equally covers the whole country. In addition, the New Vision is a newspaper that is private owned and independent in its news coverage. Aside from the reach and potential influence of these two newspapers, their different audiences and subsequent news coverage provide an interesting basis for comparison. The data for this study were

news stories published during the period between May 1st, 2016 and August 31st, 2016. This chosen period lies within the days of the campaign period as declared by the Electoral Commission, it however also includes the final polling or voting day and the post-election days because of the delay in announcing the election results and election petition cases after campaigns and elections.

Accordingly, three (3) months May, July and August 2016 was considered although it was supposed to be four (4) months. The newspaper articles for June 2016 presidential elections for Zambia Daily mail was not available in stock at time of research. They could have been accessed at Zambia Daily Mail, but time was limited. The work of Cummings (2006) guided this study in the use of articles to construct a week out of each month (May-August) in such a way that at most two from each of all the publication days (Monday-Saturday) within the study period was randomly selected for representation in each month. This was done by writing the dates of all the days in May 2016 on a piece of paper. The papers were then folded and dropped into a bowl. Afterwards the papers were mixed up and two of the papers were picked, one at a time. Record was kept of the date of each selected paper and the paper dropped back into the bowl before the next one was picked. Each time an already drawn date was selected in subsequent picks, it was ignored and dropped back into the bowl until the required number of four days(dates) in a month were selected. The process was repeated for the rest of the days in July and August within the study period. This method of sampling is called Stratified composite samples constructed by randomly selecting units for analysis (articles or ads) from certain days or weeks over a period.

3.9 Media Respondent sample

The motivation for using purposive sampling is that it enriches data (Gay and Airasian, 2000) by enabling the person doing a study to experience a

multitude of points of view on an issue being studied (Manning, 2000). In this vein, the researcher starts with the assumption that context is critical and purposely selects people to interview and/or events to observe, which are expected to provide a rich array of information, (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.200). Nevertheless, purposive sampling has limitations. O'Leary (2004), for example, forwards two major weaknesses of purposive sampling: unintentional biasness and non-representativeness.

3.9.1 Sample size and sampling procedure (Respondents)

Similar with sample size consideration and time in media content, the sample size for this study from the media audience was 5 respondents i.e. media representatives. I purposively chose the media practitioners from different media outlets (5 respondents) based on their ability to furnish me with rich information relevant to the research topic. Nonetheless, purposive sampling has limitations. O'Leary (2004), for example, forwards two major weaknesses of purposive sampling: unintentional biasness and non-representativeness. I interviewed three Media practitioners i.e. journalists, media representatives by administering an interview questionnaire. However, out of the 5 people who were to be interviewed, those successfully interviewed were only 3. Two from the public media i.e. ZNBC and ZANIS and the other one from an independent private Media Firm. Others did not respond.

3.10 Data collection methods and procedures

Data was collected through a coding sheet and self-administered survey questionnaires. The use of multiple sources increases confidence in the interpretation of data; helps to confirm the validity of study processes; and reduces biases that may arise from using one method (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

3.10.1 Data collection instruments

In summary, Table 1 presents a summary of data collection tools with respect to respondents and research questions

TABLE I.

Data collection tool	Respondents	Research	
		Objective covered	Questions covered
<i>Coding sheet (document analysis)</i>	Published Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and Daily Nation newspapers	1,2 and 3	1,2 and 3
<i>Questionnaire (self-administered questionnaire)</i>	Media regulators, Media representatives and Editors	1,2 and 3	1,2 and 3

Table 1: Summary of Data collection tools and significance

(Source: Author's compilation)

3.10.2 Coding sheet for newspapers

Coding sheet with questions for newspaper content was used. The works of Lynch and Peer (2002), Amoakohene (2007) and Andrade (2006) guided the formulation of the coding scheme for newspaper content analysis for this study. The data

collection focused on election stories published by the published by the Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and Daily Nation newspapers on the presidential election within the time frame of the study. The content categories were, placement of story, enhancement of story, fairness of story and tone of story.

3.10.3 Questionnaire distribution for respondents

Structured self-administered Questionnaire distribution was another important data collection method I used because it is a relatively cheaper and quicker method (Bryman, 2009, p.217). In addition, questionnaires were flexible in administration, especially where the circumstances did not allow me to conduct one-on-one-interviews. Prior to sending out the questionnaires, I was aware about the likely limitations of questionnaires that the researcher lacks the opportunity to probe the answers given; respondents lack the opportunity to prompt the questions; some questions are not answered in the questionnaire; and some respondents do not return the questionnaires back to the researcher. Some respondents would equally object to such an interview schedule on basis of time taking. Therefore, to enhance the effectiveness of questionnaires, I structured clear and easy to answer questions, accompanied with a guide on how to answer the questions. I also ensured that I used closed ended and short question with free response and *Yes* and *No* response to ensure that I did not bore my respondents (Bryman, 2008, p.219).

3.11 Data collection procedures: Newspaper Content

Unit of analysis is important in newspaper content when collecting data. The unit of analysis can be described as the smallest unit of a content analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Any story

(straight news, editorial, opinion/column, letter to the editor or an independent cartoon or picture. In this case the unit of analysis was an election news story published by the *Zambia Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and *Daily Nation* newspapers that referred to the 2016 presidential election within the study period.

MISA and MLC (2016,) guided what an election story is. Election stories were identified using a two-step definition that included the following:

Step 1: *To qualify as an election-related story, one of the following words must be used in the story:*

Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), the name of any political party, the name of any political party official (parliamentarians, councilors), or the name of any political party candidate (including reference to current President and any other candidate).

Step 2: *Requires that each story passing Step 1 must also feature the words August 11 or August seat or August polls or public office or 50 plus 1 or 'election(s)' or 'electoral' or 'campaign(s)' vote or votes in 2016. If a story passes both Step 1 and Step 2 then it shall qualify as an election-related story and be included in the sample.*

The researcher selected a sample of articles that fell within the period under study because it is “impossible to examine all relevant content units in the population” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 111). It should be noted that the general election campaigns for the president and members of parliament took place at the same time. However, this study’s focus was on the presidential and campaign elections coverage, i.e. pre-campaign, election and post-elections. Therefore, all news stories that involved members of parliament were excluded, unless a member of parliament made direct mention or campaigned for any of the presidential candidate.

3.11.1 Coding Process

Content analysis is basically a coding operation that seeks to synthesize distinctive pieces of information into a more comprehensive set of data (Babbie, 2009). Wimmer and Dominick (2003) explain coding as the placement of unit of analysis into content categories. The units of analysis identified during the data collection process were assigned to various content categories on a coding sheet (see Appendix C). The content categories were operationally defined as follows:

- 1. Placement of the story**– this refers to the page on which a story was placed. The page on which a story is placed has an influence on the prominence of the story and the importance readers may attach to it. For instance, Saunders (2006) asserts that front page articles are often reserved for the most high-profile candidates and political personalities. Carter (2000) also maintains that, the front pages is mostly viewed as the major selling point of the newspaper, it is what attracts the potential reader to buy the paper and read further. The front-page stories thus obviously gain more attention from readers than stories on middle-spread. Story placement was categorized into the following: front page (lead), front page (other), back of front page (page 2) and any other page.
- 2. Story Enhancement**- this relates to whether a story was accompanied by any image (photograph) or not. The categories under this were: story with photograph, story without visual, story with a cartoon, stories accompanied by photocopies of letter/document, stories with photographs and photocopies of letter/visual and stories with any other enhancement of story (the number of pictures used).
- 3. Level of fairness (Bias)** - this refers to whether articles were heavily slanted towards one side or neutral. For this study, slant is defined as “selecting details that are fair or unfair to the

subject being described” (Severin & Tankard, 2001, p. 101). Coverage stories would be measured in this regard whether they are fair or not by the number of times a political party, presidential candidate and the number of electoral stories were reported.

4. Tone of story (Valence): this measures the general tone of the story as:

- i. **Positive** (friendly, conciliatory, encouraging, exhortation) for example “Zambia Known for free, fair elections”, “Lungu Calls for National healing,” “Church dispels rigging”, “Political parties denounce violence”. (Zambia Daily Mail and Daily Nation Newspapers, 2016)
- ii. **Negative** (hostile, confrontational, adversarial) for example “UPND cadres block road”, “UPND Cadres hack PF Member (attackers also threaten ECZ)”, “MMD Grabs vehicles”, “Bembas are not fools”, “GBM Insults Bemba Chief”. (Ibid)
- iii. **Neutral** (using words that does not portray the story with either a negative or a positive tone) for example “Nevers faces Convention”, “High Court Adjourns UPND, ECZ Case”, “Lungu won’t vacate office,” “ECZ Explains Referendum Flop”, “Auditors clear voter's registers”. (Ibid)

3.11.2 Coding Reliability for quantitative data

According to studies of Lynch and Peer (2002, p.46), “Reliability in coding newspaper stories is extremely important for the validity of your analysis. Inter-coder reliability refers to the consistency, or agreement, of coding between coders. High intercoder reliability means that coder X would code a given story the same way coder Y did.” This implies that anyone (trained or not!) reading the newspaper should observe the same content and categorize it in the same way.

“Without high inter-coder reliability, you are open to criticism of bias. (ibid)

Reliability is simply defined as consistency in classification. In other words, reliability in coding refers to the consistency of measurement instruments; that is, the ability to arrive at the same results every time, regardless of who is applying the measurement instrument or when they are being applied. The researcher engaged a trained independent coder (a graduate student) to avoid manipulation of the results who assisted in testing for the reliability of the coding. About ten percent (167 stories) of the sample from the study period were randomly selected and tested for reliability.

