
The coverage of HIV/AIDS information in Tanzania: a reflection of Mwananchi and Daily News newspapers

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Abstract

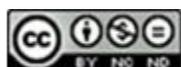
The study examined the coverage of HIV/AIDS information in Tanzania's newspapers between 2002-2004 and 2017-2019. Two leading broadsheets that were being published on daily basis, the *Daily News* and *Mwananchi* were selected. Bibliometric and content analysis were methods used in data collection and analysis. Microsoft Office Excel 2010 was used to analyse quantitative data. Findings indicate that a total of 696 HIV/AIDS articles were covered by the two newspapers. The study also revealed an irregular coverage pattern and generally a decrease in HIV/AIDS information coverage. Findings also show HIV/AIDS themes related to politics, education on disease transmission, prevention and treatment were highly covered. In addition, HIV/AIDS international information was highly covered compared to local information. The study also observed that *Daily News* had better coverage of HIV/AIDS information compared to *Mwananchi*. The study concludes that overall the attention given to HIV/AIDS in the two newspapers was very low and fluctuated over time. The study suggests that media houses train journalists on investigative journalism practices to enhance timely, quality and increased coverage of HIV/AIDS information.

Keywords:

Health information, HIV/AIDS, information coverage, media coverage, newspaper coverage, Tanzania

Introduction

The number of people living with HIV/AIDS reached 37.9 million globally as of late of whom 1.7 million people were newly estimated infections (United Nations AIDS, [UNAIDS], 2019). Since its existence, HIV/AIDS has extensively impacted society by reducing the labour force, disturbed socio-cultural and economic activities. The disease has also negatively affected most developing countries which have limited resources and accelerated poverty. According to the UNAIDS (2019), the African continent leads on prevalence, death rate and new infections compared to other continents. Although globally HIV/AIDS has affected many people, its impact has been severe in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2018, sub-Saharan region alone constituted about 6.2% of the total world population but constitute more than half (54% or 20.6 million) of the total number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world. In Eastern Africa, Tanzania was leading by having new infections where 72,000 people were infected followed by Uganda with 53,000 people



infected and Kenya with 46,000 infected people (UNAIDS, 2019). In Tanzania, HIV/AIDS has been listed as the leading disease-causing death by 17% compared to other diseases (Sawe, 2017)

Since the first clinical evidence and reportage of the (HIV/AIDS) disease in the 1980s, several initiatives have been established globally to eradicate the disease. Among the efforts was instituting organizations that help in eradicating the pandemic. Some of the global organizations initiated were the World Health Organization Global Programme on AIDS (WHO-GPA) in 1986, Joint United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) in 1994, Elton John AIDS Foundation in 1992, and Elizabeth Glaser Paediatrics Foundation (EGPF) in 2003. Other efforts undertaken to fight the pandemic include the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in 2000 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched in 2015. The aforementioned organizations and development programs are aimed at creating awareness and disseminate relevant HIV/AIDS information globally. In respective developing countries, several initiatives were also taken to combat the disease. For instance, Tanzania where this study was conducted had an important milestone in coordinating issues related to HIV/AIDS by establishing the National HIV/AIDS Control Programme (NACP) in 1985 and Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) in 2000. These global and local initiatives have been a key in several functions including coordinating matters on HIV/AIDS, providing education, and disbursing funds to governments, the public, and organizations such as civil based organizations, civil society organizations, and faith-based organizations. The mass media being organizations, have also benefited from HIV/AIDS initiatives by received funding through training and adverts on coverage of HIV/AIDS information.

In recent years, HIV/AIDS has received attention from the media in efforts to create awareness for the public. The information on the disease which is generated for the public is mostly disseminated through mass media. Mass media which include Television, radio, newspapers, and the internet (Kiran, 2019) have played a crucial role in informing the public on proper ways to prevent new transmission and use of antiretroviral drugs. The mass media coverage of health information particularly HIV/AIDS information is done through radio and television drama, analytical or editorial stories on the newspapers, billboards, pictures, and murals (Brodie, Hamel, Brady, Kates, & Altman, 2004; Mutembei 2014). Mass media not only provides people with timely and relevant information, but also informs on success stories on HIV/AIDS among people and minimizes the risk of new infections in society. Mass media also shapes debates and policy agendas (Machungo, 2012). In Tanzania, several HIV/AIDS campaigns have been conducted through radio and television. They include Fataki, SHUGA, Fema TV Talk Show, TUSEME, and FURAHA YANGU (Karam, 2009; TACAIDS, 2018).

Newspapers have been crucial in disseminating information compared to other sources such as radio, television, and billboards due to their permanence characteristic, extensive information content coverage, portability, and capability of reaching diverse and scattered people (Ogessa & Sife, 2017). Despite newspapers critical role in informing people, it has been noted that its coverage tends to prioritize catchy information content which mostly entails non-educational and non-developmental issues such as sports, entertainment, politics, advertisements rather than educational and developmental issues such as that related to HIV/AIDS (Machungo, 2012; Moqasa, 2012; Schäfer, Ivanova & Schmidt, 2014). Ogessa and Sife (2017), Elia (2019a), and Siyao and Sife (2018) also observed a preference for non-development news coverage and little coverage on development issues in newspapers on climate change and agriculture.

