

## The Effect of Media Framing on Public Perception of Political Financing in Kisii County, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*Political financing involves using financial resources to influence the political process and election dimension. The media has been at the forefront of shaping how the public perceives political financing and attitudes. The aim of political financing is to balance the imperative of maintaining fairness and integrity in a political process aimed at gaining the trust of the voters. The current study therefore seeks to examine the effect of media framing on political financing in Kisii County, Kenya. The study objectives were; to assess the media definitions of the use of Money for Political activities in Kisii County, Kenya; to explore the communicative framing patterns that influence political financing in Kisii, County, Kenya; to examine media proposals on strategies used by politicians to finance in their political campaigns in Kisii County; to assess the implication of media framing on political financing in Kisii County, Kenya. The study was anchored on the agenda-setting theory, cultivation theory and framing theory. The current study employed a descriptive research design which accommodate both quantitative and quantitative data to carry out this study. The target population, were total of 155 respondents including ((Governor (1), MPs (9), MCAs (45), two members of the community from each of the 45 wards (90), and media personnel operating within the county (8)). The study employed a purposive sampling technique, given that the data required is based on the specific respondent. Additionally, given the small target population of 155 respondents the study employed census method. The study employed both a structured questionnaire for quantitative data collection and interview schedule qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive analysis and inferential statistics while for qualitative analysis study used thematic analysis and findings presented in terms of tables, charts and graphs as well as quotes from your participants respectively. The results of the regression analysis reveal that all the media-related factors examined have a positive and statistically significant impact on political financing in Kisii County. The unstandardized beta coefficients indicate that the Implication of Media Framing has the largest effect on political financing (0.297), followed by the Media Definition of Politician's Use of Finance for Political Gain (0.347). The Communicative Framing Patterns Used by Media and the Media Proposal on Strategies Used also have depicted a positive influence, with coefficients of 0.109 and 0.231, respectively. In conclusion, the findings underscore the central role of media in shaping political financing in Kisii County. The study recommended that media outlets in Kisii County adopt more transparent and informative framing when discussing political financing.*

**Keywords:** Communicative Framing, Implications of Media Framing, Media Definition, Media Proposal Strategies

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The media and politics are two concepts that are inseparable, media has played a crucial role in shaping the political landscape. Globally modern democracies governance thrives through media coverage with the provision of information to the public regarding the political reforms based on political financing. According to Yahya (2019), media framing of the political financing is emerging as a crucial aspect propagated by media showing its implications in the integrity of democratic governance.

Globally, efforts to reform political financing in the United States of America have been continuing for decades, with advocates calling for measures to minimize money's power in politics while increasing openness and accountability. According to Wouters (2020), campaign finance laws and regulations, such as contribution limits, transparency requirements, and public financing choices, differ between states and have been challenged in court and in the legislature.

Among Asian countries such as Indonesia, Practices such as voter bribery, vote purchasing, and other malpractices were noted, primarily driven by poverty among the electorate (Grömping, 2018). These activities undermine the credibility of democracy in Nigeria, leading to calls for electoral reforms to address such malpractices and enhance democratic credibility. While the study highlighted the adverse effects of financial influence in the electoral process, it did not sufficiently investigate the systemic factors underlying political financing. Addressing this gap, further research could explore the structural and institutional determinants of political financing in an Asian context, where similar issues are observed. For instance, in countries like the Philippines or Indonesia, poverty and corruption are known to influence voter behaviour and electoral integrity. uncover systemic enablers of political financing in Asia.

This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how financial practices affect the quality of democracy and propose targeted reforms to improve electoral integrity.

In Africa, research found that women do not have the same level of success as men due to prevailing patriarchal standards that influence how they can campaign and how voters perceive them. However, for those who are successfully elected, the costs do not stop once they are in government. On average, elected members of the National Assembly spend up to Sh780, 000 each month (Cheeseman et al., 2019). This focuses mostly on constituent development initiatives and funding to local interest groups. This is higher than their basic monthly income, excluding allowances and benefits. A similar pattern of monthly expenditure equal or exceeding basic pay income was observed in all four jobs analyzed (Baidoo, et al., 2018). The high cost of politics precludes qualified candidates who lack access to significant finances. Instead, many elected officials utilize their positions to gain access to national-level networks that are extensively involved in public-sector corruption.

In Kenya, a study by Schilling et al., (2021) indicates that the cost of politics in Kenya with the current economic conditions has really increased. It is never easy for politicians to compete effectively in elections without having a substantial amount of cash to carry out their campaign activities successfully. According to the survey, there was increased political competition at all levels in the 2013 general election, which was the first election since the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution. Candidates for the presidential election identified allies to contest for elections as Governors, Senators, Woman Representatives and Members of the National Assembly. Further, it was noted that elections have become highly competitive because of the power, prestige, and benefits attached to elective offices. The country's winner-take-all electoral system has led those who win to exclude the losers, generating heated political competition across the country.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Political financing is a concept that has gained a lot of interest in the recent past. Political financing involves the process of using financial resources to influence the political process and election dimension (Neff & Pickard, 2024). The media has been at the forefront of shaping how the public perceives political financing as well as their attitudes. The way the media has been framing this concept has been a complex matter. Political parties used a lot of resources in political campaign activities. Some of the resources used are sourced from individuals, interest groups and corporations (Gherghina & Volintiru, 2017). The aim of political financing is to balance the imperative of maintaining fairness and integrity in a political process aimed at gaining the trust of the voters. However, achieving this has been an issue that has been there for decades. The problem arises in how media outlets frame the deliberations on the concept of political financing. This arises from the fact that there is incomplete information regarding how political financing takes place in its actual sense. This has brought about a discussion on the role of the media in exposing the money issues in the election process, which significantly undermines the democratic process and integrity of an electoral body.

