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Assessing the effectiveness of private electronic media in social change: A case study of promoting household food security in Kitwe Zambia

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Abstract

This study examines the role of private electronic media in promoting household food security in Kitwe District, focusing on the types of news disseminated, the motivations behind media content choices, and the challenges encountered in covering socially relevant topics. The specific objectives include: (i) to investigate the types of news that private electronic media disseminates in Kitwe District, (ii) to examine why that type of news is prioritized, and (iii) to identify challenges faced by media in reporting on household food security. Data were collected from 50 households and 20 media stakeholders using a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative insights. Descriptive statistics reveal that 50% of households primarily access news through radio, while 20% prefer television, highlighting the dominant role of traditional media. However, coverage of food security is limited, with 40% of stakeholders reporting only occasional coverage on this topic. Analysis also shows that 28% of media professionals cite financial constraints and 25% identify limited expertise as major barriers to covering food security comprehensively. Thematic analysis underscores that entertainment and political news often overshadow food security content due to perceived low audience interest. Recommendations include enhancing partnerships with NGOs and government agencies to provide resources and data, implementing community-centered programming, and offering specialized training for journalists on food security topics. This study provides critical insights into the role of private electronic media in fostering social change, with implications for increasing public awareness and action toward improving household food security in Kitwe District.

Keywords: Private Electronic Media, Household Food Security, Kitwe District, Media Coverage, Kitwe, Zambia

Introduction

Background

The role of private electronic media in promoting social change has gained significant attention globally. According to the United Nations, the theme displays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development and social change (UN, 2015). Private electronic media, in particular, has been recognized for its potential to reach a wide audience and promote social change (McQuail, 2010). The Agenda-Setting Theory, which was first introduced by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, suggests that the media has the power to influence the public agenda by selecting and emphasizing certain issues over others (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). This theory is relevant to the role of private electronic media in promoting social change, as it highlights the media's ability to shape public opinion and influence policy decisions. Studies have shown that private electronic media can be effective in promoting social change, including improving household food security. For example, a study by the International Food Policy Research Institute found that radio programs can be an effective way to promote agricultural knowledge and improve household food security in developing countries (IFPRI, 2018) [36]. In addition, private electronic media has been recognized for its potential to promote social change through advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns. For example, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) has used private electronic media to promote nutrition awareness and improve household food security in several countries (GAIN, 2020). Furthermore, the widespread adoption of digital technologies has transformed the way private electronic media operates and promotes social change. According to a report by the Pew Research Center, the use of digital technologies has increased access to information and promoted social change in several countries (Pew Research Center, 2020). In Africa, private electronic media has played a significant role in promoting social change. According to the African Media Barometer, private electronic media has been instrumental in promoting democracy and good governance in Africa (MISA, 2019). The barometer notes that private

electronic media has been effective in promoting social change by providing a platform for citizens to express their views and opinions.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, which was first introduced by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974, suggests that audiences actively seek out media content that meets their needs and gratifies their desires (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). This theory is relevant to the role of private electronic media in promoting social change in Africa, as it highlights the importance of understanding the needs and desires of African audiences and how private electronic media can meet those needs. Studies have shown that private electronic media can be effective in promoting social change in Africa, including improving household food security. For example, a study by the African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development found that radio programs can be an effective way to promote agricultural knowledge and improve household food security in Africa (AJFAND, 2017). In addition, private electronic media has been recognized for its potential to promote social change through advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns. For example, the African Media Initiative has used private electronic media to promote awareness and advocacy on various social issues, including food security and nutrition (AMI, 2020). Furthermore, the growth of digital technologies has transformed the way private electronic media operates and promotes social change in Africa. According to a report by the African Media Barometer, the use of digital technologies has increased access to information and promoted social change in several African countries (MISA, 2019). In Southern Africa, private electronic media has played a significant role in promoting social change. According to the Southern African Broadcasting Association, private electronic media has been instrumental in promoting democracy and good governance in Southern Africa (SABA, 2020). The association notes that private electronic media has been effective in promoting social change by providing a platform for citizens to express their views and opinions. The Spiral of Silence Theory, which was first introduced by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in 1974, suggests that individuals are less likely to express their opinions if they believe that their views are not widely shared (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). This theory is relevant to the role of private electronic media in promoting social change in Southern Africa, as it highlights the importance of creating a platform for citizens to express their views and opinions without fear of reprisal. In Southern Africa, private electronic media has been recognized for its potential to promote social change, including improving household food security. For example, a study by the Journal of Development Communication found that radio programs can be an effective way to promote agricultural knowledge and improve household food security in Southern Africa (JDC, 2018). The Spiral of Silence Theory is particularly relevant to the role of private electronic media in promoting social change in Southern Africa, as it highlights the importance of creating a platform for citizens to express their views and opinions without fear of reprisal.

In Southern Africa, where there is a history of censorship and repression, the Spiral of Silence Theory suggests that private electronic media can play a crucial role in promoting social change by providing a platform for citizens to express their views and opinions. Furthermore, the growth of digital technologies has transformed the way private electronic media operates and promotes social change in Southern Africa. According to a report by the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, the use of digital technologies has increased access to information and promoted social change in several Southern African countries (SARDC, 2020). The Spiral of Silence Theory provides a useful framework for understanding the role of private electronic media in promoting social change in Southern Africa. By creating a platform for citizens to express their views and opinions without fear of reprisal, private electronic media can play a crucial role in promoting social change, including improving household food security.

In Zambia, private electronic media has a significant role to play in promoting social change. According to the Zambia Media Review, private electronic media has been instrumental in promoting democracy and good governance in Zambia (Zambia Media Review, 2020). The review notes that private electronic media has been effective in promoting social change by providing a platform for citizens to express their views and opinions. The Two-Step Flow Theory, which was first introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet in 1944, suggests that information and ideas flow from the media to opinion leaders, who then interpret and disseminate this information to the wider public (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944). This theory is relevant to the role of private electronic media in promoting social change in Zambia, as it highlights the importance of opinion leaders in interpreting and disseminating information to the wider public. However, despite the potential of private electronic media to play a role in disseminating news that focuses on social issues, several sources have observed that media in Kitwe has often focused on other issues, such as entertainment and sports, rather than important social issues. For example, a study by the Media Institute of Southern Africa found that private electronic media in Zambia, including in Kitwe, has been criticized for prioritizing entertainment and sports programming over news and current affairs programming (MISA, 2019). Similarly, a report by the Zambia Independent Media Association found that private electronic media in Kitwe has often failed to provide adequate coverage of important social issues, such as poverty, inequality, and access to healthcare (ZIMA, 2020). For example, in 2019, a severe drought hit Kitwe District, affecting thousands of households and leading to widespread food insecurity. However, instead of providing extensive coverage of the drought and its impact on local communities, private electronic media in Kitwe focused more on entertainment and sports programming (The Post, 2019). Another example is the issue of heavy metal contamination in Kitwe, which has been a major public health concern for many years. Despite the severity of the issue, private electronic media in Kitwe has often failed to provide adequate coverage of the issue, instead focusing on other issues such as politics and entertainment (The Times of Zambia, 2020). In the early 2010s, Kitwe was experiencing a severe cholera outbreak, which claimed many lives (WHO, 2013). However, private electronic media outlets in the area were more focused on reporting political news and scandals than covering the health crisis (Media Institute of Southern Africa, 2013). Overall, these observations suggest that while private electronic media in Kitwe has the potential to play a role in promoting social

change, it often fails to do so due to a lack of focus on important social issues. This lack of attention and awareness-raising efforts hindered the response to the outbreak, potentially exacerbating its impact (UNICEF, 2013). Similarly, when it comes to household food security, private electronic media in Kitwe might prioritize sensational or politically charged stories over reporting on the pressing issue of food insecurity, its causes, and potential solutions (Mwewa, 2018) [41]. This oversight can contribute to a lack of awareness, engagement, and action among the public, policymakers, and other stakeholders, ultimately hindering efforts to address food insecurity (FAO, 2017). This lack of attention to food security by private electronic media is a concern, as media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Furthermore, research has shown that media coverage of food security issues can influence public awareness and understanding of the issue, as well as policy decisions (Wanta & Hu, 1993). However, there is a lack of research on the role of private electronic media in promoting food security in Zambia, particularly in Kitwe District (Mwewa, 2018) [41]. Climate change, population growth, and economic instability continue to pose significant challenges to food availability and accessibility. According to the World Bank (2020), while agricultural productivity has improved, many households, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, still struggle to access nutritious food. The drought of 2023 further exacerbated food insecurity in Kitwe, with many families facing heightened vulnerability to hunger and malnutrition (ReliefWeb, 2023) [62].

Statement Of The Problem

Despite various initiatives aimed at improving food security in Zambia, Kitwe District continues to face significant challenges. Recent statistics reveal that 30% of households in Kitwe are food insecure, with many families struggling to access sufficient, safe, and nutritious food (Zambia Census, 2020) [77]. The situation has been exacerbated by a combination of factors, including climate change, poor agricultural practices, and economic instability, which have reduced food availability and increased prices. While national and local government initiatives, such as the "Planting 1 Million Trees" program and investments in irrigation systems, have contributed to some improvements, they have not been enough to ensure consistent food security for all households. A critical aspect contributing to this ongoing issue is the role of private electronic media in Kitwe. Media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, raising awareness, and influencing policy decisions (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). However, private electronic media outlets in Kitwe tend to prioritize political news, entertainment, and sensational stories over critical social issues such as household food security (Mwewa, 2018) [41]. This focus has resulted in a lack of sustained attention to the food security crisis, leading to a gap in public engagement and policy prioritization on the issue. Furthermore, without consistent media coverage, both local communities and policymakers remain under-informed about the severity of the problem and the potential solutions that could mitigate food insecurity. This study seeks to investigate the reasons behind this media neglect and assess how private electronic media in Kitwe can play a more effective role in promoting household food security.