Although several studies on HIV/AIDS have been conducted in both developed and developing countries, most studies seem to have been conducted in developing countries. Studies conducted in developing countries include those by Nyoni (2001), Sern and Zanuddin (2012a,b), Moqasa (2012), Chande-Mallya (2014), Mutembei (2014), Bekalu and Eggermont (2014), and Kiran (2019). Studies researched in developed countries include those by Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005), Machungo (2012), Stevens and Hornik (2014). The literature reviewed in Tanzania showed that despite the existence of similar studies on media and HIV/AIDS in Tanzania (see Nyoni, 2001; Mutembei, 2014; Chande-Mallya, 2014), there was no documented info metric study which was conducted to explore the extent of newspapers coverage of HIV/AIDS information in Tanzania. It is within this milieu, the study sought to investigate the coverage of HIV/AIDS information in Tanzania using two widely read and spoken newspapers in Tanzania, namely *Daily News* and *Mwananchi*. Specifically, the study investigated the extent of newspapers coverage of HIV/AIDS information; HIV/AIDS themes covered in selected newspapers, and the geographic position of HIV/AIDS articles covered by the newspapers.

Literature Review

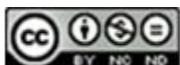
An Overview of HIV/AIDS Information Media Coverage

Media coverage of health information is crucial in addressing health challenges facing the world. Although the coverage of health information is crucial in global efforts to fight HIV/AIDS pandemic and sustainable development, studies around the globe (see Brodie et al., 2004; Machungo, 2012; Stevens & Hull, 2013) have indicated that coverage of developmental and educational issues such as that related to HIV/AIDS is low.

Machungo (2012) and Stevens and Hornik (2014) examined the coverage of HIV/AIDS news in selected newspapers in the United States of America (U.S.A). The studies found the coverage of HIV/AIDS stories was very low and decreased over time. The observed decline could be contributed by U.S.A. changes in health policies, which largely also affect how HIV/AIDS is managed, treated, and reported globally. It could also be attributed to U.S.A newspaper's lack of interest in the pandemic being attributed to little effects, unlike sub-Saharan Africa. A study in Mexico by Mercado-Martinez, Robles-Silva, Moreno-Leal and Franco-Almazan (2001) investigated the coverage of chronic diseases in Mexican presses. The Mexican study found low and less detailed coverage of chronic diseases including HIV/AIDS in print media. The study also found inconsistency in journalism practices including coverage to be among the factors which affect coverage of health information on media. In Pakistan, Kiran (2019) conducted a study that assessed the role of newspapers in creating awareness of HIV/AIDS. The study revealed low coverage of HIV/AIDS information among selected newspapers. The Pakistan study found high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was attributed to low coverage and negligence of the newspapers on reporting on the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Studies on HIV/AIDS conducted in South Africa, Malaysia and Zambia by Mbajiorgu (2014), Moqasa (2012) and Sern and Zanuddin (2012a,b) and Underwood, Hachonda, Serlemitsos and Bharath-Kumar (2006) respectively, found little coverage of HIV/AIDS information by media in respective countries. Media from these countries have been blamed for being ineffective in educating their societies, contributing to increased infections and prevalence rates.

In Tanzania where this study was conducted, the literature reviewed revealed low coverage of scientific stories when compared to other stories such as that related to agriculture, climate change, and HIV/AIDS (Ogessa & Sife, 2017; Siyao & Sife, 2018; Nyoni, 2001). For example, Nyoni (2001) assessed the role of mass media in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Tanzania and



found the coverage of HIV/AIDS information by newspapers was inadequate as little attention was given by the journalists on covering the pandemic. Additionally, Chande-Mallya (2014) also observed unsatisfactory coverage of HIV/AIDS information by the Tanzanian media and found the language used in disseminating information was not user- friendly to the audiences.

Factors Affecting Coverage of HIV/AIDS Information

Coverage of HIV/AIDS information is being attributed to several factors. One factor which highly affects the coverage of HIV/AIDS information is funding (Nyoni, 2001; Linas, Zheng, Losina, Walensky & Freedberg, 2006; Kothari, 2014; President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief [PEPFAR], 2019). Funding affects coverage of HIV/AIDS information by providing fees which promotes coverage of the information on media. The funding which is largely from donors to organizations and people who are engaged in disseminating the information to the public is crucial in identifying progress, challenges, and prospects on key issues related to the disease (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2001; Media Council of Tanzania [MCT], 2019). However, funding for HIV/AIDS is also affected by donor countries' health policies. As different parties vying for leadership have their political manifesto, a change in regime involving opposing parties such as in the U.S.A can have impacts on how pre-existing and planned HIV/AIDS projects are funded. As such, the changes may have a serious effect on how HIV/AIDS agenda is advocated.

Another factor affecting media coverage of information on HIV/AIDS is journalists' monotony in covering the topic alias 'media fatigue syndrome'. Brodie et al. (2004), Machungo (2012), and Stevens and Hull (2013) observed that media became fatigued in covering HIV/AIDS information over time. As the disease received heightened media attention in the past four decades, its low coverage tends to be affected by journalists getting used to the disease. In such a context, the media may shift interest towards covering other catchy stories from politics, sports, and business rather than on HIV/AIDS.

Socio-cultural issues are other barriers that may affect the coverage of HIV/AIDS information. For instance, the culture and religion of a particular society can contribute to people of a particular social group refrain from applying safe practices which may prevent and reduce new HIV/AIDS infections and prevalence. The two aforementioned factors which are related can result in difficulties in sharing HIV/AIDS information, experiences, and success stories among people in a society. As a result of complex socio-cultural dynamics, journalists who play the dual role of being both the source and information disseminators may find it challenging to retrieve HIV/AIDS information (Nyoni, 2001; Chande-Mallya, 2014).