3.12 Data collection procedures (Respondents)

Before collection of data it is noted that studies associated with relatively small samples (in this study 5 respondents were chosen as a sample), usually suffer from external validity therefore to resolve this problem the researchers assess the quality of their studies using trustworthiness and authenticity instead of validity and reliability (Lincoln and Guba 1994). So, the researcher made sure that the factors discussed below were observed.

3.12.1 Content trustworthiness for qualitative data

Trustworthiness answers the question, “Are the findings worth paying attention to? In his publication on Social Research Methods, Bryman (2008, p.377) explains that trustworthiness comprises four criteria: (i) credibility (similar to internal validity), (ii) transferability (similar to external validity), (iii) dependability (similar to reliability), and confirmability (similar to objectivity). Bryman further clarifies authenticity criteria as those which address the following issues of wider political impact of study: (i) fairness of the study in representing different viewpoints among

members of social setting, (ii) ontological authenticity, denoting whether the study helps members to arrive at a better understanding of their social setting, (iii) educative authenticity, alluding to whether the study helps members to appreciate better the perspectives of other members of their social setting, and (iv) catalytic authenticity, referring to whether the study act as a force to members to engage an action to change their circumstances.

I have outlined below the steps I took to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

3.12.2 Credibility

Credibility is an evaluation of whether the research findings represent a credible conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participant's original.

To try and uphold study credibility I took note of the following:

- In the questionnaire, respondents were regularly contacted through phone calls to validate their views on issues that emerged from the documents I analyzed.
- I triangulated the data sources: self-administered questionnaires. Lincoln and Guba (2000) maintain that within the same paradigm, mixing data-collection methods is sensible. Triangulation helped me to confirm the sources of data. For example, I double-checked information obtained from interview self-administered questionnaires from different respondents.

3.12.3 Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the findings can be generalized from the study sample to the entire population (Polit and Hungler, 1991, p. 645). In as much as the ultimate determination of transferability rests with future studies, this study has addressed issues related to: (i) level of

prominence, level of fairness and media's dominant tone of election coverage in Zambia (ii) a wide selection of research respondents that included both radio, TV and newspaper media (iii) possible influences created by respondents' official positions, and (vi) respondents' attitudes, expectations, opinions, and emotions during the interview.

3.12.4 Dependability

Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. In this vein, the researcher promoted dependability of the study by engaging one peer. This peer monitored and assessed the methods employed in this study and gave the researcher feedback.

3.12.5 Confirmability

Confirmability is product check that helps assure that data, interpretations, and findings are grounded in the context from which they came. In this light, the researcher kept a 'Diary' for logging important activities, schedules, and dates that otherwise might have been forgotten with the passage of time. Further, digital transcripts of newspapers using a camera phone were maintained (see appendix E to G).

3.13 Data Analysis Procedure

The descriptive statistical method of analysis was used in analyzing content categories. In cognizance of the research objectives, Excel was used to analyze coded categories from the content analysis. I analyzed the data manually by coding, categorization into themes and subthemes, and made conclusions. Using the Excel, data from the content analysis was converted into frequency (percentage) and graphical tables as a way of summarizing them into formats that can be easily understood. The development of frequency tables from the content analysis also helped to discover and compare patterns and relations that emerged.

Descriptive data analysis was also used in the case of interview schedule data. Key text elements studied included adjectives used in descriptions of media coverage of elections (election stories), tonal qualities (negative, neutral or positive) such as aggressiveness, sarcasm and emotional language which could have affected meaning taken from the text. This is well supported by Schreier (2012) who identifies the features of qualitative content analysis as interpretive, naturalistic, situational, reflexive, having emergent flexibility, inductive, case-oriented, and putting emphasis on validity (p. 21). The method relies on identifying thematic patterns in a text (i.e., message or set of messages). The themes are not imposed upon the text from outside (e.g. via a theoretically informed coding scheme) or a priori, but they emerge as the researcher undertakes a close reading of a text. Once themes are identified the analyst looks for thematic patterns in the text.

The lynch point in the use of two approaches for their differing research goals as data is analyzed is that the quantitative approaches privileges predicting the nature, type, and potential outcomes of political messages in media content, whereas the qualitative approach privileges discovery and affecting social and political change.

3.14 Delimitations of the study

The thesis was conducted using Newspaper articles taken from The Zambia Daily Mail newspaper, The New Vision newspaper and Daily Nation newspaper. Among other informants (media respondents) were from ZANIS, ZNBC and a private media organisation.

3.15 Limitations of the study

This study had some limitations. The method was incapable of determining for instance, why editors reported the way they did and the effect of the coverage on the opinion of the audience of the newspaper. In future research, research should also

be conducted on editor's opinion in their reporting style when it comes to elections.

A small sample was used few media respondents in qualitative survey (Television broadcasting institutions) though a larger sample was designed. Eliciting response was difficult and slow due to sensitive nature of the study. Therefore, the findings of this study should be used with caution and limited generalisation as it may not be generalised to all media outlets in Zambia.

In addition, the study only covered the content of newspaper media exclusive of electronic media which would have also provided a broader perspective and detailed insight. This study was not able to provide such insight. Thus, it offered only a glance at the news coverage of the 2016 presidential election in newspapers. There are also many other newspapers in Zambia nationwide that may have contained news articles about the elections. To minimise biasness, the study included interview data from qualitative analysis.

Only hard news stories were included in this study. This could be limiting because the audience or voters also read other types of stories such as columns and editorials that discuss election related issues and candidates and that may impact their decision-making process.

Time factor was equally a limitation in the sense that identifying and reading through the news articles was very involving considering the use of content analysis of analysing volumes of articles from three newspaper media stations, going through them issue by issue from both private and public newspaper editions.

Moreover, the scarcity of newspapers was also a challenge as demand of the papers during the 2016 elections made it a shortage in some resource centres. The newspaper articles for June 2016 presidential elections for Zambia Daily mail was not available at time of research at National

Archives of Zambia as of 26th December 2018. Thus three (3) months May, July and August 2016 was considered, although it was supposed to be four (4) months, to avoid disparity of data when making comparisons.

Interviews with the relevant staff or individual practitioners conducted was difficult to collect from the media fraternity and a select number of individual practitioners. Some media personnel objected to participating in the survey due to the nature of the topic. The limitation of the study on this part was that the response rate was very low for the respondents as only 3 out of the expected 5 respondents turned in their feedback to tender information as part of the survey.

Bureaucratic referrals due to general suspicions stalled the research which was quite frustrating. At the National Archives of Zambia, the first question the researcher was asked was “What is this research all about and why do you need the broadcast news content of 2016?”, despite submitting a letter from the institution that it was purely for academic purposes. It had to take a bit of time for the supervisor to come back and give a consent of approval for the researcher to go ahead with newspaper research.

Regardless of the limitations, the researcher believes that this study has provided an insightful view into the coverage of the 2016 election issues in Zambia in its future presidential elections. It is the hope of the researcher that the findings and recommendations made will go a long way to improve research in the media coverage of election issues. The researcher considered this study as an addition to the body of knowledge in the study of framing and agenda-setting in newspaper coverage of election issues.

3.16 Ethical considerations

According to Halai (2006), he plainly states that research is mostly undertaken to generate

knowledge and contribute to scholarship, policy, practice and generally to the wellbeing of the people who participate. It is not particularly required because ethical issues mostly cut across the qualitative-quantitative divide, but sound research is a moral and ethical endeavor and should be concerned with ensuring that the interests of those participating in a study are not harmed because of the research being done (Halai 2006, p.5).

In this study ethics were observed to avoid unnecessary and general suspicion from the public (despite this, some media fraternity and respondents objected to the invitation to participate) on nature of research that it is not harmful, and information obtained is purely for scientific or academic purpose. All data collected was not to be used against any media, political entity or institution as a jurisdiction. Since the study involved human research on perception or opinion on the 2016 presidential elections, fair subject selection was very important. The study population was determined primarily based on scientific goals of the study (participants who could furnish with the information from the media) but not - convenience, ethnicity, age, gender, literacy, culture or economic status). Since client self-determination and respect was noted the respondents who felt that it was not proper did not participate.

3.16.1 Letter of consent

A letter of consent was granted from the Information Communication University to undertake a content analysis research from relevant sources.

3.16.2 Use of Consent Forms

To ensure that the respondents knew exactly what they were getting themselves into, the researcher served them with consent forms i.e. questionnaires, in the introduction that highlighted

the purpose and role that the respondents were going to play in the interview process.

4.5 KEY FINDINGS FROM QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS (NEWSPAPER)

4.5.1 LEVEL OF PROMINENCE

Research Question 1:

R.1: How did stories in the 2016 general elections published in the *Zambia Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and *Daily Nation* newspapers show the level of prominence given to the coverage of elections?

The figures (frequency, table and chart) below present findings on the level of prominence with which the *Zambia Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and *Daily Nation* covered the 2016 presidential election. The variables under this section are placement of story, number of lead stories, enhancement of story and number of pictures used.