General Objective

The main objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of private electronic media in promoting household food security in Kitwe District.

Specific Objectives

1. To investigate the types of news that private electronic media disseminates in Kitwe District.
2. To examine why such types of news are prioritized by private electronic media in Kitwe District.
3. To ascertain the challenges faced by private electronic media in disseminating news related to social change, particularly household food security, in Kitwe District.

Theoretical Framework: Agenda Setting Theory

This study is guided by the Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), which posits that media influences public opinion by setting the agenda for discussion. The theory suggests that media has the power to shape public opinion by prioritizing certain issues over others (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), the agenda-setting function of media involves two levels: the media agenda and the public agenda. The media agenda refers to the issues and topics that media prioritize and cover, while the public agenda refers to the issues and topics that the public considers important (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The theory also suggests that media has the power to influence policy decisions by setting the agenda for policymakers (Wanta & Hu, 1993). By prioritizing certain issues over others, media can influence policymakers to address certain issues and ignore others (Wanta & Hu, 1993). In the context of this study, the Agenda Setting Theory suggests that private electronic media in Kitwe District has the power to influence public opinion and policy decisions related to household food security. By prioritizing certain issues and topics related to food security, private electronic media can shape public opinion and influence policymakers to address the issue (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of empirical studies of literature related to the study, focusing on the global perspective, regional, and Zambian perspective.

The types of news disseminated by private electronic media are heavily influenced by factors such as audience preferences, commercial interests, and political dynamics. In the context of many private media outlets, there is a noticeable emphasis on content that attracts large audiences, such as political news, entertainment, and sensational stories. This tendency can often overshadow critical social issues like household food security, which, while essential, may not capture immediate public interest in the same way that more dramatic or entertaining stories do. Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) provides a useful lens to understand how media prioritize certain issues over others. According to this theory, the media play a significant role in shaping public perception by focusing on specific topics, thereby influencing what the public considers important. In the case of private electronic media, the agenda-setting process tends to elevate issues such as politics, crime, and entertainment, leaving less room for more complex and less immediately engaging topics like food security. Although household food security is a vital issue affecting the community, it often receives less attention because it may not generate the same immediate engagement or viewership. The Commercial Media Theory (McManus, 1994) [50] further explains this trend, suggesting that media outlets, particularly private ones, are driven by the need for profitability. News that attracts high ratings is more likely to secure advertising revenue, which is crucial for the survival of private media organizations. As a result, news content is often tailored to meet the tastes and preferences of the largest audience segments. Stories about political scandals, entertainment, or crime are often prioritized

because they tend to attract more viewers, listeners, or readers. In contrast, food security, though a critical issue, might not generate the same level of public interest or advertising revenue, leading to its marginalization in news coverage. In addition to commercial interests, Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) [17] helps explain how media outlets present issues in ways that influence how the public perceives them. Even when issues like food security are covered, they may be framed as crisis-driven stories, focusing on immediate events such as droughts, food shortages, or natural disasters. This type of coverage often emphasizes the problem but offers little in terms of long-term solutions or systemic analysis. Such framing tends to create a perception that food security is only an issue during times of crisis, leading to a lack of sustained public engagement with the underlying causes and potential remedies for food insecurity. Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1976) [23] further illustrates the long-term effects of media content on public perception. The theory suggests that over time, repeated exposure to certain types of content can shape an audience's worldview. In private electronic media, the continuous emphasis on political and sensational news can cultivate a public consciousness that prioritizes these issues over less dramatic but equally important social problems. This theory suggests that the more audiences are exposed to news about politics or entertainment, the more they will perceive these issues as dominant in their everyday lives, while issues like food security remain peripheral concerns. Political dynamics also play a significant role in shaping the types of news disseminated by private electronic media. Propaganda Model Theory (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) [27] argues that media often serve the interests of political and economic elites. In practice, this means that certain topics, particularly those that challenge political or economic power structures, may be downplayed or ignored in media coverage. In many media environments, political news takes precedence not only because of its public appeal but also because of its alignment with the interests of those in power. Critical reporting on issues like food security, which could reflect poorly on government policies or expose structural problems, may be less likely to receive extensive coverage due to these pressures. According to Thompson (2015), the media's focus on commercial interests often sidelines vital social issues like food security, particularly in regions where the media is driven by profit motives. In the Philippines, private electronic media have been criticized for their coverage of disaster-related food insecurity, where media outlets largely focused on the spectacle of the Typhoon Haiyan disaster in 2013 but failed to follow up on the long-term effects on food security. While initial reports covered the immediate humanitarian crisis, including the distribution of food aid, the media quickly shifted back to political issues and entertainment, leaving the long-term recovery of affected communities underreported. This reflects the influence of Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) [17], as media tend to present food insecurity as a short-term crisis rather than a continuous social issue. This framing neglects the structural problems that contribute to food insecurity, such as poverty and inadequate infrastructure, which require sustained media attention to bring about meaningful change. Herman and Chomsky's (1988) [27] Propaganda Model highlights how media often serve the interests of powerful elites, which can suppress coverage of pressing social issues such as food security. In Egypt, during the political upheaval of the Arab Spring in 2011, private media outlets were heavily focused on political change and the revolution's impact on governance. However, underlying social issues, including severe food shortages and rising food prices that significantly impacted poorer populations, were given minimal attention. This lack of coverage contributed to a disconnect between the public discourse on political reform and the more immediate needs of the population related to hunger and poverty. The Egyptian case illustrates how political dynamics often overshadow social issues in private media, as covering politically sensitive topics aligns with the interests of the powerful elites that control media narratives. In Mexico, as outlined by Gutierrez (2018), private electronic media's news coverage often prioritizes crime and political scandals over critical issues like food insecurity. During the agricultural crisis in rural Mexico in 2016, which was exacerbated by severe droughts, media outlets predominantly reported on government corruption scandals and drug-related violence, leaving the food insecurity crisis among rural farmers largely ignored. Gutierrez (2018) argues that this selective focus is driven by media owners' commercial and political interests, which are more aligned with sensational and profit-driven content. This aligns with Commercial Media Theory (McManus, 1994) [50], suggesting that profit motives often push private media to emphasize content that attracts large audiences, such as political scandals, while more nuanced and complex issues like food security are sidelined. In the absence of sustained media coverage, public awareness of the food crisis remained low, and political leaders were not pressured to address the underlying agricultural issues. Lopes (2020) provides a compelling case study from Angola, where private media's coverage of agricultural development and food security is sporadic and often reactive. During the 2019 drought that devastated much of southern Angola, private radio and television stations provided extensive coverage of the immediate humanitarian crisis, focusing on food aid distribution and the government's response. However, Lopes (2020) notes that once the initial crisis passed, the media returned to more commercially viable topics such as entertainment and political news. This reflects a broader trend seen in many developing countries, where food security is only prioritized during crises and lacks the consistent attention required for long-term policy advocacy and community engagement. This is in line with Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), as media's intermittent focus on food security issues means that the public and policymakers are less likely to consider it a priority unless it is presented as an immediate problem.

In Ghana, Ampofo (2016) [4] explores how private media often focus on urban-centric issues, leaving rural food insecurity underreported. For example, during the 2015 agricultural drought, private television channels in Accra focused their news coverage on urban power shortages and political events, while the severe food insecurity facing rural farmers was scarcely mentioned. This neglect of rural issues is attributed to the media's focus on urban audiences, who are more likely to attract advertisers and drive viewership ratings. Ampofo (2016) [4] points out that this urban bias in media coverage reflects the commercial nature of private media, where profit considerations outweigh the need for balanced and inclusive reporting on social issues. This case demonstrates how the media's focus on urban issues can marginalize the food security concerns of rural populations, leaving these communities vulnerable and underrepresented in public discourse.

A related case from Vietnam, as noted by Tran (2017), shows how private media can sometimes overlook pressing food security issues due to political sensitivities. During the 2016 fish kill disaster, which severely affected the fishing communities along the central coast of Vietnam, private media coverage was initially strong, focusing on the environmental damage and its immediate impact on local livelihoods. However, as the crisis unfolded, coverage shifted away from the long-term food security implications and focused more on government-led recovery efforts, avoiding critical analysis of the root causes of the disaster and the long-term consequences for food systems. Tran (2017) argues that this shift was influenced by political pressures to downplay the role of industrial pollution in the crisis, illustrating how media can be constrained by political interests even in the face of significant social issues. This case highlights the role of Propaganda Model Theory in shaping how media frame and prioritize issues related to food security. The role of private media during the 2015 El Niño drought provides further insights into how food security is covered. Nurhadi (2016) observed that while the drought had severe impacts on food production and access in rural parts of Indonesia, private media channels in Jakarta focused largely on the political ramifications of the drought and the government's response. There was minimal coverage of how the drought was affecting local farmers and food supplies in remote areas. The media's emphasis on the political narrative, rather than on the ground realities of food