In addition, the coverage of HIV/AIDS stories has also been observed to be event-driven (Sern & Zanuddin, 2012a; Stevens & Hull, 2013; Moqasa, 2012). Its reporting tends to be affected by local, regional, and global events on HIV/AIDS. The event driven coverage problem is also related to the media fatigue syndrome. Arguably, journalists tend to cover HIV/AIDS information in media following on-going and forthcoming local and global events. The event-driven nature of the HIV/AIDS pandemic affects its media coverage and debatable, more coverage can be observed during important HIV/AIDS events such as World AIDS Day.

The coverage of HIV/AIDS information is also affected by media intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Rioba (2012) and Moqasa (2012) observed the media coverage of any stories including HIV/AIDS is being driven by editorial policies, media interest, market, financial capability and political attributes. They noticed that most of the media are influenced by the market preference in reporting stories that are catchy and which bring attention to the audience for a quick sell. Editorial policies also affect the frequency, framing, and content coverage of stories on media.

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Another factor that can affect coverage is journalists' insufficient skills in carrying out investigative journalism. Elia (2019a,b) and MCT (2017) found Tanzanian journalists still face challenges in carrying out investigative journalism. Little practice on investigative journalism is contributed by the low income and funding challenges faced by the media industry (MCT, 2017). Other factors which influence HIV/AIDS information coverage include journalists' interest, information searching skills, the cost of seeking stories, subject expertise (Isibor & Ajuwon, 2004; Elia, 2019a; Rioba, 2012). Scientific stories such as HIV/AIDS stories least coverage are also affected by inadequate scientific knowledge on the topic (Irimu & Schwartz, 2001; MCT, 2019; Rioba, 2012).

Additionally, coverage of HIV/AIDS information by the media has been observed to be driven by the employer's interests. The relationship between newsroom staff and employers has been noticed to have impacts on the reportage of news. Cushion (2007) observed that the majority of the journalists report what their employers need so as to keep good relationships with their employers to secure their jobs. Interests of the media owner can thus affect coverage contributing to the low coverage of developmental and educational information such as that related to HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS Themes Covered

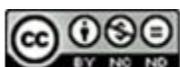
HIV/AIDS themes framing is crucial in creating awareness and understanding of the pandemic to the public. Mbajjorgu (2014) observed that depending on how the HIV/AIDS message is prepared, it can positively or negatively affect behavioural changes. Several studies globally have been conducted on the HIV/AIDS pandemic which also established coverage patterns of HIV/AIDS themes in media.

Studies of Moqasa (2012) and Kiran (2019) found that coverage of HIV/AIDS themes in South Africa and Pakistan newspapers respectively were related to drugs, vaccine development, testing, disasters such as rape, sexual violence, and homosexuality. Studies also found themes covered were also related to education such as transmission, prevention, and treatment. The two authors noted that theme of HIV/AIDS education received more coverage compared to other themes. Another South African study by Wallis (2008) observed heightened reportage and coverage on awareness and education. This study found the battle and fights off the disease as themes widely reported in South African media. These findings imply that the frames aimed at informing and preparing the public on means to prevent and adapt measures to live healthily including proper use of antiretroviral drugs.

A study conducted by Machungo (2012) in the U.S.A observed HIV/AIDS themes related to prevention that include the use of condoms, safer sex, faithfulness, and politics. For instance, extensively reporting of the disease was observed during important political arena such as during elections and in political parties' debates. In the developed world like in the U.S.A, such themes may be highly reported because they are associated with advertisements. Moreover, the study of Mbajjorgu (2014) in South Africa found education theme with sub-themes related to AIDS prevention, testing, and AIDS treatment to be themes that received more coverage compared to others. These kinds of themes have been covered more perhaps as a result of HIV/AIDS organized campaigns that strive to educate the public on the menace of the disease.

Geographical Coverage of HIV/AIDS Information

The geographical coverage of HIV/AIDS information is essential in the public's understanding and actions to be taken in fighting the disease. It also influences how stakeholders involved in



fighting the disease share success and failure stories to address the problem. HIV/AIDS information prepared in an international context and which covers international content may least be understood and have desired impact on a local context (Machungo, 2012). The dynamics in spatial and socio-cultural emanating from the pre-existing structures in preparing and organizing information may result in HIV/AIDS information content and context variations. As such, the desired audience and message may have little impact in understanding and actions to be taken as it reflects a different audience. Supporting the role of locally prepared health information contained in the public's understanding, Mbajiorgu (2014) established coverage of local HIV/AIDS news framed within a national context seemed to have more impact on the public than those with an international tone.

Although international information sources on HIV/AIDS may be perceived to be less informative and relevant compared to local information sources, Aziz (2014) and Elia (2019a) observed that most Tanzanian journalists rely on international sources in reporting news on global topical issues which include HIV/AIDS. The least use of local sources on covering topical issues could be attributed to a lack of skills in undertaking investigative journalism. It may also be contributed by language barriers and non-specialized journalism who prefer to copy and paste international HIV/AIDS news than critically investigating key HIV/AIDS issues of interest (Rioba, 2012; Machungo, 2012).

Despite international sources being mostly used in covering HIV/AIDS and other topical issues, in most developing countries, Mbajiorgu (2014) observed national HIV/AIDS information was given more coverage than international news in the South African media. The author found easy and regular access to HIV/AIDS information from trusted national organizations such as the South African National AIDS Council to influence coverage. Similar findings on local coverage of HIV/AIDS information were observed in the U.S.A by Machungo (2012). The study observed newspapers reported more on HIV/AIDS stories with the national context than international insight. Sufficient funds for conducting investigative journalism and the availability of active research institutes which generate new knowledge on the disease could contribute to more coverage of local HIV/AIDS information.