According to Yang and Gorp (2023) in many instances the media has been exposed for being biased in its coverage of political processes by not disseminating information regarding political financing. The main areas of bias include high-profile donations and scandals, neglecting the broader aspect of political financing. This inappropriate coverage spreads the wrong perception, perpetuating the corruption aspect and undue influence of political financing, where they fail to address the structural determinants of political financing. This has resulted in public discourse on political financing polarizing the constructive dialogue and the meaningful reforms that may be required (Krafft, & Donovan, 2020).

Political financing determines the level of accountability and transparency as perpetuated by media coverage. As noted by Norris (2017), it is through the media that the issue of political financing can be exposed, along with other malpractices taking place in the political process. Existing studies highlight critical issues such as electoral politics (Cheeseman et al., 2019), vote-buying (Baidoo et al., 2018), gender and politics (Kilimo, 2022), and media framing (Ileri & Ochieng, 2020). However, they fall short in addressing the specific role of community and electronic media in influencing attitudes and perceptions on societal issues such as FGM, gender equality, and grassroots empowerment. Furthermore, while some studies (Nygaard, 2020; Tsoy et al., 2021) explore media's influence, they often focus on broader contexts like alternative journalism or public health, leaving gaps in understanding localized media strategies in Kenya's cultural and social contexts.

Therefore, media coverage endeavors to encourage balanced and informative conversation that allows citizens to make informed judgments regarding the future of their democracy that are not influenced by political financing. There have been proposed reforms in political financing, yet still, the aspect has faced a lot of changes and opposition from the political class, therefore making it a concept of discussion. The current study aims at examining the media framing of political financing.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To assess the media definitions of the use of Money for Political activities in Kisii County, Kenya.
- ii. To explore how communicative framing patterns in the media influence political financing in Kisii County, Kenya.
- iii. To examine the media's proposals on the strategies used by politicians to finance their political campaigns in Kisii County, Kenya.
- iv. To assess the implication of media framing on political financing practices in Kisii County, Kenya.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

#### 2.1.1 The Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda setting theory this theory, agenda is set based on the visibility of media and the second level where there is description of media. The theory propagates the fact that media can influence communication in different ways. Such that it has power to influence change in some aspects (Vargo et al., 2018).

Given the fact that agenda-setting theory shows how the media is influential in shaping our understanding of the media's role in influencing public opinion and priorities, it is not without criticism (Vargo et al., 2018). One significant criticism is that the theory oversimplifies the link between media and audience by presuming a direct cause-and-effect dynamic. Critics contend that the theory misses the complicated ways in which individuals interpret and process information, implying that media effect is driven not just by the issues covered but also by the audience's pre-existing views, values, and personal experiences.

Despite these criticisms, the theory has some benefits that have contributed to its long-standing popularity in the field of media studies. According to Nygaard (2020) one of its main assets is its capacity to emphasize the media's enormous influence on the public agenda. Research based on this hypothesis has consistently revealed that the subjects and issues addressed by the media tend to correlate with the issues that the public considers important.

The theory is applicable in the study to pin the fourth objective that is to assess the implication of media framing on political financing practices in Kisii County, Kenya. This is because the theme of the theory is understanding how political financing trends are enhancing media framing to determine the political outcome. It is frequently used to examine news coverage, framing effects, and the media's role in influencing public debate. Because it can aid in understanding how strategic communication activities influence political financing.

#### 2.1.2 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory was formulated by Gerbner (1998). According to the theory, the long term exposure to television watching changes the perception of the consumers and how they conduct themselves. According to this theory repeated exposure to some content in media changes or shapes the perception of an individual regarding some phenomena.

According to Tsoy et al., (2021), the cultivation theory faces different critics claim that cultivation theory overlooks individual variances in media consumption habits, psychological qualities, and social backgrounds. The hypothesis shows a consistent and the general relationship between exposure to media material and the cultivation of perceptions, which may not apply to all individual. Critics also claim that cultivation theory fails to establish a causal association between exposure to media content and the development of specific attitudes or opinions. Despite these criticism, the theory is full of strengths since it explains the long term perspective of long term exposure media which is essential in explaining and recognizing the effects of media which are not always immediate but can progress gradually (Mosharafa, 2015).

The study was applicable in the study to underpin the second and third objective that is to explore how communicative framing patterns in the media influence political financing in Kisii County, Kenya. Also to examine the media's proposals on the strategies used by politicians to finance their political campaigns in Kisii County, Kenya. This is because the theory explains how policymakers, media practitioners, and regulatory authorities can obtain insights into the ethical issues and obligations of media coverage by examining how it frames talks about political fundraising. Understanding how specific frames shape public perceptions of political money can help journalists develop norms and standards for fair reporting. This theory could be used to investigate how consistent media depictions of political fundraising techniques and their repercussions shape public attitudes and views about the political process's integrity and election fairness.

### 2.1.3 Framing theory

The framing theory was formulated by Gregory Bateson (Gregory Bateson, 1972) and revised by Aworolo in 2017 (Arowolo, 2017). The theory describes communication as the process on how information is passed from one individual to another. It presents an interpretation and response of the audience. The core idea is that the way a message is constructed, in terms of choice of words, what aspects discussed, and the context provided, which can significantly influence how people perceive and react to the information.

The Framing theory faces several criticism which include the conceptual ambiguity, where the critics assert that the inconsistency in defining the concept of frame which leads to varied interpretations and applications across studies. Additionally, the theory overemphasizes the power of media to shape public opinion, potentially underestimating the active role of audiences in critically evaluating and interpreting media messages based on their own experiences and beliefs. Lastly, framing theory is sometimes seen as oversimplifying complex social and political issues by reducing them to a limited set of perspectives, thereby neglecting the nuances and multiple dimensions that such issues often encompass.

