

# News Frames in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign Coverage in Tanzania: A case of the *Daily News* and The Citizen Newspapers

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**Abstract—** This study analyzes news frames in the coverage of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, focusing on an analysis of *Daily News* and *The Citizen* newspapers in Tanzania. Guided by Framing Theory, the research employs a mixed-methods approach and a case study design. The study examined 104 editions of *Daily News* and *The Citizen* published between July 1, 2021, and June 31, 2022, using purposive sampling to select relevant editions. Data was collected through document analysis every week. Findings reveal key differences in the framing of COVID-19 vaccination coverage between the two newspapers. The most prominent frame was “Government Action,” with *Daily News* publishing 45 articles (21.6%) on this theme, highlighting the media’s focus on government efforts. “Vaccine Safety” was the second most covered frame (19.2%), reflecting the public’s concern over vaccine safety. Other frames, such as “Health Benefits” (13.0%) and “Vaccine Efficacy” (13.0%), underscored the health advantages and effectiveness of the vaccines. *Daily News* featured broader coverage, particularly on government actions and vaccine safety, while *The Citizen* focused more on expert opinions and vaccination rates. The analysis illustrates the distinct editorial approaches taken by the two newspapers in shaping public perceptions of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Tanzania. Overall, the findings underscore the varied strategies used by the media in reporting the vaccination efforts, emphasizing the multifaceted portrayal of the campaign. The study recommends enhancing coverage of societal attitudes, vaccine access, economic benefits, and international comparisons to address vaccine hesitancy and improve public awareness of Tanzania’s COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

**Index Terms-** News Frames, COVID-19 Vaccination, Campaign, Vaccine Safety, Health Benefits.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The media holds a vital position in shaping public perceptions and attitudes toward health campaigns,

particularly vaccination efforts like those against COVID-19. As the world grapples with the effects of the pandemic, media channels have become instrumental in conveying crucial information about the benefits, risks, and developments related to vaccines. In Tanzania, like in many other parts of the world, media coverage plays a pivotal role in framing the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. The coverage influences how people perceive the vaccines, shaping both acceptance and hesitancy, which, in turn, impacts public health outcomes (Romer & Jamieson, 2020).

The growing reliance on media, especially in times of crisis, has made it a powerful tool in public health advocacy. However, it also presents challenges, particularly when the media environment is saturated with conflicting messages about vaccine safety and efficacy (Padamsee et al., 2022). As Tanzania continues to navigate its COVID-19 vaccination campaign, analyzing the media’s role in shaping public attitudes becomes a crucial endeavour. This study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on the media’s influence on public health campaigns by focusing on how *Daily News* and *The Citizen* frame COVID-19 vaccination coverage, with implications for vaccine uptake and hesitancy in the Tanzanian context

Vaccine hesitancy remains one of the critical challenges in the global fight against COVID-19. The World Health Organization (WHO) identified vaccine hesitancy as one of the top threats to global health even before the pandemic (Wilson & Wiysonge, 2020). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this hesitancy has been fueled by widespread misinformation and disinformation, often spread through both traditional and social media. This creates a complex environment

where media outlets can either enhance public trust in vaccines or, conversely, sow seeds of doubt (Padamsee et al., 2022).

Studies on media framing suggest that how the media portrays an issue can significantly influence public understanding and response (Aswani, 2021). News outlets can play a crucial role in debunking myths and correcting misinformation about vaccines. However, when sensationalism or falsehoods dominate the coverage, the result may be increased public distrust and lower vaccination rates (Callaghan et al., 2021). This makes the role of media coverage in vaccine campaigns a double-edged sword. In Tanzania, where vaccine rollout has been crucial to managing the pandemic, understanding how local media frames these campaigns becomes essential.

In Tanzania, vaccine hesitancy has been linked to several factors, including concerns about the safety, efficacy, and speed of vaccine development. These concerns are often amplified by misinformation, which can be easily disseminated through media channels (Cascini et al., 2021). The role of media in either reinforcing or counteracting these misconceptions is therefore critical in shaping public opinion. Through responsible reporting, the media can play a positive role in promoting vaccine acceptance. Conversely, irresponsible reporting can contribute to vaccine hesitancy, posing a challenge to public health efforts (Chadwick et al., 2021).

