

**ROLE OF FAITH-BASED RADIO PROGRAMMING IN STRATEGIC
PEACEBUILDING DURING KENYA'S 2022 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communication Studies of Masinde Muliro University
of Science and Technology**

NOVEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for examination, award of a degree, or publication. Where other people's works have been used or referred to, this has been properly acknowledged and referenced.

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

In honor and loving memory of my late father, Samuel Watima Manje (23rd June 1948 – 3rd January 2004) for his unwavering dedication and commitment to my education.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to establish the role of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. Specifically, the study aimed to: determine the existing faith-based radio programs aired and their effectiveness in strategic peacebuilding; examine the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations; establish the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding, and; investigate the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding, all with a focus on Kenya's 2022 general elections. The study was anchored on the tenets of the peace journalism theory, the libertarian theory of mass media, and the social responsibility theory of mass media, and it adopted a pragmatist research philosophy. A mixed methods research approach, dominantly integrating qualitative procedures and embedding quantitative techniques was adopted. The study applied the concurrent embedded mixed methods design where the primary method was qualitative, while the embedded/secondary method was quantitative, to support and enrich the findings. Qualitative data were collected using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, a key informant interview, and a semi-structured questionnaire. A quantitative approach was only used to provide descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and counts. Purposive sampling was used to select seven faith-based radio stations, as well as the sample size of one hundred and nineteen (119) respondents comprising program directors, presenters, producers, and listeners. Results were presented using a combination of narratives, graphs, charts and tables. The study found out that faith-based radio programming played a vital role in promoting peace during Kenya's 2022 general elections. By drawing on religion's moral authority, community trust, and wide listenership, these stations discouraged inflammatory rhetoric and encouraged dialogue and reconciliation. Although faith-based radio effectively combines spiritual guidance with civic education, its contribution remains under recognized in policy and academic discussions. Persistent challenges such as financial constraints, political bias, and limited government support hinder its full potential. Greater recognition, regulatory support, and journalist training are essential to strengthen its role in strategic peacebuilding during elections.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| AfriCOG | Africa Centre for Open Governance |
| AIC | Africa Inland Church |
| Apps | Applications (mobile apps) |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| BHB | Biblia Husema Broadcasting |
| CAK | Communications Authority of Kenya |
| CBN | Christian Broadcasting Network |
| CITAM | Christ is the Answer Ministries |
| CJPC | Catholic Justice and Peace Commission |
| CMD | Centre for Multiparty Democracy |
| CMS | Catholic Media Services |
| CNN | Cable News Network |
| COVAW | Coalition on Violence against Women |
| CREAW | Centre for Rights, Education and Awareness for Women |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services |
| DfID | Department for International Development |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| DV | Dependent Variable |
| ECK | Electoral Commission of Kenya |
| FIDA-Kenya | Federation of Women Lawyers |
| FM | Frequency Modulation |
| FY | Financial Year |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| ICC | International Criminal Court |
| ICJ-Kenya | International Commission of Jurists |
| ICPC | International Centre for Policy and Conflict |
| IEBC | Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission |
| IREC | Independent Review Commission |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| IV | Independent Variable |
| KANU | Kenya National African Union |
| KBC | Kenya Broadcasting Corporation |
| KCCB | Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops |
| KHRC | Kenya Human Rights Commission |
| KICA | Kenya Information and Communication Act |
| KNBS | Kenya National Bureau of Statistics |
| KNCHR | Kenya National Commission on Human Rights |
| KPTJ | Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice |
| KSF | Kingdom Seekers Fellowship |
| LGBTQ | Lesbians Gays Bisexuals Transsexuals and Queer |
| LRA | Lord's Resistance Army |
| MBCI | Mission to the Body of Christ International |
| MCK | Media Council of Kenya |
| NACOSTI | National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation |
| NARC | National Rainbow Coalition |
| NCCK | National Council of Churches of Kenya |
| NCIC | National Cohesion and Integration Commission |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| ODM | Orange Democratic Movement |
| PNU | Party of National Unity |
| PWDs | Persons with Disabilities |
| RTVN | Radio and Television Network |
| SABC | South African Broadcasting Corporation |
| SCoK | Supreme Court of Kenya |
| SMS | Short Messaging Service |
| TBN | Trinity Broadcasting Network |
| UDA | United Democratic Alliance |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |

USA

United States of America

USAID

United States Agency for International Development

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Editorial policies:** Guidelines that govern the operations of faith-based radio stations and the professional conduct of their staff. These policies help editors and producers make informed and lawful decisions regarding the programs and messages they disseminate and how they relate to the public.
- Faith-based:** Organizations, initiatives, or radio stations whose identity, mission, and programming are grounded in religious beliefs, values, and teachings. In this study, the term specifically refers to Christian radio stations that produce and broadcast content inspired by biblical principles with the aim of promoting moral guidance, social cohesion, and peacebuilding.
- Faith-based radio programming:** The structured and intentional dissemination of content by religious radio stations that reflects the spiritual, moral, and ethical values of their audiences. In this study, it refers to the messages, discussions, and initiatives aired by selected faith-based stations to promote peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion during Kenya's 2022 general elections. Such programming includes sermons, talk shows, panel discussions, call-in sessions, music, and community outreach activities that emphasize strategic peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and unity grounded in religious principles.
- General elections:** The term has been used in the study to refer to Kenyan elections in which registered voters from all constituencies have the opportunity to vote for their preferred President, Governors, Senators, Members of the National Assembly,

Women Representatives, and Members of County Assembly simultaneously every five years.

Mobile apps:

Software programs designed for smartphones and tablets that enable users to access radio content, interact with stations, and participate in peacebuilding initiatives in real time. In this study, the term refers to the digital platforms developed or used by faith-based radio stations to stream broadcasts, share peace messages, receive feedback, and enhance audience engagement during Kenya's 2022 general elections.

Non-sectarian:

Refers to faith-based radio stations or programs that are not limited to the teachings or interests of any single denomination. In this study, non-sectarian describes Christian radio stations that broadcast content guided by general Christian values and principles, promoting interdenominational unity, social cohesion, and inclusive peacebuilding messages that appeal to a wider audience.

Peacebuilding:

Efforts made to address the reasons people fight while supporting individuals and communities to manage their differences and conflicts without resorting to violence. It is a collaborative, long-term process aimed at changing attitudes, norms, and behaviors of people and institutions to promote peace, reconciliation, and conflict resolution.

Peace messages:

The specific messages aired by faith-based radio stations during Kenya's 2022 general elections to foster social cohesion, discourage violence, and encourage peaceful electoral participation. This term has been used synonymously with terms such as 'messages of peace',

‘peace-oriented messages’, and ‘messages that convey peace’.

Radio programs: Organized series of radio productions aired on a station to meet the needs of a target audience, helping them better understand their environment and society.

Radio programming: The planned and organized scheduling, production, and broadcasting of audio content such as music, news, talk shows, educational segments, advertisements, and other formats designed to inform, entertain, educate, or influence a target audience within a specific timeframe on the sampled faith-based radio stations.

Religion: The Christian belief in and worship of God.

Religious approaches: Methods and strategies used by religious leaders, organizations, and followers in peacebuilding, mediation, reconciliation, and conflict resolution.

Sectarian: Refers to faith-based radio stations or programs that explicitly promote the beliefs, teachings, and interests of a specific religious denomination or sect. In this study, *sectarian* denotes Christian radio stations whose messages, programming, or affiliations reflect particular denominational doctrines or practices, potentially influencing how peace and social issues are framed.

Strategic peacebuilding: A holistic and long-term approach to achieving sustainable peace that goes beyond conventional peacebuilding. It addresses the root causes of electoral conflicts by not only ending violence but also transforming the systems and structures that sustain conflict.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the entire study, including its background, problem statement, objectives, and research questions, setting the stage for the entire study. It also highlights the study's significance, justification, scope, limitations, assumptions, and operational definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Globally, elections are progressively becoming flashpoints for violence and political unrest. Electoral violence has hindered smooth transitions in countries across Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America (Reuter & Szakonyi, 2024). This has raised serious concerns about governance, peace, and media responsibility during political contests.

In Africa, the challenge of peaceful elections is equally prominent. Many countries face recurring cycles of electoral instability, often worsened by weak institutions, politicized security forces, and divisive media narratives. Faith-based media and religious actors have gained a regional prominence as powerful platforms for shaping political discourse, promoting peace, and offering moral guidance (Chitando, 2023).

In Kenya, the history of election-related violence, such as the 2007- 2008 post-election crisis which saw the death of over 1,300 people, and the displacement of over 600,000 others, underscores the urgent need for innovative, sustainable, and inclusive approaches to strategic peacebuilding during elections (Reuter & Szakonyi, 2024). Elections are often

pivotal moments in democratic societies, yet they can also be periods of heightened tension, division, and conflict, particularly in ethnically and politically polarized contexts.

In recent years, the media and religious actors have emerged as critical players in fostering social cohesion and mitigating conflict, leveraging on their moral authority and widespread reach to promote peace. Faith-based radio stations, in particular, have played a significant role in shaping public discourse, disseminating peace messages, and encouraging dialogue during volatile electoral periods (Karombo & Kibombwe, 2021).

According to Chitando (2023), the 2022 general elections in Kenya presented a unique opportunity to explore the role of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding. As a country with a deeply religious population and a history of significant media influence on public opinion, Kenya provides a compelling case study for examining how faith-based radio stations contribute to peacebuilding efforts. These stations often serve as platforms for interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, and the advocacy of ethical governance, making them vital actors in fostering a peaceful electoral environment.

Faith-based radio has demonstrated notable successes in fostering strategic peacebuilding in various contexts. For instance, during Kenya's 2013 and 2017 elections, stations such as Radio Waumini and Hope FM played a proactive role in promoting peace. They aired programs that emphasized national unity, reconciliation, and shunning of violence, often featuring religious leaders and community elders who promoted shared moral and spiritual values, including peacebuilding, and loving one's neighbor (Adhan, 2020).

Similarly, in post-genocide Rwanda, faith-based radio stations like Radio Ubumwe (Unity Radio) were instrumental in promoting reconciliation and healing by addressing historical

grievances, and encouraging dialogue and reconciliation between conflicting groups (ABC Religion & Ethics Report, 2023). These examples highlight the potential of faith-based radio to act as a bridge-builder and peace advocate during tense electoral periods.

However, Onguny (2020) notes that faith-based radio stations have not always succeeded in promoting peace. In some instances, they have been accused of worsening tensions through biased reporting or inadvertent alignment with political or ethnic groups. During the 2007–2008 post-election violence in Kenya, some were criticized for reinforcing divisions rather than advancing peacebuilding.

Similarly, in Nigeria, faith-based radio stations have occasionally been implicated in amplifying religious and ethnic divides, particularly during elections, when their messaging has been perceived as partisan or exclusionary (Onyemaobi & Okpoko, 2023). These failures underscore the challenges faith-based radio faces in maintaining neutrality and effectively promoting peacebuilding in highly polarized electoral environments.

Election periods globally are often marked by heightened tension and anxiety, driven by people's divergent expectations of outcomes, particularly in authoritarian regimes or societies deeply divided along religious, ethnic, socio-economic, or tribal lines (Reuter & Szakonyi, 2024). Such polarization frequently exacerbates instability, manifesting in electoral violence, destruction of property, human rights violations, and loss of life.

Tension and violence during election periods often stem from incumbents employing manipulative tactics to retain power or imposing candidates on the electorate, leading to significant unrest (Vision of Humanity, 2024). For instance, in Zimbabwe (2008), opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai won the first election round, but the incumbent,

Robert Mugabe, refused to step down, triggering brutal violence, forcing Tsvangirai's withdrawal (Amnesty International, 2025).

Similarly, in Ivory Coast (2010), Laurent Gbagbo's refusal to concede to Alassane Ouattara sparked a civil war, claiming over 3,000 lives. Comparable patterns occurred in the DRC (2018), Belarus (2020), and Uganda (2021). These occurrences highlight a global trend of authoritarian resistance to democratic transitions (Vision of Humanity, 2024).

In other instances, opposition parties have instigated violence in the process of wrestling for power from incumbents, thus disadvantaging the same society they seek to lead. A good example is in Serbia where opposition lawmakers hurled smoke bombs and flares in parliament, protesting against the ruling party's actions. This incident resulted in injuries and highlighted the deep political crisis in the country, exacerbated by prolonged anti-corruption protests (The Times, 2025).

For any country to achieve good governance, peace, cohesion, and national security must be upheld to ensure effective administration and protect citizens' interests (The Times, 2025). Kenya is no exception. Following the disputed 2007 presidential election, Mwai Kibaki's contested victory triggered widespread violence. Since then, the country has faced recurring electoral unrest in 2013, 2017, and 2022, often marked by violence and disruption (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Although the 2022 elections appeared somewhat peaceful at first, the post-election period saw deadly protests, police brutality, abductions, loss of life, and destruction of property to this very day (Nyabuga & Khamadi, 2024).

Kenya has had a long, versatile, and multifaceted election history, witnessing both volatile and fairly peaceful general elections over the years. Apart from the significant occurrences

of the Nyayo era electoral violence, among the worst of these volatile elections was the aftermath of the 2007/2008 general elections which was characterized by political manipulation, dictatorship, deadly violence, destruction of property, gagging of the media, loss of livelihoods, deaths, disruption of societal norms, and ethnic tensions (Kakai, 2021).

The 2007/2008 general elections in Kenya serve as a stark reminder of the harm that can be inflicted on society as a result of lack of peace, violence, and lack of meaningful mediation and conflict resolution during elections. The apparent need for strategic peacebuilding before, during, and after general elections in the country was brought to the forefront during this period in history (Shafiei & Overton, 2023).

The general electoral process consists of many stakeholders, ranging from political parties, the civil society, the media, religious organizations, and electoral management bodies among many others. The media has been found to be one of the most crucial players during the electoral process in any country world over. The influence and power of the media as a tool of mass sensitization, education, persuasion, mobilization, and ensuring accountability can only be undermined at the detriment of society (IFES, 2025).

According to UNESCO (2024), during delicate times in any country such as election periods, the media has the overwhelming capacity to either call for peace, instigate violence, or remain silent or neutral, depending on which news is being covered and reported, and how that news is covered and reported. Responsible reporting during electioneering periods is the hallmark of professional journalism since the alternative has the potential of disturbing societal peace. Encouraging peacebuilding through media messages, programs, and initiatives is also one sign of responsible journalism.

Despite their potential, the utilization of faith-based radio programming in peacebuilding remains underexplored in academic literature. While studies have examined the role of media in conflict resolution and the influence of religious institutions in peace processes, there is limited research on how faith-based radio stations specifically design, deliver, and operationalize peacebuilding content during elections (Taro, Ndati & Mataba, 2022). Furthermore, the effectiveness of their peace messaging, the impact of their editorial policies, and the challenges they face in navigating political and social complexities remain under-researched.

This study seeks to address these gaps by analyzing the utilization of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. It focuses on the content and effectiveness of faith-based radio programs, the thematic focus of peace messages, the role of editorial policies, and the operational challenges faced by these stations. By examining these aspects, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how faith-based media can be leveraged as a tool for peacebuilding.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ideally, elections should be peaceful and free from violence and conflict. However, elections in Kenya have historically been marked by violent conflict, and the 2022 general elections were no exception. Electoral disputes once again threatened national stability. Given Kenya's history of electoral violence, particularly in the 2007, 2013, and 2017 elections, strategic peacebuilding remains a key priority for media stakeholders.

Despite their wide reach, numerous peace initiatives, and strong religious influence, faith-based radio stations have not prevented the persistence of election-related violence. This

underscores the need to examine their specific programs, messages, and actual impact on peacebuilding. The extent to which faith-based radio programming was effectively utilized for peacebuilding during the 2022 general elections remains undocumented. This study aims to identify these programs and their effectiveness in promoting peace.

Faith-based radio stations command large and diverse audiences (CAK, 2022). They have positioned themselves as leading voices in faith-inspired broadcasting, delivering messages of peace to the masses (MCK, 2023). However, the specific peace programs, messaging strategies, and their actual impact on peacebuilding remain largely underexplored.

Most media studies on electoral violence focus on negative media influences such as hate speech and propaganda, often overlooking the positive peace-oriented contributions of faith-based broadcasters. In particular, faith-based radio remains under-researched, as most studies emphasize mainstream and social media. This gap is especially significant in Kenya, where religious institutions hold considerable influence and reach, yet their role in peacebuilding through radio is largely undocumented, further justifying the need for this study.

Addressing these gaps benefits multiple stakeholders. For policymakers and regulators, the study provides insights into integrating faith-based media within electoral conflict prevention frameworks. For faith-based radio stations, the findings offer an empirical basis for improving programming strategies and strengthening peacebuilding efforts in future elections. For scholars and peace practitioners, this research enriches media and peace studies by highlighting religious media as a viable tool for strategic peacebuilding.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1.3.1 General Objective

To establish the role of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections, with a focus on programs aired and their effectiveness, themes of peace messaging, role of editorial policies, and operational challenges faced.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine the existing faith-based radio programs aired and their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.
2. To examine the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations on promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.
3. To establish the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.
4. To investigate the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Which faith-based radio programs were aired during Kenya's 2022 general elections, and how effective were they in promoting strategic peacebuilding?
2. What were the dominant themes of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations during the 2022 general elections?

3. Which role did the editorial policies of faith-based radio stations play in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections?
4. Which challenges did faith-based radio stations face in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections?

1.5 Justification of the Study

The rationale for this study lies in the persistent recurrence of deadly election-related violence in Kenya, despite the numerous peacebuilding initiatives by various actors, and strong media presence in the country. Many research studies have explored the role of mainstream and social media in shaping electoral narratives that contribute to peacebuilding during elections. Despite these efforts, peace during elections still remains elusive, and violence continues to rock the country every electioneering cycle. The findings of this study will contribute a fresh perspective on how spiritually-grounded media platforms can effectively contribute to strategic peacebuilding during elections.