The theory was applicable in the first objective that is to assess the media definitions of the use of Money for Political activities in Kisii County, Kenya. This theory explores how different media frames using in passing information emphasizing corruption, accountability, or the importance of financial support in politics affect how the public perceives political candidates and their financial backers. Additionally, it can examine whether certain frames resonate more strongly with particular demographic groups within Kisii County, thereby influencing voting behavior or public discourse. By applying framing theory, the research can uncover the mechanisms through which media shapes public attitudes towards political financing, providing insights into the broader implications of media influence on political processes in Kenya.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

### 2.2.1 Media Definitions of Politician Use of Money for Political Purposes

Alfa and Marangos (2016) examined the impact of money on the quality of democracy and its consolidation in Nigeria. Both primary data and secondary data were used. The primary data was collected using a well-structured questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. On the other hand, published materials were the main sources of secondary data. Results revealed that the politicians used money and other incentives to influence the decisions made by voters and hence enhance the outcome of an election. Some of the practices included voter bribery, the purchase of votes and other voting malpractice resulting from acute poverty among the members of the public. This practice results in a lack of credibility for the Nigerian democracy. The study made recommendations that the election process should be reformed to deal with these election activities to mould the process and hence improve credibility. Despite the study showing the impact of money in the political process, the study however failed to identify the actual systemic factors that influence political financing. The current study mitigated this by examining the factors enhancing political financing.

Ileri and Ochieng (2020) examined how media portrayal of 349 Kenyan politicians across four major English national newspapers spanning the period from 2013 to 2017. The study was grounded on the frameworks of news values and the media's role as a reflection of political realities, the research delves into whether certain factors such as gender, tribal affiliation, party size, tenure, leadership roles within committees or parties, engagement with issues of corruption, devolution, government criticism, predicted the visibility of Members of Parliament (MPs) in newspaper coverage. The findings showed that factors such as tenure, leadership positions within committees or parties, engagement with issues of devolution and corruption and criticism of the government emerged as primary predictors of parliamentarians' coverage in the news media. Notably, leadership roles within committees or parties, commentary on corruption and government criticism were identified as the most influential determinants of MPs' media visibility overall. Despite the study examining the necessary concepts, however the study failed to assess the implications of media framing on political process which was mitigated within the current study.

### 2.2.2 Communicative Framing Patterns Used by Media to Report the Political Financing

Yahya (2019) studied on how the media framed certain issues related to political complaints in the United States of America. This study employed both qualitative content analysis and quantitative analysis in carrying out the study. The collected data from media representatives and politicians was coded using Atlas. The coding software was employed to establish how the five framing types are used. These five framings include morality, conflict, responsibility, economic consequences and human interest. Results revealed that there was a weak relationship between framing by politicians and media framing. Additionally, the framing of conflict persists and dominates in all media framing; on the other hand, economic consequences dominate in politicians framing. Politicians and media portrayed different framing, which was presented in different trends. Lastly media and politicians framing presented insignificant textual interactions through the sharing of a small number of similar mutual quotations.

Ndavula and Mueni (2014) in their paper investigated the impact of new media on political marketing during Kenya's 2013 general elections. The landscape of political self-promotion has undergone significant shifts with the rise of new media, as Kenyan politicians have leveraged innovative methods to disseminate campaign messages to the public through various digital platforms. Despite the dynamism within the new media sphere, there exists a noticeable dearth of literature addressing its role in political marketing within the Kenyan context. Consequently, this study aims to explore the relevance of new media in Kenyan elections. Kenya's national policy framework advocates for widespread access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the establishment of robust ICT infrastructure has created opportunities for novel forms of mass engagement through new media. The result revealed that connection between these advancements in technological infrastructure and the enhanced accessibility of the Internet, leading to a rise in online political marketing. Drawing upon framing theory and technological determinism theory, the study constructed a theoretical framework to guide its investigation. The paper argued that a more robust ICT-based campaign platform will foster a deeper culture of participatory democracy, aligning with the country's vision for 2030. It seeks to ascertain whether political parties in Kenya should prioritize the utilization of new media for future political marketing endeavours. The study failed to have a theoretical backing of the study causing a gap.

### **2.2.3 Media Proposal on Strategies Used by Politicians to Finance their Political Campaigns**

Dwyre et al. (2018) studied the role that political parties play in financing elections. The study analysed the effect of the rules of campaign financing employed by political parties and how they are working to adjust them as imitative of creating a positive change that will play a significant role in American elections. Results show that the only players concerned with forming a majority are parties in the long run; hence, they are the most likely funders to expand their resources beyond the most competitive races, perhaps making more elections competitive. As the country emerged from the Civil War and entered a period of fast industrialization and large immigration, the parties grew increasingly sectional. The major parties continued to raise some money from the candidates themselves, often demanding donations from contenders who sought the party's candidacy, but the large amount of money remained raised from the famed fat cats.

In Kenya, a study by Kilimo (2022) on money and women in politics was introduced in the 2010 Kenya Constitution introduced a gender quota, which was meant to increase women's representation in elective positions. The quarter described that a single gender cannot hold more than two-thirds of the appointed positions, elective positions, and public offices. This has necessitated parliament nominating women to both the National Assembly and the County Assembly to adhere to this quota. The study revealed that in 2019, some county assemblies had a number of nominated members to ensure the third gender rule was followed. The reasons behind the low number of women in elective positions were attributed to low resource mobilization for political campaigns. Therefore, to ensure that the gender rule is followed, the legislation process must be followed to increase the number of women in political representation.