Moreover, research suggests that media consumption during health crises like COVID-19 significantly affects how people perceive public health interventions (Coombs, Porter, & Barbagallo, 2024). The “echo chamber” effect, where individuals are exposed only to information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs, is particularly prevalent on social media but can also be reflected in traditional media outlets (Schmidt et al., 2018). This effect is significant in shaping public discourse around vaccines, as polarized media coverage may reinforce vaccine hesitancy or acceptance within certain demographic groups.

This study examines the framing of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in two major Tanzanian newspapers: *Daily News* and *The Citizen*. Both

newspapers are significant in their reach and influence, providing a valuable comparative case study for understanding how media coverage may shape public attitudes toward vaccination in Tanzania. The coverage from these newspapers has the potential to influence both vaccine uptake and hesitancy, thereby directly affecting the success of public health campaigns in the country.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study employs Framing Theory to explore how media coverage influences public perceptions of the COVID-19 National Vaccination Campaign. Framing Theory, introduced by Tversky and Kahneman (1981), posits that the way information is presented can shape how people perceive and interpret it, thereby influencing decision-making processes. This theory assumes that media framing can directly impact public attitudes, policymaking, and health outcomes, as media outlets emphasize or downplay different aspects of an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In this study, the theory is relevant because it allows for an analysis of how *Daily News* and *The Citizen* frame the vaccination campaign—whether they highlight the campaign’s safety, efficacy, or challenges—and how these frames affect public understanding and behavior. While the theory is powerful for uncovering media influences, it has weaknesses, including the subjectivity in interpreting frames, selective framing by media outlets, and its assumption that media framing alone dictates public perception (O’Keefe & Wu, 2012). Additionally, Framing Theory often overlooks broader contextual factors like political agendas and audience agency in interpreting media messages. Despite these limitations, the theory provides valuable insights into how media narratives shape public discourse on vaccination efforts.

### 2.2 Empirical literature Review

Empirical studies on COVID-19 vaccination campaigns reveal diverse approaches and challenges across different regions. Di Fusco et al. (2022) conducted a study in the United States, highlighting the economic benefits of a successful vaccination campaign, predicting a five trillion US dollar boost. They argued that international cooperation, especially in developing nations, is crucial to increasing

vaccination efforts, which are proven to foster economic growth. In South Africa, Wiysonge et al. (2022) examined vaccine hesitancy, finding a correlation between public misconceptions and reluctance to get vaccinated. They emphasized the need for awareness-raising, particularly among healthcare workers, as their participation is critical in shaping public confidence in the vaccine.

Communication strategies also played a significant role in public health messaging, as demonstrated in several studies. Marx et al. (2023) explored how public health agencies in Brazil used Twitter to promote vaccination efforts, analyzing 77,527 tweets. The study revealed the effectiveness of innovative visual framing techniques, including infographics and pop culture references, in combating misinformation. Similarly, Azer and Alexander (2022) used netnography to analyze over 23,000 Facebook comments on WHO vaccine posts, developing a framework of public engagement behaviors towards vaccination, highlighting patterns of acceptance, hesitancy, and refusal.

Other studies explored the psychological and behavioral aspects of public responses to COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. Ko et al. (2023) compared narrative and non-narrative public service announcements (PSAs), finding that narrative PSAs increased empathy and reduced psychological reactance, which in turn influenced vaccination intentions. Meanwhile, Yadav and Sagar (2023) used text mining and network analysis of 115,000 tweets to investigate public opinion on vaccination and COVID-19 appropriate behavior, identifying key themes such as fear of the virus, perceptions of vaccine safety, and healthcare infrastructure. These studies highlight the importance of tailored communication strategies in improving public perceptions and vaccine uptake.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze media coverage of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Tanzania. The selected case study focused on two prominent newspapers, *Daily News* and *The Citizen*, to provide an in-depth examination of how these outlets reported on the

vaccination efforts. Through this design, the study explored media representation, language, and visual elements to understand patterns, biases, and trends. This approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis, combining rich, detailed qualitative insights with quantifiable data to offer a well-rounded understanding of the news framing.