Methodology

The study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Bibliometrics and content analysis were methods used to collect data. The methods were applied to systematically examine the frequency of reportage HIV/AIDS-oriented issues, themes covered, and geographical coverage of HIV/AIDS information from *Daily News* and *Mwananchi*. The researcher was assisted by two research assistants in collecting data. Data was collected from articles published in the selected newspapers for six years from 2002-2004 and 2017-2019. The researchers' choice of the years was influenced by the desire to explore whether HIV/AIDS information coverage could be influenced by the existence of the Tanzania National AIDS [TNAIDS] policy. Additionally, the desire was to explore the trend in coverage of HIV/AIDS information from the initial years of the commencement of the HIV/AIDS policy and compare with recent years' coverage. The study, therefore, covered the first three years since the TNAIDS policy was operational and the recent past three years.

Purposive sampling was used to select the two newspapers. The selection of the two newspapers was based on their wide circulation, readership, news worthiness, ownership, influential impact, possibility of covering HIV/AIDS news, consistency in publishing their

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editions, and existence for at least 10 years (Tanzania Standard Newspapers [TSN], 2017; MCT, 2019; Ogesa & Sife, 2017; Siyao & Sife, 2018; Elia, 2019a). The bibliometrics method was used to collect and analyse quantitative data. This method was used to measure, examine and analyse all articles covered in the two newspapers that were related to HIV/AIDS. Content analysis was used to collect qualitative data by tracing types of information covered in newspapers and identify HIV/AIDS themes through texts analysis. Data quality was ensured by adequately training the research assistants involved in data collection and particularly data coding. Newspaper articles were coded using a codebook adapted from Di Gregorio, Price, Saunders, and Brockhaus (2012). The guide outlines the frequency of publishing, themes, and the geographical location of articles reported by media. Microsoft Excel 2010 software was used to analyses quantitative data generated.

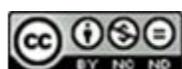
Results and Discussion

Coverage of HIV/AIDS Information

The study sought to find out the extent to which HIV/AIDS-oriented issues were published in *Daily News* and *Mwananchi* newspapers. The study findings revealed that out of 34,593 articles analysed in the two newspapers, only 696 articles covered on HIV/AIDS pandemic. On average *Daily News* had the highest coverage (499) articles whereas *Mwananchi* had the least (197) articles reported. See Table 1.

Table I: Newspapers HIV/AIDS information coverage

Years	Newspapers	Total articles covered	HIV/AIDS articles
2002	Daily News	2905	96
	Mwananchi	2894	54
Subtotal		5799	150
2003	Daily News	2884	160
	Mwananchi	2733	50
Subtotal		5617	210
2004	Daily News	2912	114
	Mwananchi	2617	42
Subtotal		5529	156
2017	Daily News	2987	44
	Mwananchi	2908	19
Subtotal		5895	63
2018	Daily News	2896	42
	Mwananchi	2883	16
Subtotal		5779	58
2019	Daily News	3010	43
	Mwananchi	2964	16
Subtotal		5974	59
Total		34,593	696



There are several reasons which could explain the present study findings. One, the reason *Daily News* had more coverage of HIV/AIDS information could be related to newspaper ownership. As *Daily News* is a government-owned newspaper, it perhaps has more access to information on HIV/AIDS compared to *Mwananchi* which is privately owned. Journalists from the government media may have a better rapport with information sources, hence positively influencing the availability of the information and coverage. Another reason that may have influenced high coverage of HIV/AIDS information by *Daily News* is the fact that the newspaper is a state-owned media that is obliged to be a frontier in disseminating to the general public information on educational and developmental issues including those related to HIV/AIDS (Moqasa, 2012). *Daily News* obliged role may be contrary to that of a privately owned newspaper like *Mwananchi* which seek for mostly cover catchy stories which can prompt readers to buy newspaper for a quick sell and compete in business. In fact, the *Mwananchi* being a non-governmental newspaper needs to generate its income to exist in business and remain operational. Thus, the findings on low coverage by *Mwananchi* are not surprising. As present findings indicate both newspapers have covered a nearly equal number of articles in recent years, one clear reason to explain the low coverage by *Mwananchi* would be devoting more space to appealing stories of interest to a reader such as politics, entertainment, and sports which are not directly related to development and HIV/AIDS awareness.

The study findings also show a decrease in the coverage of HIV/AIDS information from 210 articles in 2003 to 58 articles in 2018. The findings show that HIV/AIDS information covered in the two newspapers and perhaps in other mass media channels received very little attention. The decrease in coverage could be attributed to several factors. One plausible reason is the media fatigue syndrome. Media fatigue in this context occurs when journalists have repeatedly been engaged in covering HIV/AIDS information for a lengthy period. As such the topic becomes monotonous and subsequently may receive little attention from journalists. These findings are in line with those of Brodie et al.(2004), Machungo (2012), Stevens and Hull (2013) who found generally globally the coverage of HIV/AIDS stories to have decreased as the result of media boredom in covering such stories. Journalists' low HIV/AIDS information reporting in media may deter global, regional, and national existing efforts to fight the disease, causing more adverse effects in the society, particularly in Tanzania (Sawe, 2017). Newspapers' little coverage on the disease may also affect the public's awareness, adoption, and use of newly introduced drugs and information products which have been scientifically tested to fight the pandemic. As awareness is crucial in HIV/AIDS information use and individual's behavioural change (Rogers, 2003), low coverage of such information may lessen efforts to prevent people from adopting proper behaviour which reduces HIV/AIDS spread and prevention in the society.