insecurity, reflects the influence of Framing Theory, where media outlets prioritize stories that align with political narratives or are seen as more marketable to urban audiences. This selective framing limits the public's understanding of the broader impacts of such crises and reduces pressure on policymakers to implement comprehensive, long-term solutions to food insecurity. The private electronic media landscape in Kitwe District, Zambia, is characterized by a dominant focus on entertainment and political news (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. A study by Chanda (2018) [32] revealed that private radio stations in Kitwe District dedicate an average of 60% of their airtime to music and entertainment programs, while political news and current affairs account for approximately 30% (Chanda, 2018, p. 12) [32]. Similarly, online news platforms in the region prioritize sensational and political stories, often at the expense of local issues and developmental news (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. Furthermore, research by Mulenga (2019) [40] found that private television stations in Kitwe District frequently rebroadcast national and international content, with limited locally produced programming (Mulenga, 2019, p. 25) [40]. This trend raises concerns about the lack of diverse perspectives and the limited attention given to local issues in the private electronic media sphere in Kitwe District (Mwewa, 2020, p. 15) [42]. Private radio stations in Kitwe District prioritize entertainment programs, with music and talk shows dominating the airwaves (Chanda, 2018) [32]. For instance, popular radio stations like Yar FM and Flava FM dedicate over 70% of their airtime to music and entertainment programs (Chanda, 2018, p. 12) [32]. Political news and current affairs are also prominent, with a focus on national politics and sensational stories (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. Online news platforms like Zambia Reports and Kitwe Online frequently feature political headlines and breaking news (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. The emphasis on entertainment and political news can lead to a lack of coverage on critical local issues, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. Private television stations in Kitwe District frequently rebroadcast national and international content, with limited locally produced programming (Mulenga, 2019) [40]. For example, TV stations like Muvi TV and Prime TV rebroadcast popular international shows and movies, with limited local content (Mulenga, 2019, p. 25) [40]. This lack of local content means that local issues and perspectives are often overlooked or marginalized (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. Local producers and content creators face challenges in accessing resources and funding to produce high-quality content (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District are driven by commercial interests, with a focus on attracting large audiences and generating advertising revenue (Chanda, 2018) [32]. Advertisers often prioritize popular entertainment programs and political news over local content and developmental issues (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. This commercial focus can lead to a prioritization of sensational and entertainment-focused content over more substantive and locally relevant programming (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. The media regulatory environment in Zambia is complex, with multiple bodies and laws governing different aspects of media production and dissemination (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) regulates broadcasting, while the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) oversees online media (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District must navigate this regulatory environment, which can impact their ability to produce and disseminate content (Mulenga, 2019) [40]. Regulatory constraints and political pressure can limit the diversity of views and opinions expressed in the media (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District often prioritize audience engagement through social media and online platforms (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. Online news platforms and radio stations encourage audience participation through comments, social media sharing, and call-in shows (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. However, this engagement can be limited to specific demographics, such as urban youth, and may not represent the broader Kitwe District community (Mwewa, 2020) [42].

Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District face ethical challenges in balancing commercial interests with journalistic integrity and social responsibility (Chanda, 2018) [32]. Sensationalism and biased reporting can compromise ethical standards and undermine public trust (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. The lack of local content and diverse perspectives can also raise ethical concerns about representation and inclusivity (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District have become increasingly commercialized, prioritizing profit over public interest (Sikalinda, 2020). This commercialization has led to a focus on sensational and entertainment-focused content, as well as a proliferation of paid advertising and sponsorships (Sikalinda, 2020, p. 15). For instance, private radio stations like Yar FM and Flava FM have introduced paid advertising and sponsorships, which can influence their content and programming (Sikalinda, 2020, p. 15). Similarly, online news platforms like Zambia Reports and Kitwe Online have introduced clickbait headlines and sensationalist reporting to drive traffic and generate revenue (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District often have political affiliations and biases, which can impact their reporting and coverage (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. For example, online news platforms like Zambia Reports and Kitwe Online have been accused of promoting partisan political agendas and biased reporting (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. Private TV stations like Prime TV and Muvi TV have also been criticized for their political bias and selective reporting (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. This political influence and bias can lead to a lack of objectivity and impartiality in reporting, which can undermine public trust and confidence in the media (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District rarely engage in investigative journalism, preferring to focus on sensational and entertainment-focused content (Chanda, 2018) [32]. This lack of investigative journalism can lead to a lack of accountability and transparency in governance and public affairs (Mwewa, 2020) [42]. For instance, private radio stations like Yar FM and Flava FM rarely conduct in-depth investigations or exposés on local issues, preferring to focus on entertainment and political news (Chanda, 2018) [32]. Online news platforms like Zambia Reports and Kitwe Online also rarely engage in investigative journalism, preferring to focus on clickbait headlines and sensationalist reporting (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District often lack gender and social inclusivity, with limited representation of women and marginalized groups (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. For instance, a study by the Zambia Media Women Association found that women are underrepresented in media ownership, management, and content creation (Zambia Media Women Association, 2020). Similarly, marginalized groups like persons with disabilities and LGBTQ+ individuals are often excluded from media representation and coverage (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. This lack of inclusivity can lead to a lack of diverse perspectives and voices, which can undermine public interest and social cohesion (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. Private electronic media outlets in Kitwe District face technological challenges, including limited internet connectivity and inadequate infrastructure (Mulenga, 2019) [40]. These challenges can impact their ability to produce and disseminate content, particularly in rural areas (Mulenga, 2019) [40]. For instance, private radio stations like Radio Faith and Culture Radio face challenges in accessing reliable internet connectivity and broadcasting equipment (Mulenga, 2019) [40]. Online news platforms like Zambia Reports and Kitwe Online also face challenges in accessing reliable internet connectivity and server hosting (Kabwe, 2022) [38]. The digital divide refers to the unequal access to digital technologies and infrastructure, such as internet connectivity, computers, and smartphones (Mulenga, 2019) [40]. In Kitwe District, private electronic media outlets face challenges in accessing reliable internet connectivity, digital broadcasting equipment, and other digital technologies (Mulenga, 2019) [40]. This digital divide can impact their ability to produce and disseminate content, particularly in rural areas where internet connectivity and digital infrastructure are limited (Mulenga, 2019) [40]. For instance, private radio stations like Radio Icengelo and Culture Radio face challenges in accessing reliable internet.

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology employed to gather, analyze, and interpret data relevant to the study's objectives. The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, incorporating both desk and field research. This mixed-method approach ensures a comprehensive analysis of the role of private electronic media in promoting household food security in Kitwe District. The chapter also details the research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis, triangulation, limitations, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The research will utilize a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. This approach allows the researcher to combine the statistical breadth of quantitative research with the depth of qualitative insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) [13]. A mixed-methods approach is particularly beneficial for this study because it enables a comprehensive analysis of how private electronic media influences public awareness and policy-making regarding household food security. The quantitative method will include structured surveys, which will provide measurable data that can be analyzed statistically. Meanwhile, qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, will allow for a more nuanced understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding food security and media. The combination of these methods ensures that both the broad patterns and individual experiences are captured, providing a richer and more complete dataset (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) [70]. Desk research will involve reviewing secondary data, including existing literature, policy documents, and media reports, to understand the broader context of media influence on food security. Field research will consist of direct data collection through surveys and interviews, offering first-hand insights from key stakeholders in Kitwe District.

Target Population

The population for this study includes a diverse range of stakeholders, such as household heads or their representatives, journalists, media house owners, clergy, and civic leaders. These groups have been selected because they play key roles in either experiencing or shaping the narratives around food security. For instance, household heads directly face food security challenges, while journalists and media owners shape the coverage of such issues. Clergy and civic leaders serve as influential community figures who can provide insights into societal perspectives on media and food security. Including a broad range of perspectives ensures that the study captures a comprehensive view of the issue from both the supply (media) and demand (public) sides. As suggested by Bryman (2012) [10], including varied groups in the target population allows for a more holistic exploration of the subject. Each group offers unique insights, helping to understand both the production of media content related to food security and its reception and impact on different segments of society.

Sample Size

The study will include a sample size of 100 participants, ensuring balanced representation across all key stakeholder groups. This sample will consist of 20 household heads or their representatives, 20 journalists, 20 media house owners, 20 clergy members, and 20 civic leaders. This sample size is large enough to provide statistically significant data for quantitative analysis while also allowing for in-depth exploration through qualitative methods (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016) [64]. The equal distribution across these groups ensures that the study captures a wide range of perspectives, providing a more holistic view of how private electronic media impacts household food security in Kitwe District.

Sampling Techniques

Each group in the study will be sampled using a different technique, tailored to the characteristics of the group and the type of data needed. For household heads or their representatives, clergy, and civic leaders, stratified random sampling will be employed. This method ensures that participants are drawn from different socio-economic backgrounds, allowing the study to capture the diversity of household experiences with food security (Sharma, 2017) [65]. Stratified sampling reduces sampling bias and ensures that key subgroups within the population are adequately represented. For journalists and media house owners, purposive sampling will be used. This technique involves deliberately selecting participants based on their knowledge and involvement in media production related to food security (Patton, 2015) [59]. Purposive sampling ensures that only those who can provide relevant insights into the challenges and strategies of media reporting on social issues are included.

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaires will be used to collect quantitative data from household heads or their representatives. These surveys will consist of structured, closed-ended questions designed to measure media consumption patterns, awareness of food security issues, and the perceived influence of media on household food security practices (Kothari, 2004) [46]. The structured format of the surveys allows for consistent and comparable data across participants. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with journalists, media house owners, clergy, and civic leaders. Semi-structured interviews offer the flexibility to explore specific issues in depth while maintaining a consistent focus on key themes related to media, social change, and food security (Gillet *et al*., 2008). This method allows the researcher to capture detailed insights into the challenges faced by media professionals in covering food security and the role of community leaders in influencing public engagement through media.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the surveys will be analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. SPSS is widely used in social science research for its ability to manage and analyze large datasets.

Triangulation

Triangulation will be applied to ensure the credibility and reliability of the research findings. By combining multiple methods—such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups—the researcher can cross-validate the data collected from different sources and perspectives (Denzin, 1978) [15]. This helps mitigate any biases or limitations inherent in a single method and strengthens the overall validity of the findings. Additionally, the use of desk research to review existing literature and media reports will further enhance the triangulation process by providing secondary data that can be compared with the primary data collected.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study may have to be reviewed in line with some limitations. Since it was a case study of private media houses in Kitwe District, the findings may not necessarily be generalized to other parts of the country. The researcher envisages experiencing some difficulties in data collection because of the unwilling attitude from the respondents in providing data and information due to the perception that the researcher should pay them for conducting such studies.