Qualitative analysis was a key element of the methodology, focusing on a content analysis of 104 issues of *Daily News* and *The Citizen* from July 2021 to June 2022. The researcher examined the narrative styles and themes in news stories, identifying trends such as positive, negative, or neutral framing of the vaccination campaign. By categorizing the stories (e.g., news reports, editorials), the study uncovered how these newspapers framed the campaign in terms of government efforts, public responses, and challenges, thus providing insights into how the media may have influenced public perception of COVID-19 vaccination.

The quantitative approach complemented the qualitative findings by systematically coding each news article to quantify key elements such as the frequency of coverage, sources cited, and prominence of the stories. This involved tracking how often government officials, healthcare professionals, and international organizations were quoted and analyzing the distribution of these sources in the news. The data were then presented through statistical tools like graphs and charts, enabling the researcher to identify clear trends in the media's portrayal of the vaccination campaign, further enriching the study's overall findings.

### IV. FINDINGS

The analysis of news frames in the COVID-19 vaccination campaign as reported by *Daily News* and *The Citizen* reveals significant variations in how each publication framed the vaccination efforts. Overall, *Daily News* presented a slightly higher percentage of articles across most frames, indicating a broader or more detailed coverage of the campaign compared to *The Citizen*.

Table 1.1: News Frame Analysis in the *Daily News* and *The Citizen* newspapers

News Frame	<i>The Citizen</i>	<i>Daily News</i>	Total
Frame 1: Health Benefits	15 (14.4%)	12 (11.5%)	27 (13.0%)
Frame 2: Government Action	20 (19.2%)	25 (23.8%)	45 (21.6%)
Frame 3: Public Response	10 (9.6%)	8 (7.6%)	18 (8.7%)
Frame 4: Vaccine Safety	18 (17.3%)	22 (21.0%)	40 (19.2%)
Frame 5: Vaccine Efficacy	12 (11.5%)	15 (14.4%)	27 (13.0%)
Frame 6: Economic Impact	8 (7.7%)	10 (9.6%)	18 (8.7%)
Frame 7: Access and Distribution	11 (10.6%)	9 (8.7%)	20 (9.6%)
Frame 8: International Comparison	7 (6.7%)	4 (3.8%)	11 (5.3%)
Total Articles	100 (96.2%)	105 (100.0%)	205 (98.1%)
Missing Data	4 (3.8%)	-	4 (1.9%)

Source: Research Data, 2024

The “Health Benefits” frame was prominent, appearing in 27 articles (13.0%) across both newspapers, with 15 articles (14.4%) from *The Citizen* and 12 articles (11.5%) from *Daily News*. This frame underscored the advantages of vaccination, focusing on public health benefits and contributing to the overall narrative of promoting vaccine uptake.

The most frequent frame was “Government Action,” featured in 45 articles (21.6%) across the two publications. *Daily News* led in this frame, with 25 articles (23.8%), compared to *The Citizen*’s 20 articles (19.2%). This frame concentrated on government policies, actions, and leadership in implementing the

vaccination program, highlighting administrative efforts in the fight against COVID-19.

The “Vaccine Safety” frame was also highly visible, covered in 40 articles (19.2%) overall, with *Daily News* publishing 22 articles (21.0%) and *The Citizen* contributing 18 (17.3%). The emphasis on vaccine safety reflects the importance of reassuring the public about the security of vaccines to encourage participation in the campaign.

The “Vaccine Efficacy” frame, appearing in 27 articles (13.0%), presented information on the effectiveness of the vaccines, including scientific evidence and research outcomes. It was featured in 12 articles (11.5%) from *The Citizen* and 15 articles (14.4%) from *Daily News*.

The “Public Response” frame, which focused on societal reactions to the vaccination efforts, was less common, appearing in 18 articles (8.7%) overall, with *The Citizen* publishing 10 articles (9.6%) and *Daily News* 8 (7.6%). This frame provided insights into public attitudes and behaviors concerning the vaccination campaign.