Limited scholarly attention has been paid to the specific contribution of faith-based radio to strategic peacebuilding during general elections. Given the moral authority, grassroots presence, trust, and broad listenership enjoyed by faith-based broadcasters, it becomes essential to understand exactly how these platforms contribute to peacebuilding through their programs and messaging. By focusing on the most recent 2022 general elections, this study fills a critical gap, offering fresh insights into how faith-infused programming and messaging can support strategic peacebuilding during politically sensitive periods.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to address critical gaps in research and practice regarding faith-based radio and strategic peacebuilding in electoral contexts. This study has noteworthy policy and regulatory implications since the findings provide policymakers and regulatory bodies with insights into the role of faith-based radio in conflict prevention. By understanding the impact of religious broadcasting on electoral peace, policymakers can develop frameworks that support and integrate faith-based media into national peacebuilding strategies.

This study contributes to enhancing faith-based radio programming. Faith-based radio stations play a crucial role in promoting peace and social cohesion. This study offers empirical evidence on effective programming strategies, enabling religious broadcasters to refine their content, improve audience engagement, and maximize their contribution to electoral stability.

This study contributes to media and peace studies because it fills a gap in existing literature by focusing on faith-based media's role in peacebuilding, an area often overshadowed by studies on mainstream and social media. It broadens the discourse on how religious institutions use the media as a tool for conflict resolution, providing a fresh perspective on media's influence in electoral processes.

This study offers practical insights for peace practitioners such as peacebuilding organizations and civil society actors who can use the study's findings to develop targeted interventions that leverage faith-based radio for conflict prevention and resolution.

Understanding how religious media fosters peace will help design more effective programs, messages and communication strategies for electoral and post-electoral periods.

Lastly, this study is significant in informing future elections. As Kenya continues to experience electoral tensions in every electoral cycle, this study offers practical recommendations on optimizing faith-based media's role in mitigating political and ethnic divisions. Its findings can guide future electoral processes by emphasizing the importance of responsible and strategic peace messaging in media.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This section focuses on the geographical, content, participant, methodological and situational scope of the study.

1.7.1 General Scope

This study explored the utilization of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections, with a focus on programs and their effectiveness, peace messaging, editorial policies, and operational challenges. The focus of this study was Christian radio stations. The study did not include other forms of media, secular radio stations, or faith-based radio stations affiliated with other non-Christian religions.

1.7.2 Geographical Scope

The study was geographically limited to Kenya, with a focus on Nairobi, Nakuru and Uasin Gishu Counties. These areas were selected due to their history of electoral violence

and political tensions (NCIC, 2022), making them critical regions for examining the role of faith-based radio in peacebuilding.

1.7.3 Content Scope

The study explored faith-based radio programming for strategic peacebuilding by focusing on talk shows, sermons, call-ins and radio drama. It assessed the peace messages disseminated, strategies used to promote peace, editorial policies that shape content delivery, and the challenges faced in peacebuilding.

1.7.4 Participant Scope

The study focused on seven major Christian radio stations in Kenya, namely, Sayare FM, MBCI Radio, Biblia Husema Broadcasting, Radio Waumini, Upendo FM, Hope FM, and Family Radio 316. These stations were selected based on their missions of promoting peace and their large audience reach in violence-prone areas (CAK, 2023; MCK, 2023). Participants included producers, program directors, and presenters directly involved in peace programming, as well as accessible listeners drawn from fan (salaam) clubs who directly interacted with peace programs and messages.

1.7.5 Methodological Scope

The study was limited to the concurrent embedded mixed methods research approach, dominantly using qualitative techniques and embedding quantitative techniques only to enrich the study. It used the concurrent embedded mixed methods design, where qualitative research was dominant, and was limited to collecting data through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and semi-structured questionnaires.

1.7.6 Situational/Context Scope

The study is specifically situated within the context of Kenya's 2022 general elections. It explores how faith-based radio stations contributed to peacebuilding efforts during the 2022 general elections, considering the political climate, electoral tensions, and media dynamics of that period.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Unwillingness by some participants to voluntarily respond to the research questions, especially due to lack of time and fear of being discriminated against by the owners of their respective faith-based radio stations was encountered. This was addressed by clearly explaining the objectives of the study and giving the participants adequate time to respond, while assuring them of their anonymity.

The study's generalizability was constrained by the sample size. However, the selected sample size was appropriate for a dominantly qualitative study that focused on richness, depth, context and meaning, rather than breadth and generalizability. The radio stations were among the most popular in their category and widely listened to, not only in regions prone to electoral violence but also across broader geographical areas (CAK, 2023; MCK, 2023). Additionally, the sampled listeners were drawn from the stations' fan clubs, comprising highly engaged listeners who frequently interacted with the stations' programs and messages. As a result, the sample adequately represented faith-based radio listenership, ensuring the study remained relevant within this specific media context.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

This study assumed the following:

- i. Religious leaders affiliated to faith-based radio stations, by virtue of the positions that they hold in society, are neutral and esteemed figures who cannot take sides in political matters such as general elections, and can neutrally mediate conflicts, inspire dialogue, and preach peace.
- ii. Faith-based radio broadcasters in Kenya are actively involved and concerned with strategic peacebuilding efforts, especially during general election periods, through their messaging and programming.
- iii. Messages broadcasted by faith-based radio stations in Kenya have the potential to influence the behaviors and attitudes of their listeners towards strategic peacebuilding during, before and after elections.
- iv. Faith-based radio programs that are explicitly designed for strategic peacebuilding play a significant role in reducing electoral violence and tensions.
- v. Peace messages delivered by faith-based radio broadcasters are effective in advancing strategic peacebuilding, reducing electoral violence, and promoting calm.
- vi. Supportive editorial policies significantly contribute to the effectiveness and consistency of peace messaging by faith-based radio broadcasters.
- vii. Challenges faced by faith-based radio broadcasters can hinder their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding, requiring targeted interventions.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study and established the foundation for establishing the role of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. It highlighted the global and local contexts of electoral violence and showed how Kenya's recurring election-related conflicts underscored the need for sustainable peacebuilding strategies. The chapter outlined how faith-based radio stations, leveraging religion's moral authority and community trust, had been instrumental in promoting peace and dialogue during elections.

The problem statement noted that despite the presence of many faith-based radio stations, their specific impact on peacebuilding remained unclear. The chapter presented the study's objectives and research questions, focusing on radio programs, peace messages, editorial policies, and challenges encountered. It justified the study's importance to media, faith-based institutions, policymakers, and peace practitioners, emphasizing its contribution to peace communication scholarship.

Finally, the chapter defined the study's scope, limitations, and assumptions, clarifying its geographical focus on Nairobi, Nakuru, and Uasin Gishu Counties and its methodological reliance on a concurrent embedded mixed-methods design. It concluded with operational definitions of key terms to guide the rest of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents information from other publications on themes related to the research problem. The chapter has identified and reviewed literature about the key concepts used in this study. Findings of other authors, studies, and scholars relating to the utilization of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during general elections have been reviewed from an international, regional and local perspective. Each of the four objectives of this study have been explored and discussed in detail. The theoretical framework that underpinned this study, the conceptual framework, as well as the research gaps are also presented in this chapter.

2.1 Faith-Based Radio Programs and their Effectiveness on Strategic Peacebuilding

According to the National Religious Broadcasters (2025) Faith-based radio programming refers to the structured creation and dissemination of radio content centered on religious beliefs, values, and faith-driven perspectives. Unlike general religious broadcasting, which may focus broadly on outreach and religious teachings, faith-based radio programming is intentional in designing content that integrates spirituality with social issues, moral guidance, and community engagement. It is delivered through various formats, including sermons, theological discussions, prayer sessions, gospel music, radio dramas, and interactive talk shows. However, much of the literature still treats faith-based media as either apolitical or limited to evangelism. This study challenges that assumption

by exploring the role played by faith-based radio stations in Kenya in strategic peacebuilding during the 2022 general elections.

While some faith-based radio programs operate under commercial sponsorship, others rely on listener donations, partnerships with religious organizations, or community-driven funding models (Peacock, 2024). These programs serve not only as a medium for spiritual enrichment but also as a platform for advocating behavioral transformation and fostering social cohesion. However, current literature rarely interrogates how these funding models shape editorial choices during politically sensitive periods, hence the need for a study to address this gap.

Advancements in technology, particularly mobile devices and internet-based streaming, have significantly enhanced the reach and accessibility of faith-based radio programming. These innovations have lowered production and distribution costs while enabling real-time interaction with audiences across geographical boundaries. This has played a significant role in amplifying the reach of faith-based radio stations (Frederick, 2022). Despite these developments, existing literature has treated technological expansion as a neutral process, overlooking how it can be strategically used for peacebuilding. This study contributes to that discourse by examining how stations used technology to broadcast and mobilize listeners around themes of reconciliation, unity, and civic responsibility.

As Onyemaobi and Okpoko (2023) note, faith-based radio stations have adapted to digital platforms, allowing them to engage listeners beyond traditional airwaves through mobile apps, online streaming, and social media integration. This shift has expanded the scope of faith-based programming to include diverse content such as religious news, community

dialogues, educational sessions, and peace-oriented messages. By evolving beyond traditional religious broadcasts, faith-based radio programming continues to play a vital role in shaping public discourse, promoting moral values, and addressing pressing societal concerns.

Radio remains the dominant media output channel for faith-based broadcasting, a position attributed to its relatively lower regulatory and economic barriers, compared to television and newspapers, which involve higher and often prohibitive costs (CAK, 2023). Additionally, faith-based radio broadcasters benefit from the ability to extend their reach beyond urban centers, effectively serving audiences in remote and rural areas where access to other forms of media may be limited.

The affordability of radio further strengthens its appeal, as it provides an accessible alternative to costly television subscriptions and newspapers. Moreover, radio's adaptability to diverse audiences, including both literate and illiterate populations, enhances its role as an inclusive communication tool (MCK, 2023). These factors collectively reinforce the significance of radio as a primary medium for faith-based broadcasting, ensuring its continued relevance in disseminating religious content and engaging communities across different socio-economic backgrounds.

Faith-based radio stations primarily focus on Christian broadcast content, largely due to Christianity's widespread global following. Korir and Nabushawo (2021) examined the diversity of programming in selected Christian radio stations in Eldoret, Kenya, and found that these broadcasters emphasize religious values and norms aligned with their affiliations. This focus was attributed to the fact that many of these stations were

established, owned, and sometimes controlled by faith-based institutions or religious leaders who use them as platforms for disseminating faith-based teachings. While this can help maintain theological integrity, it raises important questions about editorial independence and the framing of non-religious public interest issues such as elections. This study furthers this conversation by investigating how such institutional influences impacted the framing and delivery of peace messages during Kenya's 2022 general elections, when strategic messaging and neutrality were critical.

Faith-based radio broadcasters often face the challenge of fulfilling the core tenets of broadcasting, namely, to inform, educate, and entertain, while simultaneously upholding the values and norms of their respective religious affiliations (Onyemaobi & Okpoko, 2023). Onyemaobi and Okpoko's (2023) conducted a content analysis of broadcast media. Their study revealed that efforts to align faith-based radio content with the broadcasting principles of informing, educating, and entertaining, while simultaneously upholding religious values have encountered resistance. This reluctance is largely rooted in concerns that expanding content beyond strictly religious themes may dilute a stations' core religious values. However, striking a balance between maintaining religious integrity and embracing diverse, engaging content is essential for enhancing the relevance and sustainability of faith-based radio in an evolving media landscape.

The reluctance of faith-based radio broadcasters to diversify their content has drawn criticism from researchers such as Korir and Nabushawo (2021), who argue that diversification is essential for fully realizing the core broadcasting tenets while also ensuring the sustainability of these stations. Expanding content offerings can help faith-

based radio stations maintain a steady audience base and remain competitive in the highly dynamic radio industry.

Additionally, a well-balanced programming approach can enhance the effectiveness of faith-based radio initiatives, such as promoting peace during general elections. Korir and Nabushawo (2021) highlight the stiff competition faith-based radio stations face from secular and commercial broadcasters, emphasizing the need to broaden their content without compromising religious values. By striking this balance, faith-based radio can strengthen its role as both a spiritual and socially relevant platform. This study explored how Kenyan faith-based radio stations navigated that balance to remain both spiritually grounded and socially responsive during the 2022 general elections.

Critics argue that ensuring faith-based radio stations fully embrace the core tenets of broadcasting can play a vital role in addressing societal challenges such as electoral violence, substance abuse, and moral decline, which impact broad segments of communities (Paul & Soukup, 2023). To remain effective, faith-based broadcasters must acknowledge these pressing social issues and adopt a more inclusive approach, rather than focusing solely on evangelistic content. Since these challenges affect both religious and non-religious individuals alike, programming that engages with real-world concerns can enhance the relevance and impact of faith-based radio. Governor, Clever, and Akata (2021) advocate for a policy of accommodation by religious institutions, leaders, and broadcasters to foster a paradigm shift toward more inclusive content. Such an approach would enable faith-based radio to serve not only as a spiritual guide but also as a platform for meaningful societal dialogue and transformation.

Ensuring a rich and diversified balance in broadcasting content is crucial for faith-based radio stations as they address various societal issues affecting diverse communities. In some academic circles, radio stations are regarded as social institutions comparable to traditional entities such as governments, schools, churches, and families due to their significant influence in shaping public discourse.

Faith-based radio, in particular, has the potential to engage with critical societal concerns, including morality, ethics, corruption, and peacebuilding during general elections. As Korir and Nabushawo (2021) suggest, incorporating programs beyond strictly spiritual content, while remaining aligned with religious values, can enhance the role of these stations in promoting the overall well-being of society. By adopting a holistic approach to programming, faith-based radio can serve as both a moral guide and a platform for constructive societal engagement.

A review of the audience composition of faith-based radio stations in Kenya by Korir and Nabushawo (2021) revealed that it includes both religiously committed listeners and those who do not strictly adhere to religious beliefs. This diversity underscores the need for faith-based broadcasters to adopt programming strategies that cater to a broad audience while maintaining alignment with their religious values. This study built on this by examining how audience diversity influenced the framing of peace messages during the 2022 general elections.

According to Stiernstedt (2021), in many parts of the world, church attendance has been on a decline. This has been attributed to a number of factors such as advances in technology which have brought the church to where we live, work and dwell. The Covid-

19 pandemic which hit the world in 2020 also greatly contributed to this decline due to the restrictions in movement and public or religious gatherings. This highlights the rising importance of faith-based radio as an accessible spiritual platform, which this study explored within the unique context of Kenya's 2022 elections, where the media became a critical space for both religious and civic engagement.

During the Covid-19 period, churches and other places of worship devised creative ways to reach their followers at the comfort of their homes and dwellings. Religious broadcasting has been able to bring religion to the attention of those who do not physically attend religious places of worship. The internet, television and radio have been particularly instrumental in bringing religious content closer to audiences within the intimacy of their homes and other dwelling places. As a result, religious followers have been able to create quasi-personal relationships with these broadcasters, further strengthening their influence (Stiernstedt, 2021).

2.1.1 A Global Perspective of Faith-Based Radio Programming

Globally, faith-based radio programming has a rich history that dates back to the early days of the invention of radio itself. In the 1900s, radio emerged as an influential medium with the potential of reaching huge audiences in far places simultaneously. Religious organizations and churches realized the potential of radio in outreach in the 1920s and began airing religious music and sermons in the United States (Lee & Chow, 2022). KDKA was the first ever radio station to receive a license in 1921 in Pittsburgh, that allowed it to air the Calvary Episcopal Sunday evening vespers service. This historical

background provides a context for establishing the relevance of faith-based broadcasting and its role in contemporary peacebuilding efforts.

According to McDonnell (2023), initially beginning with a small audience of just a few thousands, the fixation on these broadcasts led other religious organizations to launch radio ministries due to the American entrepreneurial spirit, coupled up with radio's growing appeal. The station would broadcast Christian content a few hours each day. Paul Rader, Aimee Semple McPherson, Charles Fuller and Fulton Sheen were among the first Christian evangelists and pastors to recognize the potential of radio to spread their messages and preach the gospel in the early 1920s (McDonnell, 2023).

Young and Jones (2022) state the, initially, religious content was only segmented within normal radio programming before independent religious networks began in the early 1960s in the United States of America. For instance, the popular religious broadcasting networks and enterprises such as Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) and Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) allowed diverse radio programming formats to be developed, giving rise to non-stop religious radio content broadcasting. This later expanded globally due to advances in satellite technology, FM radio, and the internet. The aftermath of the World-War II contributed significantly to an increase in religious radio broadcasting where evangelists increasingly utilized radio to spread messages of peace through shows that featured captivating prayers, music and preaching (Paul & Soukup, 2023).

Faith-based radio broadcasting in some countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) developed mainly as part of public service provision. In other countries such as the United

States of America (USA), faith-based broadcasting was developed by faith-based organizations, and individual evangelists and preachers. In the USA, UK and Canada, faith-based broadcasting began in the initial days of radio. It entailed the broadcast of preaching, religious worship and religious conversations. As time went by, an array of formats was developed to include a wide range of styles and approaches to religious broadcasting. Faith-based broadcasts would now entail documentaries, chat shows, and television and radio dramas (Sonay, 2018).

A good number of faith-based organizations today air their sermons and preaching live on air on both radio and television, while others record them and broadcast them on their websites or social media platforms. Forty-two percent (42%) of non-commercial radio stations in the USA currently operate on a faith-based format. Out of the 2,400 Christian-based radio stations operating in the USA, more than 80% are non-commercial. This shows that a greater percentage of faith-based radio stations are not profit motivated but are intended to spread the gospel of Christ (Mukulu, 2019). This mission-driven broadcasting model is echoed in Kenya, and this study investigated how faith-based radio stations prioritized peace-focused content during the 2022 elections, demonstrating their commitment to public good beyond commercial interests.