Ethical Considerations

The major ethical considerations in this study will be voluntary participation, confidentiality, and informed consent for study participants. The researcher will ensure that responses and field notes are kept in confidence, and interviewees are identified by numbers to ensure that responses are not traceable back to participants. The nature of the study is to explain to the respondents, and consent will be sought from them prior to their participation. In this

way, the study conforms to conventional research ethics. A letter will be sought from ICU as well for data collection purposes. Ethical practice is often defined as 'doing no harm.' In this chapter, we take the view that we should also aspire to do 'good', in other words, to conduct research that benefits participants in positive ways. The ethical considerations in a study are significant, especially the information regarding the participants being key for informed consent (White, 2003) [73]. The study will consider ethics in order to respect the rights and opinions of the research participants. The research will seek prior consent from the Area Member of Parliament. A letter of authorization for data collection will also be sought from the Information and Communication University.

Presentation of Research Findings and Discussion of Results

Overview

This chapter presents the findings from the study, focusing on the perspectives of both households and media stakeholders on the role of private electronic media in promoting household food security. The chapter begins with demographic information of respondents, followed by an analysis of media consumption patterns and content preferences among households. It then explores media stakeholders' perspectives on content production, effectiveness, and the challenges they face in covering food security issues. Finally, the chapter identifies the barriers to effective media promotion of food security and discusses strategies that could enhance media impact on social change in Kitwe District.

Presentation of Results on Background

This section presents the characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, educational levels of respondents, and position of the respondents.

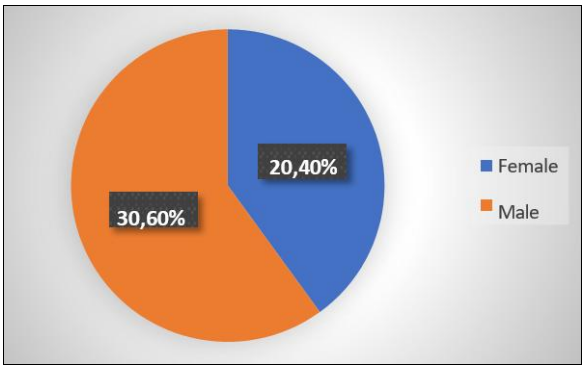

Fig 1: Distribution of respondents by Gender

The gender distribution among household respondents, shown in Fig 1, indicates a slightly higher representation of males, with 60% (30 respondents) compared to 40% females (20 respondents). This gender balance could shape media interaction patterns and perceptions regarding food security, as men and women might have different media preferences or priorities related to household responsibilities.

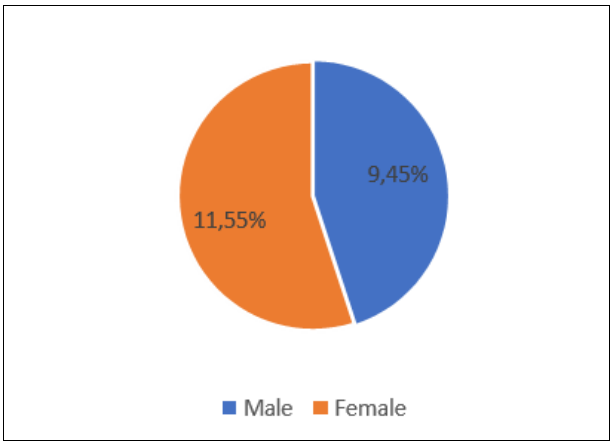

Fig 2: Gender Distribution of Media Stakeholders

As displayed in Fig 2, the gender distribution among media stakeholders shows a slight female majority, with 55% (11 respondents) identify in gas female and 45 % (9 respondents) as male. This distribution provides a balanced gender perspective, which may influence the insights and priorities reported by stakeholders in their media coverage practices, especially regarding issues of social change and food security.

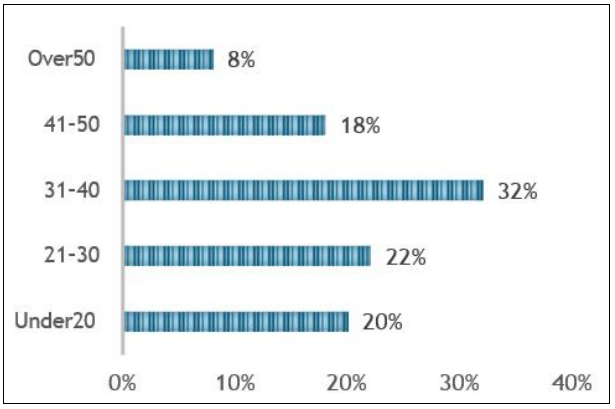

Fig 3: Distribution of respondents by age

As shownin Fig 3, theage distribution of the 50 household respondents involved in this study illustrates a range of age groups. The most represented age group is 31–40 years, accounting for 32% (16 respondents) of the sample. This is followed by the 21–30 years category, with 22% (11 respondents), and those under 20 years, making up 20% (10 respondents).Together, these three groups represent 74% of the respondents, highlighting a relatively younger population within the households surveyed. A smaller portion of the respondents falls into the 41–50 years category (18%, or 9 respondents), while only 8% (4 respondents) are over 50 years old. This age distribution is essential to consider, as media consumption and responses to social change initiatives can vary significantly across different age groups, potentially influencing the effectiveness of electronic media inpromoting household food security.

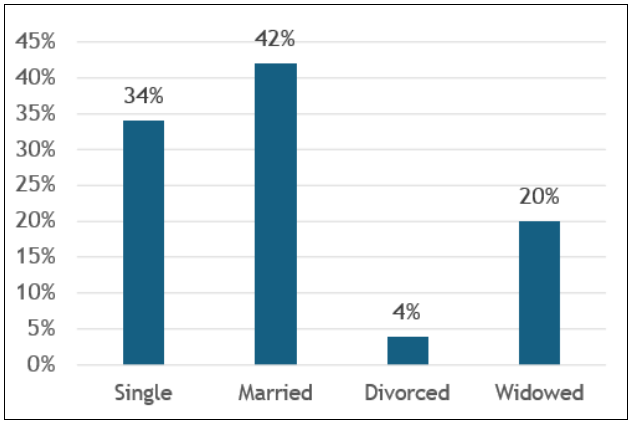

Fig 4: Distribution of respondents by Marital Status

According to Fig 4, the marital status of the respondents shows that the majority are married, representing 42% (21 respondents). This is followed by single respondents, who make up 34% (17 respondents), and widowed individuals, who constitute 20% (10 respondents). Only a small portion of 4% (2 respondents) identified as divorced. This variety in marital status may influence household dynamics and responsibilities, potentially impacting food security needs and how households respond to media-driven information on food security practices.

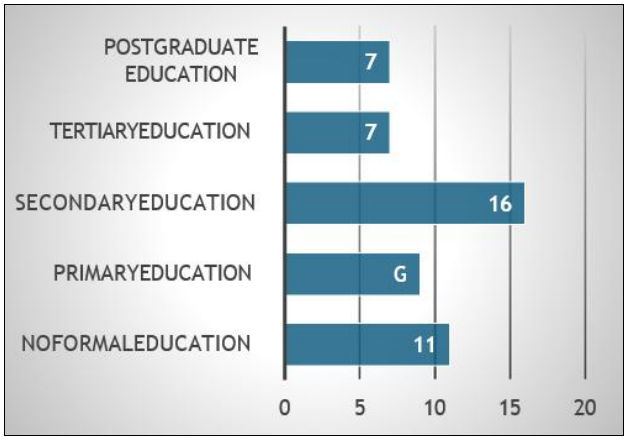

Fig 5: Distribution of respondents by Highest Level of Education Completed

The educational levels, as shown in Fig 5, indicate adiverse range of formal education among respondents. The largest group completed secondary education (32%, or 16 respondents), while primary education was the highest level for 18 % (9 respondents). Interestingly, 22 % (11 respondents) reported having no formal education, a factor that may affect their access to and interpretation of media content related to social change and food security. Further, 14% of respondents achieved tertiary education, and another 14% had completed postgraduate education. This range of educational attainment suggests varying levels of media literacy within the sample, which could influence how effectively private electronic media conveys information to different segments of the population.

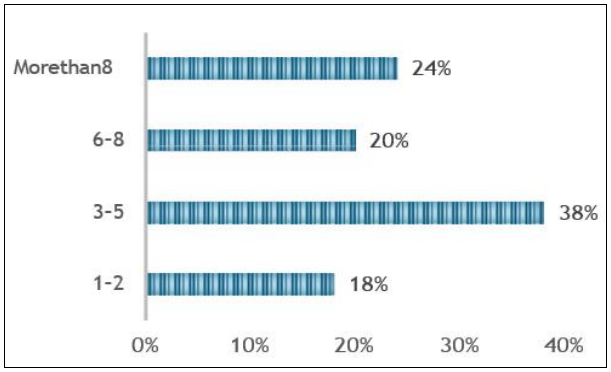

Fig 6: Distribution of respondents by Household Size (Number of people living in your household)

As detailed in Fig 6, the house hold sizes vary considerably, with 38 % of respondents (19 households) living in households of 3-5 people, the most common household size. Households with 1–2 members account for 18 % (9 households), while 20% (10 households) consist of 6–8 people. Notably, 24% (12 households) have more than 8 members, indicating a substantial portion of larger families in the sample. Household size may directly impact food security, as larger households could face higher demands for resources, making access to reliable information on food security even more crucial.