### **2.3.4 Implication of Media Framing on Political Financing**

Yang, and Gorp (2023) applied a conceptual design from cultural framing to undertake content analysis on a carefully selected collection of political and media communications about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) from China, India, the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and Australia. Results reconstructed, and compares 14 culturally entrenched frames across five dimensions: China's intentions, the BRI's influence on other countries, adherence to high standards, and historical context. Following this, a deductive analysis based on these 14 frames elucidates key arguments supporting China's legitimization of the BRI, differences between Chinese officials and foreign political-media figures, shifts in foreign governments' positions on the BRI and their justifications, and the growing critical examination by foreign elite media

The study by Onguny (2021), investigated the impact of political regimes and media regulations on journalistic practices, particularly in the context of coverage related to corruption and political impunity. The study variables were the effect of news values, editorial independence, and critical media, the study explores competing interpretations and their implications for media operations. The study employed a qualitative research methodology, drawing upon a range of data sources including academic literature, media reports and policy documents. A thematic analysis approach is utilized to identify and analyse key themes related to state-media relations and the media landscape in Kenya. The findings of the study reveal a complex interplay of factors influencing state-media relations and the media landscape in Kenya. Competing interpretations of "news values, editorial independence and critical media contributes to tensions within the media industry, exacerbated by changes in political regimes and regulatory frameworks. Political and corporate interference in media coverage, particularly concerning issues of corruption and political impunity, pose significant challenges to journalistic autonomy and media freedom

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The current study employed a descriptive research design which accommodate both quantitative and qualitative data to carry out this study. This design is significant since it helps us understand how and why a concept happens. According to Alavi and Hąbek (2016), the mixed research design is appropriate because it can capitalize on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, providing a more thorough knowledge of a study problem. The research using this design may gain a deeper understanding of how and why the experience of a phenomenon happened the way it did. Researchers can get deeper insights into complicated phenomena by combining quantitative data collection and analysis tools, such as surveys or experiments, with qualitative ones like interviews or observations.

#### 3.2 Target Population

The target population refers to a specific group of people that meets some certain criteria from which the research is expected to draw inferential conclusions (Stratton, 2021). A response from the targeted population is expected to answer the research question conclusively. Respondents who are in charge of the implementation of corporate social responsibility were the target population. The target population in research is critical because it identifies the group of people or entities to whom the study findings was applied. The target population for this study was total was 155 including {(Governor (1), MPs (9), MCAs (45), two members of the community from each of the 45 wards (90), and media personnel operating within the county (8).

#### 3.3 Sampling Design

The study employed a purposive sampling technique, given that the data required is based on the specific respondent. The sample was purposefully selected to represent each elective position to form the sample size. According to Schaffer et al., (2021), the large sample size minimizes the errors. The choice of purposive sampling technique is based on the fact that it allows the researcher to get specific individuals or groups who share the characteristics of interest, allowing for more concentrated investigations into certain occurrences or experiences. This tailored approach improves the depth of learning and allows for the examination of complicated topics within the population.

#### 3.4 Sample Size

The current study employed census method to select all the 65 respondents from all categories. However, in the case of the 90 members of the community, simple random sampling was utilized to sample the 90 respondents.

#### 3.5 Instruments of Data Collection

Since the current study contains both quantitative and qualitative data, they used both a questionnaire for quantitative data and an interview schedule for qualitative data collection. Since the data is quantitative and qualitative, both instruments aid in collecting the appropriate data. This instrument was appropriate because of its straightforward nature and can prove to be faster and therefore time-saving for both the respondent and the researcher (Mazhar et al., 2021).

#### 3.6 Data Collection

Data was collected using questionnaires where the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and are expected to be completed and returned within two weeks. It is necessary to collect the whole set of questionnaires for verification and data processing. According to Mazhar, et al., (2021) this approach is appropriate in this particular case given that it allows for more interaction between the researcher and respondents during various stages of the explanation of the study's goal and clarification of any issues that may have arisen during its execution, among other things.

#### 3.7 Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The Likert scale responses were subjected to descriptive statistics to determine patterns and trends in public perceptions of political financing. Additionally, inferential statistics such as chi-square tests or regression analysis were employed to assess relationships between media framing and public opinion, factoring in demographic variables. The qualitative data from focus groups and media content analysis were coded and analyzed thematically to uncover the framing techniques and their impact on public perception. With the aid of SPSS version 23, the quantitative analysis the study was analyzed using descriptive analysis while for qualitative analysis study used thematic analysis and findings presented in terms of tables, charts and graphs as well as quotes from your participants respectively for easy understanding and interpretation.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Response Rate

The descriptive statistics provided in this data summarize the response patterns in a survey or research study. The table displays survey response data, showing that out of a total of 155 expected responses, 126 were returned, resulting in a response rate of 81.29%. Meanwhile, 29 responses were not returned, making up 18.71% of the total. This indicates a high participation rate, with over 80% of respondents completing the survey. Table 1 presents the findings derived from the respondents' rate.

**Table 1**

#### *Response Rate*

Response	Frequency	Response Rate
Returned	126	81.29%
Not Returned	29	18.71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### 4.1.1 Respondent Gender

Table 2 presents the findings derived from the distribution of the respondents in terms of gender, consisting of a total of 126 participants. This table provides a clear overview of the gender composition within the surveyed population.

**Table 2**

#### *Gender of the Respondent*

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	95	75.4
Female	31	24.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results revealed that the distribution in terms of gender distribution of the respondents, with a total of 126 participants. Among them, 95 are male, making up 75.4% of the respondents, while 31 are female, representing 24.6%. This shows a higher participation rate among male respondents compared to female respondents.

### 4.1.2 Marital Status

Table 3 describes the marital status of a group of individuals. It provides information in two columns: Frequency, Percent.

**Table 3**

#### *Marital Status*

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent (%)
Married	101	80.2
Unmarried	25	19.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3 shows the marital status of survey respondents, totalling 126 individuals. Of these, 101 respondents are married, accounting for 80.2%, while 25 are unmarried, making up 19.8% of the sample. This indicates that the majority of respondents are married.

### 4.1.3 Respondent Age

Table 4 presents results derived from the distribution of individuals across various age brackets and provides insights into the demographic composition of the study population.