In Sweden, faith-based radio programming began with community radio (Stiernstedt, 2021). Religious movements initially utilized already existing media platforms to spread their religious messages. However, with time, they began innovating and developing new ways and media forms to reach their target audiences. With community radio being at the heart of communities and serving community interests, religious matters played a big role in the development of faith-based radio stations in Sweden since religion is core to

community life. In fact, Stiernstedt (2021) notes that free churches and the Pentecostal movement were attributed as the main driving force of community radio stations in Sweden in the 1970s.

Taiwo, Adamu and Fatele (2023) note that, in countries like Pakistan which follow the well-established state religion of Islam, the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation which is a state-owned broadcaster is mandated by law to only broadcast programs that may promote Islamic ideologies, peace, national unity, social justice, tolerance, equity, forgiveness, and democracy as perpetuated in Islamic faith-based teachings. This shows the value that faith-based radio broadcasting places on peace.

Deacy (2019) conducted a study that was aimed at investigating the specific function, role, quantity and context of religious content in British media. The study focused on local, regional and national radio broadcasters. The study concentrated on radio because the researcher established that radio had for long been sidelined as a medium for delivery of religious content despite the fact that it came second to television in terms of trust from target audience. The study revealed that radio is not only trusted by the largest number of audiences, but also the most easily available, accessible, and flexible media platform. The audience of the sampled faith-based radio stations reported that they do not only listen to those stations for religious content, but also for news, entertainment, and as a platform for civic engagement. This shows the power that radio has when it comes to providing a platform for civic matters, including strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

2.1.2 An African Perspective of Faith-based Radio Programming

Regionally, in Africa, the roots of religious radio programming can be traced to the early 20th century. Radio in Africa was introduced by missionaries due to its potential to help them spread their religious messages. During the colonial era, radio broadcasting in Africa was strongly controlled by the colonial powers and was majorly used to propagate Christianity and Islam, as well as indigenous African religions. The foundation for faith-based radio programming in Africa was led by pioneer organizations such as South Africa's Radio Pulpit and Sudan Radio Service whose motivation was based on the potential of radio to penetrate audiences in rural areas and command a large listenership. Currently, the continent has hundreds of faith-based radio broadcasters that serve a wide range of religious denominations and African languages. International media networks such as CBN and TBN have opened subsidiaries in Africa, namely CBN Africa and TBN Africa, further boosting faith-based radio broadcast in Africa (Korir & Nabushawo, 2021).

Faith-based media in Africa, particularly radio, continue to influence the ways of lives of its people and what they believe in. In Africa, radio is the most popular form of mass media that surpasses all other media in terms of its use and accessibility by audience, making it very influential and preferred. Faith-based radio broadcasting has grown tremendously in Africa (CAK, 2022). This study situated this growth within Kenya's 2022 elections, showing how faith-based radio was used to promote peace.

According to a study by Myers (2018), faith-based organizations and churches in many African countries dominate the radio airwaves and strongly command a high audience, particularly women and the older generation. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of

Congo, more 35% of all FM radio stations are owned, controlled and managed by faith-based organizations, mainly evangelical Christian groups. This dominance is also mirrored in Kenya, where this study explored how such influence was used to shape peace messaging during the 2022 general elections.

A study by Kibombwe (2023) supports that faith-based radio is also deeply rooted in other African countries such as South Africa where a Christian radio station called Radio Pulpit is the only radio station that enjoys national coverage apart from the state-owned SABC channels. This moves to show just how much faith-based radio broadcasters are become popular in Africa by the day, and how they continue to enjoy nationwide coverage. Kibombwe (2023) further states that faith-based broadcasting in countries such as Zambia, Tanzania and DRC has led to the growth of private broadcasting. The Roman Catholic Church in Zambia runs a high number of radio stations in the country.

In Uganda, faith-based entities own and operate a third of the broadcasting houses that broadcast purely faith-based content. However, faith-based broadcasters in Uganda have made resolute efforts to ensure that their faith-based stands are not confused with political stands for fear of being reprimanded by the government. Kibombwe (2023) further notes that radio is the most dominant faith-based medium, a situation which can be attributed to lesser regulatory entry barriers and lower monetary requirements compared to other media such as television and print media like newspapers.

According to Kibombwe (2023), in some countries such as Zambia, the state has had undue control over faith-based radio broadcasters. Faith-based radio stations that seemed to support opposition voices have had their operating licenses revoked by the state

authorities. In Angola and Zimbabwe, the media environments are highly restrictive with more radio programming being dedicated to religion compared to political matters. In some countries such as Senegal and Ghana, faith-based radio broadcasting has not been given prominence compared to other African countries since their primary concern has been politics, not religion. Other countries with low faith-based radio broadcasting popularity include Botswana where faith-based programming only amounts to 3% of the content broadcasted by the state. Religion in Somalia has been legislated as a private matter, and, as such, faith-based programming has been quite low.

Charities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) affiliated to faith-based groups have strongly shaped the faith-based media landscape in a number of African countries. Most faith-based broadcasting houses in Africa were founded on the foundation of foreign NGOs and charities. A good example is the Catholic Media Services (CMS) Center that operates in Nigeria. The center specializes in providing journalists with professional and specialized training to improve their journalistic skills and ethics.

Elsewhere, support from foreign churches in Uganda has greatly contributed to the growth of faith-based media since many churches now own and operate television and radio stations. However, since most faith-based broadcasters are non-profit-making entities, most of them have been forced to rely on subsidies from their parent faith-based organizations in order to remain independent from state control and to remain economically sustainable in the tough economic times affecting the media sector (Kibombwe (2023)).

2.1.3 A Kenyan Perspective of Faith-Based Radio Programming

Faith-based radio programming in Kenya has grown immensely over the years. There has been an influx of the number of faith-based radio stations in the country recently. According to the baseline survey for broadcasting services in Kenya conducted by the Communications Authority (2022), faith-based radio programming was more embraced in rural areas compared to urban areas. The report also noted the challenge of quality content production facing faith-based radio broadcasters. Faith-based radio broadcasters are grappling with producing relevant local content. Local content on faith-based radio stations is sometimes taken to be inappropriate to the audience, and of little relevance to the country's socio-economic development needs. Therefore, it is necessary to improve content through needs assessment, proper marketing, capacity building, production facilities and incentives. Promoting peace, understanding and conflict resolution have been identified as some of the most crucial roles of faith-based radio broadcasters in Kenya (Chepkorir, 2019).

Some of the faith-based radio stations sampled in this study were among the oldest ones to be launched in Kenya. For instance, the African Inland Church established Biblia Husema Broadcasting (BHB) in 1953 in Kijabe, Kenya. The Catholic Church also launched Radio Waumini as one of the first faith-based radio stations in the country. A common trend in faith-based radio broadcasting is the ever-growing number of sectarian faith-based organizations being granted licenses to operate faith-based radio stations. Another trend is the increasing number of non-sectarian broadcast organizations also being granted licenses to broadcast faith-based constructed programming. However, both

the non-sectarian and sectarian radio licensees must operate under non-faith-based, secular regulations of the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK, 2022).

Faith-based radio stations in Kenya have been providing some of the most popular and highly listened-to programs. Faith-based radio stations have also been on the rise as witnessed by the rush for frequencies by competing to acquire licenses and frequencies so they can start or expand their own radio stations. According to *The struggle for Christian Radio* (2019), the media landscape in Kenya cannot accommodate the faint-hearted. For this reason, faith-based broadcasters have also been forced to up their game, re-strategize, and review their content in order to survive the ever-competitive media environment. This study examined how this drive for relevance played out during the 2022 general elections, pushing faith-based radio stations to blend spiritual authority with timely peace messaging.

Access to information is a prerequisite for effective administration and governance of any society. Access to information enables the citizenry to make objective, independent and responsible choices about the leaders they elect to govern them, and also hold them to account whenever the need arises. In Kenya, the Access to Information Act of 2016, allows the electorate to be fully aware of their rights and freedoms of expression required to hold elected leaders accountable, and accommodate the diverse views and political choices of the people. Additionally, the Access to Information Act, as provided for in the Constitution of Kenya 2010, also provides for the exposure of any wrongdoings by public offices or officials in electoral process by laying bare any illegalities that may mar elections and threaten peace (Min, Bai, Wang, Grzeslo & Jayakar, 2022).

The media has allowed citizens and other people living in many countries to exercise their constitutional rights and freedoms of expression by providing them with a platform to freely express themselves to the rest of the world. The media performs an interpretive role through interpretive reporting, whereby, journalists do not merely report news, but provide in-depth analysis about a particular issue or event so that the public can better understand issues being reported. For these reasons, the media is profoundly depended upon by the people for the provision of vital information, for holding leaders to account, and also as a platform for people to freely express themselves. It is this dependence on the media by the public for information that gives it immense influence in society (Valentine-Lloips, 2018).

Religion and everyday social life are difficult to separate. People have always viewed religion as a means to solve their personal, relational, professional, societal, and communal problems. Many believers and followers usually expect their different religions to provide instant solutions to many of the problems they face. According to Ludovic (2021), to neglect religion in any political, societal, and peacebuilding discourse challenges the credibility of any such academic research because of the complexity of the religious landscape, as well as the significance of religion to its followers' lives. Given that believers' religious aspirations place a strong emphasis on peace, justice, love, mediation, and reconciliation, it is evident that religion has a crucial role to play in peacebuilding during elections in any country.

The importance of religion in Africa's public realm has been dictated by significant changes. Such changes include civil conflicts, threats from militant groups such as terrorist organizations, the continent's inclination toward democracy, lack of neutrality, and the decrease in upholding of various state's social responsibilities. Due to these

changes, non-state actors including faith-based institutions, as well as faith-based media houses, have taken up the challenge of promoting peacebuilding, even during general elections (Ludovic, 2021).

Shitemi et. al (2013) examined the contribution of faith-based media during and after Kenya's 2007–2008 post-election violence, documenting how religious broadcasters and church networks participated in reconciliation efforts, public appeals for calm, and community outreach. Their study reviewed program types used for reconciliation and argued that faith actors used moral exhortation and community ties to influence behavior during the crisis. The study provided valuable historical and contextual grounding for the notion that religious media can be an asset in national recovery. While informative about the 2007–2008 period, their study relied mainly on descriptive and historical material and did not analyze later technological changes (social media, mobile apps) or systematically assess program effectiveness during later elections. This study updated the empirical record by examining programming, messaging, and editorial policy dynamics specifically during the 2022 elections and across multiple stations.

2.1.4 An Overview of Faith-based Radio Stations in Kenya

Apart from providing spiritual nourishment to audiences across the country, faith-based radio stations in Kenya play a significant role in other ways such as fostering cohesion among communities, and shaping public discourse. In Kenya, most faith-based radio broadcasters are affiliated to either Christian or Islamic faiths. Most of their content ranges from religious sermons and teachings, inspirational messages, religious music, news, and entertainment. This study sampled seven (7) of these faith-based radio stations as

discussed in the subsequent sections. By focusing on these stations, the study highlights how religious broadcasting in Kenya has evolved into a platform for peacebuilding.

Sayare FM is a Kenyan Christian-based radio station operating under the umbrella of Sauti ya Rehema Radio and Television Network. Started in 1998, the interdenominational Christian-based organization's is headquartered in Eldoret, Kenya, and broadcasts on a frequency of 98.7 FM. The faith-based radio station boasts of a very wide reach and large following. Some of the popular programs aired on Sayare FM include Gospel Show, Anoint to Build, In Pursuit of Vision, Faith Power Today, Safari ya Matumaini, and Hekima na Ukweli among others. Sayare FM broadcasts in more than twenty counties in Kenya using different languages that are well understood by the listeners such as English, Swahili, Kisii, Maasai, Luo, Kalenjin and Turkana (Sayare RTVN, 2024).

Established in December 2014, MBCI radio operates under the umbrella of MBCI media which operates television and radio stations. MBCI stands for Mission for the Body of Christ International. The Kenyan Christian radio station endeavors to provide its listeners with programs that focus on the bible teachings and Jesus Christ. MBCI is owned and operated by the Kingdom Seekers Fellowship (KSF). MBCI radio has its head office in Nakuru, Kenya where it operates on a frequency of 89.5 FM. It has a nationwide reach and has different frequencies throughout the other parts of the country in which it broadcasts. The radio station broadcasts in more than thirteen (13) counties, specifically in the towns of Nakuru, Eldoret, Meru, Migori, Kapenguria, Voi, Webuye, Kericho, Kisii, Kwale, Nyeri, Kitui and their surroundings. Swahili is the main language used in all MBCI broadcasts since it is the country's national language and can be easily understood by most

listeners. Some of its popular shows include Morning devotion, Raushwa show, Glorious rhythm, Lunch hour service, and Best of worship among others (KSF, 2025).

Biblia Husema Broadcasting is one of the main Christian radio stations operating in Kenya. It is headquartered in Upper hill, Nairobi. The radio station enjoys a countrywide and worldwide coverage thanks to the advancement of the internet and technology. It operates on a frequency of 96.7 FM in Nairobi, but has other different frequencies in other parts of the country where it transmits its broadcasts. It is among the oldest Christian radio stations in the country, having been started in 1953 the African Inland Church (AIC) in Kijabe, Kenya. Some of the most popular shows that are broadcasted by BHB include Hosanna Macheo, Mixed Flavors, Mavuno, and Jamii ya Kristo among others. The station has grown and opened mission centers in even the remotest of Kenyan towns such as Kakuma, Lokichogio and Marsabit. Its broadcasts are mainly done in Swahili language so that they can reach and be understood by as many people as possible (BHB, 2024).

Radio Waumini is a Nairobi-based Catholic radio station owned and run by the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB). Its main aim is to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church in Kenya. Launched in 2003, the station broadcasts on a frequency of 88.3 FM. The station considers itself an evangelization instrument that seeks to support the activities, initiatives and ideologies of the Catholic Church in Kenya. Radio Waumini transmits its broadcasts in both Kiswahili and English languages as the way of reaching out to the culturally diverse Kenyan audiences. The station enjoys a nationwide coverage and affirms its commitment to promoting justice through its mission statement. Some of the programs aired on Radio Waumini include Rosary, Soul Food, Morning Tide, Insights

on HIV, Amani Imani, Tafrija za Heri Njema, Barizi na Waumini, Bustani ya Waumini, Masomo ya Biblia kama ilivyoandikwa among others (Waumini 88.3 FM, 2024).

Upendo FM is a faith-based community radio station that broadcasts on the frequency of 89.4 FM. The station is owned and operated by the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret, serving the diverse community of the North Rift area and its environs. The Catholic Church leaders drawn from the Diocese of Eldoret usually use Upendo FM as a platform to preach peace and cohesion. The leaders also use the radio station to hold the government to account and urge political leaders to promote peace (Upendo FM, 2024).

Hope FM is a Kenyan Christian-based radio station which started its broadcasting services in 2003. The station operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week on a frequency of 93.3 FM, and its motto is “Listen and Live”. Located at CITAM Valley Road, Nairobi, Kenya, the radio station has a nationwide reach. The station is run and managed by Hope Media, a ministry of Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM) which also operates Hope TV, Hope recording studios, and Hope creative. The radio station is run on pure Christian values and principles intended to act as avenues for holistic ministry, spiritual nourishment and outreach. Hope FM is entirely dedicated to carrying the message of Jesus Christ around the clock through delivery of well-balanced content, education broadcasting, entertainment and up-to-date information. The programs on Hope FM are designed to challenge, educate and inspire listeners (Hope Media, 2024).

The current products offered by Hope FM include inspirational talks, gospel music for praise and worship, Christian sermons, advertising services, news, sports and commentaries. One of its core values is its commitment to ensuring accountability and

transparency to God, to each other and, to the government of Kenya. Some of its common programming include shows such as Activate, Hope for today, Praise junction, Shangilia, Route 104, Breath of Heaven, and Hope through the night among others. These shows are targeted at satisfying its listener demographic groups which consist of youth, male and female adults, and children. The station has grown tremendously and can be accessed via its online platform, thus reaching out to a wider and worldwide audience (Hope Media, 2024).

Family Radio 316 is one of the leading and oldest Christian radio stations in Kenya, having been founded in 1999 by Leo and Anneke Slingerland under the umbrella of Family Media, which also owns Family TV. The station transmits its broadcasts in Nairobi on 103.9 FM and enjoys a nationwide coverage on different frequencies in the other parts of the country that it transmits. The station's mission is to create and disseminate compelling information through every possible media that will encourage its audiences to develop useful relationships with Christ. The station reiterates its trust, commitment, faith and hope in God, and endeavors to create a lasting and extraordinary impact to its listeners (Family Radio, 2024). It airs its programs 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Some of the most popular programs aired by Family Radio 316 include Jam 316, A celebration of music, Enjoy everyday life, and Joseph Prince. Others are Rick McConnell radio show, Prayer circle, World for today, Marriage today, Through the Bible show, and Food for thought among others. Music, sermons, short messages, talk shows and interviews are some of the means through which the radio station propagates its work of transforming and encouraging its listeners. Family Radio 316 encourages its listeners to take individual initiative to solve their life problems. Innovativeness and creativity are

part of the station's work ethics that encourage their staff to have fun while working in order to be more effective in fulfilling the mission and vision of the media house. The station also broadcasts news and runs advertisements as a means of sustaining its operations. It also receives sponsorships and donations from well-wishers to support its activities and initiatives (Family Radio, 2024).

Jape and Mpuya (2024) explored the unique role of religious-based radio stations in Zanzibar amidst the forces of globalization, particularly in relation to cultural heritage. Their study found that faith-based radio programs are designed to meet both the spiritual and community needs of their target audience. These stations have evolved to strategically diversify their programming, addressing not only religious topics but also broader socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-political issues affecting local populations. In regions grappling with these challenges, faith-based radio serves as a vital platform for community building, fostering social cohesion, and supporting peacebuilding initiatives. By engaging with these multifaceted issues, faith-based radio stations help strengthen community resilience and contribute to a more harmonious society (Jape & Mpuya, 2024).