Placement of story

TABLE 3

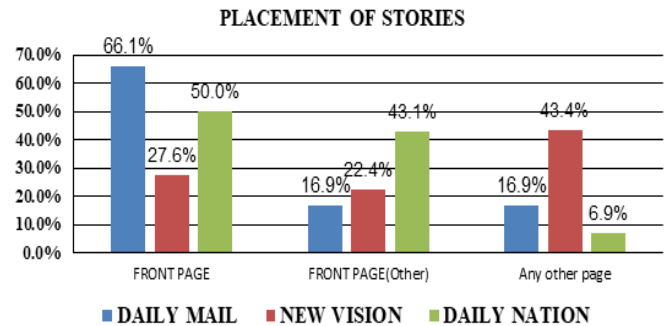
PLACEMENT OF THE STORY				
PA GE NO	CATEG ORY (section)	DAIL Y MAIL	NEW VISIO N	DAILY NATIO N
1	Front page	39 (lead stories)	17 (lead stories)	29(lead stories)
1	Front page (Other)	10	33	4
2& othe r	Any other page	10	29	4
Tota l		59	79	58

Table 3. Number and placement of election stories

TABLE 4

PAPER	SECTION OF NEWSPAPER		
	FRONT PAGE	FRONT PAGE (Other)	ANY OTHER PAGE
DAIY MAIL	66.1%	16.9%	16.9%
NEW VISION	27.6%	22.4%	43.4%
DAILY NATION	50.0%	43.1%	6.9%
Total	100.00	100.0	100.0

Table 4. Percent of placement of election



stories

Figure 1: Percent of placement of election stories

Table 3, 4 and Figure1 above shows the distribution of stories on the election coverage in terms of their placement (location) in the *Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and *Daily Nation* in comparison. As can be seen, the most proportion of the lead stories carried by the *Zambia Daily Mail* were in “front pages” with (66.1%). In *New Vision* placement of stories in “front page” were (27.6%) while those in “front pages i.e. lead stories or headline” in the *Daily Nation* were (50%). Front

page (other section) for *Daily Mail* was 16.9%, *New vision* (22.4%), *Daily Nation* (43.1%), Any other page for *Daily Mail* in location of stories was (16.9%), *New Vision* 43.4% and *Daily Nation* (6.9%).

Enhancement of stories

TABLE 5

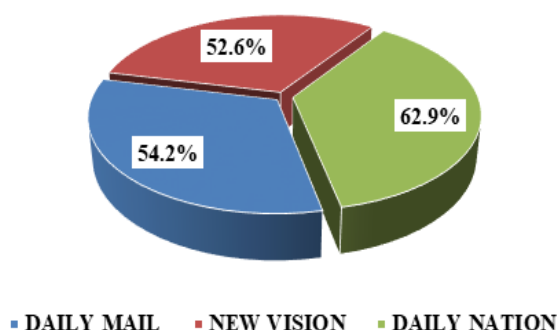
Paper	Number of pictures used	Out of	Percentage of pictures used
DAILY MAIL	32	59 stories	54.2%
NEW VISION	40	76 stories	52.6%
DAILY NATION	39	62 stories	62.9%

4.5.2 LEVEL OF FAIRNESS (BIAS)

Fairness in coverage (reportage) of the presidential elections

The variables under this section are the amount of coverage of political parties i.e. the number of stories about a political party, the difference in amount of coverage of presidential candidates viz the number of stories about a presidential candidate in each newspaper and the amount of coverage of election stories.

NUMBER OF STORIES WITH ENHANCEMENT USED



Total	111	197 stories	100.0
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Table 5. Number of pictures used by the three Daily Newspapers

Figure 2: Number of lead stories with enhancement in the election stories

Table 5 and pie chart above in Figure 2 shows the number of stories with enhancement. The pie charts above illustrate the type of enhancements (lead stories) used. It is observed from the chart that out of 59 stories 32 pictures representing (54.2%) had photographic enhancement for *Daily Mail*, for *New Vision* out of 76 stories 40 pictures representing (52.6%) had photographic enhancement, for *Daily Nation* out of 62 stories 39 pictures representing (62.9%) had enhancement. It can be summarized that majority of stories had enhancement photograph attached to them.

R.2: How did the coverage of the Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and Daily Nation newspapers in the 2016 general elections indicate the level of fairness in its reportage?

The table below represents the distribution of stories across the political parties covered in both the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *Daily Nation* newspapers by comparison.

(i). Coverage of political parties

TABLE 6

S/N	PARTY	DAILY MAIL		NEW VISION		DAILY NATION	
		No. of stories	Percent	No. of stories	Percent	No. of stories	Percent
1	MMD	1	7.7%	3	11.1%	5	31.3%
2	PF	3	23.1%	4	14.8%	1	6.3%
3	UPND	8	61.5%	13	48.1%	10	62.5%
4	FDD	1	7.7%	2	7.4%	0	0.0%
5	NAREP	0	0.0%	2	7.4%	0	0.0%
6	GREEN PARTY	0	0.0%	1	3.7%	0	0.0%
7	RAINBOW PARTY	0	0.0%	1	3.7%	0	0.0%
8	UNIP	0	0.0%	1	3.7%	0	0.0%
	Total	13	100.0	27	100.0	16	100.0

Table 6. Number of stories of political parties covered by the three Daily Newspapers

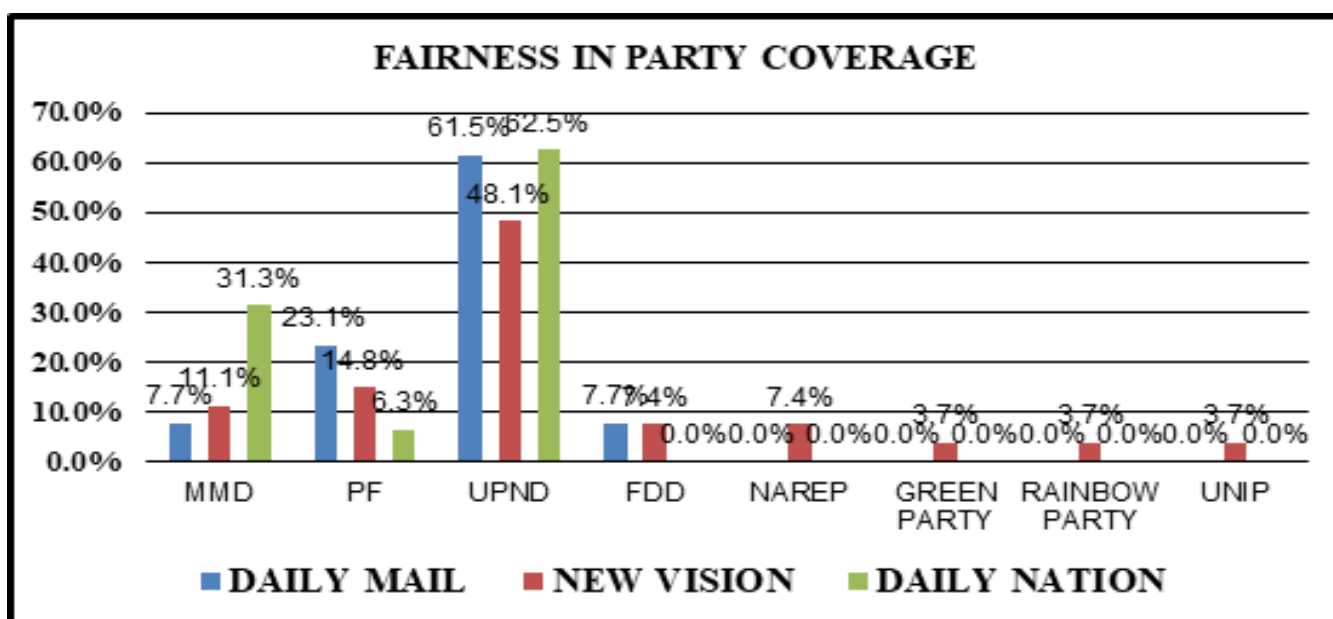


Figure 3: Percent of coverage of political parties by the three Daily Newspapers

It can be seen from the data in **Table 6** and **Figure 3** that in these stories UPND had the highest mention of (61.5%) by *Daily Mail*, (48.1%) by *New Vision* and (62.5%) by *Daily Nation*, followed by MMD (31.3%) by *Daily Nation* and PF with (23.1%) by *Daily Mail*. FDD and MMD was mentioned (7.7%) by

both *Daily Mail*. FDD and NAREP had (7.4%) mention by *New Vision*. The other parties such as Green party, Rainbow party and UNIP had an equal number of mentions of (3.7%) by *New Vision*. from the figure above, *Daily Nation* did not cover FDD, NAREP, Green party and UNIP. Equally, *Daily Mail* did not cover NAREP, Green party, Rainbow party and UNIP.

(ii). Coverage of presidential Candidates

TABLE 7

S/N	CANDIDATE NAME	DAILY MAIL		NEW VISION		DAILY NATION	
		No. of stories	Percent	No. of stories	Percent	No. of stories	Percent
1	Nevers Mumba (MMD)	3	10.7%	3	10.5%	5	12.0%
2	Edgar Lungu (PF)	20	71.4%	4	47.4%	1	56.0%
3	Hakainde Hichilema (UPND)	3	10.7%	13	21.1%	10	24.0%
4	Edith Zewelani Nawakwi (FDD)	1	3.6%	2	5.3%	0	8.0%
5	Elias Chipimo Jnr (NAREP)	1	3.6%	2	5.3%	0	0.0%
6	Peter Sinkamba (Green Party)	0	0.0%	1	5.3%	0	0.0%
7	W. Kabimba (Rainbow Party)	0	0.0%	1	5.3%	0	0.0%
8	Tilyenji “Kenneth” Kaunda (UNIP)	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Total	28	100.0	27	100.0	16	100.0

Table 7. Distribution and Number of stories about presidential candidates by the three Daily Newspaper