**Table 4***Age Bracket of the Respondent*

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percent (%)
Between 18-30 years	26	20.6
31 to 40 years	29	23.0
41 to 50 years	35	27.8
50 years and above	36	28.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4 provides an age distribution of the 126 survey respondents. Among them, 26 individuals (20.6%) are aged between 18 and 30 years, 29 (23.0%) are between 31 and 40 years, 35 (27.8%) are between 41 and 50 years, and 36 respondents (28.6%) are aged 50 years and above. This spread shows a relatively even distribution across age groups, with a slight concentration in the older age ranges (41 years and above).

**4.1.4 Education Level**

Education level of respondents serves as an essential demographic variable that helps researchers categorize and understand the background of study participants or populations. The Table 5 presents the highlights the educational qualifications of a specific population, shedding light on the diversity in their educational backgrounds. The table shows the educational qualifications of 126 survey respondents, distributed across five categories: Certificate, Diploma, Degree, Master's Degree and Doctorate Degree. Out of the total respondents, the largest group holds a degree 55 (43.65%), followed by those with a master's degree 37 (29.37%). Individuals with a diploma make up 16 (12.7%) of the sample, while those with a Certificate account for 12 (9.52%). The smallest group comprises respondents with a PhD, at just 6 (4.76%).

**Table 5***Education Level*

Education Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Certificate	12	9.52
Diploma	16	12.70
Degree	55	43.65
Masters Degree	37	29.37
PhD	6	4.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**4.1.4 Years in Politics**

The provided Table 6 presents data on the distribution of individuals based on the years of in politics. This information can offer insights into the understanding levels of politics within a particular group.

**Table 6***Years in Politics*

Years in Politics	Frequency	Percent (%)
5 years and below	24	19.0
6-10 years	40	31.7
11-15 years	48	38.1
Above 15 years	14	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Result revealed that in terms of number of years' respondents had been involved in politics. The majority, representing 38.1% (48 respondents), reported having 11-15 years of political experience, indicating a significant portion with over a decade in the field. Those with 6-10 years in politics formed the second-largest group, with 31.7% (40 respondents), showing a notable presence of respondents with mid-level experience.

On the other hand, respondents with the least and most experience were smaller in number. Only 19.0% (24 respondents) had 5 years or less, while 11.1% (14 respondents) had over 15 years in politics. This distribution illustrates a concentration of respondents with moderate to significant experience in politics, with fewer individuals at the extremes of experience. In total, 126 respondents participated in the survey, accounting for 100% of the sample



## 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

### 4.2.1 Media Definition of Politician’s Use of Finance of Political Gain

Table 7 below presents descriptive statistics on perceptions regarding the influence of money in politics among constituents in Kisii. The statements reflect various dimensions of how money impacts political trust, integrity, and perceptions of politicians’ motives. The means and standard deviations provide insights into the general consensus and variability in responses. Overall, the statements reflect a generally high perception that money significantly impacts political outcomes and influences public trust in the political system. With a sample size of 126, the respondents’ views give a well-rounded perspective on how money-related activities in politics are perceived.

The first statement, on the politicians among constituents in Kisii perception of money as a significant factor in influencing political outcomes, has a mean of 3.8016 and a standard deviation of 1.17997. This mean implies that respondents generally agreed that money is influential in determining political outcomes, though the standard deviation indicates moderate variability. This may imply that while many respondents see money as an essential factor in political success, there is some difference in the strength of this perception.

The second statement, that residents of constituencies perceive politicians who rely heavily on money for political purposes as less trustworthy, depicted a mean of 3.7698 and a standard deviation of 1.04432. This result implies that politicians who depend on financial influence are generally seen as less trustworthy. The lower standard deviation reflects moderate consistency in this opinion, indicating a shared perception among respondents about the negative impact of money reliance on trustworthiness.

The third statement, whether media's definition of the general public perception of the money factor as a factor covering integrity in political activities, depicted a mean of 4.0476 with a standard deviation of .91089. The higher mean score shows stronger agreement that the media significantly shapes public opinion on money’s role in political integrity. The lower standard deviation here implies a greater consensus, showing that respondents largely agree on the media’s role in framing money’s impact on political integrity.

On the fourth statement, on public’s perception of politicians’ motives for using money influences their overall trust in the political system, depicted a mean of 3.8889 and a standard deviation of 1.11156. This mean reflects a general agreement that perceptions of politicians' financial motives play a role in shaping trust in the political system. However, the standard deviation indicates a moderate level of variability, meaning there is some divergence in the extent to which respondents feel this influence impacts overall trust.

On the final statement on the perceptions of politicians' financial transparency regarding their attitudes towards the use of money is negative for political purposes, holds the highest mean at 4.1032 and a standard deviation of 1.01846. This high mean score indicates strong agreement that the perceived lack of financial transparency among politicians is viewed negatively, especially regarding money used in political contexts. The moderate standard deviation reflects some consistency in this view, with many respondents agreeing on the negative perception of financial transparency in politics.

The overall average mean score for these statements is 3.9222, with a standard deviation of 1.05304, suggesting a general tendency among respondents to agree that money has a significant impact on political perceptions, with moderate variability in the strength of these views across different statements.

**Table 7**

*Descriptive on Media Definition of Politician’s Use of Finance of Political Gain*

Descriptive Statistics			
Statements	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Politicians among constituents in Kisii perception of money a significant factor in influencing political outcome.	126	3.8016	1.17997
Residents of Constituencies perception of how politicians rely heavily on money for political purposes as less trustworthy.	126	3.7698	1.04432
The media definition on the general public perception of the money factor as a factor covering integrity in political activities."	126	4.0476	.91089
Public’s perception of politicians’ motives for using money influences their overall trust in the political system.	126	3.8889	1.11156
Perceptions of politicians' financial transparency regarding their attitudes towards the use of money is negative for political purposes.	126	4.1032	1.01846
<b>Average</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>3.92222</b>	<b>1.05304</b>

### 4.2.2 Communicative Framing Patterns used by Media to Reports the Political Financing

Table 8 presents descriptive statistics on respondents' perceptions of media framing regarding political financing in Kisii County. The data, drawn from a sample of 126 participants, covers various dimensions such as the media’s role in highlighting political financing issues, emphasizing money’s role in elections, and educating the public on financing’s



impact on politics. Each statement includes a mean, representing the average level of agreement, and a standard deviation, indicating the variation in responses.