Karombo and Kibombwe (2021) undertook a study that focused on the importance of Catholic radio in South Africa with specific focus on Radio Veritas. They found out that, typically, faith-based radio stations are owned and operated by religious organizations. They serve a unique audience mostly comprising of believers and religious followers, as well as listeners seeking moral and spiritual guidance. The content of faith-based radio programs often focuses on spiritual matters such as religious music, prayers, sermons, as well as discussions with a solid grounding on religious teachings. Further, the study

established that faith-based radio programs provided a moral framework for dissecting societal issues and reinforcing social values (Karombo & Kibombwe, 2021).

The use of radio programs in peacebuilding has been well-documented in conflict regions such as Nigeria, Rwanda and Kenya. Faith-based radio programs enjoy a unique position and chance to encourage dialogue and mitigate conflict. This is especially true because messages in these programs can easily be framed around religious tenets of non-violence, reconciliation, forgiveness and loving one's neighbors. This can make faith-based radio stations very influential in strategic peacebuilding efforts, especially in areas where religion enjoys a significant following (Tyali, 2021). Faith-based radio programs often foster a sense of unity and belonging among their audience. The messages in these programs usually provide hope and resilience, especially to communities undergoing social-political strife, as well as marginalized communities.

According to Taiwo, Adamu and Fatele (2023), faith-based radio programs have acted as peacebuilders and mediators through the provision of platforms for disseminating peace content grounded in religious teachings, as well as platforms for peaceful dialogue. Such programs include but are not limited to sermons on peace, interfaith dialogues, as well as live call-in shows that invite listeners and experts to express their issues in a moderated and guided platform. Faith-based radio programs usually frame strategic peacebuilding through religious narratives that give emphasis to unity, forgiveness, love and humanity. Chepkorir (2019) noted that peacebuilding efforts of faith-based radio programs are more effective when they echo the religious and cultural identities of their audience. As such, faith-based radio programs ought to capitalize on this and deliver programs with deeply rooted religious doctrines and aligned with their audiences' ethical and moral standards.

According to a study by Chepkorir (2019), religious peacebuilding initiatives, including of faith-based radio programs, can be more effective if they partner with faith-based organizations, NGOs, and religious leaders to create content that encourages peace and cohesion, and discourages violence during elections. After the aftermath of the disputed 2007 presidential elections, faith-based radio stations generally adopted a peace-oriented style of programming. Many faith-based radio stations collectively aired programs that were intended to promote peace, foster national unity, quell ethnic divisions and encourage interethnic collaboration. For instance, in the run-up to the 2013 general elections in Kenya, faith-based radio stations such as Hope FM which is Christian-based and Iqra FM which is Muslim-based jointly broadcasted messages of peace in their radio programs. This was achieved by hosting interfaith dialogues and inviting politicians to preach peace through their platforms.

2.1.5 Radio Programming and Strategic Peacebuilding

Over the years, radio has proven to be one of the most effective and widely used mediums of mass communication. According to the Communications Authority of Kenya (2023), radio holds the largest geographical reach in Kenya and attracts the highest number of listeners compared to other mediums such as television and newspapers. This wide accessibility underscores radio's immense power and influence to mobilize people and prompt action. This study tapped into that influence by examining how faith-based radio used its reach to promote peace narratives during the 2022 general elections.

While some radio stations around the world have been accused of exacerbating conflict through inflammatory comments and messages (Taro, Ndati & Mataba, 2022), the

majority of radio broadcasters remain committed to supporting peacebuilding efforts and promoting peaceful coexistence, particularly in countries grappling with political unrest and violence (Mwangi, 2020). As a result, many radio stations have been established by various stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, donor agencies, and faith-based organizations, to disseminate peace messages and play an active role in strategic peacebuilding initiatives (Potter, 2023).

In Burundi, deep-wrenched ethnic divisions were witnessed in local press broadcasts in the early 1990s. Radio programs would openly preach hatred and advocate for killings and elimination of members of rival groups. The radio programs would spread distrust, terror and fear, further aggravating the ethnic divisions that were being witnessed in the country. The USAID, fully realizing radio's potential of mobilizing and calling people to action, funded and set up the Ijambo studio in 1995 in Burundi to assist with eradicating the negative effects of the hate spread through radio. The studio focused on producing quality and neutral programs that promoted peacebuilding initiatives and helped local stakeholders to build their capacity in conflict resolution (Saleh, Yahaya & Mukhtar, 2023).

Across West Africa, the United Nations, through radio, has also been instrumental in strategic peacebuilding initiatives in several countries. For instance, the Search for Common Ground (SFCG), a non-governmental initiative funded and operated by the United Nations, produces, sponsors and airs radio programs that encourage disarmament of rebel groups, as well as reconciliation efforts in Liberia. Radio projects with similar objectives have also run and supported by the SFCG in eight other African countries that

are rocked with civil wars and conflicts. These countries include Sierra Leone, Angola and Burundi among others (Mwangi, 2020).

In Uganda, rebels belonging to the infamous Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) were encouraged, through radio, to come out of their hiding and surrender themselves. The LRA has been an extremist Christian group operating in East and Central Africa in countries such as Central African Republic, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), but with Ugandan origins. These efforts to encourage the LRA to come out of their hiding and surrender themselves were spearheaded by Mega FM, a radio station funded and established by the Department for International Development (DfID) of the United Kingdom. The area in North of Uganda had suffered from decade-long violence, destruction of property, human rights violations, abductions, child sex slavery, raids, displacements, atrocities, and deaths instigated by the rebel group. However, due to the power of radio as a medium of mass mobilization, alongside other peacebuilding efforts, the violence eventually came to an end (Valentine-Lloips, 2018).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the civil war experienced in the eastern part of the country led to the death of thousands of citizens and displacements of tens of thousands. Various stakeholders joined hands to try and resolve the long-standing conflicts and bring an end to the violence. Among them was the MacArthur Foundation which funded and set up Interactive Radio for Justice. The radio station was established with the aim of creating awareness of human rights issues and providing a platform through which crimes and violation of human rights could be discussed and addressed.

The programs produced by the Interactive Radio for Justice Station gave members of the public a forum through which they could ask local and international stakeholders tough questions regarding the war and human rights violations. The radio programs were also aimed at imparting knowledge of both international and local laws so that the rights of the audiences are not violated (Mwangi, 2020). These programs were found to significantly contribute to peacebuilding at that time.

In Kenya, Mwanzia (2017) sought to demystify community radios' role in peacebuilding among the youth. The focus of the study was on Pamoja FM which serves the residents of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. The study aimed to find out the specific radio programs that were intended to promote peace among the youth of Kibera. The study sought to identify the individuals and groups engaged by the radio station in promoting peace, as well as the specific radio messages disseminated to foster peace. Data from 400 respondent questionnaires were analyzed descriptively, while broadcast content from June to August 2017 underwent content analysis. The study established that peace content and messages were broadcasted by Pamoja FM throughout the day, implying that the community radio station was indeed committed to peacebuilding. 39% of the youth who informed the study preferred peace messages being disseminated from known community members. 24% of the study's respondents actively participated in radio peace content through call-ins. 70% of the respondents in the study had the general feeling that Pamoja FM programs and content, to a great extent encouraged peaceful coexistence among the youth by preaching tolerance and motivating them to become advocates of peace in their communities (Mwanzia, 2017). This shows the critical value placed on community radio in peacebuilding.

The study by Mwanzia (2017) concluded that, even though many players are involved in peacebuilding, community radio remains one of the most useful tools in promoting cohesion and peace among community members. This was because of their proximity to the members of the communities that they serve. However, the study focused on community radio broadcasting, hence the need for this study that focused on faith-based radio broadcasting. The study by Mwanzia (2017) focused on community radio's role in peacebuilding among the youth whereas this study focused on the role of faith-based radio in peacebuilding, particularly during general elections.

Another study by Mwangi (2018) in Kenya sought to establish the place of radio programs in promoting peace. The study recognized the efforts by various players such as the government, civil society and the media in peacebuilding efforts, especially after the post-election violence of 2007 in Kenya. The study focused on establishing the role of Radio Amani in promoting peaceful coexistence through its radio programs in the communities it serves. The study's scope was limited to communities living in Nakuru West and Nakuru East Sub Counties in Kenya that were prone to violence and lack of peace. It aimed at establishing the level at which the community is involved in the peace programs, as well as the relationship between Radio Amani's peace program and other peacebuilding initiatives. It was established that radio programs are very instrumental in promoting peaceful coexistence among conflicting communities. Majority of the respondents opined that the programs aired on Radio Amani provided a platform for them as community members to articulate, debate and engage in peacebuilding conversations, and address the root causes of conflict.

Further, the study also determined that Radio Amani's programs complemented peace efforts by other players who were concerned about peacebuilding. The study concluded that media practitioners involved in peacebuilding programs need to have basic training on conflict resolution and peacebuilding in order for the programs to be more effective (Mwangi, 2018). The study by Mwangi (2018) focused on the role of radio in general in promoting peace whereas this study focused on the role of faith-based radio in strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

Manje (2022) studied the role of community radios in the development of slum areas in Kenya, with specific focus on Pamoja FM in Kibera. The study used a descriptive research design, utilizing qualitative approaches. Data was collected through observations, interviews and focus group discussions with journalists and listeners of the radio station. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis based on the study's objectives. The study established that radio plays a crucial role, not only in the development of slum areas, but also in promoting peacebuilding, conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence, and security.

According to the study by Manje (2022), it is nearly impossible to have any meaningful development in a civilized society without the prevalence of peace and security. Kibera being one of the most affected areas by the 2007/2008 PEV, Pamoja FM played a very significant role in restoring peace among community members who were involved in unending conflict and violence at that time. The radio station undertook several measures to restore peace in the community such as partnering with like-minded institutions like the Kibera Women for Peace and Fairness to discourage violence and call for peaceful coexistence among community members. However, the study by Manje (2022) purely

focused on community radios, hence the need for a study such as this one that focuses on faith-based radio and strategic peacebuilding.

Korir and Nabushawo (2021) note that, given that peace is a fundamental virtue upheld by many religions, faith-based radio stations have the potential to play a critical role in strategic peacebuilding, particularly during general elections. Examining their contributions to peace initiatives offers valuable insights into how faith-based media can influence societal harmony and foster constructive dialogue during politically sensitive periods. This study built on that perspective by analyzing how selected faith-based radio stations in Kenya engaged in peace messaging during the 2022 elections.

According to Korir and Nabushawo (2021), faith-based radio stations do not operate in isolation. They are a part of the larger and highly competitive radio industry that comprises community radio and commercial radio. This highly competitive radio market poses stiff competition to faith-based broadcasters who have to ensure that they effectively appeal to their target audience in order to survive the stiff competition. A 2010 survey by Inter-media Knowledge Center revealed that Kenyan faith-based radio broadcasters are struggling for audience in this competitive radio market since they were not among the top ten list of stations with the most listeners.

Korir and Nabushawo (2021) found that at the time of their study, most Kenyans preferred secular radio stations due to their more balanced, diverse, and enriched content. This preference highlights a key challenge for faith-based radio stations, as an exclusive focus on religious programming may limit their competitiveness within the broader radio industry. To remain relevant and attract a wider audience, faith-based broadcasters must

adopt a more dynamic approach by diversifying their content while maintaining alignment with their religious principles. Striking this balance can enhance listener engagement and position faith-based radio as both a spiritual and informative platform capable of addressing a broad spectrum of societal interests.

To boost the strategic peacebuilding initiatives of faith-based radio broadcasters during general elections, a study by Korir and Nabushawo (2021) recommended that faith-based radio broadcasters need to ensure that their broadcast content adequately address the unique needs of their target audience in order to compete effectively in the radio industry. The content of faith-based radio broadcasters ought to appeal even to listeners who do not necessarily subscribe to the religious affiliations of the stations. This has a significant effect in attracting and retaining an expanded audience base, as well as advertisers, who are both critical ingredients in improving the ratings of these faith-based radio stations. Korir and Nabushawo (2021) established that advertisers tend to be more interested in working with stations with diverse content that attracts a diverse audience base, with the hope that the loyalty of the listeners of these stations will spread to their products and services.

Chepkorir (2019) argues that religion serves as a powerful force for restraining war and ending conflict, offering beliefs and rationales that extend beyond the scope of traditional diplomacy. Religion has been recognized for its potential to bring conflicts to an end and promote values of love, unity, and peace. This is particularly significant because approximately two-thirds of the global population adheres to a particular religion, meaning that faith-based peacemakers often have a large and influential constituency at their disposal. This widespread reach provides religious leaders and faith-based media

with a unique opportunity to mobilize support and influence efforts toward peace and reconciliation in conflict-ridden societies. This study tapped into that potential by exploring how faith-based radio in Kenya used religious values and mobilized audiences to promote peace during the 2022 general elections.

According to Omer and Tarusarira (2023), religion has played a multifaceted and complex role in conflict and peacebuilding throughout history. This has seen religion fuel violence in some instances, and also inspire peace in other instances. Nonetheless, the potential of religion to positively contribute to peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts is increasingly recognized world over. As such, strategic peacebuilding, which involves a comprehensive approach to preventing, managing, and resolving conflict, can gain a lot from religious institutions, individuals and broadcasters.

In the words of Abu-Nimer (2022), the power of religion in strategic peacebuilding is entrenched in its moral authority, community networks, provision of social services, and conflict resolution skills. Religion's moral authority gives religious leaders, religious teachings and religious broadcasters the ability to command respect and compliance from their followers, thus providing a powerful platform through which peace and reconciliation can be advocated and promoted. Religious institutions and broadcasters provide extensive platforms and networks for different social groups to communicate and dialogue during times of conflict. A number of religious organizations are involved in the provision of social services disaster relief, healthcare, and education, thus giving them an opportunity to participate in social cohesion efforts. Religious teachings, values, traditions and practices emphasize the need for mediation, reconciliation and forgiveness, giving societies the opportunities to resolve conflicts constructively. These factors bequeath

religion with the responsibility of taking the lead in peacebuilding even during general elections (Abu-Nimer, 2022).

Christianity teaches that reconciliation and peacebuilding are acts of God, initiated by him through the death of Jesus Christ, his son. Christian teachings emphasize the need for peace and loving ones neighbor. According to Christianity, forgiveness is essential for reconciliation to take place as commanded by Jesus Christ (Chitando, 2023). In order for the Church to remain faithful to the command of Jesus Christ, social reconciliation and peace efforts remain central to its operations. As such, evangelization cannot be detached from the duty of every church member to become their brothers and sisters keepers, especially in times of need such as during war and conflict as a manifestation of God's love. This calls for the Church to be proactive in promoting dialogue, peace and justice (Ludovic, 2021).

From a global perspective, faith-based approaches to peacebuilding and reconciliation have proved successful in countries such as Guatemala, Kosovo, and Colombia. Strategies such as truth-telling, mediation, problem-solving workshops, and negotiation have been used in these countries by faith-based organizations to foster peace and resolve both ethnic and electoral conflicts (Chepkorir, 2019). This is because reconciliation and peace are a part of the main mission of faith-based organizations and leaders as taught in faith-based teachings. For instance, during the war in Guatemala, the Guatemalan Catholic Church was credited for initiating peace efforts, and not the civil society, thus showing the value that religion places on religion.

Regionally, religion can also be credited for contributing to peace and ending conflict in countries such as Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Nigeria, Algeria, Mozambique, and Uganda. Religious leaders and organizations in some of these countries took up the challenge of peacebuilding in times of war (Chepkorir, 2019). For instance, the Quakers initiated mediation and peacebuilding efforts during the 1967 to 1970 civil war in Nigeria. The 1997 war in Sudan also saw the combined efforts of faith-based based organizations such as the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and the World Council of Churches that came together to lead mediation efforts that greatly contributed to ending the war.

In Kenya, religious leaders and faith-based organizations such as the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) have been on the forefront in reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts after general elections in Kenya (Chepkorir, 2019). According to Chepkorir (2019), among the ways in which faith-based organizations can be credited for peacebuilding include mobilizing communities and their followers for peace, providing mediation to the conflicting parties, offering trainings and workshops in conflict resolution, reaching out to rebel groups, forming peace commissions, and providing spiritual and emotional support to the victims of war among other strategies. The study by Chepkorir (2019) only focused on faith-based approaches to peacebuilding, a gap that this study sought to address by focusing on the place of faith-based radio broadcasting in strategic peacebuilding, specifically during general elections.

Barry and Pul (2019) undertook a thematic assessment of four United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded peacebuilding initiatives involving conflicting parties whose differences included religious identity. One main justification of

their study was to add to the narrow body of knowledge concerning the link between peacebuilding, religion and conflict. The basis for their study was on four USAID funded people-to-people peacebuilding initiatives, two in Thailand, and two in the Central African Republic. The study examined the implementation, effectiveness, and sustainability of the activities in which religion was the source of conflict. The study established that religious leaders are very symbolic and instrumental in peacebuilding compared to non-religious leaders. The study also established that peacebuilding activities that involved religious institutions and religious leaders had higher success rates compared to those that did not involve religious leaders and institutions. This study sought to complement the study by Barry and Paul (2019) by focusing not only on religion in general, but specifically on religion-based broadcasters in strategic peacebuilding.