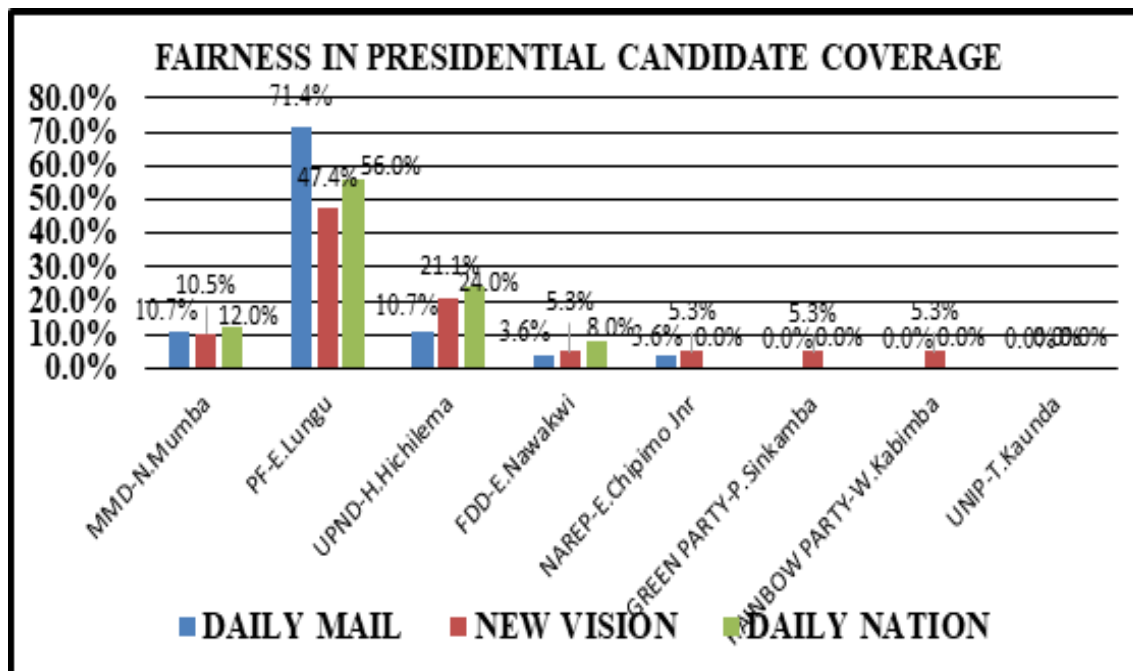


Figure 4.
Fairness in the coverage of political candidates

As can be seen from table 7 and figure 4 on the left, there were

differences in the amount of coverage for each of the presidential candidates received from the three newspapers. All the newspapers heavily focused on President Edgar Chagwa Lungu. Edgar Chagwa Lungu had a higher number of mentions in percentage followed by Hakainde Hichilema than any other candidate. The government-owned *Zambia Daily Mail* newspaper mentioned president Lungu in the *Daily Mail* with (71.4%), *New Vision* (10.4%) and *Daily Nation* (56.0%) and president Hakainde (10.7%), *New Vision* (21.1%) and *Daily Nation* (24.0%). This was followed by President Mumba with (10.7 %) *Daily Mail*, (10.5%) *New Vision* and *Daily Nation* (12.0%). President Nawakwi was mentioned by *Daily Mail* (3.6%), *New Vision* (5.3%) and *Daily Nation* (8.0%). President Chipimo was mentioned (3.6 %) by *Daily Mail*, *New Vision* (5.3%) and *Daily Nation* did not mention him. President Sinkamba was mentioned by the *New Vision* (5.3%). He wasn't mentioned by both *Daily Mail* and *Daily Nation*. President Kabimba was equally mentioned by *New Vision* (5.3%). He was also not mentioned in the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Nation*. Tilyenji Kaunda was mentioned by the three dailies.

(iii). Coverage of election issues/stories

TABLE 8

ELECTION ISSUE/ TOPIC	DAILY MAIL		NEW VISION		DAILY NATION	
	N=	Percent	N=	Percent	N=	Percent
Election Campaigns	11	18.3%	3	5.8%	6	10.9%
Electoral process issues	10	16.7%	15	28.8%	5	9.1%
Judiciary and legal affaires	3	5.0%	2	3.8%	4	7.3%
Election-related violence	10	16.7%	5	9.6%	8	14.5%
Other election related issues	10	16.7%	13	25.0%	19	34.5%
Election Malpractice (rigging)	2	3.3%	1	1.9%	2	3.6%
Defections from political party to another	2	3.3%	2	3.8%	1	1.8%
Personal attacks on candidates (not insult)	4	6.7%	0	0.0%	3	5.5%
Labour issues	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Nominations	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	1	1.8%
Political party alliances	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.8%
Party manifesto	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Infrastructure	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	0	0.0%
Poverty alleviation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Personal insults about candidate or party	1	1.7%	2	3.8%	3	5.5%
Corruption or anti-corruption	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Agriculture	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.8%
Education	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	0	0.0%
Employment	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Youth participation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Reconciliation (peace)	5	8.3%	6	11.5%	2	3.6%
Total	60	100.0	52	100.0	55	100.0

Table 8: Distribution of election issues/stories by the three Daily Newspapers

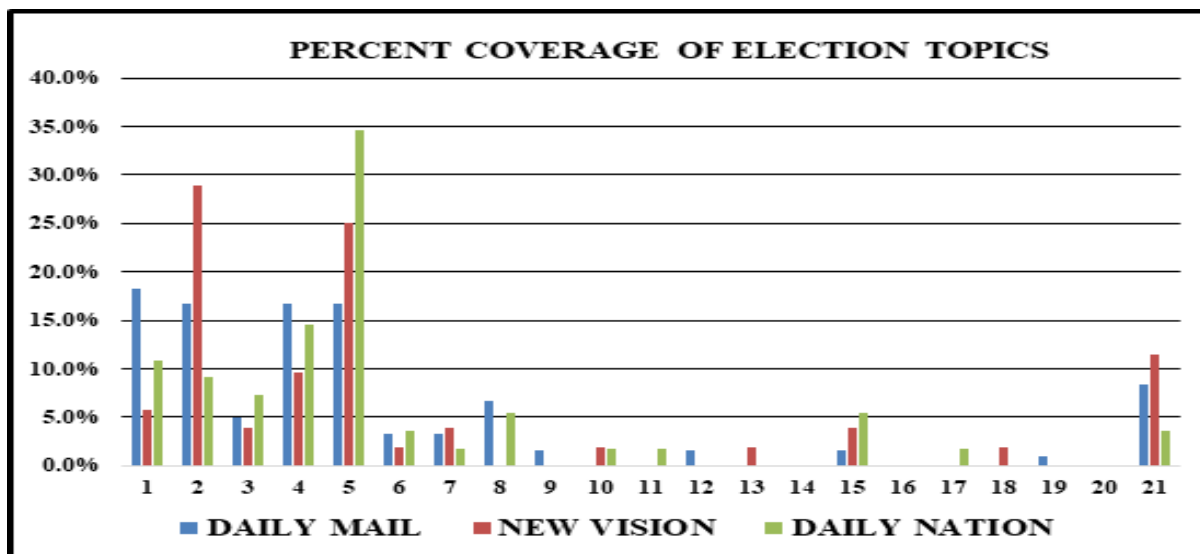


Figure 5: Percent coverage of election issues/stories by the three Daily Newspapers.

Table 8 and Figure 5 shows the data findings. The analysis above shows that *Zambia Daily Mail* covered the electoral process issues, electoral-related violence and other election related issues (16.7 %), election campaigns (18.3%) and reconciliation (peace) (8.3%) were top three issues. The other issues that received coverage in the newspaper include: personal attacks on candidates (not insults) (6.7%), Judiciary and legal affairs (5.0%), election malpractice(rigging) and defections from political party to another (3.3%), personal attacks about candidate, or party, labor issues and party manifesto (1,7%), and employment (1.0%).

In the privately-owned *New Vision*, had a slightly higher coverage given to electoral process issues (28%), other election related issues (25.0%) Election campaigns reconciliation (peace) (11.5%) more than *New Vision* (see table above). Other issues that were covered were: election-related violence (9.6%), election campaigns (5.8%), personal attacks on candidates (not insults) and personal insults about candidate or party and judiciary and legal affairs (3.8%), election malpractice (rigging), nominations and education (1.9%).

On the other had the private-owned *Daily Nation* had other election related issues (34.5), election campaigns (10.9%) and electoral process issues (9.1%) as highest covered. Other issues covered include: personal attacks on candidates (not insults), personal attacks about candidate or party (5.5%), election malpractice (rigging) and reconciliation (peace) (3.6%), defections from party to another, nominations, political party alliances and Agriculture (1.8%)

4.5.3 LEVEL OF DOMINANT TONE

Research question 3:

R.3: How did the election stories on the 2016 general elections in the *Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and *Daily Nation* newspapers show the media’s dominant tone?

Table 8 below presents results on the tone of items (stories) published in the *Zambia Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and *Daily Nation* newspapers on the 2016 presidential election elections. The variables under this section are the dominant tone of stories found in both newspapers on the front page, front page other and any other section. Tone in stories was measured by three sub-variables either positive (friendly or conciliatory), negative (hostile or confrontational) or neutral (neither positive nor negative).