Another factor that could have contributed to the decline in the coverage of HIV/AIDS information in the two newspapers could be contributed by weaknesses in the editorial policy. Rioba (2012) and Elia (2019a) also found such actors to affect coverage of information in Tanzanian media. Although the government-owned media were expected to cover extensively HIV/AIDS information in newspapers far more than the privately managed media, findings surprisingly showed the government-owned newspapers' coverage on HIV/AIDS stories was generally very low. One intrinsic media factor could indeed be the lack of a clear editorial policy on the coverage of global pandemics such as climate change (Elia, 2019b) and HIV/AIDS. Unclear editorial policies tend to have negative effects on media coverage. Resultantly, coverage of such

information becomes seasonal and donor-driven rather than being informed by observed social-cultural dynamics.

The other reason which may have contributed to the low coverage of HIV/AIDS is newspapers' financial constraints. One part of the financial constraint affects the media while the other the projects sustained and funded by donors. With regards to challenges media houses face, a drop in revenue is one crucial factor affecting the coverage of information (MCT, 2017). As a result, media may concentrate more on stories that attract readers to continue operating in the business. Moreover, for several years, externally sourced funding especially donor funding has been a catalyst in promoting the coverage of HIV/AIDS information by facilitating fees to cater for media coverage (Nyoni, 2001; Linas, et al., 2014; PEPFAR, 2019). Donor funding is also being influenced by global policies and politics. Inadequate funds from donors tend to affect coverage as meagre funds are allocated for media engagement. For such pressing reasons, journalists may mostly concentrate on publishing information that grabs public attention and attract readers for a quick sell out of newspapers and ignoring important health information such as that related to HIV/AIDS.

Moreover, the study findings indicate a notable fluctuations pattern in the publication in the reviewed period. This fluctuations trend to both newspapers could be attributed to several factors. To start with, the coverage of HIV/AIDS information could be more event-driven rather than demand-driven. Similarly, Sern and Zanuddin (2012a), Stevens and Hull (2013), and Moqasa (2012) observed that HIV/AIDS coverage was event-driven. Arguably, journalists tend to report and cover HIV/AIDS at important local and global events on HIV such as World AIDS Day. Reporting HIV/AIDS basing on seasonal and event-driven trend, affect coverage, understanding, and public awareness.

The other factor that contributed to the fluctuation could be editors' preference and interest. In most developing countries like Tanzania with ineffective editorial policy frameworks, editors may interfere media coverage of certain stories if he/she has little interest on such stories (Elia, 2019a). This may have contributed to the inconsistency of the newspapers' coverage of HIV/AIDS information. McCombs and Reynolds (2009) and Tewksbury and Scheufele (2009) also observed fluctuations in covering HIV/AIDS information. Developed countries may have better and consistent coverage of HIV/AIDS than developing countries due to efficient editorial policies frameworks.

The study further sought to compare the coverage of HIV/AIDS news between 2002-2004 and 2017-2019. Results of the study indicate that the coverage was very high during the first three years (2002-2004) but very low in the past three years (2017-2019). Generally, results connote that in the early years of the 2000s HIV/AIDS information was highly reported by the two newspapers, unlike the recent years. See Figure 1.

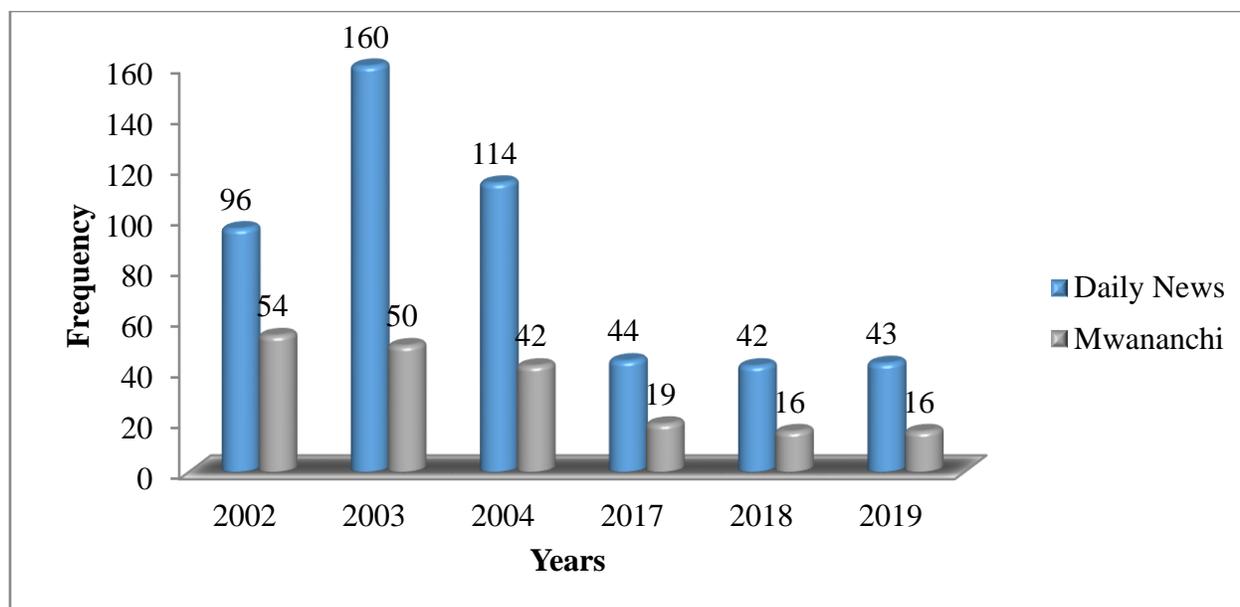


Figure 1: Trends in coverage of HIV/AIDS information by the Daily News and Mwananchi