The “Economic Impact” frame, addressing the financial implications of the vaccination campaign, appeared in 18 articles (8.7%)8 articles (7.7%) in *The Citizen* and 10 articles (9.6%) in *Daily News*. This frame evaluated both the economic costs and benefits associated with the mass vaccination effort.

“Access and Distribution” issues were discussed in 20 articles (9.6%) across the two publications, with *The Citizen* publishing 11 (10.6%) and *Daily News* 9 (8.7%). This frame explored logistical challenges and the availability of vaccines, providing an operational perspective on the campaign.

The least reported frame was “International Comparison,” appearing in only 11 articles (5.3%) overall. *The Citizen* published 7 articles (6.7%) and *Daily News* 4 (3.8%). This frame compared Tanzania’s vaccination campaign to international efforts, offering a global perspective on the country’s progress.

In conclusion, while both *Daily News and The Citizen* covered a wide range of frames in their COVID-19 vaccination campaign coverage, “Government Action” and “Vaccine Safety” were the most prominent. The differences in frame distribution between the two newspapers may reflect editorial priorities or target audience preferences, offering insights into how media framing shapes public understanding of the national vaccination effort.

## V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the study on news frames in COVID-19 vaccination campaign coverage by *Daily News* and *The Citizen* align with empirical studies that explore media framing, public health messaging, and vaccination campaigns in different regions.

In the analysis, the “Health Benefits” frame was highlighted in 13% of the articles, emphasizing the public health advantages of vaccination. This mirrors the findings of Di Fusco et al. (2022), who noted that vaccination campaigns have significant health and economic benefits, especially when international cooperation is involved. In *Daily News* and *The Citizen*, the focus on health benefits likely aimed to boost vaccine uptake by highlighting positive outcomes. Empirical studies like those by Wiysonge et al. (2022), who linked vaccine hesitancy to misconceptions, reinforce the importance of disseminating accurate health information to counteract hesitancy and encourage participation in the vaccination drive.

The “Government Action” frame was the most frequently reported (21.6%), with *Daily News* leading in coverage. This aligns with studies emphasizing the role of government policies in influencing public health behavior. For example, Marx et al. (2023) showed how Brazilian public health agencies used social media to promote government-led vaccination initiatives. Government policies and leadership are central to shaping public perceptions, as seen in the Tanzanian newspapers’ coverage, which highlights the government’s proactive steps in vaccination efforts. The prominent focus on this frame likely contributed to shaping public trust in the campaign, as the government’s role is a key driver in vaccination acceptance.

Public response was less frequently reported (8.7%), which is consistent with global patterns observed by Azer and Alexander (2022), who found varying levels of public engagement with vaccination campaigns on social media. The Tanzanian newspapers’ limited focus on public response may reflect a need to emphasize this aspect more, as studies like Wiysonge et al. (2022) argue that public perception, especially overcoming vaccine hesitancy, is critical to the success of vaccination campaigns. In the empirical context, exploring public reactions more deeply could help understand societal challenges to vaccine adoption.

The “Vaccine Safety” frame, visible in 19.2% of the articles, reflects the global focus on reassuring the public about the safety of vaccines, as seen in Yadav and Sagar (2023). These authors identified concerns about vaccine safety as a key theme in public opinion on social media. The prominence of this frame in Tanzanian media indicates a strategic focus on alleviating public fears, which is consistent with global efforts to combat vaccine hesitancy. Ensuring public confidence in vaccine safety is crucial, and this coverage reflects that emphasis.

The coverage of vaccine efficacy (13.0%) in Tanzanian media parallels Ko et al. (2023)’s study, which found that narrative PSAs on the effectiveness of vaccines helped reduce psychological barriers to vaccination. This frame provided scientific evidence and research outcomes, which are important in informing the public and promoting confidence in the vaccination process. The focus on efficacy supports the overall narrative of the importance of scientific validation in encouraging vaccine uptake.