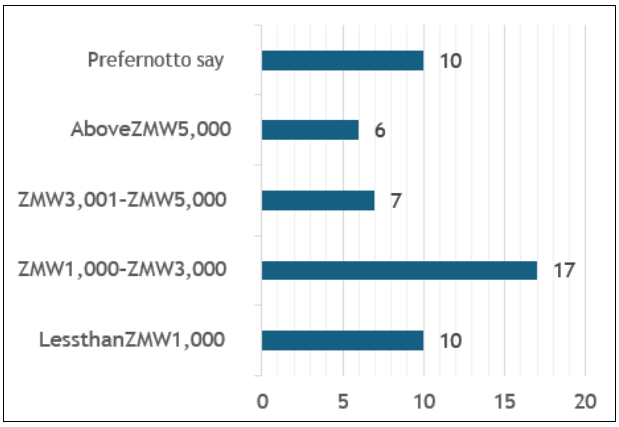

Fig 7: Distribution of respondents by Income Level (Monthly Household Income)

Income data, presented in Fig 7, reflects a range of economic conditions within the sample. The largest group, 34% (17 respondents), reported a monthly household income between ZMW 1,000 and ZMW 3,000. 20% (10 respondents) earn lessthan ZMW 1,000 monthly, while an equal 20% (10 respondents) preferred not to disclose their income, perhaps reflecting sensitivity around financial matters. Households earning ZMW 3,001–ZMW 5,000 make up 14% (7 respondents), and only 12% (6 respondents) have incomes above ZMW 5,000. This income distribution is crucial for understanding the economic constraints that might impact respondents' access to media and their ability to implement recommended food security practices.

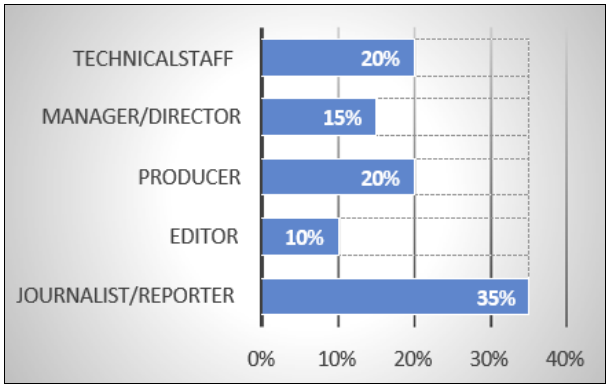

Fig 8: Distribution of respondents by Position in the Media Organization

The largest group, 35% (7 respondents), identify as journalists or reporters, indicating a strong representation of frontline news personnel who directly handle content creation. 20% of respondents each are producers (4 respondents) and technical staff (4 respondents), both roles crucial for the production and technical support of media content. 15% (3 respondents) occupy managerial or director positions, while 10% (2 respondents) serve as editors. This variety in roles allows for a broad understanding of how different levels within the organization view and contribute to news dissemination.

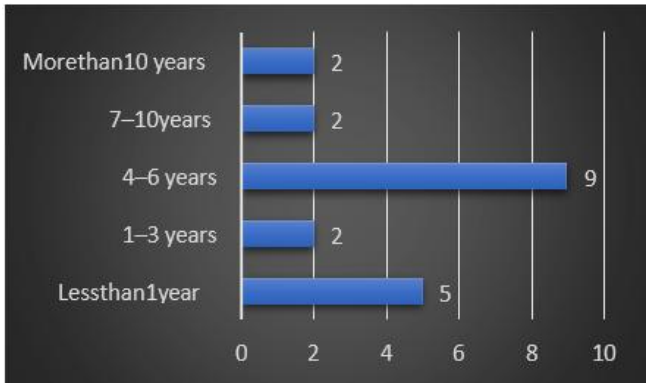

Fig 9: Distribution of respondents by Years of Experience in the Media Industry

The experience levels of respondents, detailed in Fig 9, reflect a mix of early-career and moderately experienced professionals. The most represented group, 45% (9 respondents), has 4–6 years of experience, bringing a solid intermediate understanding of media operations and challenges. 25% (5 respondents) have less than 1 year of experience, and 10% (2 respondents each) have 1–3years, 7–10 years, and more than 10 years of experience, respectively. This range indicates that perspectives in this study come from both seasoned professionals and newer entrants, providing a diverse set of insights into media practices.

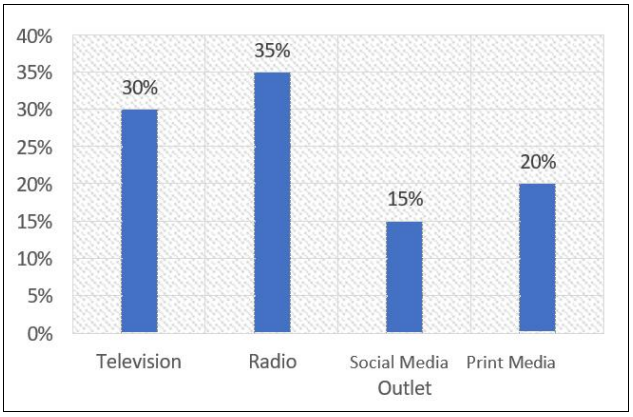

Fig 10: Distribution of respondents by Type of Media Organization

Fig 10 categorizes respondents by the type of media organization they represent. Radio is the most common medium, with 35% (7 respondents) working in this field, followed by television, where 30% (6 respondents) are employed. Print media accounts for 20 % (4 respondents), while social media outlets represent 15% (3 respondents). This distribution highlights the role of traditional media like radio and television alongside emerging platforms, offering a well- rounded view of how different media types approach social issues, including household food security.

To investigate the types of news that private electronic media disseminates in Kitwe District

This section presents findings from the research on the objective, to investigate the types of news that private electronic media disseminates in Kitwe district.

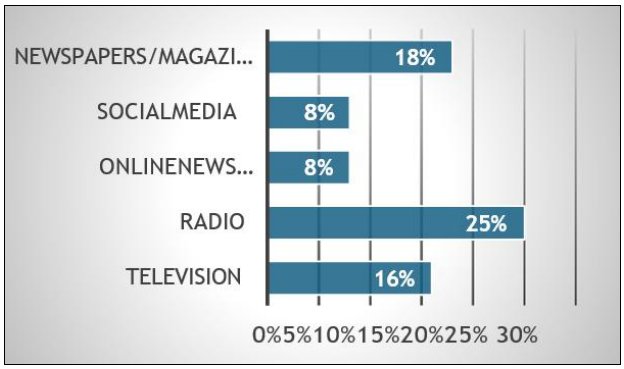

Fig 11: Which types of media do you frequently access?

Fig 11 highlights the types of media most frequently accessed by the household respondents. Radio is the most commonly accessed medium, with 50% (25 respondents) regularly tuning in, likely due to its accessibility and affordability, especially in regions with limited internet connectivity. Newspapers and magazines are accessed by 18 % (9 respondents), while television is close behind, accessed by 16% (8 respondents). Online news platforms and social media are each accessed by 8% of respondents (4 each),

reflecting a smaller but significant portion engaging with digital media. These findings suggest that traditional media, particularly radio, still plays a dominant role in disseminating news within this community.

Figure 12: How often do you consume news from private electronic media (radio, television, online)?

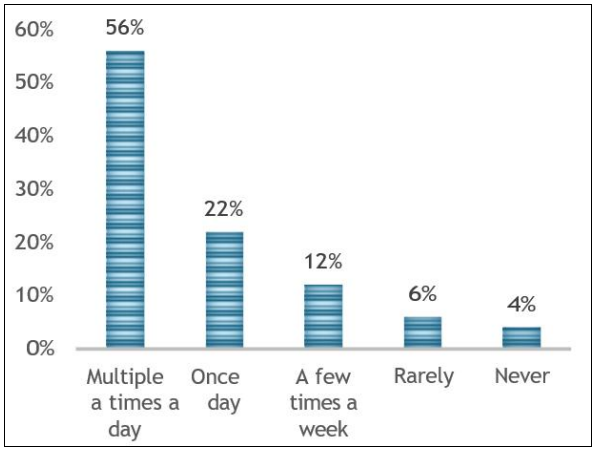

Fig 12: Frequency of News Consumption from Private Electronic Media

As shown in Fig 12, respondents demonstrate varied frequencies in their consumption of news from private electronic media. The majority, 56% (28 respondents), consume news multiple times a day, indicating a high level of engagement and reliance on these media sources. 22% (11 respondents) access news once a day, and 12 % (6 respondents) tune in a few times a week. A smaller number of respondents consume news rarely (6%, or 3 respondents) or never (4%,or 2 respondents). This high frequency of engagement underscores the potential influence of private electronic media on daily information flow and social change efforts, particularly around food security information.

Figure 13: Which private electronic media outlets do you regularly follow?

Private Electronic Media Outlet	Frequency	Percent
Flava Radio and TV	10	20.00
Radio Phoenix	10	20.00
Prime TV	8	16.00
Muvi TV	8	16.00
ZNBC Radio 2	7	14.00
YAR FM	7	14.00
Total	50	100.00

Fig 13: Regularly Followed Private Electronic Media Outlets

The data in Fig 13 shows which private electronic media outlets are regularly followed by respondents. The data shows which private electronic media outlets are regularly followed by respondents. Flava Radio and TV, Prime TV, and MuviTV are the most popular television channels, while Radio Phoenix, ZNBC Radio 2, and YAR FM are prominent radio stations.

Figure 14: What devices do you primarily use to access private electronic media?