TABLE 9

DOMINANT TONE OF MEDIA					
Variable	DAILY MAIL	Variable	NEW VISION	Variable	DAILY NATION
<i>Dominant Tone</i>	No of stories	<i>Dominant Tone</i>	No of stories	<i>Dominant Tone</i>	No of stories
POSITIVE	31	POSITIVE	29	POSITIVE	16
NEGATIVE	20	NEGATIVE	21	NEGATIVE	38
NEUTRAL	8	NEUTRAL	25	NEUTRAL	8
<i>Total no. of stories analysed</i>	59	<i>Total no. of stories analysed</i>	76	<i>Total no. of stories analysed</i>	62

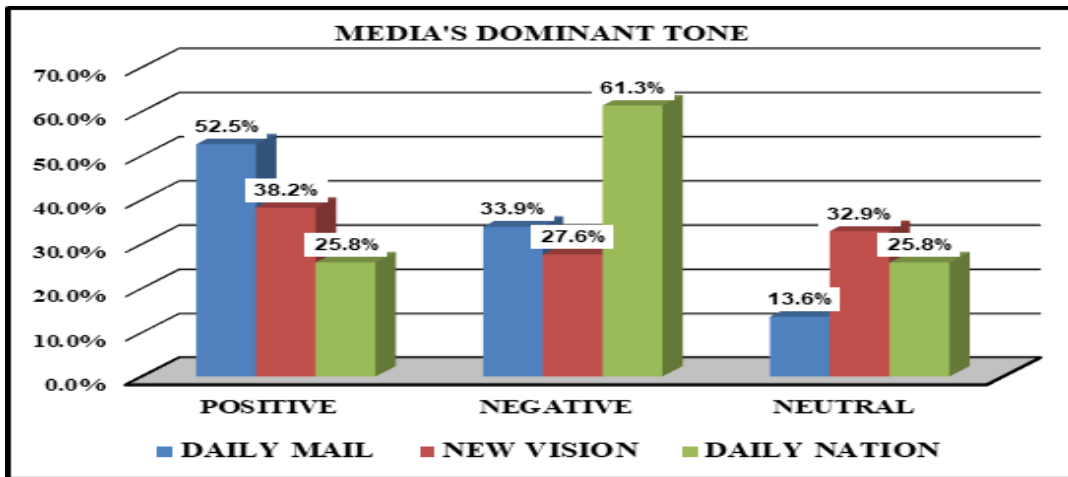
Table 9: Dominant Tone of the Media

TABLE 10

PAPER	PERCENTAGE OF TONE		
Sub-variable ➔	POSITIVE friendly, conciliatory, encouraging, exhortation)	NEGATIVE hostile, confrontational, adversarial)	NEUTRAL using words that does not portray story as either negative or positive
<i>DAILY MAIL</i>	52.5%	33.9%	13.6%
<i>NEW VISION</i>	38.2%	27.6%	32.9%
<i>DAILY NATION</i>	25.8%	61.3%	25.8%
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 10: Percent of Dominant Tone of Media

Figure 6: Percent of Media’s Dominant Tone by the three Daily Newspapers The findings show that



more than half (52.5%) out of 31 stories *Zambia Daily Mail* on election were positive, (33.9%) out of 20 stories were negative. (13.6%) out of 8 stories analyzed were coded with neutral tones. In

New Vision (38.2%) out 29 stories were positive, (27.6%) out of 21 stories were negative and (32.9%) out of 25 stories were neutral. In the *Daily Nation* (25.8%) out of 16 stories were positive, (61.3%) out of 38 stories were negative and (25.8%) out of 8 stories.

4.6. KEY FINDINGS FROM QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS (RESPONDENTS)

The study also involved conducting interviews with key personnel in the sampled media houses. The main objective was to have deeper insights into how the media felt they covered the elections in-order to establish the correlation between the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study and the self-assessment of individuals in the media. The interviews sought answers to the following questions; the description of individual media house’s coverage of the run up to the August 11th 2016 presidential elections, whether they have in-house policy regarding election coverage, if the electoral laws in Zambia facilitate media coverage of elections i.e. the Electoral Commission of Zambia, the highlighting of successes and challenges faced so as to suggest improvement in the coverage of future elections in Zambia. Out of the five purposively selected media respondents only three gave response. The rest either remained mute while others said they were busy. To help me answer these questions, I formulated research questions that were answered through self-

administered questionnaires. These questions were mainly answered by journalists.

4.6.1 LEVEL OF PROMINENCE

Research Question 1:

R.1: How did stories in the 2016 general elections published in the *Zambia Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and *Daily Nation* newspapers show the level of prominence given to the coverage of elections?

Regarding the question directed at media respondents above, I formulated an interview question as shown below:

Question 1: Think back over the media’s coverage of the 2016 presidential elections, during election coverage in Zambia, what prominent election stories appeared most in the media as top stories?

Presentation of Results

Respondent 1:

1. Violence
2. Tribalism
3. Malpractice

Respondent 2:

1. Personal attack 2. Party Manifesto 3. Political party alliance

Respondent 3:

State owned Media Institutions prioritized the issues of the ruling party whereas the private owned media prioritized issues of the opposition parties.

4.6.2 LEVEL OF FAIRNESS

Research Question 2:

R.2: How did the coverage of the Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and Daily Nation newspapers in the 2016 general elections indicate the level of fairness in its reportage?

Regarding the question directed at media respondents above, I formulated an interview question as shown below:

Question 2: Think back again over the media's coverage of the 2016 presidential elections, in your own words, when it comes to fairness of media coverage, was there adequate coverage by the media in terms of:

1. Political party coverage?

Respondent 1:

"Political party media coverage is always compromised especially where the only national broadcasting media house that is accessed by majority of the population worldwide is pro-government. In such a case in my opinion there can never be fairness in political party coverage unless certain things are put in place such as levelling the political playing ground for both the ruling and opposition parties."

Respondent 2:

"No, because some media houses were biased."

Respondent 3:

"Note that invisible deals were cut between political parties and Private owned Media Houses."

Off course for the State owned it was obvious. Further, Journalists were assigned as invisible image builders for the respective Parties, as such the pipers on played tunes as demanded by those who paid for the tunes. In a nutshell, Political Party media coverage was not fair as automatic preferential treatment targets were set by almost all the media houses depending on who paid the piper."

2. Presidential candidate coverage?

Respondent 1:

"The same concept of political party coverage applies also to a political presidential candidate"

Respondent 2:

"Not fair coverage as only the PF and UPND were more covered."

Respondent 3:

"The case of covering the Presidential candidate is as in the case of covering Political Parties. In fact, in most cases the Presidential candidate is given more coverage than the political party."

Question 3: What where some of the major election stories which the media covered?

Respondent 1:

1. 50 + 1 winning concept
2. Referendum
3. Political violence

Respondent 2:

1. Presidential candidates
2. Insults
3. (no response)

Respondent 3:

1. Abuse of Office/Authority
2. Tribal/Regional voting
3. Malpractices (Rigging) allegations

Question 4: What where some of the least election stories which the media covered?

Respondent 1:

1. (no response) 2. (No response) 3. (no response)

Respondent 2:

1. Party Manifestos 2. Defections 3. (no response)

Respondent 3:

1. Ward Councilors statements 2. Referendum 3. Ineffectiveness of the Electoral Commission of Zambia

4.6.3 LEVEL OF DOMINANT TONE

Research question 3:

R.3: How did the election stories on the 2016 general elections in the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Nation* newspapers show the media’s dominant tone?

Regarding the question directed at media respondents above, I formulated an interview question as shown below:

Question 5: What was the dominant tone of media coverage of the presidential elections was

1. Negative 2. Positive 3. Neutral

NOTE:

***Positive** (friendly, conciliatory, encouraging, exhortation),

***Neutral** (using words that does not portray story as either negative or positive)

***Negative** (hostile, confrontational, adversarial)

Respondent 1:

Answer: 1=Negative

Respondent 2:

Answer: 1=Negative

Respondent 3:

Answer: 3=Negative

Question 6: Explain briefly for reason given in the question above.

Respondent 1:

“Most of the private media houses covered the opposition where most of these negative political incidences where recorded while a few of the pro-government media concentrated on the positive.”

Respondent 2:

“The media gave us more of fights instead of news on issues.”

Respondent 3:

“Depending on who paid the piper, the Media Institutions’ preferred candidate/ political party always got the best/positive coverage and space whereas the candidates that didn’t pay the piper got negative coverage.”

4.7 Other findings from Questionnaires: Interview schedules

4.7.1 Policies on media coverage of elections

Regarding the question on policies on media coverage of elections directed at media respondents, I formulated an interview question as shown below:

Question 1: Do you have in house policies you follow as a guide in covering elections? If yes skip Q.C2

1. Yes 2. No

S/N	Respondent	Answer
1	Respondent 1	YES
2	Respondent 2	YES
3	Respondent 3	NO

Question 2: Do you think the electoral laws in Zambia facilitate easy coverage of elections?

Respondent 1:

“The electoral laws do facilitate for easy coverage of elections. However, it is the way some government wings handle the situation that causes problems in covering elections by some media houses”

Respondent 2:

“Yes.”

Respondent 3:

“NO. However, Zambia has adequate electoral laws, unfortunately they are selectively implemented by those responsible. Further, in most cases, the said laws are only favorably implemented to the ruling party whereas the opposition always find themselves on the other side of such laws. E.G: The Public Order Act.”

4.7.2 Analysis of key successes & challenges in media coverage of elections

4.7.3 Research question 4

R.4: *What were the successes and challenges faced by the media during the coverage of the 2016 presidential elections.*

Key successes

S/N	RESPONDENT 1
1	Most political parties that want to stand are given a chance to do so without any intimidation from the ruling party
2	Dissemination of electoral information to the masses is given enough time by the media
3	Election education is conducted even in the remote parts of Zambia to enlighten the public on the Dos and Don'ts
S/N	RESPONDENT 2
1	Election results are quick
2	Election results are made available to all media houses
3	The commission responds to questions from the media
S/N	RESPONDENT 3
1	(Unfortunately, there are no successes worth to discuss)
2	
3	

Key challenges

S/N	RESPONDENT 1
1	Journalists who are engaged by certain political parties to cover their events end up being biased and not being fair and objective while some reporters from the private media tend to be hindered from covering the ruling party
2	Usage of government resources by office bearers in offices as well as holding ministerial positions during campaigns makes it difficult for journalists to exercise professionalism
3	Revoking of public gathering licenses for political parties on last minute by the police attracts violence by the affected political party which endangers the lives of journalists assigned to cover such an event
S/N	RESPONDENT 2
1	Transportation of journalists to other polling stations
2	Private media houses can't hire enough man power to cover the elections
3	Some journalists are beaten by cadres during campaigns
S/N	RESPONDENT 3
1	Security of Journalists who are perceived to be controversial against a political party is not guaranteed when covering events especially that even the Police are vulnerable to attacks from the ruling Party.
2	Most Zambian Media Institutions are financially limping and that trickles down to the respective Journalists who automatically become vulnerable to the carrots that are dangled by the politicians.
3	Non-Access to Information Law is one challenge which impedes authoritative collection of information.