The “Economic Impact” frame, which appeared in 8.7% of articles, echoes Di Fusco et al. (2022)’s findings on the financial benefits of successful vaccination campaigns. However, this frame was less emphasized in the Tanzanian newspapers compared to government action and vaccine safety. The relatively lower coverage might reflect a lack of public awareness or discourse on the direct economic advantages of the vaccination campaign, even though studies indicate that this angle could be a persuasive tool in gaining broader public support.

Issues of “Access and Distribution” (9.6%) were covered in both newspapers, highlighting logistical challenges, which align with studies by Marx et al. (2023) that stressed the need for efficient distribution systems to achieve successful vaccination outcomes. These operational concerns are critical in both global and Tanzanian contexts, where logistical infrastructure may be a barrier to widespread vaccine access.

Lastly, the “International Comparison” frame, which appeared in only 5.3% of the articles, reflects the limited focus on global perspectives within the Tanzanian media. While Di Fusco et al. (2022) and other studies stress the importance of international cooperation in combating the pandemic, Tanzanian newspapers provided minimal coverage on how the national campaign compared to global efforts. The absence of this broader perspective could limit public understanding of how Tanzania’s efforts fit into the global context.

The comparative analysis of *Daily News* and *The Citizen* in framing COVID-19 vaccination campaigns reveals a focus on government action, vaccine safety, and health benefits, consistent with global trends in vaccination communication strategies. Empirical studies emphasize the importance of addressing vaccine hesitancy, safety concerns, and economic implications-factors that were variably highlighted in the Tanzanian media. Effective framing of vaccination efforts, as demonstrated by the global examples, plays a critical role in influencing public perceptions and boosting vaccine uptake.

## CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the news frames employed by *Daily News* and *The Citizen* in their coverage of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Tanzania, revealing distinct differences in framing and focus between the two publications. The primary objective of this analysis was to understand how different media outlets shape public perceptions of vaccination efforts through their framing choices.

The findings indicate that both *Daily News* and *The Citizen* covered a range of frames, with notable prominence given to “Government Action” and

“Vaccine Safety.” These frames collectively represented a significant portion of the coverage, reflecting a strategic emphasis on governmental leadership and vaccine reassurance. *Daily News* provided more extensive coverage in most frames, particularly in “Government Action,” suggesting a more detailed or broader approach to the vaccination campaign compared to *The Citizen*.

The emphasis on the “Health Benefits” frame in both newspapers highlights the critical role of showcasing the advantages of vaccination in promoting public health. This frame’s prominence aligns with global practices, where highlighting health benefits are key to encouraging vaccine uptake. The “Vaccine Safety” frame, being highly visible, underscores the importance of addressing public concerns about vaccine safety—a theme consistent with global trends aimed at mitigating vaccine hesitancy.

Conversely, the “Public Response” and “Economic Impact” frames received relatively less attention. The limited focus on public response may indicate a missed opportunity to engage with and address societal attitudes and hesitations about vaccination. Similarly, while the economic implications of vaccination campaigns are significant, the relatively lower coverage of this frame suggests a need for more discourse on the financial benefits and costs associated with the vaccination effort.

The “Access and Distribution” and “International Comparison” frames were covered to a lesser extent, with logistical challenges and global perspectives receiving minimal focus. Addressing these areas more thoroughly could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the vaccination campaign’s operational and global context.

In conclusion, the study reveals that while both newspapers effectively addressed key aspects of the vaccination campaign, differences in frame emphasis reflect varied editorial priorities and potentially different audience engagement strategies. Understanding these framing choices is crucial for evaluating how media coverage influences public perception and vaccine uptake. This analysis underscores the importance of balanced and

comprehensive coverage in shaping informed public attitudes towards vaccination campaign.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the study recommends the need to increase the frequency and depth of reporting on societal attitudes, offering clearer insights into public sentiments to effectively address vaccine hesitancy. Additionally, incorporating international comparisons of vaccination coverage can provide a broader perspective on Tanzania's efforts, highlighting successes and areas for improvement. Emphasizing the economic benefits of vaccination campaigns can foster public support by showcasing the financial advantages, while strengthening reporting on vaccine access and distribution logistics will inform the public about the campaign's progress and address concerns related to barriers to vaccine uptake.

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