The study by Barry and Pul (2019) established that, generally, many religious leaders in Thailand and Central African Republic supported peace initiatives. However, the study noted that there are some religious leaders who also promote conflict. Communities that were sampled in this study were found to employ the power of religion, religious values and traditions, religious practices, religious institutions, and religious leaders in conflict resolution. This study sought to find out the power of religious messages and programs disseminated by faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

Barry and Pul (2019) also established that different religious institutions, denominations and traditions have different capabilities of responding to conflict. Conflicting parties and state actors in the Central African Republic and Thailand have used religion as one of their main strategies of tackling conflict. Intra-religious activities can be used to improve

peacebuilding skills and awareness in order to counter such conflicts because the affected communities are becoming more skilled and aware when religion is being used to cause conflict. Generally, the inclusion of religion in implementing conflict resolution initiatives was found to contribute to overall effectiveness of the activities (Barry & Pul, 2019). This study drew from that understanding to examine how faith-based radio in Kenya served as a vehicle for inter- and intra-religious peacebuilding.

The study by Barry and Pul (2019) recommended that, during peacebuilding, religion should be engaged with communities, especially where religion is important to them. The opportunities created by religion intended to reinforce community participation in peace initiatives should be properly explored if religion is to successfully contribute to peacebuilding. Sensitivity and caution should be exercised whenever conflicts that entail religion are involved. It was noted that faith-based institutions and religious leaders have a permanency that most times outlives that of their non-religious counterparts in many communities. This permanency and trust they enjoy should be taken advantage of when implementing peacebuilding initiatives that development agencies, civil society organizations, and the government cannot provide. This entails leveraging on the penetration that religion has in most communities. The study focused on religious leaders and religious institutions, hence the need for this study that focused on faith-based radio broadcasting in particular.

2.2 Peace Messages Disseminated by Faith-based Radio Stations

According to a study by Abboud, Ajwang and Lugano (2024) on the role of social media in general elections in Kenya, the media was found to be a powerful mobilizer of social

action and shaper of public opinion. Through its messaging, the media can serve both as an inciter of conflict, as well as a promoter of peace during volatile times such as general elections. This dual potential is important in the context of faith-based radio, which this study explored as a medium that purposely chose the path of peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.

Owing to their association with religion, peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations hold a unique position within the media landscape. Arregui, Thomas and Kilby (2020) also noted that when religion and the media work together to disseminate peace messages, promoting peace becomes much easier to achieve. This study taps into that unique position, showing how faith-based stations became credible voices for peace in a highly charged electoral season. This study built on this insight by exploring how faith-based radio stations positioned themselves as trusted voices for peace during a highly charged electoral season in Kenya.

Shafiei and Overton (2023) noted that, similar to faith-based radio programs, the peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations typically place emphasis on religious values such as social justice, reconciliation, forgiveness, love and peace. For peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations to be effective, they have to be framed in a way that appeals to shared religious values around religious teachings that emphasize peacebuilding. However, the effectiveness of these peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations is not guaranteed. The credibility of these peace messages has been undermined in some instances when there has been politicization of religion and the media. In other instances, religious leaders have used faith-based radio platforms to openly take sides in political conflicts, hence diluting their neutrality as peacebuilders. During

such instances, faith-based radio stations can easily be taken as political propaganda platforms rather than peacebuilding tools (Garnham, 2020).

Several studies conducted on Kenyan media ethics exemplify the ethical dilemmas faced by faith-based radio stations in striking a balance between their peace messaging with their denominational and religious affiliations, which sometimes align with political interests. For instance, Barry and Pul (2019) established that faith-based radio stations face challenges of disseminating peace messages effectively, especially if religious leaders and broadcasters are politically entangled. In such instances, their neutrality has often been compromised, thus affecting the overall effectiveness of peace messages. Additionally, according to Korir and Nabushawo (2021), a good number of faith-based radio stations in Kenya are owned by religious leaders, some of whom are known to have strong political ties and stands, further compromising their neutrality. This has caused peace messages to be viewed skeptically as audiences have often questioned the underlying political motivations of faith-based radio broadcasters who take sides.

The way in which peace messages are toned and framed significantly contributes to their effectiveness (Laor, 2022). For instance, peace messages that were entirely focused on forgiveness and reconciliation without addressing the underlying causes of conflicts and grievances may fail to meet the threshold of effectiveness. Conversely, peace messages that only focused on the underlying grievances and causes of conflicts without encouraging forgiveness, love, unity and cohesion were also found not to be entirely effective. As such, there is an imminent need to strike a balance in the tone and framing of peace messages to ensure that they focus on both forgiveness, unity and love, as well as justice, fairness and the integrity of electoral processes (Lee & Chow, 2022).

2.2.1 Peace Messaging and Strategic Peacebuilding

The KROC Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame (2024) defines peacebuilding as the process of fostering constructive relationships among individuals, groups, and political entities across racial, ethnic, class, and national divides. This approach seeks to resolve injustices through nonviolent means while addressing the root causes of conflict to prevent its recurrence. Peacebuilding encompasses various dimensions, including conflict transformation, resolution, management, prevention, and post-conflict reconciliation. This definition provided a useful foundation for this study to examine how faith-based radio in Kenya fosters peace through strategic programming and messaging.

Despite ongoing efforts by multiple stakeholders to prevent violence, Lusambili, Matanga, and Kasiera (2016) observe that societal conflicts persist, underscoring the continued necessity of peacebuilding initiatives. Given this reality, platforms such as faith-based radio stations have the potential to contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding by disseminating messages that promote dialogue, understanding, and conflict resolution. This study explored how faith-based radio in Kenya stepped into that peacebuilding space during the 2022 elections, offering messaging grounded in faith and civic responsibility.

For peacebuilding to be strategic, it must be sustainable and effective over the long term, engaging all societal levels to foster and maintain relationships both locally and globally. Strategic peacebuilding goes beyond merely identifying and resolving conflicts; it seeks to establish lasting structures, policies, and institutions that promote enduring peace and justice (KROC, 2024). Unlike traditional peacebuilding approaches, which primarily

focus on addressing the immediate causes of conflict, strategic peacebuilding emphasizes the creation of resilient societies capable of preventing conflicts before they escalate. This approach highlights the importance of integrating peacebuilding efforts into broader social, political, and economic frameworks to ensure long-term stability and coexistence.

Strategic peacebuilding is a holistic and comprehensive approach designed to prevent, manage, and resolve violent conflict across multiple levels. Rather than focusing solely on the immediate consequences and symptoms of conflict, this approach emphasizes addressing the underlying root causes that contribute to instability. Fairey (2023) highlights that strategic peacebuilding aims to establish the foundations for long-term and sustainable peace by integrating conflict resolution with broader social, economic, and political structures. This approach ensures that peace efforts go beyond short-term solutions, fostering resilience and stability within communities and institutions. By prioritizing sustainable change, strategic peacebuilding creates environments where conflicts are less likely to re-emerge, thereby promoting lasting societal cohesion.

Strategic peacebuilding extends beyond addressing violence and conflicts. It encompasses issues such as environmental sustainability, economic prosperity, and human rights. Different from short-term interventions, strategic peacebuilding seeks to establish long-lasting solutions that span generations. It aims at ensuring that peace is not merely restored but sustained over time (Funabashi, 2023). This framing aligns with this study's perspective that faith-based radio can play a sustainable role, not just by calming tensions electoral elections, but by embedding peace values that contribute to Kenya's long-term social fabric.

Funabashi (2023) further emphasizes that strategic peacebuilding serves as a critical link between grassroots actors such as faith-based groups, communities, and local organizations to key powerbrokers, such as governments, financial institutions, and international bodies like the United Nations (UN). By bridging these levels of influence, strategic peacebuilding fosters collaborative efforts that integrate local needs with broader policy frameworks, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of peace initiatives.

The distinction between peacebuilding and strategic peacebuilding is that the latter does not merely engage immediate conflict and crises. Strategic peacebuilding goes a notch higher by appreciating the fact that the process of attaining lasting peace is a long-term endeavor. Efforts of strategic peacebuilding require establishing group networks and unions that will survive recurrent conflicts, thus creating a secure society that can ensure sustainable human development. This study examined how faith-based radio contributes to this long-term vision through peace programming and messaging beyond just the election cycle.

According to the United States Institute of Peace (2022), strategic peacebuilding utilizes a more holistic approach to violent conflicts as demonstrated in figure 2.1



Figure 2.1: Paths to Strategic Peacebuilding

Source: KROC Institute for International Peace Studies (2024)

2.2.2 Peace Messaging and General Elections

Peace during transitional periods such as general elections, are crucial for ensuring that citizens' lives are not disrupted, and that the developmental progress made is not undone. In Syria, for instance, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, adopted in 2016, has provided the framework for electoral peace talks, advocating for a non-sectarian government, a new constitution, and free and fair elections (Samuel et al., 2017). Many countries like Syria, South Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Burundi, continue to face noteworthy challenges related to violence, political instability, insecurity, and the absence of peace during their political transitions. However, valuable lessons can be drawn from countries like Nepal, Tunisia, Myanmar, Liberia, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Herzegovina, and Bosnia, which have managed to achieve peaceful transitions despite facing major challenges during their elections. The experiences of these nations prove that peace can be fostered in violent political environments. In reflecting on these global experiences, this study considered how local faith-based radio stations in Kenya can play a powerful role in keeping peace on track during elections.

According to Owiso (2022), many strategies, models and frameworks on peacebuilding, particularly during general elections, have been brought forth with the aim of achieving sustainable peace. Owiso (2022) notes that peacebuilding continues to remain a concept that is dominated by the eastern world, specifically on the ideation stage. This has made the results of peacebuilding efforts to be prescribed as a one-size-fits-all solution to lack of peace, not appreciating that peacebuilding dynamics may vary depending on context. Despite the effortless peacebuilding initiatives by multiple stakeholders during general

elections in Kenya, the problem of the reoccurring cycle of violence every election year cannot be overlooked. Owiso (2022) recommended that it is important for such peacebuilding initiatives to address the root causes of violence and further investigate the programmatic interventions by various peace actors.

A study by Maigari (2022) explored the role played by civil society organizations in building peace in societies that experience conflict in Kenya and Nigeria. The study determined that the violent conflicts witnessed in Kenya and Nigeria continue to pose serious challenges to resolving armed conflicts, including during elections. The traditional peacebuilding and mediation strategies and techniques used to address such conflicts continue to prove to be inefficient in responding to emerging conflicts revolving around religious affiliations. Based on the findings of the study, not using non-military force has proved to be effective in providing long term solutions to conflict because aggrieved parties are brought together to vent and address their grievances. The study determined that this success was largely because the conflicting parties took active part in coming up with measures to address their conflict situations (Magairi, 2022). However, the study focused on civil society organizations, hence the need for this study that focused on faith-based radio broadcasting and strategic peacebuilding.

The first general elections in Kenya took place in 1963, resulting in the Kenya National African Union (KANU) securing its first victory. In the subsequent elections of 1969, 1974, 1979, 1983, and 1988, KANU maintained its dominance, winning almost all contested seats, and, in some cases, even winning unopposed. However, with the advent of multiparty politics in 1992, general elections in Kenya became fiercely contested as other political parties began actively participating in the electoral process. Since then,

election results have often been contested, rejected, or nullified, leading to heightened tensions, anxiety, and, at times, widespread violence, primarily fueled by the differing expectations of election outcomes. These disruptions of peace have caused Kenya to experience significant periods of violence during general elections. It is within this context that this study explored the role of faith-based radio broadcasters in strategic peacebuilding, especially during such volatile periods when tensions are at their peak.

Kenya holds its general elections every five years, offering registered voters the opportunity to cast their ballots for various positions, including the President, Governors, Senators, Members of the National Assembly, Women Representatives, and Members of the County Assembly across all 47 counties. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) is the constitutionally mandated body responsible for planning, managing, and conducting these elections, as well as announcing the results or outcomes (IEBC, 2022). The IEBC's role is critical in ensuring the transparency, fairness, and credibility of the electoral process, with its decisions and actions significantly shaping the political landscape in Kenya.

In Kenya, the President is elected through the two-round system in which voters select their preferred candidate by casting a single vote. For a candidate to be declared a winner in the first round, he/she must garner at least 50% of the total votes cast nationally, plus one. Additionally, he/she must receive at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the votes cast in at least twenty-four (24) of the forty-seven (47) Counties in Kenya. This has been a contentious issue that has led to petitions being filed at the Supreme Court of Kenya (SCoK), in most instances causing tension and disrupting peace. A holder of the Office of

the President usually holds office for a five-year term and may only seek re-election only once, meaning he/she can only hold office for a maximum of two terms (IEBC, 2022).

Parliamentary elections are also held during general elections in Kenya. The Kenyan Parliament is made up of two houses, namely, the Senate and the National Assembly being the upper and lower houses respectively. Holders of these elective positions hold office for five (5) years and may seek re-election thereafter. The National Assembly consists of a total of three hundred and fifty (350) members. Two hundred and ninety (290) are elected directly in the constituencies and forty-seven (47) are reserved for Women Representatives who are also elected in their respective Counties during the general elections. The thirteen (13) seats that remain are filled by one elected member who becomes the House Speaker, and twelve (12) members nominated by political parties. These and are drawn from professionals, workers, different genders, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The Senate has sixty-eight (68) members, forty-seven (47) of which are elected at their respective Counties during the general elections, one (1) filled by a speaker, two (2) by PWDs, two (2) by youth, and sixteen (16) by women.

2.2.3 Status of Peace during General Elections in Kenya

Kenyan for Peace with Truth and Justice (KPTJ) was formed immediately after the aftermath of general election debacle in 2007. KPTJ is a coalition comprising more than thirty (30) governance, policy, human rights, legal, humanitarian, and peace organizations drawn from Kenya and the larger East Africa. Among the notable members of KPTJ include the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ-Kenya), Centre for

Multiparty Democracy (CMD), Centre for Rights, Education and Awareness for Women (CREAW), Bunge la Mwananchi, Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya), International Centre for Policy and Conflict (ICPC), Kituo cha Sheria, The Cradle, and Africa Centre for Open Governance (AfriCOG) among others. According to KPTJ (2017), peace can never exist without truth and justice. In case of any failed general election, truth and justice must be sought in order for peace to prevail. The coalition opines that peace before, during and after general elections requires a country to face the truth of its history and address the injustices that were witnessed. This perspective resonates strongly with this study, which recognizes faith-based radio as one of the platforms through which truth, justice, and reconciliation messages can be amplified during electoral periods.

Recurrent problematic elections, and the refusal and/or failure by the justice and electoral systems to implement required changes after elections are the root of lack of peace in Kenya. According to KPTJ, the 2017 general elections could be regarded as a watershed moment in Kenya's election history due to the relative peace experienced in the country. However, the peace was short-lived, proving that if continuous efforts are not made to maintain peace through truth and justice, the decades-long struggle to attain lasting peace will all be a waste (KPTJ, 2017). This study recognized these systemic challenges and explored how faith-based radios positioned themselves as one of the platforms that advocates for sustained peace, justice, and reconciliation beyond election periods.

After the 2007 general elections in Kenya, the opposition challenged the credibility of the elections and pushed for electoral reforms. Streets protests, skirmishes, violence, destruction of property and lack of peace was the order of the day. After the 2013 general

elections, the situation was replicated when the opposition continued fighting for electoral reforms and justice after the hotly contested presidential results. Street protests and boycotts were the order of the day in various parts of the country with demands for a new leadership team at the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) (KPTC, 2013). Before the general elections in 2017, the government bowed to pressure and implemented a few changes to address the continued push by the opposition for electoral reforms. A committee of parliament to investigate the administration was formed. The register of voters was also independently audited in a bid to ensure electoral integrity. Major changes were made to the electoral laws. The election technology was overhauled and a completely new team of IEBC commissioners was placed in office in a bid to address these concerns.

Despite the evident reforms that were witnessed, the August 2017 elections were no different from the two previous general elections. The electoral cycle continued to witness the same issues from the previous elections. For instance, there were unanimous complaints of lack of transparency from IEBC and a serious communication breakdown with the public from the electoral body. Other issues from the past that tainted the election's credibility were problems with the voter register, last-minute amendments to electoral laws, and technical hitches with the electoral results transmission system. This led to serious unrest and disturbance of peace since the credibility of the election results was already questioned even before the results were officially announced (KPTJ, 2017).

According to Kanyunga, Long & Ndi (2013) in their report on electoral fraud presented to the Kreigler Commission, lack of peace after general elections has always been caused by accusations of electoral fraud, which have often been hard to prove. The fact that

electoral fraud has been difficult to prove has been the reason why political operatives frequently engage in it and often seem to get away with it. Despite these efforts, political violence and lack of peace have always accompanied these claims of electoral malfeasance.

The Independent Review Commission (IREC) led by Johann Kriegler was appointed in 2007 to investigate all the issues surrounding the 2007 general elections that led to bloodshed, violence, loss of lives, destruction of property, and general lack of peace. The key tasks of the Commission included identification of weaknesses and inconsistencies in the defunct Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK), assessing the independence of the ECK, examining the electoral environment, and gauging the integrity of the entire electoral process by evaluating the vote tallying and counting processes. Among the recommendations made were a new registration system, elimination of bribery, discontinued use of black books as registers, and allowing political party agents to access polling stations among others. Some of these recommendations were never implemented, while others were implemented either fully or partially (“Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections,” n.d.).

According to the Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.), there was a lot of unresolved ethnic hostilities and hate preceding and succeeding the 2007 general elections. The Commission reported that political power in Kenya has become personalized around the Office of the President. Constitutional changes made by different presidents who have been in power have been increasing the personalization of presidential powers in Kenya. This caused a general public perception that the country is not governed by laws, but instead by the personal decisions of the president and the

political class. According to the report, members of the public were led to believe that a person from their tribe must be in power so that their own tribe can benefit from jobs, land, and entitlements, keeping other ethnic groups at bay. Other issues that led to violence during general elections as identified by the Commission were land disputes, push for political power, poverty, unemployed youth, and negative ethnicity among others.