4.7.4 Future coverage of elections

Question: What do you think should be done to improve coverage of future elections in Zambia by the print media?

S/N	RESPONDENT 1
1	Journalists should cover elections independently as a media house not being sponsored by the political party involved
2	Raiding of print media houses should be discouraged especially by the ruling party when some publications do not favor them as this causes fear in reporters and editors under print

	media
3	Media houses should have enough resources from media coverage and other logistics
S/N	RESPONDENT 2
1	The electoral commission should consider offering some help to private media in terms of transportation.
2	Media houses should employ enough staff to cover the elections
3	Boost protection for journalist during elections
S/N	RESPONDENT 3
1	There is need of enacting the Freedom of Information Bill which shall allow the Media and the general publics have access to the public and private relevant information.
2	Political parties must take their cadres who are in the habit of intimidating and attacking Journalists who are perceived to report negative but truthful information of the respective political party or candidate.
3	Despite carrots being dangled on the faces of Journalists and their respective Media Institutions, Professionalism must, always be observed.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Overview

This chapter summarizes the findings introduced in the last chapter, by first analyzing the results and then discussing how they pertain to the questions addressed in this study posed at the beginning of the study. This study explored how the state-owned the *Zambia Daily* and private-owned *New Vision* and the *Daily Nation* newspapers covered the 2016 presidential elections. It involved a content analysis of 108 articles to determine the level of prominence and fairness as well as the dominant tone of coverage. This discussion entailed assessment of key points noted in the findings with inferences from the perspectives gained through review of the framing and agenda setting theory and other related studies discussed in Chapter Two. The chapter also draws some conclusions of the comparative analysis of media coverage from three Newspaper content analysis from qualitative content analysis, and finally makes recommendations for future studies.

indicators.

Similarly, to Busher (2006) other types of newspaper content such as editorials, letters to the editor, opinion columns and cartoons, were avoided in this study. The results showed that a majority (66.1% *Daily Mail* and 50% *Daily Nation*) of the articles analyzed were straight news (lead) stories. However *New Vision* had a lower coverage in headline stories with (27.6%). On the positive note this was similar with the findings of Cummings (2006) where more (60.7%) of the articles were in that category. Miller et al (2012) also found more articles (89.8%) that were news stories than editorial, columns or letters and associated the most of prominence with the straight news type story. In similitude to the

5.1 DISCUSSION ON NEWSPAPER FINDINGS

1. To determine the level of prominence of election stories covered by selected media outlets in the 2016 general election.

5.1.1 Level of prominence

As applied here, prominence “refers to the positioning of a story within a text to communicate its importance” (Kioussis, 2004, p. 71). Argued by Watts et al (1993), stories in the media show their importance to the audience virtue of their placement, length, or treatment. A story’s prominence is influenced by its placement, size, pictures and other aesthetic tools (Kioussis, 2004). Therefore, this study measured the level of prominence given to the 2016 presidential elections by using type of story (lead story), placement (location) of story and enhancement type (number of pictures used) as

findings in this study, it is apparent from this study that the coverage of the media in terms of prominence in the 2016 presidential elections by type of story was prominent enough. Miller et al (2012) asserted that prominence includes the location (front page, front section, elsewhere) of stories. This study accordingly measured prominence by taking into cognizance the placement of the story. As noted by Andrade (2013), stories located on the front page of newspapers are more prominent than those found elsewhere. Similar with the findings of Miller et al (2012) that about a quarter of the stories analyzed were placed on the front pages. Front other and any other page were less than 50%. As noted by Saunders (2006), the front page of newspapers is

reserved for high profile personalities. It is apparent that in the 2016 presidential elections the Media treated the election stories with much prominence in terms of placement.

Another variable that was used to measure the level of prominence was enhancement of stories (number of pictures used). Khan (2003) in a study for instance measured the level of prominence given to the election petition in terms of whether stories were accompanied with visuals or not. The results in this current study showed that most of the stories in the distribution had photographic enhancement which was above (50%). *Daily Mail* (54.2%), *New Vision* (52.6%) and *Daily Nation* (62.9%). It can be summarized that majority of stories had enhancement photograph attached to them. Consequently, it could be said that the coverage of the 2016 elections was with much prominence. Stories are framed by the media through pictures are attached to them. Thus, framing the elections and setting the agenda by telling the audience what to think and how to think about issues in society.

2. To ascertain the level of fairness with which the selected media outlets reported on the 2016 general elections

5.1.2 Level of Fairness (Bias)

As shown in the findings section Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu and Mr. Hakainde Hichilema stories dominated the *Zambia Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and the *Daily Nation* newspapers, although there were differences in the amount of coverage each of the presidential candidates received from all the newspapers. But both newspapers heavily focused on president Edgar Chagwa Lungu and Hakainde Hichilema.

Edgar Chagwa Lungu had a slightly higher percent with all newspapers, followed by Hakainde Hichilema and Nevers Mumba. The other candidates received even lesser coverage. The discrepancy in coverage can be attributed and

not limited to first, more resources at the disposal of the government owned newspaper that might have enabled it to hire and pay several correspondents in different parts of the country where candidates campaigned to cover the elections. From the picture analysis and language captions, the opposition UPND candidate was covered more not on grounds of popularity but framing stories in the negative on basis of violence reported stories in the UPND and being a political figure in news making thus a higher mention. The PF candidate equally received mentions first to the opposition on basis of being a political figure and a ruling party.

Secondly, it could have been ideologically prudent for all the three dailies to publish more favorable articles of president Lungu to counter the 'opposition propaganda'. The results indicated that all newspapers gave the ruling more coverage than any other presidential candidate. Also, all the newspapers offered scarce coverage to third-party candidates. This was probably because newspapers largely frame presidential election as a two-way contest between an incumbent and another candidate with higher chances of winning. Thirdly, as Schomback (2008) earmarks, commercial news media are profit and power driven and do not necessarily devote themselves to the service of public interest. This means that they are more likely to concentrate on candidates with a potential to generate revenue in terms of copy sales, and these are people common in the public domain. Commercialization of news and pressure to generate profit are seen to be the reasons in pushing media outlets to preference 'horse-race' coverage.

On party coverage findings indicate otherwise. As indicated earlier, Miller and Riechert (2001) advocated that in the process of frame identification, key words should be mapped out and counted in terms of frequency within the data collected. Accordingly, fairness of each story

analyzed was determined by identifying key words that denoted a slant towards any side or otherwise. The findings of this study were that UPND had the highest mention of (61.5%), followed by MMD (31.3%) and PF with (23.1%) by all the newspapers. These results indicate a similar suggestion that media frames political issues. These results are supported by findings on amount of party coverage by Davis (2004) who examined how the mass media framed the South African general elections in 2004. It was found out that newspaper coverage of political parties was generally neutral and the incumbent party in power, African National Congress (ANC), dominated the coverage followed by the main opposition party, Democratic Alliance (DA). This current study supports the tenets of Davis' findings in literature review, the ruling party (PF) dominated the coverage.

In the core principle of agenda setting theory which is; "the prominence of elements in the news influences the prominence of those elements among the public" (Carol & McCombs, 2003, p. 36), the first level is concerned with the salience of objects (public issues or public figures) and the second level is concerned with the salience of the characteristics of those objects (Carol & McCombs, 2003, p. 38), is agreeable to the fact that news media present an agenda of those topics and they also describe each one. Therefore, prominence of opposition party's coverage and incumbent ruling party coverage was based on public figures in the parties and commercialization pressure to sell their papers. It is therefore argued after an analysis of these results that these parties (UPND, PF and MMD) were most active on the campaign and had high profile leaders that attracted the media to cover their election events. It also suggests that the other parties which had either the least coverage or were not covered at all in the study period was because they had no profile figures in their parties. The

fact that election stories indicated high levels of bias (unfairness) leaving out other parties in the way the newspapers covered the electoral issues is supported by MISA (2016) and Cummings et al which all found high levels of bias in the newspapers they studied (Cummings 2006, Grbesa ,2012, Goretti, 2007, Khan,2003).

On election topics as discovered in the results section the Daily Mail had 16.7% electoral related violence and election related issues, (16.7%) election campaigns, *New Vision* had (28.1%) political process issues, (11%) campaigns and peace, (6.7%) personal attacks on candidates; and *Daily Nation* had (34.5%) election related issues, (10.9%) election campaigns, (5.5%) personal attacks on candidates. It is conclusive from the results that top issues captivated the attention of all the newspapers in the presidential cycle and were identical - suggesting that the election related issues, electoral violence, electoral campaigns and personal attacks on candidates dominated the three newspapers were framed in the coverage as central issues of concern for the ordinary. This on the other hand-suggest that, poverty alleviation, corruption or anti-corruption, education and youth participation, education, agriculture, labor, etc. which were least covered were framed negatively in the coverage as issues not central and not of concern for the Zambian electorate. The prominence given as such in the findings on the less or no coverage or mention of a political party, candidate or election issue supports the tenet from Farnsworth and Lichter's studies (2003, p. 91), that "Reporters can choose not to cover a political actor...they can reduce the influence of a given actor's comments by increasing the attention given to alternative voices on that topic, and they can even investigate the claims and find them to be transparent symbols or even false" It is through this framing perspective that the public may decide which candidate and/or issue they will focus their interests.