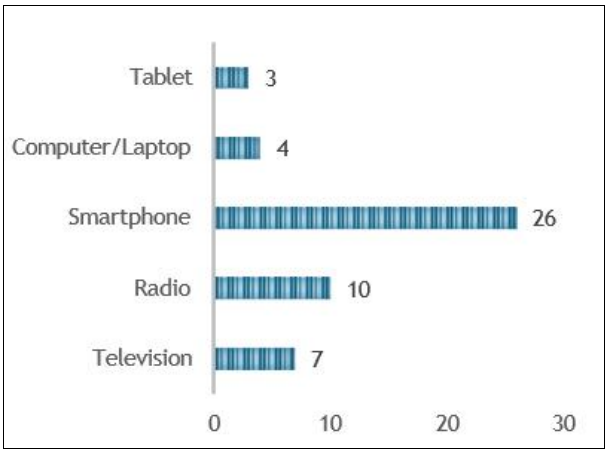

Fig 14: Primary Devices Used to Access Private Electronic Media

According to Fig 14, the smartphone is the primary device for accessing private electronic media, used by 52% of respondents (26 respondents), likely due to its portability and multifunctionality. Radio is the next most commonly used device, with 20% (10 respondents) relying on it as a primary source. Television follows with 14% (7 respondents), while computers/laptops and Figurets are less frequently used, at 8% (4 respondents) and 6% (3 respondents), respectively. This trend toward smartphone usage highlights the potential for mobile-based media campaigns and the importance of mobile accessibility for news dissemination in Kitwe District.

Figure 15: How reliable do you find private electronic media as sources of news and information?

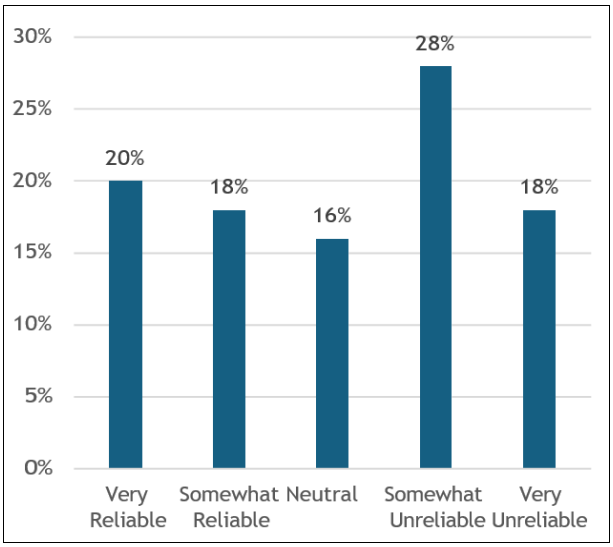

Fig 15: Perceived Reliability of Private Electronic Media

As illustrated in Fig 15, perceptions of reliability vary among respondents regarding private electronic media as a source of news and information. 20% (10 respondents) rated it as very reliable, and 18% (9 respondents) consider its ome what reliable. Meanwhile, 28% (14 respondents) perceive

these sources as somewhat unreliable, and 18% (9 respondents) rate them as very unreliable. A neutral stance is taken by 16% (8 respondents). This mix of opinions suggests varying levels of trust in the accuracy and credibility of information from private electronic media, which may affect its effectiveness in promoting social change and household food security.

Figure 16: What kind of news content do you mostly engage with from private electronic media?

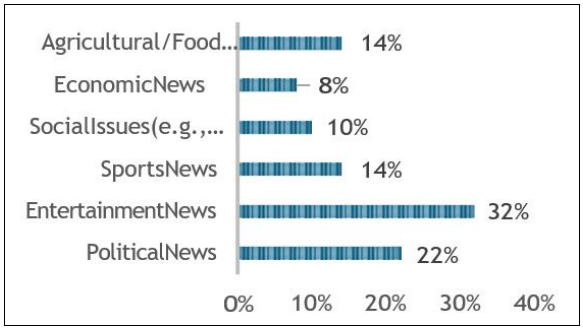

Fig 16: Types of News Content Frequently Engaged with

According to Fig 16, the most frequently engaged news content among respondents from private electronic media is entertainment news, with 32% (16 respondents) indicating a preference for this category. Political news follows, with 22% (11 respondents) engaging with it, likely reflecting interest in national and local governance. Sports news and agricultural/foodsecurity news each attract 14 % of respondents (7 each), while social issues like health and education are followed by 10% (5 respondents). Notably, \only a small proportion of respondents engage with economic news (8%). These findings suggest a preference for entertainment and political topics, possibly overshadowing food security issues despite their relevance to household welfare.

Figure 17: In your opinion, what type of news does private electronic media in Kitwe primarily focus on?

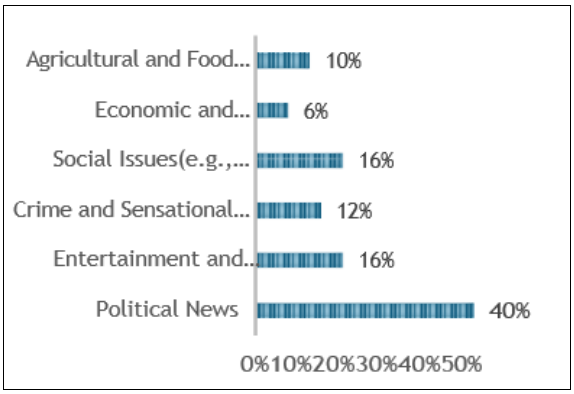

Fig 17: Perceived Focus of News by Private Electronic Media in Kitwe

As shown in Fig 17, respondents perceive that private electronic media in Kitwe predominantly focus on political news, with 40 % (20 respondents) identifying this as the primary focus. Entertainment and celebrity news (16%) and social issues (16%) are also significant, while crime and sensational stories are mentioned by 12% (6 respondents). Only 10% of respondents (5 respondents) believe that agricultural and food security news receives primary attention, indicating that food security may not be a prominent focus in media coverage. This perception highlights a gap between critical local needs, such as household food security, and the media's primary news content.

Figure 18: How often do you come across newsstories related to household food security on private electronic media?

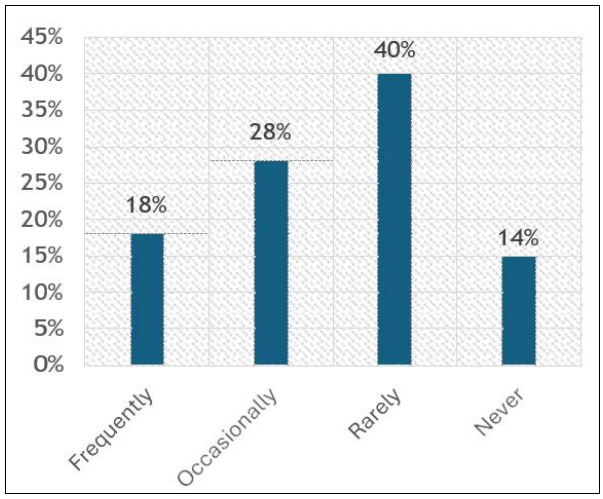

Fig 18: Frequency of Encountering Food Security-Related News

Fig 18 reveals that 40% of respondents (20 respondents) rarely encounter news stories related to household food security on private electronic media, and 28% (14 respondents) report seeing such content only occasionally. 18% (9 respondents) come across food security news frequently, while 14% (7 respondents) report never encountering such stories. This infrequent engagement with food security content suggests a need for increased focus on this topic, considering its importance to community welfare.

Figure 19: Do you think that private electronic media provides sufficient coverage on household food security issues?

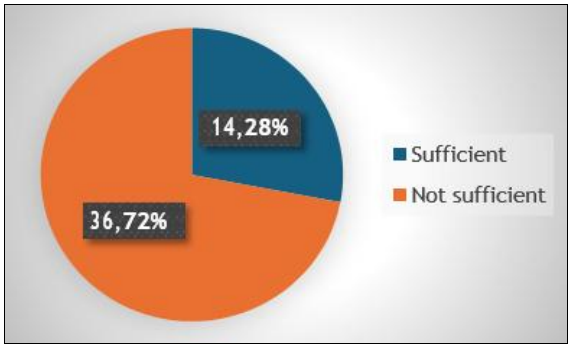

Fig 19: Perceptions of Sufficiency in Food Security Coverage

In terms of the sufficiency of food security coverage, Fig 19 shows that asignificant 72% (36 respondents) feel that private electronic media do not provide adequate coverage on household food security issues, while only 28% (14 respondents) believe coverage is sufficient. This indicates a strong perception of insufficient attention to food security,

highlighting an opportunity for private media to address this concern more effectively.

Area Related to Food Security	Frequency	Percent
Access to Nutritious Food	5	13.51%
Agricultural Practices and Innovation	12	35.13%
Availability of Food Resources	4	10.81%
Community Initiatives on Food Security	8	21.62%
Government Policies on Food Security	7	18.92%
Total	36	100.00%

Figure 20Underrepresented Areas in Food Security Coverage

Fig 20: Under represented Areas in Food Security Coverage

To examine why such type of news is prioritized by private electronic media in Kitwe district

This section presents findings from the research objective; to examine if household food security news is prioritized by private electronic media in Kitwe district.

Households Perspective

Figure 21: Do you think private electronic media prioritize stories that attract higher viewership over socially important topics like food security?

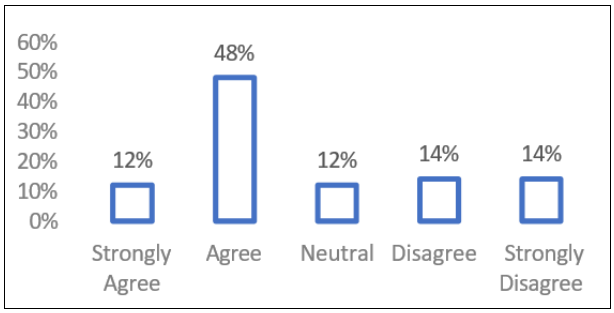

Fig 21: Prioritization of High-Viewership Stories Over Socially Important Topics

Fig 21 shows that nearly half of the respondents, 48% (24 respondents), agree that private electronic media prioritize stories likely to attract higher viewership over socially important topics. An additional 12% (6 respondents) strongly agree with this view, underscoring a perception that media outlets may focus on entertainment or high-engagement topics rather than addressing issues like household food security. 14% of respondents (7 respondents) disagree or strongly disagree, indicating that some do not perceive this bias in content prioritization. Nevertheless, the general consensus points to a perceived preference for viewership-drivencontent, suggesting that media may under represent food security topics due to limited commercial appeal.

