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Abstract
Raw information on issues such as climate change and the environment can be incomprehensible and meaningless to segments of media the audience. To ease audience's understanding of such information, the media may filter and (re)construct both the information and the experiences that generated it; this is called framing. This study analysed how climate change is visually framed in selected print media in a bid to understand how this could influence the audience's understanding of climate change information. This study was guided by the Framing Theory. Data was collected from two newspapers in Kenya (*The Standard* and *Daily Nation*) published between January 2013 and December 2017 which were purposively sampled due to their wide circulation and coverage. Qualitative content analysis was used both as a methodology and a data collection tool and the data analysed thematically. The study findings indicated that visuals were rarely used in the selected newspapers. From the findings, the depiction of actors was mainly based on their social class. The most dominant visual frame was the politicians and talking head frame. A new frame that was depicted in this study was the humour imagery frame. The causes of climate change are depicted as small causes and small solutions, but the impacts are depicted as large scale which can lead to low self-efficacy amongst the citizens. This study concludes that visual framing of climate change is an area not fully embraced by the media in presenting climate change, yet it offers an array of opportunities to communicate the climate change message.

Introduction
Language as a way of conveying purpose and meaning shapes people's perceptions, motivations and actions. As a result, human beliefs and behaviour about nature and the environment are mediated or influenced by communication. As such, the content and language used in communication influence how information is understood.

The media's primary function is communication, which is seen by its ability to package and sell goods and ideas. As it communicates, mass media informs, educates and entertains its audiences. It also creates interest in information on specific issues and, at the same time, draws attention away from some issues. Therefore, the media powerfully influences the issues to be prioritised and those to be disregarded by the public. Increased media coverage is one way to encourage the popularity of a given agenda or subject. In its agenda-setting role, the media shapes public knowledge and

opinions through its selective coverage and framing of issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). McCombs (2004) further argues that by choosing which stories to publish daily, the media can set the agenda regarding which issues the public should perceive as most important.

Mass media is an essential source of information for the public on climate change matters. The media influences public perceptions and understanding of climate change issues and government initiatives (Dirikx & Gelders, 2008; Doulton & Brown, 2009). Fernández-Reyes, Piñuel-Raigada and Águila Coghlan (2017) argue that knowledge of media coverage of climate change and global warming is essential to policy formulations. "Since the public (of which policy actors are a part) learns most of what it knows about science from the mass media, scrutinising the media's portrayal of climate change – and exploring how and why information about climate change is translated into news – is imperative" (Boykoff & Boykoff, 2007: 3).

Visual elements play a crucial role in interpreting messages in the media. It is something that the reader will quickly notice first and, therefore, greatly affects how the written word will be adopted. It is the opening through which the reader's attention is drawn to the work. They help convey the message's main essence without reading the whole article. If the photograph is appealing, it may compel the reader to go into the details of the written word and vice versa. Smith (2005) avers that readers enter the newspaper page through the dominant image.

Visuals are selective windows to the world (Masinde, Barasa & Mandillah, 2023). They help frame ideas and information about what the writer seeks to convey. Schneider and Nocke (2014: 16) have argued that images can directly address and concentrate human perception. This means that the choice of a visual can lead the readers to think about a given issue and make the issue stick in the minds of individuals. It is thus evident that visual imagery is critical in the dissemination of information. If they are used well, they can impact the audience's minds and even encourage engagement with climate change issues.

This paper is guided by the Framing Theory attributed to Erving Goffman (1974). This theory proposes that how audiences perceive media events is determined by how media messages are presented. According to the Framing Theory, the same message presented in different ways can impact audiences' choices and evaluations. It claims that news contains plain facts and value frames that help us understand these facts. According to Chapman and Lupton (1994), a frame is a way of packaging and positioning an issue to convey a specific meaning. The emphasis placed on particular issues aims to depict the main concern or focus of the issue. Through the frames they embed in their news items, the mass media dictates what issues are in the public spotlight and on people's minds and for how long.