It is evident that the focus has thus been on the trappings of the electoral process, but not the substance behind the parties nor on developmental issues that are fundamental to democracy. This means that the media do not provide Zambians with enough access to the information they need to be able to make an informed choice as to who and which party to vote for to determine the future of Zambia.

3. To analyze the dominant tone with which the selected media outlets covered stories on the 2016 general elections.

5.1.3 Level of Dominant Tone

The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of the three dailies in the study indicated that generally, the tone of the coverage was either positive (52.5%) *Daily Mail*, (38.2%) *New Vision* and (25.8%) *Daily Nation* or Negative (33.9%) *Daily Mail*, (27.6%) *New Vision* and (61.3%) *Daily Nation* or neutral (40.2%). This is however opposite to the findings of Busher's (2006) study of the tone with which the New York Times framed Hillary Clinton and found that most the articles had neutral tones. This study does not further support Andrade (2013) who also found a generally neutral/positive tone in the coverage of Julian Assange by English and Spanish newspapers from various continents. The findings of this study supported the assertion by Brunken (2006) that the tone of elitist newspapers was more positive in their coverage since the *Daily Mail* can be classified as an elitist newspaper in Zambia and is government owned. Most of the stories covered were positive in the sense that newspapers needed to cover such stories of the incumbent ruling party as the party belongs to the government. The *Daily Nation* was more negative of the three newspaper towards its reportage of which in comparison it had (61%) as opposed to (3.3%) of *Daily Mail*. The new Vision was

(27.6%). One reason suggested is that it is a pro-government private owned newspaper thus its high negative dominant tone especially towards the opposition parties.

5.2 DISCUSSIONS ON MEDIA RESPONDENT FINDINGS

5.2.1 Level of Prominence of election stories

Presentation of results in the results section indicated that the respondents ranked Violence, Tribalism, Malpractice, Personal attack, Party Manifesto, Political party alliance as prominent election stories covered by the media. However, findings in the newspaper content analysis indicate topics such as violence, personal attacks were more prominent. Other stories such as malpractice, party manifesto and political alliance were covered by the media but had not much prominence. Tribalism was one factor that was prominent but did not occur as key research word in the newspaper content. The third respondent said that the "*State-owned Media Institutions prioritized the issues of the ruling party whereas the private owned media prioritized issues of the opposition parties*"

Qualitative descriptive analysis on the perception of media respondent on the level of prominence indicate that the media framed, and agenda set the elections, a similar finding with the newspaper content analysis. Amoakohene (2007) concluded that the level of prominence given to political stories is mainly because of relations between political systems and the media.

5.2.2 Level of Fairness of Newspaper in its reportage

It is very clear from the respondent's perception that political party and presidential candidate coverage was compromised and unfair. This is in correlation with the newspaper content analysis in which Hakainde Hichilema and Chagwa Lungu had more coverage including the

political parties. For example, from the interview schedule, all the respondents had this to say on political party coverage:

Respondent 1:

“Political party media coverage is always compromised especially where the only national broadcasting media house that is accessed by most of the population worldwide is pro-government. In such a case in my opinion there can never be fairness in political party coverage unless certain things are put in place such as levelling the political playing ground for both the ruling and opposition parties.”

Respondent 2:

“No because some media houses were biased.”

Respondent 3:

“Note that invisible deals were cut between political parties and Private owned Media Houses. Off course for the State owned it was obvious.” Further, Journalists were assigned as invisible image builders for the respective Parties, as such the pipers on played tunes as demanded by those who paid for the tunes. In a nutshell, Political Party media coverage was not fair as automatic preferential treatment targets were set by almost all the media houses depending on who paid the piper.”

The findings above are similar with the literature reviewed from the study done by Temin & Smith (2002) on the tone of the state-owned newspaper’s reportage with both the incumbent and opposition parties receiving largely positive or neutral coverage, with relatively few negative stories appearing in the state-owned press.

5.2.1.1 On Presidential candidate coverage respondents said:

Respondent 1:

“The same concept of political party coverage applies also to a political presidential candidate”

Respondent 2:

“Not fair coverage as only the PF and UPND were more covered.”

Respondent 3:

“Abuse of Office/Authority, Tribal/Regional voting, Malpractices (Rigging) allegations”

Qualitative findings on presidential candidates and election stories correlate with the findings on quantitative findings were more attention and undue coverage was given to the UPND and PF though followed by MMD and in addition, substantial developmental election stories had lower coverage by the media. This is unlike the support by Temin & Smith (2002) in literature review of this study who noted that while the media endeavored significant efforts to ensure fair coverage to the various political parties, the ruling NDC received the bulk of attention. In this study it was both the major opposition and ruling parties who received the bulk of attention as noted earlier on.

5.2.1.2 The major election stories which the media covered

On major election stories in which the media covered 50+ 1 winning concepts, and referendum were not covered as key research topics in the newspaper content analysis except for defections, party manifestos, political violence i.e. attacks on candidates and political parties and insults and violence related issues (tribalism/regional voting). In short, these are some of the issues which media concentrated more. The media framed the elections most stories that concern developmental issues such education, health, youth participation were not major central topics of coverage. One supposition is that most political parties also do

not talk about these issues but rather concentrate on attacking each other and desiring to gain more coverage.

5.2.2.3 The least election stories which the media covered

One media respondent (media representative) narrated that ward councilors statements, referendum and Ineffectiveness of the Electoral Commission of Zambia were the least stories covered by the media.

5.2.3 Level of Media's Dominant Tone

Regarding the question directed at media respondents on media's dominant tone two respondents from the findings section indicated that media coverage was more negative and only one respondent said it was neutral. The reason given by both media respondents cannot overemphasised as quoted below:

Respondent 1:

"Most of the private media houses covered the opposition where most of these negative political incidences were recorded while a few of the pro-government media concentrated on the positive."

Respondent 2:

"The media gave us more of fights instead of news on issues."

Respondent 3:

"Depending on who paid the piper, the Media Institutions' preferred candidate/ political party always got the best/positive coverage and space whereas the candidates that didn't pay the piper got negative coverage"

5.2.4 Policies on media's coverage of elections

On the interview questions which included policies on media coverage, two respondents indicated that they had existing in-house policy which they follow and supported that the electoral

laws in Zambia do facilitate the easy coverage of elections. It is noted, however, from one respondent as quoted that:

"....it is the way some government wings handle the situation that causes problems in covering elections by some media houses"

The respondent who was not certain on having an in-house policy narrated that despite this:

"...Zambia has adequate electoral laws, unfortunately they are selectively implemented by those responsible."

The two other respondents on the other hand further said, in most cases, the said laws are only favorably implemented to the ruling party whereas the opposition always find themselves on the other side of such laws. E.g. The Public Order Act.

Two respondents from the public media noted that the Electoral (Code of conduct) regulations provided enough guidelines as indicated in the findings section. It suggests that policies are published for the awareness of all parties involved as well as government institutions. However, some government institutions do not adhere to these policies which affect media houses in their respective job description. This way, journalists though properly guided throughout the electoral process, do not execute their duties well.

5.2.5 Successes and Challenges of media coverage

All the respondents as can be seen from the results section on media coverage claimed that most political parties that want to stand are given a chance to do so without any intimidation from the ruling party the ruling government adheres to the provisions in the electoral laws for any party to stand for any position.

Second, dissemination of electoral information to the masses is given enough time by the media and election education is conducted even in the

remote parts of Zambia to enlighten the public on the Dos and Don'ts which is a good indicator of media's role as an educator.

Third, respondents claimed that election results are quick and are made available to all media houses and finally the commission (ECZ) responds to questions from the media.

The above suggest that the media is doing well in covering of elections when it comes to election education, transmission of election results, and dissemination of electoral information to the masses. On the other hand, this study brought to the fore many challenges encountered by media practitioners in their quest to inform the electorate about the activities of political parties. ZANIS and ZNBC respondents indicated that the most outstanding challenge was revoking of public gathering licenses for political parties on last minute by the police which attracts violence by the affected political party and therefore endangers the lives of journalists assigned to cover such an event. In addition, the security of Journalists who are perceived to be controversial against a certain political party is not guaranteed when covering events especially that even the police are vulnerable to attacks from the ruling Party Second, lack of resources both financial and human is a hindrance to coverage of elections. This is with private media houses as indicated by one respondent. He said, "Private media houses can't hire enough man power to cover the elections".

Fourth, journalists fail to exercise their professionalism. In her own words, a media respondent said, "Usage of government resources by office bearers in offices as well as holding ministerial positions during campaigns makes it difficult for journalists to exercise professionalism".

Fifth, "Journalists who are engaged by certain political parties to cover their events end up being

biased and not being fair and objective because they are what one respondent said, "dangled with carrots" meaning given tips to cover news while some reporters from the private media tend to be hindered from covering the ruling party finally, transportation of journalists to other polling stations is difficult and some journalists are beaten by cadres during campaigns.

Sixth, there is need of enacting the Freedom of Information Bill to allow the Media and the general publics have access to the public and private relevant information.

All the above factors make the coverage of elections become unfair. It is most likely what was experienced in the recent 2016 presidential elections.

5.2.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE COVERAGE OF ELECTIONS

The fact that political violence affected most journalists in their work cited as the biggest challenge "raiding of print media houses should be discouraged especially by the ruling party when some publications do not favour them as this causes fear in reporters and editors under print media". Since this is inevitable sometimes, it is highly recommended to boost protection for journalist during elections.

Second lack of both financial and human resources was the second biggest challenge cited, respondents suggested that, Media houses should have enough resources for media coverage and other logistics, by employing enough staff to cover the elections especially the private media. In addition, the electoral commission should consider offering some help to private media in terms of transportation, to enable them to cover the elections more effectively. This way media houses would have no excuse to give for failure to cover some political parties because of lack of transport or other resources whatever the nature.