Figure 22: How important is it for private electronic media to cover household food security issues?

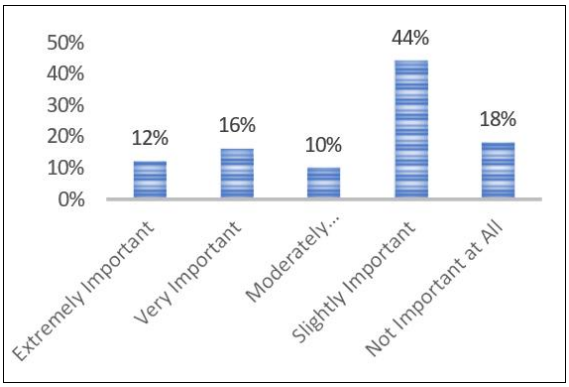

Fig 22: Importance of Covering Food Security Issues

The importance of media coverage on household food security is some what varied among respondents, as shown in Fig 22. While 12% (6 respondents) rate it as extremely important and 16 % (8 respondents) as very important, the largest portion, 44% (22 respondents), considers it only slightly important. Additionally, 18% (9 respondents) view it as not important at all, indicating a potential gap between public perception and the societal importance of food security issues. This perception may reflect why private media prioritize topics that are seen as more widely engaging or commercially viable.

Figure 23: Do you think that increased media coverage of food security would have a positive impact on public awareness and policy?

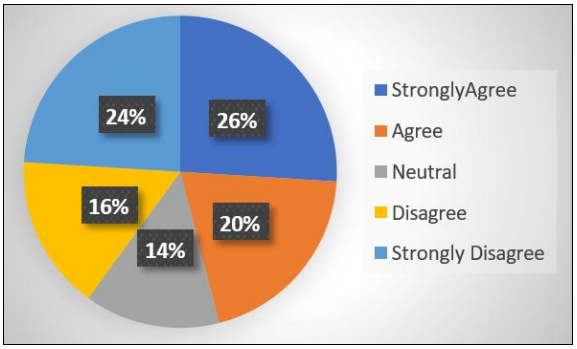

Fig 23: Potential Positive Impact of Increased Food Security Coverage

According to Fig 23, respondents are somewhat divided on whether increased media coverage of food security would positively impact public awareness and policy. 26% (13 respondents) strongly agree that it would have a positive effect, while 20% (10 respondents) agree. However, 24% (12 respondents) strongly disagree, and 16% (8 respondents) disagree with this potential impact, with 14% (7 respondents) remaining neutral. This split suggests mixed views on whether additional media focus on food security would lead to meaningful change, although a significant portion remains supportive.

Figure 24: Have you or your household made any changes in food-related practices due to media coverage on food security?

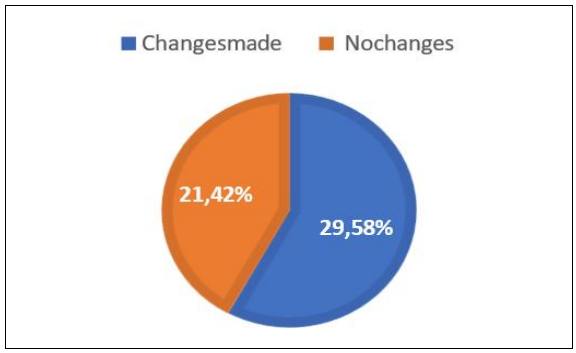

Fig 24: Influence of Media Coverage on Food-Related Practices

In Fig 24, 58% of respondents (29 respondents) report that media coverage on food security has led to changes in their household food-related practices, while 42% (21 respondents) report no changes. This indicates that, where coverage does occur, it has the potential to influence household behaviors, underscoring the importance of targeted media content for promoting food security awareness and practices.

Figure 25: What changes has your household made due to media coverage on food security?

Changes in food related practices among respondents	Frequency	Percent
Food production and acquisition	10	34.5%
Food consumption and preparation	8	27.6%
Food storage and management	6	20.7%
Food related knowledge and awareness	4	13.8%
Household food security strategies	1	3.4%
Total	29	58%

Figure 25Perceived Barriers to Media Coverage on Food Security

Fig 25: Perceived Barriers to Media Coverage on Food Security

According to Fig 25, among the 58% of respondents who reported changes in food related practices, the majority (34.5%) made changes in food production and acquisition, such as starting gardening or purchasing food from local farmers. This suggests that media coverage on food security influenced respondents to take control of their food sources. Additionally, 27.6 % changed their food consumption and preparation habits, adopting healthier eating practices. These findings indicate that media coverage had a significant impacton respondents' food-related behaviors.

Figure 26: How can private electronic media improve their coverage of household food security?

Suggested Improvements for Media Coverage on Household Food Security	Frequency	Percent
Allocate more resources to social issues	18	36.00%
Collaborate with experts and organizations	10	20.00%
Engage with the community to understand issues	5	10.00%
Increase dedicated programs on food security	11	22.00%
Provide training for journalists	6	12.00%
Total	50	100.00%

Respondents also offered specific recommendations for enhancing media cover age of food security, detailed in Fig 26. The most frequent suggestion, supported by 36% of respondents (18 respondents), is for media to allocate more resources to social issues. 22% (11 respondents) suggest increasing dedicated programs on food security, while 20 % (10 respondents) recommend collaborating with experts and organizations to improve content quality and credibility. Other suggestions include providing training for journalists (12%, or 6 respondents) and engaging with the community to better understand food security challenges (10%, or 5 respondents). These suggestions highlight practical steps media outlets can take to address gaps in food security coverage and enhance their role in promoting social change.

Figure 27: What methods would make you more engaged with media coverage on food security?

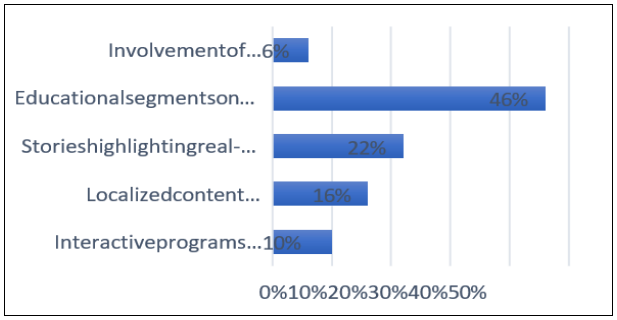

Fig 27: Methods to Increase Engagement with Food Security Coverage

As shown in Fig 27, 46% of respondents (23 respondents) feel that educational segments on food practices would increase their engagement with food security news. Additionally, 22% (11 respondents) are interested in stories that highlight real-life experiences, and 16% (8 respondents) favor localized content relevant to their communities. Interactive programs, such as call-ins or social media engagement, are seen as valuable by 10% (5 respondents), while 6% (3 respondents) support the involvement of community leaders and experts in discussions. These insight ssuggest that personal, community-centered, and interactive content formats could enhance public interest and involvement in food security issues.

Figure 28: Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make regarding media coverage of household food security?

Comment/Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage
Increase coverage of food security issues in media programs	6	26.09%
Provide educational content on nutrition and healthy eating habits	5	21.74%
Include practical tips on food preservation and sustainable practices	4	17.39%
Collaborate with local communities to share success stories	3	13.04%
Broadcast programs in local languages for better understanding	2	8.70%
Encourage interactive sessions with experts (e.g., Q&A segments)	2	8.70%
Utilize social media platforms to reach a younger audience	1	4.34%
Total	23	100%

Media Stake holders' perspective

Figure 29: In your opinion, what type of news does your organization primarily focus on?

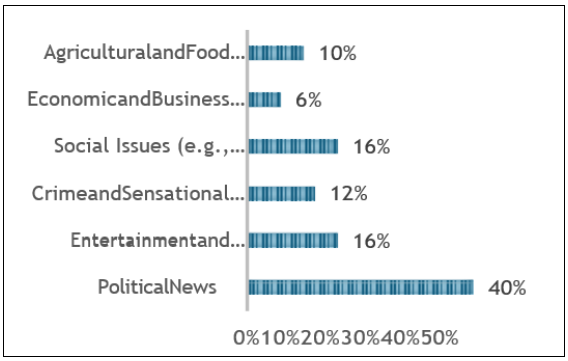

Fig 29: Perceived Focus of News by Private Electronic Media in Kitwe

As shown in Fig 29, respondents from media houses report that they predominantly focus on political news, with 40% (8 respondents) identifying this as the primary focus. Entertainment and celebrity news (16%) and social issues (16%) are also significant, while crime and sensational stories are mentioned by 12% (2 respondents). Only 10% of respondents (2 respondents) believe that agricultural and food security news receives primary attention, indicating that food security may not be a prominent focus in media coverage. This perception highlights a gap between critical local needs, such as household food security, and the media's primary news content.

Figure 30: Do you think that your organization provides sufficient coverage on household food security issues?

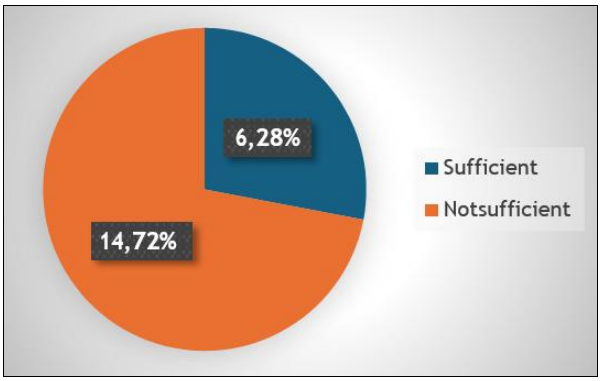

Fig 30: Perceptions of Sufficiency in Food Security Coverage

In terms of the sufficiency of food security coverage, Fig 30 shows that a significant 72% (14 respondents) feel that their organization does not provide adequate coverage on household food security issues, while only 28% (6 respondents) believe coverage is sufficient. This indicates a strong perception of insufficient attention to food security, highlighting an opportunity for private media to address this concern more effectively.