Materials and Methods

Purposive sampling was used to select two daily newspapers in Kenya based on their wide coverage and high readership compared to other papers. It was also used to select the articles published by the selected print media for five years (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017). These years were chosen purposively—two years before and two years after the launch of the Public Communication Strategy in Kenya (2015), which emphasised the liaison between the media and the ministry in communicating climate change matters.

This paper employed Qualitative content analysis as a methodology. In qualitative content analysis, researchers analyse the presence, meanings and relationships of words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are a part (Clatworthy & Jones, 2001). Qualitative content analysis seeks to

generate knowledge through an in-depth analysis of secondary data relevant to what is being studied.

Results and Discussion

In the analysis of visual imagery, the researcher sought to find out if there was a predominant visual frame used in the selected articles, analyse the main idea depicted in the selected visuals, identify the placement and general outlook of actors, and determine their relationship with climate change.

Focus of the visual imagery in the selected articles

This study sought to determine the photographs used (if any) in the selected articles. It sought to find out the perspective taken in the pictures that were used in the selected articles. This was mainly depicted from the central idea it depicted. Borrowing from Entman's (1993) guideline of problem definition, causal responsibility, treatment recommendation or the moral evaluation of climate change, we analysed how the photographs were linked to climate change.

The study findings from *The Standard* newspaper indicated that most articles had no accompanying visual imagery. Most of these articles fell under the letters to the editor section, which could affect the use of imagery due to its limited space (most letters to the editors covered only one page for all the letters published for the day). Most of the articles with visual imagery had images that had no direct link to climate change in their central idea. Entmas' (1993) guideline was used in this study to establish the link to climate change. The fact that there was no clear link to climate change does not negate their use, as images associated with leaders or specialists could push up the credibility of an article. Therefore, these articles were analysed to determine the kind of visuals they depicted.

In the study findings from *The Standard* newspaper, the visuals that had no direct link to climate change mostly used portraits of article authors and leaders attending conferences or conference activities. From the study findings, most of *The Standard* newspaper articles with visuals linked to climate change depicted the effects of climate change. Most of the impact showed drying rivers, failed yields, and effects on agricultural produce. Other effects depicted in the visuals included flooded homesteads, flooded roads, lightning, and the classical melting ice. For instance, in *The Standard January 9, 2013*, a photograph is included in the article depicting the effects of climate change. The focus of the photograph is a man standing on a maize farm that that has maize withering. The desperation on the man's face is palpable. The caption "variation in rainfall patterns could negatively affect Kenya's agriculture, which accounts for about 26per cent of its goods and services, and 75 per cent of jobs."

From the study findings, a significant no of articles had no accompanying visual in the *Daily Nation*. Most articles with no visuals were mainly opinion pieces and letters to the editor compared to the other categories. All the feature articles on the DN pull-out had accompanying photographs. The visual imagery with no link to climate change was more than those with a link to climate change. For those with no specific link to climate change, most of them depicted portraits of the authors of the articles. Others depicted conference activities, including participants and leaders attending or addressing conferences or sleeping arrangements in conferences. Those two elements, portraits of authors and conference elements, were the main focus of visuals that had no direct link to climate change.

The visual imagery linked to climate change mainly focused on the problem. It mostly depicted the effects of climate change. Most depictions of the problem focused on vast dry lands, flooded homesteads, flooded towns with motorists and pedestrians struggling to use the roads, withered crops and dead livestock (*Daily Nation December 2, 2014*). An insignificant number focused on the classical melting ice imagery. For example, in *Daily Nation December 4, 2015,* a photograph has been

used covering the whole page - it shows a dry land - with visible cracks showing how dry it has been. No vegetation is evident in the photograph.