According to the Peace Actors Forum (2022), in the path to the 2022 general elections in Kenya, various stakeholders collaborated in order to address the drivers of conflict during elections. This was done in an attempt to avoid the conflicts and violence witnessed during previous general elections. The fallout between the then President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy at that time, William Ruto reverberated and intensified political divisions, conflicts and tensions across the country preceding the 2022 general elections. The country witnessed unrestricted hate speech from politicians and members of the public, as well as sporadic violence, and a general sense of political tensions. Nonetheless, many election observers reported that the 2022 Kenyan general elections remained relatively transparent and peaceful. Even though violence remained moderately low after the general elections of 2022 in Kenya compared to 2007, 2013 and 2017, there has been a general sense of political tensions which emerged later on, when least expected. Evident street protests have led to destruction of property, loss of lives, disruption of education and work, violence, and a dwindling economy among other devastating results. As a result of this, Kenyans have had growing fears that the country may plunge into violence once again unless multiple stakeholders such as politicians, ordinary citizens, religious leaders, media, faith-based organizations, election management bodies, and the judiciary among other come together to ensure peace and change the political environment.

According to The Commonwealth (2022), in the run up to the latest general elections in Kenya that took place in August 2022, there were visible signs of change in the overly ethnicized political discourse, though it remained unclear whether this would usher in less violent elections. Many news media outlets and international election observers, immediately after the elections, deemed them to have been generally peaceful and transparent. This was largely because the days preceding to the elections were largely peaceful and progressed with minimal violence and unrest despite the eminent worries about potential violence. However, the fact that almost every election cycle is usually accompanied by destructful controversies, whose results are often violence and conflict, cannot be overlooked since violence still broke out later on due to the election results.

According the United States Agency for International Development (2022), despite the general sense of peace witnessed in the country preceding the general elections in 2022, things took a turn for the worst immediately after the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) declared William Ruto of the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) the winner. Azimio Coalition's Raila Odinga proceeded to file a petition disputing the presidential election results at the Supreme Court of Kenya. The Supreme Court heard the petition and ruled against Raila Odinga by upholding William Ruto's win, making him the President of the Republic of Kenya. This led to an unprecedented spat of protests and demonstrations infamously dubbed 'maandamano' [demonstrations] which saw supporters of Raila Odinga take to the streets on selected days of the week to demand for the ouster of William Ruto, and also reject some of the policies that were being implemented from his campaign manifesto. Violence, deaths, destruction of property, and disruption of services such as education, transport and healthcare among others were the

order of the day. This only moved to show that peace in Kenya during general elections remains elusive and there is need to approach the issue strategically by all concerned stakeholders in order to come up with sustainable solutions. This further justified the need for this study which focused on how faith-based radio broadcasters can contribute to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya.

2.3 Editorial Policies of Faith-Based Radio Stations in Strategic Peacebuilding

In the context of this study, editorial policies refer to the set of guidelines that govern the operations of faith-based radio broadcasters and the professional conduct of their staff in disseminating information. These policies are crucial for assisting radio editors and producers in making informed, legal, and ethical decisions about the content they share with the public (Lelo, 2022). The editorial policies of faith-based radio stations are typically centered on promoting the gospel and teachings of their respective faiths. For Christian radio stations, these policies are specifically designed to align with and communicate the ideologies of Jesus Christ to the broader audience. Such editorial policies outline key objectives, including editorial, operational, and administrative goals, an ethical code of conduct for journalists, and the social, professional, and faith-based responsibilities expected of staff members. These policies ensure that the content remains consistent with the station's religious principles while maintaining high professional standards. This study examined how these editorial guidelines shaped the way peace messages were framed and delivered during Kenya's 2022 elections.

Laor (2022) asserted that faith-based radio stations continue to walk a tightrope between promoting their religious beliefs, and upholding journalistic ethics and standards. The

study by Laor (2022) stated that faith-based radio journalists have the onerous task of striking a balance between the commitments to their faith, and remaining informative and objective. Faith-based radio editorial policies have the potential of interfering with the editorial independence of journalists. Editorial policies in faith-based radio stations tend to be grounded on religious beliefs and may disallow journalists to discuss certain topics or issues. For instance, the Catholic Church is very particular on issues touching on the use of contraceptives in family planning, as well as matters touching on LGBTQ since they go against their religious values, beliefs and principles. As such, radio stations owned by the Catholic Church may sometimes be forced to steer away from such controversial topics despite the fact that these issues need to be openly discussed since they affect a significant proportion of society. Striking a balance between preserving faith-based principles and avoiding addressing thorny issues in current affairs and news reporting is crucial. It is based on this that this study sought to determine the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio broadcasters in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya.

The faith-based based radio stations sampled in this study all proclaim and support the gospel of Jesus Christ. The general basis of their editorial policies is the Bible. As such, anything that these faith-based radio stations broadcast should align itself with the Bible and the teachings found in its scriptures. Generally, the Christian radio stations editorial policies are developed with the aim of enabling the stations to act as ambassadors of Jesus Christ and give their listeners a platform through which they can experience and build meaningful relationships with Jesus Christ.

The editorial policies of Christian radio stations stipulate that the general feeling, trend and spirit of their radio programs should always be biblical. As such, all presenters and producers are expected to endorse and abide by their radio stations' statements of faith as captured in their editorial policies. Their conduct, demeanor, character, appearance and language used while broadcasting must be in line with the philosophies and ideologies of the specific denomination that owns their media houses (Poole, 2021). For instance, a Christian radio station owned and operated by the Catholic Church will have its editorial policies usually aligned with the beliefs, practices, ideologies and philosophies of the Catholic Church. As such, the presenters and producers will be expected to promote Catholic practices such as the partaking of holy communion during paschal time, attendance of holy mass, regular confession of one's sins, providing for the material needs of the church, practicing fasting and abstinence, and observation of certain feasts among others (Shafiei & Overton, 2023).

Faith-based radio editorial policies must reflect the needs of their broad spectrum of listeners. Kenya being a multi-religious country guarantees its citizens the freedom of worship. As such, the editorial policies of faith-based radio stations should respect other faith-based groups' right of worship and allow them to freely proclaim their convictions. This implies that criticism of other religions should not be allowed.

According to Poole (2021), regarding controversial persons, matters or organizations, editorial policies of faith-based radio stations guide them on how to remain relevant and only cover issues that are in line with their missions and visions. This calls for producers and presenters to be politically neutral and only discuss political issues with the overall aim of helping their listeners to make informed choices and always choose the path of

peace. The editorial policies of faith-based radio stations also demand that the type of music, talk shows, interviews, commentaries, sermons, and any other information to be broadcasted must perpetuate Christian values and principles.

An ecumenical consultation held in Limuru, Kenya, in 1992 on African Christian Communications highlighted the significant crossroads Africa faced due to rapid shifts toward democracy and multiparty politics. One of the major challenges identified during the conference was the influence of Christian media, particularly radio, on shaping people's lives and beliefs (Catholic Media Council, 1992). The consultation, organized by the Catholic Church, recognized radio as the most widely accessible mass communication medium in Africa, surpassing all other forms of media in terms of reach. The primary focus of the consultation was how radio was being used by the Church in the evolving African context. The event converged fifty (50) Christian broadcasters from sixteen (16) African countries, who shared their experiences regarding the role of radio in political, religious, economic, and social realms. A key question explored during the consultation was whether the Church was adapting to the digital revolution. Additionally, discussions revolved around the messages the public received from the Church through radio, emphasizing the importance of understanding the medium's impact in a rapidly evolving society.

Participants of the consultations reported that they operated within a context of undue control by governments. Governments were blamed for excessively and unduly controlling the operations of radio broadcasters. Christian broadcasters reported that they simply focused on programming that reflects their gospel beliefs and avoided involvement in any political discussions which may have invited criticism and harassment from

governments (Catholic Media Council, 1992). Christian broadcasters who dared to speak about social and political issues affecting society encountered discrimination, censorship and even persecution from a majority of African governments. The participants were all of the opinion that the gospel touches on all aspects of life, including political, economic and social issues, thus they should be included in Christian radio broadcasting without facing censorship from governments. Their opinion was that they should be allowed to address political, social, economic and national issues on radio that affect the lives of their followers without being censored or victimized because they are also citizens of the countries and are also affected by politics.

The conference recommended that Christian broadcasters must be involved in planning for communication and radio broadcasting from continental, regional and national levels. Such planning should include financing, programming and human resource. Formulation of both internal and public policy into laws was also recommended to ensure that Christian radio stations operate in public interest. In regard to content, Christian radio broadcasters were encouraged to do away with the gospel view that Christianity is only about spirituality and not social, physical, political and economic aspects of life, a view held by many African governments. Instead, Christian radio broadcasters were urged to contribute positively towards the democratization of the countries they serve instead of only focusing on spirituality. It was also recommended that Christian radio communicators should be trained on civic education and political affairs so that they can enrich the lives of their listeners on these two areas, not only spirituality. Lastly, churches were urged to finance the faith-based radio stations they own in order to sustain their efforts to enrich the political and social aspects of their listeners (Catholic Media Council, 1992).

2.3.1 The Media and Elections

In examining the role of faith-based radio in strategic peacebuilding during general elections, it is crucial to first understand the broader relationship between media and elections. Internationally, foreign news channels have had a considerable impact on election outcomes and voters' decisions. Research on the influence of international media outlets like CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera on politics and elections has been extensive. Iqbal and Ahmed (2024) conducted a study that explored how CNN and Al Jazeera influence political perspectives in news reporting. Their study revealed that these two leading international news channels have significantly shaped politics and elections by influencing public opinion, setting agendas, and affecting both local and international policies. This broader media influence provided a useful backdrop for understanding how local faith-based radio in Kenya also shaped political attitudes.

CNN and Al Jazeera have played pivotal roles in framing political narratives during election cycles, often determining which stories to emphasize, how to present them, and whose voices to highlight. This selective framing has had a profound impact on public discourse worldwide, highlighting the power of media in shaping political realities (Iqbal & Ahmed, 2024). This study drew from that understanding to explore how faith-based radio in Kenya also shaped narratives by avoiding sensationalism and elevating voices of peace during the 2022 general elections.

Mwangi (2020), in quoting the words used by PLO Lumumba in a commentary on the Constitution of Kenya 2010 likens the media to a beast that has eyes, information, and hands that shape the opinion of the public. The media can influence who wins and loses

elections. The media has the power to impeach politicians and hold the government and politicians to account, and uncover corruption and other malpractices by government officials. For this reason, the media is so powerful that it cannot and should not be ignored and controlled.

Mwangi (2020) further notes that the media is likened to a neo-doctor of our currently ailing society because of its potential to drive action and address critical societal issues. The study states that in numerous occasions where the media has played its watchdog function, stakeholders have trembled and suffered from anxiety. Electioneering periods are no exception. During general elections, the media takes up the responsibility of covering and reporting about the entire process on behalf of the citizens. Some media houses are literally converted into secondary polling stations and tallying centers, keeping tabs of votes casted, and streaming results as they come in.

In Kenya, during the 2022 general elections, the media was heavily criticized for contributing to the confusion that was witnessed in the country. This was due to the fact that various channels from different media houses were each giving their own tally of the results, further fueling the anxiety witnessed at that time (Maigari, 2022). This shows the level of trust bestowed upon the media in election covering and reporting.

For a long time now, traditional media has played a significant role in presidential elections. The media informs voters about the manifestos, views, plans, shortcomings, and backgrounds of candidates for public office. This usually facilitates dialogue and debate between candidates and their voters. Further, the media is generally expected to report election results in a timely, impartial and accurate manner. Today, candidates can speak

to voters directly, especially through social media. They are no longer compelled to take part in presidential debates as witnessed in many parts of the world, including Kenya, where presidential candidates have chosen to skip national presidential debates. This has shifted the dynamics between candidates and the press, forcing the role of traditional media in modern general elections to evolve.

In Kenya, the relationship between the media and general elections has witnessed significant evolution since the Nyayo era of the late former President of Kenya, Daniel Toroitich arap Moi (1978 – 2002) to the present day. A study by Taro, Ndati and Mataba (2022) reveals that, during the Nyayo era, the state tightly controlled the media in almost every aspect. Undue state control and censorship were the order of the day. The main source of news was the state broadcaster, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), which was often referred to as the mouthpiece of the government. KBC operated both television and radio stations. The repression, censorship, and harassment faced by independent media from the government was immense. Journalists who reported anything that appeared to be anti-government faced frequent intimidation, and any publications that criticized the government were either banned or shut down completely.

For peace initiatives during general elections to be effective, programming must extend beyond purely religious content to engage a wider demographic. Expanding content in this way enhances the reach and relevance of faith-based radio, increasing the likelihood that peace messages will resonate with a broader audience. A station that acknowledges and addresses the varied interests of its listeners is more likely to foster engagement and contribute meaningfully to strategic peacebuilding efforts during election periods.

According to Owiso (2022), during that period, elections were characterized by serious irregularities such as vote rigging that led to instances of deadly violence and lack of peace. Regarding election coverage, the media at that time was mostly used to propagate government propaganda. Any voices that appeared to dissent the views of the government were immediately silenced. The ruling party at that time, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) enjoyed the monopoly of media coverage during general elections since the coverage and reporting was heavily biased in its favor.

Abboud, Ajwang & Lugano (2024) note that the period between the 2002 and 2007 general elections in Kenya was largely seen as a transition period for the media fraternity. This period was a turning point since the media began to achieve a higher level of liberation from state censorship and control. The end of the Nyayo era brought forth a more liberal media environment in Kenya, with the defeat of KANU by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) under the late President Mwai Kibaki. The crucial role of the media in elections began to be more appreciated since it provided a platform for diverse political voices to be heard. Media freedom began to experience significant increase, with more privately owned media houses emerging. This provided a more balanced election coverage and allowed the media to play its watchdog role during the general election process more freely.

In a study by Mukhongo (2020) on participatory media cultures, the aftermath of the 2007 general elections in Kenya marked yet another turning point in the role of the media in elections. The general elections of 2007 were tarnished with violence, deaths, loss of livelihoods, destruction of property, unrest, and a general lack of peace. The media is accused of having played a very controversial role, especially vernacular radio stations

which were said to have incited ethnic tensions that greatly contributed to the bloody post-election violence. During that period, the double-edged nature of the influence of media, particularly radio, in a politically charged environment was greatly highlighted. In the wake of the post-election violence, key stakeholders such as the government and civil society called upon the media to practice responsible journalism. The Government of Kenya strengthened and empowered the Media Council of Kenya to ensure adherence to ethical standards during election coverage and reporting (Mukhongo, 2020).

In a study conducted by Rutenberg and Sugow (2020) on the regulation of social media in electoral democracies which purely focused on Kenya, social media and digital media played a very impactful role in the 2013 and 2017 general elections. The study found out that social media and digital media were greatly used to disseminate information, misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda. Peer-to-peer platforms such as social media broke down the traditional barriers to one-way communication. Though traditional media still played a significant role in the general elections of 2013 and 2017, online platforms were turned into major political messaging battlegrounds. Cases of fake news and misinformation during that time also became quite high. Media coverage of elections in the 2013 and 2017 general elections in Kenya reflected a very polarized political situation in the country. Several media outlets were accused of being biased and taking sides of different political factions or candidates (Rutenberg and Sugow, 2020).

Nyabuga and Khamadi (2024) conducted a study titled media censorship in East Africa. The study revealed that in the latest general elections of 2022 in Kenya, the media played a very vital role in ensuring the transparency of the electoral process. Based on the lessons learnt from the election coverage of the previous general elections, the media focused on

combating misinformation and ensuring fact-checking in the election coverage and reporting. However, despite these efforts of the media to become more responsible in election reporting, challenges still abound. Many issues such as sustainability of independent journalism, media ownership, and political interference continue to influence the coverage of elections. Nyabuga and Khamadi (2024) further state that the media environment in Kenya is considered to be among the most free in Africa. Despite this, there are several instances where the state exerts undue pressure on the media, especially when media coverage and reporting appears to be critical of government.

The influence that the media possesses in society has allowed it to play the fourth estate role and act as a watchdog responsible for holding the government and its elected officials accountable in all their functions and activities, including the electoral process. The media has an onerous duty of safeguarding the sanctity of the electoral process and ensuring transparency, fairness, and peace before, during and after elections. The need to direct the influence of the media towards ensuring peace and harmony in society led to the development of the concept of peace journalism that places the media at the forefront in promoting peacebuilding.

In Kenya, the Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.) collected diverse views regarding how the spread of information through the mainstream, as well as the unconventional media channels had a role to play in the 2007 post-election violence. Reports by various media practitioners and officials from the Ministry of Information and Communication revealed that some vernacular FM stations contributed significantly to an atmosphere of hatred and hostility through their broadcasts. The Commissions investigating the violence heard that negative ethnicity and vernacular music allegedly

came from different vernacular FM stations, contributing to the interethnic clashes experienced.

The Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.) also heard that before multiparty democracy in Kenya, while the Kenya National African Union (KANU) was in power, the state had been in full control of the media. There was a perception that media and media practitioners were susceptible to torture, harassment, fines and imprisonment for freely expressing their views, especially regarding the electoral process and election outcomes. Censorship by the state was a common practice at that time to punish media outlets and practitioners who appeared to speak anything against the state. Self-censorship ensued as a result of fear by media practitioners from being reprimanded by the government.

Some attempts at liberalization of the media by the government were seen after the 2002 elections. For instance, many new radio and television stations were licensed and allowed to operate somewhat freely. However, there lacked new legislative and regulatory frameworks to accompany these new changes that were taking place in the media industry. This led to a situation where the media was seen to be excessively free. The Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.) account that certain media took advantage of this vacuum and began operating freely, irresponsibly and recklessly. Some of the witnesses interviewed by the Commissions were of the opinion that some media houses failed to act impartially during the elections. This saw various revisions being made to the Kenya Information and Communication Act (KICA) in order to enforce more stringent regulations towards the conduct of the media.