Figure 31: Why do you think your organization focus more on certain types of news (e.g., politics, entertainment) rather than social issues like food security?

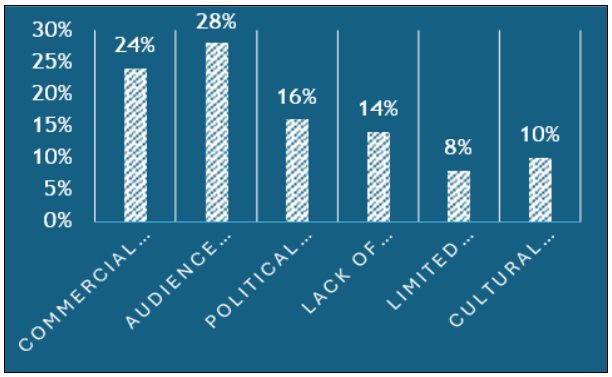

Fig 31: Reasons for Focus on Certain Types of News

Fig 31 reveals respondents' perspectives on why their organization prioritizes certain types of news, such as politics and entertainment, over social issues like food security. The most cited reason is audience demand, with 28% (6 respondents) believing that viewer preferences strongly influence media content. Commercial interests follow closely at 24% (5 respondents), suggesting that profitability and advertising incentives drive content choices. Political influence is also noted by 16% (3 respondents), highlighting potential media bias or agendas shaped by political factors. Other considerations include lack of awareness (14%, or 3 respondents), cultural preferences (10%, or 2 respondents), and limited resources (8%, or 1 respondent).

Discussion of Findings

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings, discussion on findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the study's analysis of the role of private electronic media in promoting household food security in Kitwe District. It synthesizes insights from both household respondents and media stakeholders.

Objective (i): To Investigate the Types of News that Private Electronic Media Disseminates in Kitwe District

The study revealed that 58% of respondents (29 out of 50) reported being informed about household food security through private electronic media. This finding aligns with existing literature highlighting the significance of media in shaping public opinion and influencing behaviors (McQuail, 2010; Rogers, 2003). The wide reach and accessibility of private electronic media make it an effective platform for disseminating food security information. Research has shown that access to information is a critical factor in improving food security (FAO, 2017). Private electronic media's role in providing timely and relevant information can be attributed to its capacity to influence attitudes and behaviors (Valente, 2010). However, the study also revealed that 42% of respondents are not accessing food security information through private electronic media, indicating

gaps in coverage or accessibility. To enhance the effectiveness of private electronic media in promoting household food security, media outlets should prioritize food security coverage and increase accessibility to underserved populations. Collaborations with local organizations and government agencies can also enhance effectiveness. Media outlets should develop targeted food security programs and campaigns, while government agencies should support media initiatives promoting food security.

Objective (ii): To Examine Why Such Types of News Are Prioritized by Private Electronic Media in Kitwe District

The study revealed a concerning trend: 40% of stakeholders report only occasional coverage of food security. This limited attention is overshadowed by entertainment and political news, largely due to perceived low audience interest. The consequences of this limited coverage are far-reaching. Infrequent food security reporting perpetuates public ignorance on critical issues, undermines efforts to address food insecurity, and limits public engagement and debate on food security policies. Moreover, the lack of media attention reinforces the misconception that food security is a niche concern, rather than a vital aspect of national development. Several factors contribute to this limited coverage. Media outlets face resource constraints, limiting their capacity to dedicate resources to food security reporting. Additionally, the perceived lack of audience interest and advertising revenue potential makes food security a low priority. However, opportunities for improvement exist. Collaborations between media outlets, food security organizations, and experts can enhance content quality and relevance. Targeted content strategies, such as social media campaigns, can increase engagement. Incorporating food security into broader news stories (e.g., economic, health) can highlight its interconnectedness with other critical issues. To address these challenges, media outlets must prioritize food security reporting. Enhancing partnerships with food security stakeholders, developing engaging content, and building journalistic capacity are crucial steps. By doing so, private electronic media can play a vital role in promoting food security awareness, informing household decisions, and contributing to a food-secure future.

Objective (iii): To Ascertain Challenges Faced by Media in Reporting on Household Food Security

The study revealed significant obstacles. Financial constraints (28%) and limited expertise (25%) emerged as primary barriers. Financial constraints severely limit media's capacity to produce quality food security content. In-depth investigations, remote area access, and quality production require substantial resources. Limited expertise hinders accurate and nuanced reporting, restricting media's ability to analyze complex data. To overcome these challenges, media outlets must prioritize capacity building, partnerships, and resource allocation. Training journalists and collaborating with experts can enhance content quality. Allocating necessary resources will ensure meaningful food security reporting.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study set out to examine the effectiveness of private electronic media in promoting household food security in Kitwe District. Through a dual analysis of household respondents and media stakeholders, several significant findings emerged, shedding light on both the successes and limitations of private media in addressing this critical issue. This study's results highlight a complex landscape where media plays a role in awareness but faces considerable challenges in driving tangible change in household food security. Firstly, demographic analysis revealed that households in Kitwe District access various forms of private electronic media, with radio and television being the most prevalent. This widespread use of traditional media indicates that these platforms have a significant reach and could be influential tools for spreading food security information. However, media stakeholders acknowledged that food security content is not consistently prioritized, with entertainment and political news often dominating programming. This imbalance suggests that, while the capacity exists, there may be limited commitment or perceived audience interest in making food security a consistent focus. The effectiveness of private electronic media in promoting household food security appears to be moderate at best. Some household respondents reported awareness of food security topics through media, but the depth and impact of this information varied widely. Many households felt that while food security was occasionally covered, the information was often too general and lacked practical, actionable advice that could directly benefit their daily lives. This indicates a gap between awareness and practical impact, pointing to the need for media content that not only informs but also empowers households with usable knowledge. Media stakeholders themselves expressed mixed views regarding the effectiveness of their food security content. Some felt that their organizations were moderately effective in raising awareness, while others believed their efforts had little to no impact on actual household behaviors. The lack of consistent impact measurement tools among media organizations, such as surveys or community feedback, further complicates the assessment of effectiveness. Without clear metrics, it becomes challenging for media organizations to understand their influence on household food security and make data-driven adjustments to their programming. Several challenges were identified that hinder private electronic media from effectively promoting household food security. Both financial constraints and limited access to reliable information emerged as significant barriers. Media organizations often operate on tight budgets, which restrict their ability to invest in specialized programming on social issues like food security. Additionally, the lack of expertise among journalists in handling food security topics contributes to limited coverage. Political interference and low audience engagement also discourage media from dedicating more time to food security issues, as these topics may not generate high viewership compared to more popular content.

Despite these challenges, there is a clear recognition among media stakeholders of the potential role that private electronic media could play in promoting food security. Many suggested that partnerships with NGOs, government agencies, and academic institutions could enhance their capacity to produce credible and impactful content. Such collaborations could provide the necessary resources, expertise, and reliable data that media organizations currently lack. By working with knowledgeable partners,

media outlets can strengthen their content on food security and address the information gaps identified by household respondents. Another key finding of the study is the significant underutilization of interactive and community-centered approaches in media coverage of food security. Households expressed a preference for practical, community-based information, yet media organizations rarely engage directly with communities to capture their specific challenges and success stories. Incorporating interactive formats, such as Q&A segments with experts, call-ins, and community-driven stories, could bridge the gap between media content and household needs. This would allow media organizations to make their coverage more relevant and responsive to the local context. Overall, while private electronic media in Kitwe District has the potential to be a powerful tool in promoting household food security, its current effectiveness is limited by resource constraints, lack of expertise, and competing content priorities. To unlock its full potential, private media need to prioritize food security as a critical social issue, leverage partnerships for resources and expertise, and adopt more community-centered approaches in their programming. By addressing these areas, private electronic media can better contribute to positive social change, helping to improve household food security across the district.

Recommendations

To enhance the role of private electronic media in promoting household food security in Kitwe District, several targeted recommendations are proposed. Firstly, media organizations should increase dedicated coverage on food security by establishing regular segments that focus on practical information, such as affordable nutrition, food preservation techniques, and sustainable agricultural practices. This can help bridge the gap between awareness and actionable knowledge, providing households with concrete steps they can take to improve their food security. Training and capacity building for journalists and media professionals on food security topics are essential. Media organizations should invest in specialized training or collaborate with NGOs and academic institutions to provide reporters with the necessary skills and understanding to cover complex food security issues effectively. This will help in producing more informed, reliable, and impactful content that can resonate with the audience. Partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and local experts are also recommended to enhance content quality and credibility. Such collaborations can provide media with access to accurate data, expert interviews, and resources, allowing them to deliver well-rounded and credible information on food security. Expanding the use of interactive and community-driven approaches is another important strategy. Media organizations could implement call-in segments, Q&A sessions with food security experts, and feature local success stories, making the content more relevant to the community's specific challenges and interests. Broadcasting in local languages can also improve accessibility and comprehension among diverse audiences.

Finally, additional financial support from stakeholders or donor organizations is recommended to alleviate resource constraints. By securing additional funding, media outlets can invest in dedicated food security programming and impact assessment tools, enabling them to measure the effectiveness of their efforts and adapt strategies based on community feedback. Collectively, these recommendations can empower private electronic media to play a more proactive role in fostering household food security in Kitwe District.

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