The other visual imagery, which focused on treatment/solutions and moral evaluations, were almost similar in number. Most solutions depicted individualisation as they showed the face of an individual engaged in an activity to combat climate change. These individuals included a child(ren) planting trees, individuals tending tree nurseries, improved cooking stoves displayed by individuals, and adults planting or holding tree seedlings. For example, in *Daily Nation, December 6, 2014,* a photo of a man squatting to plant a seedling is depicted. A similar depiction is shown on the *Daily Nation on August 15, 2016,* showing a woman holding a seedling ready for planting.

Those that depicted moral evaluations mainly depicted protestors or activists demonstrating at the wake of major conferences or major political meetings. It is important to note that none of the imagery depicting protests had a local dimension. They all depicted protestors from Western countries such as Washington DC, Lima, Berline, etc., and protests outside Kenya. For example, *Daily Nation August 15, 2016,* is an article covering international news accompanied by a photograph of participants with placards demonstrating outside the venue of the Marrakech conference.

From the study findings, the visual imagery that focused on the cause of climate change was the least used. Those used mainly focused on deforestation as a cause of climate change. The visuals depicted tree stumps, women carrying firewood, and charcoal burning. A few others depicted the planting of eucalyptus and a car exhaust with fumes to the sky. Individualising these causes may not depict them as significant causes of climate change. One tree stump may not depict the overarching effects as when several tree stumps were used, just like one car exhaust may not clearly show the picture as when several cars were used.

From the study findings, most articles used photos with no link to climate change, followed by articles with no accompanying photos. Only a few articles used photos that had a link to climate change. However, it is essential to note that in the *Daily Nation*, the pull-out section *on December 4, 2015,* used photos linked with climate change when covering climate change stories. These photos were 'eye-catching' by their size. Mostly, they covered the whole page and were large enough to attract attention. This is unlike the other sections that either used photographs minimally or used photographs that had no link to climate change.

These findings clearly show that most articles did not use visual imagery. Those that mainly did not propagate the climate change message on the imagery. Most selected articles used visual imagery showing people attending conferences, leader's portraits and other messages that did not communicate the effects, problems, causes, moral evaluations or even solutions to climate change. *The Standard* newspaper's study focused on logging as the leading cause of climate change. The emphasis on only one main cause can cloud the other causes of climate change.

On the other hand, the *Daily Nation* newspaper mainly emphasises individualisation when presenting the causes of climate change. For example, a tree stump is shown when depicting logging, and one car is shown when depicting air pollution. Individualisation can oversimplify the causes of climate change and cloud the bigger picture.

The *Daily Nation* depicts a 'big' effect caused by climate change in its depiction of the effects. This is unlike the suggested solutions, which point to 'small' solutions offered by an individual planting a tree. In *The Standard* newspaper, the same is replicated; the effects are devastating and large while individual efforts present the solutions.

Actors used in the visual imagery

The study analysed the actors in the selected visual imagery to identify the subjects or objects of focus. The actors chosen as participants in the visuals impact the interpretation of that visual.

From the *Daily Nation*, the study findings showed that stereotyping based on social class was evident. The study findings indicated a depiction of social classes in the visuals. The effects of climate change were depicted as affecting actors based on their social class. In the presentation of the impacts of climate change on people's livelihoods, most of the photographs used depicted the actors as people from humble backgrounds. For example, their dress suggests their place on the social ladder; the background shows, say, carcasses of their dead animals or withering crops (see *Daily Nation December 4, 2015*). Those that depicted the effects on the middle class depicted the impact on the infrastructure more than the individuals' livelihoods. For example, when discussing the effects of climate change, such as flooding, they are shown driving on flooded roads in urban settings or rivers (see *Daily Nation December 2, 2014*). They are also depicted from an international front participating in demonstrations (see *Daily Nation December 7, 2014; Daily Nation November 28, 2015)* and when engaged in individual efforts to deal with climate change (*see Daily Nation December 6, 2014).* Those photographs depicted the prominent individuals at conferences or other 'powerful positions' where they attend conferences or speak on podiums (see *Daily Nation December 1, 2015,* shows President Uhuru Kenyatta at a conference).