Various factors could elucidate these findings. To begin with, the increased coverage of HIV/AIDS information in the early 2000s could be attributed to the establishment of the TNAIDS policy in 2001. Coverage of the disease was on the high side for the first three years of the policy operationalization. It appears newspapers received a bulk of information on several issues as a result of the policy. The wide dissemination of the information by newspapers seems to be mostly influenced by the novelty of the policy. In addition to the quest to operationalize the policy, it also appears that some specific sections of the policy fostered coverage. For example, clause 5.8 of the TNADS policy states:

“The media should be actively involved in investigating the practical challenges in the control of HIV and the responses by different sectors in the society, including the private sector. Scientific publications regarding trends in epidemiological surveillance and research intervention activities to promote safe practices shall be disseminated in professional journals and through the mass media”.

This section of the policy may have had positively increased newspaper coverage of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania. The clause has promoted journalists’ understanding of the disease by shifting the investigative and education roles to them. The policy vested journalists with an additional role of sourcing information from scientists, building a gap between researchers and journalists in fighting the pandemic. Elia (2019b) also observed that the availability of policies to have influenced journalists’ coverage of topical issues such as climate change in Tanzania. On the other hand, despite the availability of the TNAIDS policy, least coverage of HIV/AIDS information was still evident. Findings show that the presence of a policy does not necessarily influence coverage. The TNAIDS seems to be out-dated and perhaps its amendment would have promoted coverage of HIV/AIDS stories in newspapers. The researchers also observed the low coverage of HIV/AIDS information from the TACAIDS online repository. For instance, from 2010-2019 the repository had a total of only 61 resources on HIV/AIDS (as of 30th July, 2020). In addition, despite the TACAIDS depository having a Web link on stories collected from newspapers, there was no

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existing HIV/AIDS information from any newspaper with stories covered on the disease for users to read. The little coverage of HIV/AIDS information in recent years could be linked with newly introduced media laws such as the Media Service Act, 2016, Information Act, 2016, and the Cybercrime Act, 2015. These laws have been reported by the MCT as affecting journalists' coverage of information in media (MCT, 2017).

The other factor that could have influenced coverage from 2002-2004 compared to the last three years could be the consecutive launching of various HIV/AIDS programs and initiatives. These included the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 in 2000, MDGs in 2000, TACAIDS in 2001, and the report on global HIV/AIDS in 2002. These initiatives were perhaps a key in sensitizing the public on the disease. Moreover, as the pandemic was still new to the majority of Tanzanians, newspapers treated it uniquely; hence more attention was given to it. As previously explained the recently observed drop in HIV/AIDS coverage could also be attributed to the availability of new media particularly social media platforms, and increased community radio which can reach a larger audience in a shorter time. The widely aforementioned programs which were linked to HIV/AIDS explain the contribution of global and national development strategies and events in influencing newspaper coverage of HIV/AIDS information. Results corroborate those of Sern and Zanuddin (2012a) in Malaysia, Stevens and Hull (2013) in United States, and Moqasa (2012) in South Africa who found coverage of the pandemic was high when there were frequently launching of various HIV/AIDS initiatives.

Thematic Coverage of HIV/AIDS Information in Newspapers

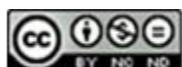
The study examined key HIV/AIDS information topics covered in the two selected newspapers. The articles were assessed based on seven themes. The themes are medical, economic, social, political, sexual violence, education/awareness, and disaster. The themes used in this study were adopted from studies of Moqasa (2012), and Kiran (2019).

The results of the study indicate that topics on HIV/AIDS information related to politics were highly covered (343) and followed by HIV/AIDS information related to education/awareness (192). HIV/AIDS information related to social (7) and sexual violence (5) were least covered (see Table 2).

Table 2: HIV/AIDS Themes Covered

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Daily News</i>	<i>Mwananchi</i>	<i>Total articles</i>	<i>Ranking</i>
<i>Medical</i>	47	17	64	4
<i>Economy</i>	51	15	66	3
<i>Political</i>	273	70	343	1
<i>Social</i>	7	0	7	6
<i>Sexual Violence</i>	5	0	5	7
<i>Education/Awareness</i>	99	93	192	2
<i>Disaster</i>	17	2	19	5
<i>Total</i>	499	197	696	

Findings show a heightened coverage of HIV/AIDS information related to political issues. Sub-topics such as Democratization, People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in elections, AIDS, and leadership appear to dominate in the selected newspapers. This dominance of these themes may explain how politics is intertwined with HIV/AIDS pandemic. The findings are promising, as they show an increased awareness of the pandemic among politicians, policymakers and Non-Governmental Organizations. As such, the theme highlights the integration of HIV/AIDS and



development. It also explains the role of information dissemination in livelihood and sustainable development. For example, one newspaper article titled “*Member of Parliaments needs no secrets in the fight against HIV/AIDS*” was published in *Mwananchi* newspaper on 26th March 2002. These findings correlate with those of Machungo (2012) in the United States who found more HIV/AIDS articles published in the selected newspapers were related and dominated by political issues, where politicians were actors highly involved.