The statement whether media framing frequently highlights discrepancies or controversies in political financing has a mean of 3.7460 and a relatively low standard deviation of .97107. This indicates a moderate level of agreement among respondents that media often emphasizes controversies in political financing, with responses fairly consistent on this perception. This implied that a shared view that media coverage often draws attention to inconsistencies or problematic aspects of political funding.

The second statement, whether the media framing in Kisii County emphasizes the role of money in political elections, has a mean of 3.3889 and a higher standard deviation of 1.33250. This lower mean implies that respondents are somewhat neutral or less in agreement about the media's emphasis on money in elections. The high standard deviation reflects considerable variability in responses, indicating mixed views on the extent to which the media focuses on the financial aspects of elections in Kisii County.

The third statement, whether the rate the coverage of different political parties or candidates in terms of their financing strategies, received a mean of 3.7857 and a standard deviation of 1.19068. This higher mean implied that there was a moderate level of agreement that the media provides coverage on political parties' financing strategies. The standard deviation shows moderate variability, suggesting some differences in opinion on how extensively the media covers financial strategies across various political actors.

The fourth statement, whether Media in Kisii County often conducts in-depth analysis to investigate reporting on political financing issues," has a mean of 3.3810 and a standard deviation of 1.19905. This mean reflects a moderately neutral stance, indicating that respondents may perceive that in-depth analysis by media on political financing issues is less common or emphasized. The moderate standard deviation points to some variation in responses, implying that opinions are divided on how thoroughly the media investigates political financing issues.

The fifth statement, whether media framing prioritizes public knowledge and education about the ramifications of different financing patterns on the political process," has a mean of 3.7540 and a standard deviation of 1.16404. This implied that respondents generally agree that media framing in Kisii County promotes public awareness of political financing's impact, though there is some variation in responses. The overall average mean score for these statements is 3.61112 with an average standard deviation of 1.171468, implying that there was a moderate level of agreement that media framing in Kisii County addresses issues related to political financing.

**Table 8**

*Communicative Framing Patterns used by Media to Reports the Political Financing*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
<b>Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Media framing frequently highlights discrepancies or controversies in political financing.	126	3.7460	.97107
The media framing in Kisii County emphasizes the role of money in political elections.	126	3.3889	1.33250
Rate the coverage of different political parties or candidates in terms of their financing strategies.	126	3.7857	1.19068
Media in Kisii County's often conducts in-depth analysis to investigate reporting on political financing issues.	126	3.3810	1.19905
Media framing prioritizes public knowledge and education about the ramifications of different financing patterns on the political process.	126	3.7540	1.16404
<b>Average</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>3.61112</b>	<b>1.171468</b>

**4.2.3 Strategies used by Politicians to Finance their Political Campaigns**

Table 9 provides descriptive statistics on perceptions of strategies used by politicians in Kisii County to finance their campaigns. The statements cover a range of funding strategies, including corporate donations, individual incentives, backroom deals, personal wealth, and digital fundraising. Each statement includes a mean, reflecting the average level of agreement among the 126 respondents, and a standard deviation, showing the variability in responses.

The statement whether the politicians regularly utilize money incentives including small individual donations as a strategy for financing their political campaigns depicted the highest mean, at 4.4841. This implies a strong agreement among respondents that small individual incentives are a common campaign financing strategy. The low standard deviation of .65402 indicates high consistency in responses, with most respondents in agreement on this perception.

On the statement on whether practices such as utilizing personal wealth to finance political campaigns among politicians. Depicted a mean of 4.2143 is associated with the statement. This implies that respondents generally agree that politicians often use personal funds for campaign financing. The standard deviation of .68827 is relatively low, indicating a consistent perception among respondents that personal wealth is commonly used in political financing.



Another common strategy noted is the use of backroom deals with special interest groups, with a mean score of 3.9127 and a standard deviation of .94674. This implies that there was a moderate agreement among respondents that politicians frequently engage in covert arrangements to secure campaign funding. However, the moderately higher standard deviation here indicates some variability, meaning that while many respondents agree, there are diverse opinions on the prevalence of this strategy.

The statements whether corporate donations are one of the strategies frequently used by politicians to fund their campaigns within the county and that Politicians sometimes employ digital fundraising platforms as a strategy to finance political campaigns depicted a mean of 3.7222 and 3.8889, respectively, with moderate standard deviations of 1.14988 and .90529. This reflects a general agreement that corporate donations and digital fundraising are used to finance campaigns, though there is a bit more variation in the perceived frequency of corporate donations.

The overall average mean for these statements is 4.04444, with an average standard deviation of 0.86884. This implies that there was a general consensus that these various strategies are prevalent in political financing, with some strategies such as individual incentives and personal wealth perceived as particularly common. The moderate variability across responses indicates that while there is broad agreement on the usage of these strategies, perceptions differ somewhat on how frequently each is employed.

**Table 9**

*Strategies used by Politicians to Finance their Political Campaigns*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Corporate donations are one of the strategies frequently used by politicians to fund their campaigns within the county.	126	3.7222	1.14988
Politicians regularly utilize money incentives including small individual donations, as a strategy for financing their political campaigns	126	4.4841	.65402
Politicians often engage in backroom deals in arrangements with special interest groups to secure campaign funding.	126	3.9127	.94674
Practice such as utilizing personal wealth to finance political campaigns among politicians.	126	4.2143	.68827
Politicians sometimes employ digital fundraising platforms as a strategy to finance political campaigns.	126	3.8889	.90529
<b>Average</b>		<b>4.04444</b>	<b>0.86884</b>

**4.2.4 Implication of Media Framing on Political Financing**

Table 10 presents descriptive statistics on the perceived implications of media framing on political financing in Kisii County. Each statement in the table explores how media coverage affects attitudes, actions, public opinion, reforms, and societal change related to political financing. The mean values indicate the level of agreement among the 126 respondents, while the standard deviations reflect the consistency of their responses.