From the study findings in *The Standard* newspaper, most of the articles with accompanying photographs that didn't show a direct link to climate change presented portraits and photographs of leaders in meetings, offices or walking together. The elites are presented as influential individuals attending and discussing issues in major forums or engaged in their offices. For example, in *The Standard, January 22, 2015,* the photograph shows individuals following proceedings during a forum for forest-dependent communities in Nakuru. In *The Standard, December 3, 2015,* the photograph shows individuals sitting in a conference hall. It is captioned "President Uhuru Kenyatta and Environment CS Prof. Judi Wakhungu during the conference of parties meeting in Paris, France".

In depicting the effects of climate change on livelihoods, the poor are mostly used (as depicted by their dress and the background they are depicted in). For example, *The Standard July 29, 2014,* shows a person spraying vegetables on a small-scale farm. In *The Standard, July 28, 2014,* the visual shows a man wadding through a flooded homestead. The depictions also show the effects on infrastructure for the middle class. When the impact of climate change is depicted, it would mainly depict flooded roads and affected infrastructure.

These depictions can affect how we interpret climate change and how it affects individuals in society. We may brush off the message if we cannot relate to the actors. We may ignore the whole article if the photograph is not something we can relate to. For example, suppose one sees the effects of climate change as a lack of animal pasture. In that case, the concept may not be appreciated if they don't own animals and live in an environment without animals. One cannot identify with the dire need the farmers have. The need to 'do something' about climate change may not be aroused as they cannot identify with the crisis.

Visual frames in the selected articles

This study sought to identify the main themes and the subsequent frames propagated by the visual imagery in the selected articles. From the study findings in *The Standard* newspaper, most visuals had no direct link to climate change. The link was established following Entman's (1993) components reflecting climate change: the cause, problem, moral evaluation and treatment or solution. Therefore, most of the imagery in *The Standard* newspaper did not present the main

components. Most presented peoples' portraits, people in conferences, leaders addressing meetings, conference participants, sleeping arrangements, and demonstrations during conferences. This study classified this frame as the politicians/talking heads frame. For example, *The Standard May 25, 2014,* shows a photograph of a man emphasising a point in his argument with his raised hand. The photograph captioned "National Environment Management Authority Director-General Geoffrey Wahungu, who was early this year accused by a Mombasa businessman of trying to extort a KSh.3 million bribe."

The study findings similarly depicted the political frame in *the Daily Nation*. It was evident in visuals depicting leaders chairing various forums, leading delegations, and conference organisations. The visuals representing this frame were significant in the *Daily Nation*. For example, *Daily Nation December 1, 2015,* shows the head of state (Uhuru Kenyatta) and Environment Cabinet Secretary Judy Wakhungu during COP 21 in Paris.

The other frame that was evident in the study findings was the one that focused on the impacts of climate change. It depicted the devastating effects of climate change. This frame was classified as an impacts and threats frame. The impact frame was evident in both newspapers. In the *Daily Nation* pull-out, a section that mainly covers features and the impacts of climate change, when depicted, used long shots depicting the impacts as larger than life. It showed climate change impacts in long shots of remote landscapes. For example, In *Daily Nation, December 4, 2015,* a photograph was used covering the whole page- it shows a dry land- with visible cracks, showing how dry it has been with no vegetation in sight.

The study findings from *The Standard* newspaper also show that the impacts and threats frame is evident. Unlike the pull-out section of the *Daily Nation,* which presents it as a larger-than-life phenomenon, *The Standard* newspaper presents these threats in relative size (mainly as a fraction of the page). For example, in *The Standard November 16, 2014,* the caption accompanying this photograph is: "For every two lightning strikes in 2000, there will be three lightning strikes in 2100. *The Standard July 16, 2014,* shows the impact on wildlife with the visual showing a buffalo standing amid a flock of flamingos with receding waters in the background. *The Standard July 16, 2014,* shows a section of land covered by eucalyptus and a riverbed on the verge of drying. They all depict the impacts of climate change.