Finally, Journalists should cover elections independently as a media house not being sponsored by the political party involved as this will promote professionalism for journalists and increase the fairness or balanced coverage of presidential elections.

5.3 Implication for the Framing and agenda setting Theory

The findings of this study support the tenets of the framing theory and agenda setting. In coverage of political parties, other parties had less coverage or literally no record of coverage by the media in the study period apart from PF, MMD, UPND and FDD. Through framing and agenda, a setting, the reportage on the election the media had the potential to lead readers to perceive the election as peaceful since the dominant tone of the coverage was either positive or Negative. All the papers framed most of the election stories not devoid of confrontation and adversaries thus could have instigated any form of political conflict or violence in the country in its reportage.

Most stories were on personality and personal attacks especially among political parties and a few political giants deduced from the thematic content of tone of the newspapers. While this evidence does seem to support the framing and second-level agenda setting theories, one must contemplate what the media's true power and influences are over public opinion. It is important to note that while media framing of candidates may be powerful, it is not universal. Ross (1992) concluded that other outside forces, besides the media, can affect public perception. Therefore, other variables beside the media may be at play when public opinions are developed. By not covering important developmental issues such as agriculture, health, education, youth empowerment, employment was also framed by the newspapers.

5.4 The Influence of Media framing and agenda setting on Media and Public Opinion on coverage of the 2016 presidential elections

It is important to examine the frames and agenda setting in the news coverage of presidential elections during this election because numerous studies have shown that the way an event or individual is framed, and agenda set can have an influence on people's perceptions of that event or individual. An influence of the media lies within its ability to frame. Frames put the complexity of the world into context to help individuals make sense of the world around them. Druckman (2001) suggested that framing effects occur because citizens do not seek out additional information, but instead look to credible sources for answers. The literature on the impact of framing is extensive and shows that differences in framing can have influences on public perceptions. There is little doubt that people learn about the candidates through the media. This in turn has an influence on perceptions and eventually on the choice voters make when voting. Voters' evaluations of candidates are influenced by factors such as the voter's party identification, the voter's evaluation of the candidate's issue position, the voter's evaluation of the candidate's personality, and the voter's assessment of the candidate's viability (Kahn, 1994a, 1994b).

According to Kahn (1994a, 1994b), the way the media frame political campaigns can influence the way voters perceive the candidate. The media also can influence public perceptions of presidential elections. The ways in which the photographers, journalists, and editors choose to report election stories can trigger violence. While the study is not determining a direct correlation between newspaper readership and voting behavior or readership and violence, the results do call into question the second-level agenda setting and framing theories as they pertain to local

newspaper influence. A proliferation of negative stories did not necessarily yield negative perceptions in a voter's mind; at least, not to the extent to where it would influence voting behavior. In other words, citizens might have a negative perception about a candidate and yet still vote for him. Nevertheless, future studies might examine this idea more.

In furtherance, McCombs and Shaw (1977) in Platz (2010, p.3) confirm the influence of agenda setting on public opinion, they asserted that the press "largely structures voters' perception of reality...the press can exert considerable influence on which issues make up the agenda for any particular election" (McCombs & Shaw, 1977, p.15). It is not a wander that in this study developmental issues such as education, infrastructure, agriculture, and youth empowerment etcetera did not receive much attention from the media as focus was more on other electoral issues thus setting an agenda for people which in turn influenced their voting opinion or perception. This is well substantiated by Platz (2010), who confirms that in a given election, the press chooses from a variety of campaign topics and determines which topics will receive the most coverage from more substantial matters to lesser substantial matters such as horse race or personal quality stories i.e. personal attacks and insults. Irrespective of which topics are covered, the media wields a remarkable deal of influence by setting the agenda during an election as the topics frequently chosen and covered are the ones that citizens will view as the most significant.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Primarily, this study sought to explore how the 2016 presidential election was framed and the agenda set by the *Zambia Daily Mail*, *New Vision* and the *Daily Nation* Newspapers. The analysis of the findings was to determine the level of

prominence, ascertain the level of fairness with which the state-owned and private owned newspapers covered the election as well as analyze the dominant tone of the coverage. The study used the quantitative content analysis and qualitative content approach to explore the stories. Generally, stories on the presidential election were framed prominently in terms of the placement of headline or lead stories, enhancement (number of pictures used), coverage of political parties, coverage of presidential candidates and coverage of electoral stories/topics, and finally dominant tone of electoral stories. The agenda was also set from the less substantial election stories the media covered which viewers perceived as most important.

In the 2016 presidential election period, there has been limited coverage of key issues concerning citizens to guide their choice of voting as the focus of the media has been on political processes and practices. Political actors especially those covered in the media, are more interested to discuss processes and events surrounding the pre-election period rather than discussing the vision and agenda which should market their political ideology to the citizens of Zambia. This has been observed from personal attacks and insights against each other in politics. In a nutshell, In-depth analysis of presidential newspaper coverage is nothing new to academic study. For more than 40 years, countless scholars have examined how the theories of agenda setting and framing influence voting behavior. For as long as democracy thrives in this country, such studies must continue. All media, especially newspapers, must be willing to evaluate its coverage of elections and how that coverage influences voters. Were certain stories left out? Did one candidate receive more, better coverage than his/her opponent? Most importantly, did the media fulfill its role in effectively informing citizens about their candidates?

While this study examined election coverage in local newspapers by the media in Zambia, voting behavior and violence related stories, it should be noted that the typical newspaper reader does not reflect the general voting population and culmination of violence. Print news consumers tend to be older (over age 65), more educated (at least some post-graduate work) and white collar. Therefore, generalizations made about the media coverage of elections in the voting behavior and violence through newspaper coverage might be skewed.

Other news media, such as television or the internet, may also play a stronger role in influencing voters or violence. Slid majorities find local and cable television broadcasts are mostly or somewhat believable. During the election cycle, significantly more individuals turn to the internet Social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook have continued to dominate the landscape in terms of breaking news and have offered mainstream media outlets a challenge to keep up with the fast pace at which they operate (MISA,2016, p.22). Oher sources include Radio and Television as a source of news, a shift in media consumption away from newspapers might be placing greater agenda setting power on other news media. As earlier scholars (Entman, 1993; Ross, 1992) have pointed out, other factors beside the media may be at play when determining voting behavior. These factors can include anything from socio-economics and upbringing to the influence of one's peers. As such, the diminishing number of employment levels.

Despite the above observation on the limitation of findings, the results of this study still suggest that the role of local newspapers in this critical democratic process may be waning. The uncertain, evolving nature of the current newsroom business model is no doubt taking its toll on the quality and breadth of stories newspapers can offer as commercialization is

taking toll. However, whatever form or business model the media may take in the future, one thing is for certain: all media outlets – whether it be the internet or television, radio or newspapers must offer their audience quality, unique coverage to compete and stay viable. Regardless if the media succeeds in telling consumers how or what to think, the media's vital democratic role of informing citizens in the present and future must remain its top priority.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Although findings generated from the study were very useful, the generalizability of the results to other media types such as radio and television, should be treated with caution. This is because the study was limited to only the Zambia Daily Mail, New Vision and Daily Nation newspaper's coverage of the 2016 presidential elections. It is therefore recommended that future studies consider a Television and Radio comparative study in Zambia which would be very interesting to adopt a broader media studies in the coverage of election issues by not looking at newspapers only.
2. From the study in the selected period, there is a need to increase the coverage of topics relevant to citizens' choices of who and which party to vote for. Topics such as the eradication of poverty, education, health, agriculture, and employment would merit being addressed in relation to each party's manifesto. Balance the coverage of different political parties; this means there is a need to increase the present amount of coverage of opposition and smaller opposition parties.
3. Media organisations must realise that the period for elections provides an opportunity for them to help Zambians decide futures the country ensuring that all the activities by political players are highlighted. In a nutshell,

- the media should not merely report what the various political parties are saying but should also endeavour to bring to the fore issues that the citizens would like the parties to explain or how they intend to address certain issues if they voted for them. This way the electorate would be able to decide the best candidates based on the responses to the issues raised.
4. Media must avoid the influence of commercial pressures on media coverage. Commercialization of news and pressure to generate profit are the reasons which push media outlets to preference 'horse-race' coverage. A balanced and fair broadcast media should not be even inclined to favor game coverage. 'Profit making' kind of coverage can leave journalists open to accusations of bias
 5. Media organisations should take deliberate measures to publish policies in newspapers to provide guidance on how to report the elections. Even in an event that these guidelines are drawn media practitioners must commit adherence to them. The practitioners will have the content with the provisions in the Electoral Act of covering elections but most of them fail to adhere to in full.
 6. The Media's focus should be on peoples' need to be given information on democratic issues as much as it is their role to report violence. In addition, the media should access other political copies of their manifestos and other relevant documents such as plans of actions to the media to enable the media to write well researched stories or come up with the ideas to be used as basis for conducting interviews.
 7. The media should be neutral than being pro-government in its functionality as watch-dog and mediator between the government and the people.
 8. Media freedom should be exercised by the ruling government so as not to discourage reporters and editors under print media for fear of being raided by the ruling party.
 9. Media houses should have enough resources for media coverage and other logistics to meet all costs of adequately covering presidential elections.
 10. Media houses especially the private media should employ enough staff to cover the elections.
 11. Journalists should cover elections independently as a media house not being sponsored by the political party involved to increase fairness in coverage of elections.
 12. Journalists should be protected at all cost from public violence which is because of either political party violence or legal institutions interference in political campaigns which sparks and precipitates the violence. The police should take up the role of protecting the journalists.
 13. Public institutions should support the media rather than exacerbating the journalist in their work of covering elections which in their interference intimidates them in reporting fairly on elections.

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