The highest mean, 4.4127, is observed for the statement whether, media framing can influence societal change within the county, suggesting strong agreement that media framing has the potential to drive societal changes. The standard deviation for this statement is .71855, indicating relatively low variability and a high level of consistency among respondents in perceiving media as a powerful agent for societal change.

The second-highest mean, 4.0476, is associated with the statement of politicians sometimes act based on the media framing of their actions. This implies that respondents believe media framing affects politicians' behaviour in response to how their actions are portrayed. The standard deviation of .91089 implies that there was a moderate consistency, indicating general agreement with some variation in how strongly respondents feel media framing influences politicians' actions.

The statement whether the public opinion is influenced by media framing regarding political financing has a mean of 3.8889 and a standard deviation of 1.11156. This mean shows agreement that media framing plays a role in shaping public opinion about political financing. However, the higher standard deviation indicates more variability in responses, suggesting that while many respondents agree, others may have differing views on the strength of media's influence over public opinion.

The statements whether media framing has a positive implication on the individual attitude regarding financing political campaigns within the county and whether reforms in financing political campaigns are determined by media framing depicted means of 3.7698 and 3.7302, respectively, and standard deviations of 1.04432 and .96675. These results suggest moderate agreement that media framing positively affects individual attitudes and influences the direction of campaign finance reforms. The moderate to high standard deviations reflect some variability, indicating that while there is agreement, views on the extent of these impacts vary.

The overall average mean for these statements is 3.96984, with an average standard deviation of 0.950414. This implies a general consensus that media framing has significant implications on various aspects of political financing, with respondents recognizing its potential to shape individual attitudes, influence public opinion, and even drive societal change, though the degree of impact is perceived differently across the statements.

**Table 10***Descriptive on Implication of Media Framing on Political Financing*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
<b>Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Media framing has a positive implication on the Individual attitude regarding financing political campaigns within the county.	126	3.7698	1.04432
Politicians sometimes act based on the media framing of their actions.	126	4.0476	.91089
The public opinion is influenced by media framing regarding political financing.	126	3.8889	1.11156
Reforms in financing political campaigns is determined by media framing.	126	3.7302	.96675
Media framing can influence societal change within the county.	126	4.4127	.71855
<b>Average</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>3.96984</b>	<b>0.950414</b>

#### 4.2.5 Political Financing in Kisii County

Table 11 below presents descriptive statistics on perceptions of political financing practices among politicians in Kisii County, covering aspects such as disclosure of funding sources, adherence to regulations, commitment to transparency, and the influence of external factors. Each statement's mean indicates the average level of agreement among the 126 respondents, while the standard deviation reflects the variability of their responses.

The first statement, whether politicians in Kisii County frequently disclose their sources of campaign funding within the county, depicted a mean of 3.3889 and a high standard deviation of 1.33250. This relatively low mean implies a neutral to moderately disagreeing stance among respondents regarding politicians' transparency in disclosing campaign funding sources. The high standard deviation reflects considerable variability, indicating mixed opinions on this topic.

The statement whether politicians within Kisii County adhere to existing regulations regarding political financing depicted a mean of 3.7857 and a standard deviation of 1.19068. This implies a moderate level of agreement that politicians generally comply with political financing regulations, though the standard deviation indicates some variation in responses, with different levels of confidence about compliance.

The third statement, politicians within the County reflect a commitment to accountability and transparency regarding campaign financing, revealed a mean of 3.6032 and a standard deviation of 1.20717. This moderate mean indicates some agreement that politicians are committed to transparency and accountability, though the standard deviation reflects moderate variability, suggesting that while some respondents believe politicians are committed, others remain sceptical.

The statement whether illicit financial practices, such as bribery in political financing statements made by candidates in Kisii County, depicted a mean of 3.6429 and a standard deviation of 1.02344, indicating moderate agreement that illicit practices are present in campaign financing. The lower standard deviation here implies greater consistency among respondents regarding this perception.

Whether political statements from candidates in Kisii County address the influence of external factors such as corporations in campaign financing depicted the highest mean, of 3.8254. This implies that respondents generally agreed that politicians acknowledge the role of external influences in financing. The standard deviation of .98857 reflects moderate consistency in this view.

The overall average mean score for these statements is 3.64922, with an average standard deviation of 1.148472. This implies that, on average, respondents moderately agreed that political financing practices in Kisii County involve some level of disclosure, regulation compliance, and transparency, though opinions vary on the degree of adherence and the presence of illicit practices



**Table 11**

*Political Financing in Kisii County*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Politician’s in Kisii County frequently disclose their sources of campaign funding within the county.	126	3.3889	1.33250
Politicians within Kisii County adhere to existing regulations regarding the political financing.	126	3.7857	1.19068
Politicians within the County reflect on commitment on accountability and transparency regarding campaign financing.	126	3.6032	1.20717
Illicit financial practices, such as bribery in political financing statements made by candidates in Kisii County.	126	3.6429	1.02344
Political statements from candidates in Kisii County address the influence of external factors, such as corporations in campaign financing	126	3.8254	.98857
<b>Average</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>3.64922</b>	<b>1.148472</b>

**4.3 Inferential Statistics**

Inferential statistics was done using multiple regression analysis to predict the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. Results were as follows.