There are several reasons which could explain the increased coverage of HIV/AIDS information related to politics in Tanzania. One critical factor in a heightened report on HIV/AIDS and politics could be the TNAIDS policy. The policy underscores the role of politicians and government leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS (URT, 2001). As such, the policy links policymakers and the public. Policymakers who include politicians ought to solicit funds from the government and donors to support citizens’ livelihood making the disease an important agenda in politics and social welfare. Another factor that might have contributed to the dominance of HIV/AIDS information in newspapers that are inclined to politics could be reader’s interest in political issues. These findings correlate with that of Machungo (2012), Mbajiorgu (2014), and Ogessa and Sife (2017) who observed readers in U.S., South Africa, and Tanzania respectively have been interested in politically related information.

Although current findings indicated a higher coverage of HIV/AIDS about politics, the results are contrary to that of Moqasa (2012) in South Africa and Kiran (2019) in Pakistan. These two studies found more articles were published on medical and disaster themes respectively. It appears articles published in Tanzania newspapers focus more on what politicians and workshops report on HIV/AIDS and not investigative journalism where journalists search for information from research institutes or scientists who are involved in HIV/AIDS research contrary to section 5.8 of the TNAIDS policy. The study in South Africa indicates perhaps there is more investment of resources and expertise in medical research unlike in Tanzania where the medical theme was ranked fourth. Moreover, there could be more specialized and skilled journalists who can unpack scientific disaster-related information including HIV/AIDS information in Pakistan, unlike Tanzania.

The results also showed an increase in coverage of HIV/AIDS information related to education/awareness. Topics on education intend to *educate* and *enlighten* the public on issues such as safe/unsafe sex, condoms usage, prevention, transmission, and treatment. These findings are contrary to those of Kiran (2019), Moqasa (2012), and Machungo (2012) who both found *education/awareness* themes not to be highly covered. Education/awareness theme ranked second perhaps due to two main reasons. One is that most Tanzanians seem to be caged in cultural and religious barriers which prevent them from accepting safe measures to fight the pandemic (Nyoni, 2001). As such, they need to be regularly educated to be able to positively change behaviour on bad cultural customs which elevate HIV/AIDS spread. The second reason could be low literacy levels such as that related to health issues when compared to other developed countries. As such, the public needs frequent sensitization and education on the proper use of HIV/AIDS preventive measures to reduce HIV/AIDS spread and prosperous society of people living with the disease. For example, the article titled “*Living with HIV/AIDS; my health, my right*” dated 5th of April, 2018 in *Daily News*, where journalists try to educate and enlighten the public on the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS as being like any other person in the community. Such messages are preferred by the journalists as they are easily attracting the audience and accelerate the sale of newspapers (Mbajiorgu, 2014).

The coverage of HIV/AIDS information in Tanzania: a reflection of Mwananchi and Daily News newspapers

Moreover, results surprisingly showed the least coverage of articles on HIV/AIDS-related to social phenomena such as sexual violence. Results indicated the Swahili newspaper; *Mwananchi* did not cover any article related to social and sexual violence themes, unlike *Daily News*. The findings could imply difficulties in covering social issues related to HIV/AIDS from the grass-root because of meagre funds to conduct investigative journalism. Since newspapers in Tanzania are faced with financial constraints (MCT, 2017), journalists' capability to source important HIV/AIDS related information from the society's social perspective becomes an uphill task. Not only the cost in searching for HIV/AIDS seems to be a problem, but also public challenges encapsulated in culture that limits journalists' covering of HIV/AIDS related sexual violence information (Mwanukuzi & Nyamhanga, 2021). The results of this study are indeed mindboggling as one would have expected to see the Swahili newspaper to lead in informing the public on socio-cultural issues as it is communicated in the language spoken by the majority of Tanzanians, unlike *Daily News* which is an English newspaper.

Geographical Coverage of the HIV/AIDS information

The study examined the geographical coverage of HIV/AIDS-oriented issues in the *Daily News* and *Mwananchi* newspapers. The results revealed that *Daily News* published the majority (335) of internationally sourced news while 164 were sourced from national news. *Mwananchi* published at least (177) articles from international news and 20 articles were from nationally oriented news. See Figure 2.

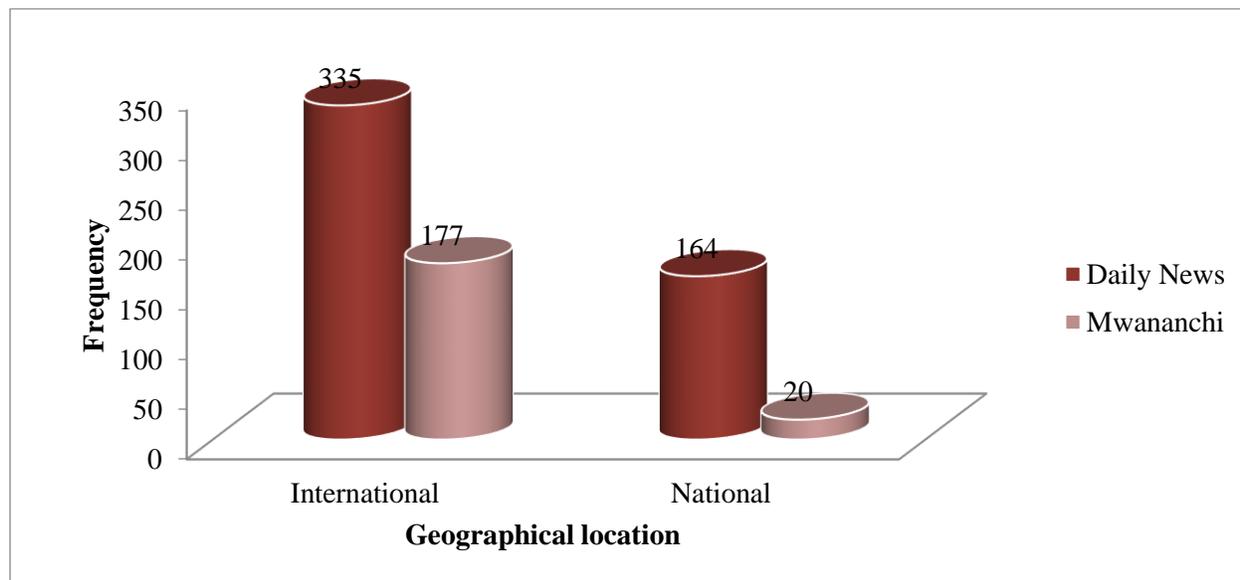
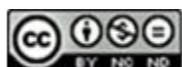