Another frame evident in the findings depicted statistics related to climate change. These images showed graphs, charts, or other drawings depicting statistics on climate change issues. In this study, this frame was called the graphs and models frame. It contained information on climate change. It summarised the data reflecting what is happening in the climate change sector. This frame was depicted in both newspapers.

The study findings show that both newspapers used infographics, though rarely. When used, they depicted the various statistics regarding climate change in the selected newspapers. Although not a significant theme, the graphs and model frames were analysed as they appeared in both newspapers and formed part of the frames in the study.

The sustainability frames in this study refer to images that depict solutions and efforts to curb climate change. They depict climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. The images depict persons taking part in combating climate change, such as using alternative energy, travelling with less pollution, or planting trees.

The study findings depicted this theme in *The Standard* newspaper. The citizens saw the solutions to climate change as 'small' actions. The study findings show that the solution mainly visually depicted

is the planting of trees by individuals. This shows an individualised solution perspective to climate change. For example, it depicted the planting of trees by individuals as a solution to climate change.

The sustainability frame was found in the study findings in the *Daily Nation*. The study findings showed that the visuals depicted showed small actions of individuals in curbing climate change. For example, in *Daily Nation, August 15, 2016*, the article is accompanied by a photograph of a woman holding a plant. It is captioned, "Prof Sean Maxwell. (Right is a grape varieties (sic) adapted to climate change)." Compared to the visuals depicting the larger-than-life effects, the sustainability frame depicts solutions which are small compared to the effects described in the visuals

The frame of civil society demands was evident in the study findings. This frame mainly pointed to visuals depicting the civil societies' work as they campaign for mitigation efforts in line with climate change. This frame was only evident in the *Daily Nation from the study findings*. The visuals in the *Daily Nation* that depicted this frame mainly pointed to the demonstrations on the streets to urge leaders to make some decisions or pass some policies. For example, *Daily Nation, on January 15, 2015,* has a photograph captioned "A demonstration against climate change in Berlin, Germany, last year", showing demonstrators on the streets with placards. Another article, *Daily Nation, August 15, 2016,* shows demonstrators with placards outside the venue of the Marrakech conference.

This study introduced a new frame known as humour imagery. This frame was based on the study findings from *The Standard* newspaper. This frame points to jokes, Fun and humour, caricatures, and cartoons in depicting climate change stories. These articles lack the 'seriousness' of the newspaper articles. *The Standard* newspaper had an additional perspective when presenting climate change stories. Humour was used to communicate issues of climate change. The authors presented stories that were part of 'fun' rather than the usual news or opinion pieces. For example, *The Standard November 10, 2014,* an article on *Crazy Monday*, uses caricature to bring in laughter but points to the solutions to climate change. The angle taken by the author in reporting this article is that of 'jokes.'

Conclusion

The use of visuals influences the audience's emotions and affects their perception of the importance of an article (Joffes, 2008; Wanta, 1988; Lester, 2003). O'Neill (2013) argues that visual representation moderates public engagement with climate change by influencing perceptions of issues of salience and self-efficacy. As Nurmis (2017) has argued, "the choice of photograph, both in terms of style and content, matters to the way the public conceives of the event – it tells the public how to think of the event, and shapes collective memory of it (p.ii)". The importance of visual imagery in communicating climate change messages cannot be downplayed. It significantly impacts 'catching' the reader's attention and engaging them with the message.

Visual imagery is minimal in climate change articles despite its major role in 'attracting' the audience to the page. Climate change visuals need to be emphasised in climate change articles. The visual contexts provided can influence how citizens will make sense of the climate change message. According to Nisbet (2009), a frame is only efficient if it is relevant to the audience's pre-existing interpretation. Thus, unfamiliar or unrelatable frames can influence perception and affect action.

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