**4.3.1 Model Summary**

Table 12 presents the model summary provides information on the relationship between the dependent variable and the predictors: Implication of Media Framing, Media Proposal on Strategies Used, Communicative Framing Patterns Used by Media, and Media Definition of Politician’s Use of Finance for Political Gain. The R value is 0.663, indicating a strong positive correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable. The R-Square value is 0.439, which implies that approximately 43.9% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the combined influence of the predictors in this model. This is a moderate level of explanatory power, meaning that these media-related factors collectively account for a significant portion of the variance, though more than half of the variance remains unexplained.

**Table 12**

*Model Summary*

<b>Model Summary</b>									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.663 <sup>a</sup>	.439	.421	.19267	.439	23.710	4	121	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Implication of Media Framing , Media Proposal on Strategies used , Communicative Framing Patterns used by Media , Media definition of Politician’s use of Finance of Political Gain

**4.3.2 ANOVA**

Table 13 presents the ANOVA results, based on the F-statistic in the ANOVA table is used to assess the overall significance of the regression model. In this case, the F-statistic is 23.710, which is quite large. The F-statistic tests whether the variation explained by the predictors (Implication of Media Framing, Media Proposal on Strategies Used, Communicative Framing Patterns Used by Media, and Media Definition of Politician’s Use of Finance for Political Gain) is significantly greater than the unexplained variation (residuals). The corresponding significance value (Sig.) is 0.000, which is much smaller than the common alpha level of 0.05.

**Table 13**

*ANOVA*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.521	4	.880	23.710	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4.492	121	.037		
	Total	8.012	125			

A. Dependent Variable: Political Financing In Kisii County

B. Predictors: (Constant), Implication of Media Framing , Media Proposal on Strategies Used , Communicative Framing Patterns Used by Media , Media definition of Politician’s use of Finance of Political Gain

**4.3.3 Coefficient Table**

The results of the regression analysis reveal that all the media-related factors examined have a positive and statistically significant impact on political financing in Kisii County. The unstandardized beta coefficients indicate that the Implication of Media Framing has the largest effect on political financing (0.297), followed by the Media Definition of Politician’s Use of Finance for Political Gain (0.347). These findings suggest that media framing and the way the



media defines political finance significantly influence political financing behavior in the region. The Communicative Framing Patterns Used by Media and the Media Proposal on Strategies Used also have positive effects, with coefficients of 0.109 and 0.231, respectively.

**Table 14**  
*Coefficient Tables*

Model		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.412	.263		5.371	.000
	Communicative Framing Patterns Used By Media	.109	.030	.250	3.653	.000
	Media Definition of Politicians use of Finance for Political Gain	.347	.043	.499	1.105	.001
	Media Proposal on Strategies used	.231	.046	.342	5.017	.000
	Implication of Media Framing	.297	.045	.593	6.602	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Political Financing in Kisii County

#### 4.4 Qualitative Analysis & Discussion

Based on these responses, two themes were identified that is the role of money in political success and the scepticism and distrust towards political financing. Many respondents emphasize that financial resources play a crucial role in securing election victories in Kisii County, leading to perceptions that those with more money have an unfair advantage, regardless of their political experience or policy quality. At the same time, there is a strong sense of scepticism and concern about the transparency and integrity of political financing, with voters viewing it as a corrupting influence that undermines the democratic process and fosters inequality.

Regarding the responses on which media outlets do you primarily rely on for information about political financing, two themes were identified. Two emerging themes from the responses are reliance on traditional media outlets and use of digital and social media for political financing information. Respondents commonly rely on television and radio stations, such as Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, Kisii FM, and Egesa FM, for in-depth discussions and updates on political financing, especially during elections. Additionally, there is a growing trend of using digital platforms like social media (Twitter and Facebook), online news websites and community-based digital outlets to stay informed about political financing, with social media offering insights from political commentators, activists, and journalists. These findings are supported by those by Alfa and Marangos (2016) who found that there is a significant relationship between political financing and the quality of democracy in a county. Further, Gilens et al. (2021) supported these results by indication that the motivation behind the politicians’ ambitions are merged with political financing.

Regarding the recent media communicative framing on political financing, the emerging themes were concerned with transparency and corruption in political financing and the influence of financial resources on election outcomes. Respondents highlight how the media has focused on the transparency of political financing, raising concerns about illegal funding sources, vote-buying, and the corrupting influence of money on democratic integrity. Additionally, the media has framed political financing as a major factor influencing election outcomes, often emphasizing how candidates with substantial financial backing dominate campaigns, overshadowing those with fewer resources and raising concerns about the impact of corporate donations on political decisions and policies. The findings resonate with those by Yahya (2019) who found that media frame certain issues related to political complaints significantly enhanced the political status and the use of political financing. Also, Neff and Pickard (2021) noted that public media systems contribute significantly to information dissemination regarding political financing.

### V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that media plays a crucial role in influencing political financing in Kisii County. The results demonstrate that the way media frames political issues, particularly the implications of media framing, significantly impacts the financial decisions made by politicians and political parties. The media's portrayal of financial practices, including its emphasis on how politicians use finance for political gain, is a key determinant in shaping the political financing landscape. This indicates that media framing and definitions are not just passive reflections of political events, but active forces that drive the strategies and behaviors surrounding political financing.



In conclusion, the findings underscore the central role of media in shaping political financing in Kisii County. The media's ability to frame political issues, define financial practices, propose strategies, and communicate information has a profound impact on the financial behaviour of political actors. Given the statistical significance of these media-related factors, it is clear that media influences both public perception and the financial strategies employed by politicians.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that media outlets in Kisii County adopt more transparent and informative framing when discussing political financing. Given the significant role media framing plays in influencing political financing decisions, it is crucial for the media to emphasize the importance of ethical financial practices and transparency in political campaigns. Media should prioritize providing balanced and detailed coverage on the sources and uses of campaign funds to foster greater public awareness and accountability in political financing. By promoting integrity and discouraging illicit financial practices, media can help ensure that political campaigns are financed in a more transparent and equitable manner.

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