Figure 2: Geographical coverage of HIV/AIDS information

The study findings show that international HIV/AIDS information was covered more than national information in both newspapers. These findings are supported by Aziz (2014) and Elia (2019a), who found that Tanzanian journalists tend to cover more information with an international focus rather than the national context. Increased coverage of international information could be attributed to the availability of trusted sources, ease of accessibility, availability, and reliability of electronic international news feeds that cover HIV/AIDS information. Journalists depend more on international information to report on HIV/AIDS because of two main reasons. One is easy access



to information from sources. As there is bulk information generated and easily accessed from scientific bodies through the internet from developed countries, journalists find it convenient to source the information and prepare a story. Daily News's higher coverage of international information could be contributed to its medium of communication which is English. Thus, journalists covering English related media have an advantage on language to source information from varieties of media. These findings are supported by those of Mbajiorgu (2014), Elia (2019a,b,c), and Aziz (2014) who observed an increased preference for the internet, particularly search engines by journalists in South Africa and Tanzania respectively as their primary sources for retrieving, processing and distribution of information. Those international electronic sources present a range of information products and services in an electronic format that is timely and affordable to many journalists and can easily be accessed through websites and social media. The challenge to English-based newspapers could be a little synthesis of information on the disease being solicited and more copying and pasting of HIV/AIDS information from international sources.

Despite present findings showing international HIV/AIDS information was highly being reported, results indicate local information was not adequately sourced. One reason could be the financial challenges explained earlier journalists face in collecting local stories. The other reason could be the lack of locally available HIV/AIDS information to be reported.

Another contributory factor to extensive coverage of international stories could be accredited to inadequate journalistic searching expertise. Lack of sufficient information searching capabilities and skills in reporting HIV/AIDS information could be another reason explaining why Tanzanian journalists depend on international sources. Information literacy which entails skills and abilities on how, where, what, when, and which scientific information such as that related to HIV/AIDS to search is an art that most journalists lack (Elia, 2019b). Reporting HIV/AIDS needs journalists to have specialized knowledge, and skills in searching, locating and preparing easily read HIV/AIDS information for their readers for easy use.

Increased coverage of international news could also be attributed to a lack of specialized knowledge and science journalism. Among journalists' key sources of scientific information from the research of science and medical-related disciplines such as HIV/AIDS are researchers. For proper reporting on HIV/AIDS information, journalists need to know to identify information gatekeepers and build a good rapport. The close relationship with such researchers can assist journalists in clarifying complex scientific issues emerging from research. Elia (2019a,b,c) observed reporting on science-related disciplines was better if the journalist had a science background. However, HIV/AIDS needs a broader perspective of other fields of study to better inform the audience. Journalists need to be conversant with diverse fields of studies such as science, medicine, economics, and social sciences to be able to effectively translate the content and framing a story in a manner clear to the majority of the audience. That quality could be lacking in most media houses in Tanzania (Elia, 2019b).

Despite low coverage of the national HIV/AIDS news compared to international HIV/AIDS news, the results show better coverage of national HIV/AIDS news by *Daily News* compared to *Mwananchi*. There are various factors that could explain the trend. One reason could be *Daily News* tends to prioritize on national HIV/AIDS news. Elia (2019a), Rioba (2012), and MCT (2017) observed editorial issues to be vital in influencing coverage in Tanzanian media. The other reason could be *Daily News* journalists have better resources to source, process, and report national news, unlike the privately owned *Mwananchi* newspapers.

The coverage of HIV/AIDS information in Tanzania: a reflection of Mwananchi and Daily News newspapers

Conclusion and Recommendations

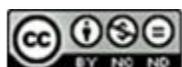
Based on the findings from the two Tanzanian newspapers, there is low coverage of development related information in Tanzanian newspapers. Generally, the attention given to HIV/AIDS in the two newspapers was low with more coverage on international than local HIV/AIDS information. Besides, the coverage of HIV/AIDS information changes overtime with no clear patterns on reporting. The coverage of HIV/AIDS seems be influenced by global and local HIV/AIDS activities, donor funding, access to information sources, financial constraints, information searching skills, editorial policies and the Tanzania AIDS policy information in media. Insufficient coverage of HIV/AIDS information to the public may negatively affect people to have timely and correct information on the disease prevention measures and appropriate drug usage.

The study recommends more training and awareness of current and future global trends on HIV/AIDS amongst journalists to sensitize and promote quality and timely coverage of HIV/AIDS information. Additionally, to enhance understanding and readership to the public, journalists should receive specialised training on reporting scientific news such as that related to HIV/AIDS. The study recommends adjustments in Tanzania AIDS policy and media policies to instigate and motivate media houses and journalists to seek and report on HIV/AIDS information.

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