For the media to carry out its mandate effectively and efficiently, it needs to be allowed to operate in an environment that is free from undue control from the government. During general elections, the media is expected to provide unbiased and comprehensive coverage of the electoral process from campaigns, voter registration exercises, actual voting, vote tallying, and transmission of results among other matters surrounding elections. However, in the 2007 general elections in Kenya, the media was banned from broadcasting the vote tallying process live on air when political leaders became visibly acrimonious at the national tallying center.

In the 2007 general elections, live broadcasting of the vote tallying process was unceremoniously cut off from mainstream media channels and later banned completely by the government (“Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections,” n.d.). These actions by the government flamed tensions, uncertainty and anxiety that brought the country to a near standstill. The ban was instituted by the Ministry of Internal Security through the Ministry of Information, but was determined to be illegal, unconstitutional and improper by the Waki and Kriegler Commissions that were investigating the aspects that led to the disputing of the 2007 presidential election.

The Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.) recommended that any speech disseminated by the media, including vernacular FM stations, that perpetuates ethnic hatred should undergo thorough and timely investigations in order for corrective actions to be taken. Similarly, the Commissions also recommended that any speech by the media that borders on inciting, planning or organizing for violence should be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate legal action taken against the offending media houses and practitioners. According to the Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.), there

should be comprehensive amendments to the legislative frameworks governing media operations and conduct in order to discourage media misconduct, especially the propagation of hate speech during delicate times such as general elections.

2.4 Challenges Faced by Faith-Based Radio Stations in Peacebuilding

Despite the significant potential of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding, research indicates that they continue to face several challenges. Ludovic (2021) highlights one of the major obstacles as the politicization of both media and religion. According to Chepkorir (2019), some faith-based broadcasters and religious leaders align themselves closely with political figures, parties, or coalitions, which undermines their neutrality and compromises their credibility as impartial spiritual guides. Furthermore, faith-based radio stations often operate under the influence of their respective denominations, each with its own unique administrative procedures, belief systems, and editorial policies.

Denominational influences can restrict the objectivity of media personnel working within these stations, limiting their ability to engage with sensitive peacebuilding issues in a balanced and inclusive manner. Doctrinal limitations, in particular, may prevent these broadcasters from addressing critical peacebuilding topics in ways that resonate across diverse societal groups. This study engaged directly with these tensions by showing how selected faith-based radio stations in Kenya negotiated faith, politics, and editorial constraints to still push forward peace narratives during the 2022 elections.

Many media actors, faith-based radio stations included, have also had to grapple with the challenge of self-censorship. This mostly arises due to fear of reprisal from their audience, political players and religious authorities. The deliberate avoidance of conflict reporting

has often come at the cost of accountability and transparency. Faith-based radio stations in Kenya and other developing countries usually operate under constrained finances and limited technical resources. This often restricts their capacity to produce high-quality and impactful peace-themed programming. Their ability to adequately train their journalists in conflict reporting and peace journalism is also limited by inadequacy of funds (Jape & Mpuya, 2024).

Faith-based radio, by virtue of their uniqueness, also have unique audiences that are aligned to their denominational doctrines. As such, these audiences expect the faith-based radio stations to broadcast content and messages that align with their religious viewpoints and traditions of their faith. Such a situation can easily lead to audience polarization, limiting the ability of these radio stations to reach diverse audiences who do not necessarily subscribe to their religious doctrines. Regulatory constraints may also pose serious challenges to faith-based radio stations, especially when media regulations restrict the nature of content that can be broadcasted, such as sensitive topics during politically-charged times like general elections (Selvarajah, 2021).

2.4.1 Challenges to Peace during General Elections

The greatest challenge to peace during general elections in Kenya has been the occurrence of pre-election and post-election violence incidences (“Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections”, n.d.). Pre-election and post-election violence is caused by a number of factors which have been discussed in numerous research studies. During the pre-election period, violence and lack of peace is mainly fueled by clashes between candidates, supporters, and communities. This study investigated how faith-based radio used deliberate

messaging and programming to de-escalate such tensions and build peace during the 2022 general elections.

Post-election violence, for instance, in the Rift Valley, Nairobi, and Nyanza during the 2007 elections was quite spontaneous, and as a reaction to the perceived claims of election rigging and irregularities. Furthermore, according to the Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.), in the aftermath of the 2007 post-election violence, violence in the Coast and Rift Valley regions mainly targeted the Kikuyu and Kisii communities who were seen to be associated with the then President Mwai Kibaki and the Party of National Unity (PNU). These two groups were perceived as beneficiaries of “rigged” elections, contributing to the violence that was witnessed at that time.

In Western and Nyanza region, after the contested presidential results, the spontaneous violence was mostly targeted towards government facilities and pro-government associates since the disgruntled groups felt that the government was involved in rigging elections (“Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections,” n.d.). The violence and protests took the form of destruction and looting of property, and was said to have also been targeted at expelling and destroying the property of the communities associated with the government and PNU, rather than killing the members.

According to the Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.), these attacks were also targeted at members of the Kikuyu and Kisii communities. This study situated faith-based radios within such historically volatile contexts by examining how its peace-oriented programming aimed to counter incitement and promote unity during Kenya’s 2022 elections.

Further, the Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.) states that the subsequent pattern of violence showed that there was proper organization and planning by businessmen, locals, and politicians to have criminal gangs enlisted to perpetuate violence and anarchy. This was common particularly in Nairobi and Rift Valley.

In retaliation to this, gang members who, according to the Kriegler and Waki reports, were found to be from the Kikuyu community in the Rift Valley areas of Nakuru and Naivasha, as well as several slum areas of Nairobi such as Kibera and Mathare, were mobilized to unleash lethal violence against members of the Kalenjin, Luhya and Luo communities. They were required to expel them from their rented premises (“Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections,” n.d.).

The situation was replicated in the North Rift areas where Kalenjin youths were mobilized to attack and drive out Kikuyus living in that region. This painful history emphasizes the urgency for strategic peacebuilding, something this study explored by analyzing how faith-based radio attempted to prevent a repeat of such violence during the 2022 general elections.

The Kriegler and Waki reports on the 2007 post-election violence (n.d.) states that the electoral violence was organized because, in some instances, the victims were issued with stern warnings before being attacked. In other instances, the perpetrators of heinous violence were in large numbers, showing that they had been well prepared and organized since they came from outside the locations of the attacks. Sophisticated weapons and petrol were used to destroy property, harm people, and carry out deadly attacks in several areas, which shows thorough organization since such execution requires pre-planned

procurement, concealment and transportation. Another factor that showed organization and apt planning was the fact that most attacks targeted certain ethnic groups while deliberately excluding others.

Another challenge to peace during general elections in Kenya as identified by the Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.) is precipitation of violence by politicians through their actions, statements, and omissions. For instance, politicians were accused of conducting their campaigns in a confrontational and vociferous manner that created a tension-filled atmosphere in the country, while neglecting the basic tenets of peacebuilding. Politicians were also blamed for using ethnically divisive language and creating an attitude of distrust and skepticism among voters regarding the credibility of electoral management institutions and processes. These accusations were also extended to the media, especially vernacular radio stations.

The Kriegler and Waki reports on 2007 elections (n.d.) also blamed the security and administrative forces such as the police and other security agencies for their failure to act on intelligence concerning the likelihood of violence during the general elections. The security and administrative forces were accused of responding inappropriately and inadequately to violence, thereby worsening the violence, lack of peace, and the distress of the victims. In many instances, there was unjustified use of excessive force by the police and security forces, thereby aggravating the violence. Police and security forces were also guilty of failing to act with impartiality and discipline in many occasions, and sometimes engaging in criminal acts that were against the rights of civilians. This backdrop stresses the importance of alternative peace actors like faith-based radio stations whose role in peacebuilding is vital in supporting state institutions.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by three theories, namely: the peace journalism theory; the libertarian theory of mass media; and the social responsibility theory of mass media. The selection of these three theories is justified as follows: peace journalism theory provides insights into the role of faith-based radio in peace programming and messaging; libertarian theory examines media independence and editorial policies; and social responsibility theory emphasizes ethical responsibility and media accountability. Also, since media operates within political, social, and ethical constraints, incorporating all three theories provides a realistic understanding of how faith-based stations function in relation to strategic peacebuilding. Together, these theories offered a strong lens for analyzing how faith-based radio navigated the complex demands of strategic peacebuilding through their programming, messaging and editorial policies during Kenya's 2022 general elections.

The peace journalism theory was the core theory that guided this study. It was relevant because it emphasizes the role of media in conflict-sensitive reporting and peacebuilding. It was applied to this study to help analyze how faith-based radio stations frame peace messages, avoid inflammatory content, and promote reconciliation during elections. The tenets of this theory helped this study focus on how faith-based radio programs presented election-related content, whether they promoted dialogue, tolerance, and non-violence, and lastly, the strategies used to counter hate speech and political polarization. However, this theory fails to address aspects of media freedom and the complexities of editorial policies, hence the need to incorporate the libertarian theory to help fill this gap.

The libertarian theory of mass media was relevant because it emphasizes freedom of the press and media independence, which are critical for assessing the editorial policies of faith-based radio stations. This theory helped this study to explore the extent to which faith-based radio stations operate freely or face external interference either from government, religious institutions, or political groups. It also helped this study explore how much editorial independence faith-based radio stations have in broadcasting peace messages, as well as the ability of radio presenters and journalists to report objectively without censorship. However, it could not adequately address aspects of faith-based media's mission of moral responsibility and ethical reporting, hence the need to bring in the social responsibility theory of mass media to address this gap.

The social responsibility theory of mass media was relevant to this study because it argues that media should serve the public good and be accountable to society. This aligns well with the mission of faith-based media goal of ensuring moral responsibility and ethical reporting. This theory was applied to help analyze whether faith-based radio stations balanced freedom with responsibility in their reporting, and how they ensure accuracy, fairness, and inclusivity in their peace messages. It was also used to analyze ethical dilemmas they face in reporting sensitive election-related issues.

2.5.1 Peace Journalism Theory

Peace journalism is a theory that refers to a practice of journalism dedicated to discovering the root causes of conflict with the sole intention of creating opportunities for journalists and society at large to contemplate non-violent approaches to conflict (Arregui, Thomas & Kilby, 2020). The history of the peace journalism theory dates back to 1965 when John

Galtung conducted an analysis of what makes foreign news to be considered newsworthy. This concept was further developed by John Galtung and Jake Lynch in 2010 who argued that the media predominantly shows preference to violence and also paints a picture that all conflict signifies war, which should not be the case. This study applied the peace journalism lens to faith-based radio programming and messaging, assessing how these stations reframed election-related conflict in Kenya.

Johan Galtung introduced the concept of peace journalism, arguing that journalists and media institutions could reframe conflict reporting to foreground causes, victims, non-violent solutions, and reconciliation rather than privileging violence and winners. His work set out the normative orientations and practical techniques for reporting that support peace processes and emphasized the media's potential to expose structural causes of conflict and to highlight nonviolent alternatives. Galtung's framework was widely adopted as a heuristic for analyzing whether media output tended toward escalation or de-escalation of conflict, and subsequent literature used his typology to assess newsrooms' framing practices (Galtung, 1998).

According to Ndhlovu (2021), peace journalism as a theory advocates for journalism to actively contribute to peacebuilding, mediation, and conflict resolution. Peace journalism is considered the exact opposite of war journalism. War journalism give emphasis to conflict, violence, and sensationalism. In contrast, peace journalism strives to ensure that reporting on conflict is constructive, sensible, and balanced. The peace journalism theory advocates for journalism to focus on highlighting the root causes of conflict, rather than simply reporting about the immediate events of war and conflict. This calls for focusing

on the underlying cultural, political, economic, economic, and social factors that lead to conflict, and how to report in a manner that supports bringing an end to such conflicts.

Ogenga (2020) notes that the peace journalism theory also calls for journalism to always strive to present a balanced perspective of all conflicting parties, including the often overlooked voices of the marginalized. This theory also advocates for the avoidance of sensationalist imagery and language that often exacerbate conflicts and inflame tensions. Contrariwise, it advocates for the presentation of facts by journalists in a way that encourages dialogue, mediation, and reflection. The main aim of peace journalism is for the media to create opportunities for conflicting parties to dialogue by highlighting efforts towards peacebuilding and reconciliation, as opposed to highlighting conflict and war (Ogenga, 2020).

According to Hussain (2020), the peace journalism theory further advocates for a non-partisan and balanced approach in reporting where the media remains neutral and does not appear to take any sides in coverage and reporting. Inversely, journalists should strive to present balanced information that can help their target audiences to form their own opinions and make informed decisions. Additionally, the peace journalism theory encourages journalists to be ethically responsible and take cognizance of the potential impact of their reporting in all conflict situations (Ndhlovu, 2021). In doing so, journalists need to consider the influence that their work might have on public opinion, and how it can either contribute to peacebuilding or conflict.

The peace journalism theory emphasizes the importance of giving conflict a human dimension by telling intricate stories of how ordinary people are affected by conflict.

Doing so usually helps to humanize the issue of conflict and make the target audience relate more with it. The proposers of this theory advocate for using less confrontational tone and language when reporting about volatile issues such as conflicts during elections. This entails looking for alternative ways of understanding and reporting conflicts, as well as interrogating the status quo. Additionally, the peace journalism theory advocates for highlighting stories that may not be immediately categorized as newsworthy but are still important in the understanding and promotion of peacebuilding (Arregui, Thomas & Kilby, 2020).

The peace journalism theory has equally been criticized in scholarly circles for being biased. For instance, Doll and Moy (2022) argue that the peace journalism theory compromises the ideal of objectivity embodied in traditional journalistic principles by requiring journalists not to highlight conflict, even if it is taking place. Also, in their study on peace journalism, Demarest and Langer (2021), noted the difficulties in balancing the implementation of the peace journalism in actual practice. This was mostly because journalists usually work under extreme pressure to deliver timely and attention-catching stories, while at the same time being expected to ensure adherence to the principles of journalism during volatile times. Selvarajah (2021) conducted a study aimed at identifying the obstacles facing peace journalism and established that, as a result of commercial pressures, media outlets are sometimes driven by the desire to improve ratings and revenue. This can lead them to focus on sensationalized stories that attract attention rather than those that focus on promoting peace, further complicating the application of peace journalism.

The peace journalism theory is relevant to this study since it provides a framework that can guide ethical reporting by journalists, and still align with the values and beliefs of faith-based radio stations. Faith-based radio stations are usually driven by religious principles revolving around reconciliation, justice, peace, and love for one another. As such, these stations can utilize the principles of peace journalism as a guiding philosophy to make sure that their content and reporting promote strategic peacebuilding. The principles of the peace journalism theory can also be used by faith-based radio stations to promote non-partisan and balanced reporting. Faith-based radio stations are considered to be neutral players in the political landscape. However, this is not always the case since there have been numerous documented instances where faith-based radio stations and organizations have been perceived to take sides during conflict. However, the peace journalism theory advocates for balanced representation and non-partisan reporting. Faith-based radio stations can use the principles of peace journalism to maintain credibility and trust among their diverse audiences.

The peace journalism theory advocates for understanding and reporting the root causes of conflict without necessarily focusing on the conflict itself. These factors can include economic, social, historical, and political ones that influence electoral violence. Faith-based radio stations can apply these tenets of peace journalism to inform their target audiences about the underlying causes of conflict during electioneering periods, and help prevent misinformation that can increase the likelihood of violence. Additionally, this theory is relevant to this study because it strengthens the role of the media, including faith-based radio stations, in strategic peacebuilding. By applying the principles of peace journalism, faith-based radio stations can strengthen their role as strategic peacebuilding

promoters, not only during general electioneering periods, but continuously as a show of commitment to peace.

2.5.2 Libertarian Theory or Free Press Theory

The libertarian theory or free press theory which suggests that the media or press has the complete freedom to disseminate anything at any time and to act as a watchdog. This theory advocates for free flow of all kinds of information and believes that there should be freedom of thought in what is expressed by the media. Information flow should not be controlled by the state or authorities with the aim of suppressing the media, and everyone should be given the right to air their opinions, including journalists (Garnham, 2020). This study took into consideration how faith-based radio stations in Kenya exercised such freedoms to shape peaceful public discourse during the 2022 general elections, within the bounds of both law and religious doctrine.

The libertarian theory of mass media is the exact opposite of the authoritarian theory where the flow of information is unduly controlled and regulated by the government and authorities. The libertarian theory originated from renowned proponents of libertarian thoughts such as John Stuart Mill, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Lao Tzu and John Milton among others. This theory advocates for individualism and freedom of thought. The government should not unfairly control, censor or suppress the media. According to the theory, every person should be allowed to freely express their thoughts and opinions without being unfairly controlled (Fuchs, 2020).

According to Muller (2021), the libertarian theory acknowledges the fact that there is a flow of all kinds of information in society. Individuals have the right to decide which

information is important to them and which information is not, how authentic that information is, and how they interpret and utilize it. All this is possible because human beings are rational enough to make such choices in their own without undue influence. For this reason, the media should not restrict the flow of any kind of information to the public, even if that information criticizes the government. While doing this, the media should take cognizance of its immense power and also realize that abusing such powers can have detrimental as well as legal consequences.

The libertarian theory of mass media posits that should media should be independently owned and operated without any state interference. The media should be treated as an entirely different entity from the functioning of the government. In as much as no form of censorship should be done towards the media, the media has the responsibility of being accountable to the law. This calls for the media to follow a professional code of conduct and operate within the confines of the law. The rights and freedoms of individuals should not be violated by the media in the process of exercising its power and freedom of expression and thought (Governor, Clever & Akata, 2021).

The importance of an uncensored and uninhibited press in a democratic society cannot be overemphasized. The free press theory recognizes the media as an important tool in providing the public with critical information that they require to make well-informed decisions about civic and governance issues, as well as societal matters in general. This theory is also anchored on holding those in power accountable since it believes that a free press should ideally investigate and expose corrupt practices and wrongdoings by government official, government agencies, businesses, and other relevant entities. The libertarian theory argues that a press that is free from government control can promote

public discourse by providing a platform through which the public can freely exchange ideas and have public debates that can foster development (Machan, 2021).

In a study by Martins, Chima, Chinaza and Williams (2020) on the perception of journalists on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in Nigeria, it was established that in contemporary society, examples of libertarian theory of mass communication are evident in instances such as government reports being easily accessible by the media for scrutiny and evaluation in many democratic countries. The media has been allowed the freedom to publicize and criticize government policies, reports and performance, giving the citizenry the opportunity to evaluate them and take appropriate action. This should ideally happen without any forms of interference from government. Such opinions and criticisms should not be censored unless they go against the rights of an individual such as defaming or compromising their privacy or placing them at risk (Martins, Chima, Chinaza & Williams, 2020).

One notable strong point of the libertarian theory of mass media is the fact that the media can have the freedom to give true information without being controlled since there is no censorship. The media is provided with the opportunity to act responsibly while informing the public. Individuals also have the freedom to use the media as a tool to openly express their thoughts and opinions, and also share useful ideas without fear. This theory has been credited for keeping the government and public officers or authorities in check, thereby unearthing wrongdoings, deterring corruption, and promoting public accountability.

The libertarian theory of mass media also has some noteworthy weaknesses. The media might not always conduct itself responsibly as expected, and may also fail to act as

responsibly as expected. This may be a threat to national security, especially if the media appears to be challenging the government. Governments often support the restrictions they impose on freedom of speech, claiming that they do so to protect national security. However, critics contend that such restrictions are often used to suppress critical information from reaching the public and also to silence dissenting voices. This study acknowledged these tensions, especially for faith-based radio. These stations must navigate the fine line between media freedom and responsible messaging, particularly during politically sensitive times like general elections.

The libertarian theory of free press also assumes that all individuals have good ethics and intentions when giving out information. Another assumption of this theory is that people have the innate ability to make rational and informed judgements emanating from the information they receive. In other instances, the media may misuse its immense power and violate the dignity and privacy of others through defamation, libel, slander, sedition and obscenity. People's freedoms, thoughts, opinions and ideas are usually subjective and can be a cause of conflict. It may also be difficult for dissenting views to be aired freely if media ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few entities, as this may give them undue control, thus threatening the freedom of the press.

The libertarian theory of mass media is relevant to this study because it highlights the importance of the media in ensuring that information flows freely to the public so that citizens can have the opportunity to make informed decisions. This study emphasizes the need for the media to ensure that information intended to build peace reaches the electorate so that they can make more informed decisions during general elections in Kenya. The theory is also important to this study because it obligates the media to act within the

confines of the law when disseminating information to the public. The libertarian theory also urges the media to strike a balance between the need to protect national security and freedom of speech, as well as freedom of the press. The theory is applicable and significant to this study because it requires citizens to rationally and sensibly use information disseminated to them by the media, in this particular case, use peace information disseminated by faith-based radio broadcasters to uphold peace during general elections.

2.5.3 Social Responsibility Theory of Mass Media

The social responsibility theory of mass media stipulates that individuals must be accountable for accomplishing their civic duties, and their actions must benefit the society as a whole. The theory is fairly new compared to the others used in this study, having been formulated in the mid-twentieth century. It was designed by Schramm, Peterson and Siebert in 1956 and started from Europe before being used mostly in developing countries. This theory calls for the press to be free from censorship, but at the same time the media should ensure that the content it publishes benefits the whole society, and not only its own interests. The media should accept any liability that arises from news that it publishes and should therefore report with accuracy, objectivity and truthfulness (Khan, Limpot & Villanueva, 2020). This study applies the social responsibility theory to faith-based radios, arguing that while guided by religious values, these stations must also rise to the civic responsibility of promoting peace.

According to Reisach (2021), the social responsibility theory of mass media advances the importance of media actions being guided by professional ethics. All actions of the media should be aimed towards the betterment of the society, economy, culture and environment.

This theory obligates the media to refrain from causing any form of harm to society but instead promote socio-cultural and environmental progress that touch on a country's economic development. The social responsibility theory advocates for zero censorship and total press freedom, but they should be guided by social responsibilities.

In the words of Wilkins and Christians (2020), the social responsibility theory of mass media is seen as a replacement to the libertarian theory of mass media because it views libertarianism as being outdated. Some key aspects of the authoritarian theory are incorporated in the social responsibility theory of mass media. The developers of this theory expressly state that freedom of expression is not an absolute right under the social responsibility theory. An individual's right to freely express oneself must strike a balance between society's interest and the private rights of other individuals. The social responsibility theory of mass media is credited for having brought about professionalism in the media industry and profession.

Bappayo, Abubakar and Kirfi (2021) note that media reporting changed from objective reporting to interpretative and investigative reporting thanks to the social responsibility theory of mass media. Before the emergence of this theory, media reporting was more focused on presenting facts only as they were, as opposed to giving interpretations and meanings. The danger of this was that the audience interpreted news and information from the media according to their own understanding. Social order ended up being affected because some interpretations were biased, subjective and not factual. The interpretive and investigative style of reporting began to unearth the truth about things that were happening in society, and making them more understandable to the public.

The key tenets of this theory are anchored on private media ownership, helping democracy to thrive, fostering public participation, and emphasizing social responsibility. This theory is also anchored on the premises of promoting a self-regulated media, and media that upholds professionalism and abides by a code of ethics. The social responsibility theory of mass media recognizes media's role in responsibly criticizing the government and helping to eliminate social problems for the benefit of society. Lastly, this theory is emphasizes the critical role played by the media in ensuring that citizens are well informed to be responsible enough to make meaningful decisions.

One notable strength of the social responsibility theory of mass media is that it helps to alleviate conflicts in times of war since it advocates for striking a balance between divergent opinions. This theory is seen to be working for the people as it fully accepts and appreciates public opinion. The theory places a heavy social responsibility on the media because it expects media practitioners to abide by the law and operate under their professional codes of ethics. This theory advocates for the provision of a platform for the marginalized and voiceless to freely air their views that contribute to the overall wellbeing of society.

The theory is not void of weaknesses. Firstly, ethics are sometimes ambiguous and vague, and they differ from case to case. As such, the media may sometimes find itself in a dilemma and find it problematic to ensure ethics in all cases of journalistic coverage and reporting. When it comes to setting clear and objective standards and principles, it is sometimes difficult to come up with objectives that are fair across board because laws are mostly authoritative in nature, and objectivity may also sometimes be taken to be

subjective. Legal limitations being imposed on the media are sometimes considered restrictive, especially if the media is expected to act responsibly.

The social responsibility theory of mass media is relevant to this study because it views the media as being for the people, for humanity, and for society. This can encourage the media to put society first and preach peace during general elections, as well as avoid instigating violence. This theory is also applicable to this study because it obligates the media to remain responsible in its electoral coverage and reporting since there will be consequences for violating professional codes of conducts by journalists at such volatile times. Such obligations are highly likely to make journalists refrain from instigating violence and only focus on preaching peace during general elections because they are bound by their journalistic codes of ethics. The social responsibility theory of mass media is important in informing this study because it emphasizes the need for the media to analyze, interpret, and explain information so that it can be best understood by the public. This is important to any country because it promotes peace and social harmony by discouraging bad habits such as violence during general elections. This theory stipulates the role of the media as being informative, analytical, interpretative, and to mediate and mobilize. As such, the theory recognizes the media's role in mediation during times of conflict, making it invaluable to this study.

2.5.4 Theoretical Application to Research Objectives

The first objective was to identify faith-based radio programs and their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding. The peace journalism theory informed the analysis of this objective by providing a lens to assess how faith-based radio programs framed conflict

and peacebuilding during the election period. The study analyzed whether the programs adopted a peace-oriented approach by avoiding sensationalism, highlighting solutions, and giving voice to all sides.

The social responsibility theory helped in evaluating the extent to which faith-based stations fulfilled their ethical duty to promote peace, public interest, and responsible journalism. The theory guided the analysis of program content to see whether it served the broader goal of national cohesion and democratic stability.

The libertarian theory helped interpret the degree of editorial freedom the stations exercised in airing peace messages. It also framed the exploration of whether these programs could speak freely about peace without censorship or undue influence from political or religious elites.

The second objective was to determine the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding. The peace journalism theory offered a framework for thematic content analysis, especially in identifying key peace journalism elements such as non-partisan reporting, dialogue-driven narratives, and avoidance of divisive language in the peace messages broadcasted.

The social responsibility theory guided the examination of whether the themes addressed in the peace messages met societal needs. It helped in analyzing if the content promoted ethical standards, civic responsibility, and constructive community engagement.

The libertarian theory helped assess whether the themes explored were independently chosen or constrained by external forces. It provided context for evaluating the ideological freedom stations had in selecting and broadcasting peace-focused themes.

The third objective was to assess the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations on strategic peacebuilding. The social responsibility theory framed the analysis of how editorial policies balanced freedom of expression with the obligation to protect public interest and promote peace. The theory helped assess whether stations instituted policies that encouraged fair, balanced, and peace-oriented reporting.

The libertarian theory provided insight into how much autonomy editors and producers had in making decisions about peacebuilding content. The study explored whether the editorial policies upheld media freedom or were subject to internal and external censorship. The peace journalism theory was used to analyze whether editorial guidelines actively encouraged peace journalism principles, such as non-inflammatory language, inclusivity in coverage, and focus on reconciliation efforts.

The fourth objective was to identify the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in fostering strategic peacebuilding. The social responsibility theory was key in framing the institutional and ethical challenges faced by the stations such as financial instability, pressure to maintain neutrality, or audience skepticism. It highlighted tensions between commercial survival and the social duty to foster peace.

The libertarian theory contributed to the analysis of structural and regulatory challenges, such as restrictions on free speech, political interference, or religious bias, which may hinder stations from independently engaging in peacebuilding. Finally, the peace

journalism theory helped contextualize content-related challenges like lack of capacity or training to produce peace journalism content. It also guided the understanding of limitations in applying peace journalism frameworks consistently across programs.

Table 2.1 summarizes the application of the peace journalism theory, social responsibility theory and libertarian theory to the research objectives.

Table 2.1 Theoretical Application to Research Objectives

| Objective | Peace Journalism Theory | Social Responsibility Theory | Libertarian Theory |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1. Effectiveness of programs | Assessed use of peace-oriented reporting | Examined duty to promote peace & cohesion | Analyzed editorial freedom to promote peace |
| 2. Thematic focus | Identified peace journalism themes | Evaluated themes in light of public interest | Assessed ideological freedom in content selection |
| 3. Editorial policies | Examined incorporation of peace journalism principles | Analyzed alignment with social and ethical standards | Explored autonomy in editorial decision-making |
| 4. Challenges | Highlighted content and training limitations | Focused on institutional & ethical challenges | Assessed regulatory/political constraints |

2.6 Conceptual Framework

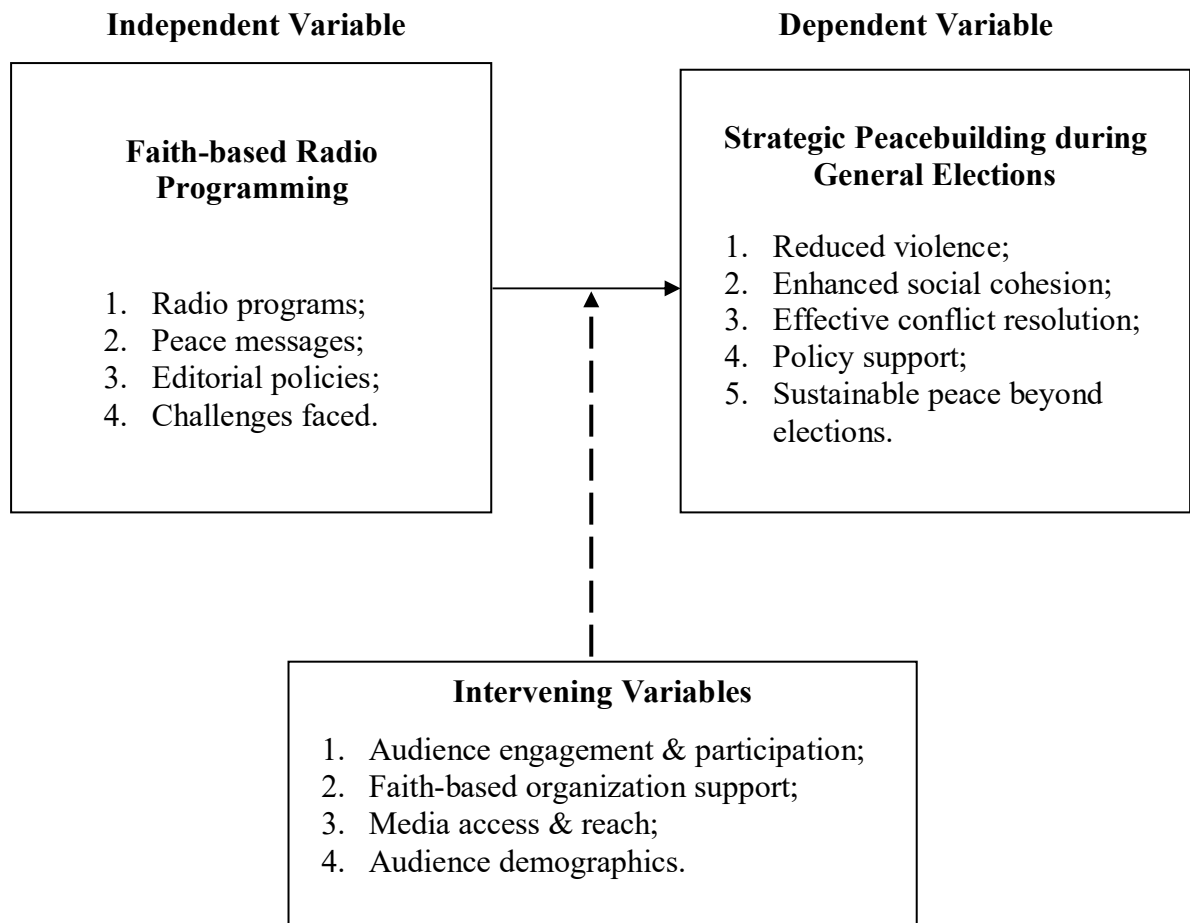


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher

The general context of the conceptual framework aims to elucidate the role of the media, particularly faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. This conceptual framework is drawn from the unique position of faith-based radio broadcasters in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections due to their widespread reach, trust, and moral authority.

The conceptual framework consists of a dependent variable which is strategic peacebuilding during general elections, indicated by reduced violence, enhanced social cohesion, effective conflict resolution, policy support, and sustainable peace beyond elections. The independent variable is the utilization of faith-based radio programming, indicated by radio programs, peace messages, editorial policies, and challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding.

The radio programs of faith-based radio stations were analyzed through identification of specific radio programs dedicated to strategic peacebuilding; analysis of program content, format, and delivery methods; audience engagement strategies used by these programs; and the effectiveness of radio programs in strategic peacebuilding.

The peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations were analyzed through identification of specific peace messages; framing of peace messages; strategies used to disseminate peace messages; and the effectiveness of peace messages in strategic peacebuilding.

The editorial policies were reviewed by analysis of editorial policies affecting strategic peacebuilding; and the effect of government regulations on editorial policies affecting content selection and message framing.

Finally, the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding were analyzed by identification of internal & external challenges facing strategic peacebuilding efforts; and ways of addressing the identified challenges.

The indicators for reduced electoral violence are decreased reports of incidents of violence during general elections, and a reduction in the severity of violence. Increased understanding of peace were indicated by greater levels of public knowledge about peacebuilding, and increased awareness about the consequences and risks of electoral violence. Enhanced social cohesion were indicated by strong relationships among previously warring communities, and a decrease in inter-ethnic tensions during elections.

Effective mediation and conflict resolution were indicated by successful peace initiatives and resolution of electoral disputes without violence. Policy and institutional support for peacebuilding were indicated by the application of policies that support strategic peacebuilding during elections, and institutional support offered to faith-based radio broadcasters for peacebuilding initiatives. Lastly, sustainable peace beyond elections were indicated by long-term peace during the election period, and the continuation of peacebuilding initiatives by faith-based radio stations even beyond elections.

The intervening variables can either facilitate or hinder faith-based radio broadcasters in strategic peacebuilding efforts during elections. For instance, the audience demographics such as their age and religious beliefs can affect how they respond to and internalize peace messages. The level of interaction and extent to which the target audience engage with peace content could influence how they receive and act upon peace messages.

Regarding faith-based organization support, receiving the backing of religious leaders in strategic peacebuilding initiatives could boost their credibility and improve their effectiveness. The geographical coverage of the faith-based radio stations could also affect the reach and impact of the peace messages they disseminate.

2.7 Research Gaps

Several potential gaps have been identified, and these gaps offer opportunities for future research to further explore the role of faith-based radio broadcasters in strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

2.7.1 Impact Assessment of Faith-Based Radio on Peacebuilding

One significant gap identified is the need for research that evaluates the tangible and measurable impact of faith-based radio broadcasters on strategic peacebuilding during general elections. It is important to assess how effective faith-based radio programs and messages are in promoting peace, as this would help identify areas of strength and areas requiring improvement. Another area for future research is to explore the long-term impact of faith-based radio broadcasting on strategic peacebuilding beyond the election period. Understanding whether peacebuilding initiatives continue to influence communities long after elections, or whether they are short-lived, can provide insights into the sustainability of these efforts.

2.7.2 Audience Reception and Perception

Future research should also investigate how the target audiences receive and perceive faith-based radio programs and messages during general elections. Understanding audience reactions to radio programs and peace messages can help faith-based stations better tailor their content to meet the diverse needs of their listeners and ensure the messages resonate effectively.

2.7.3 Role of Religious Leaders and Institutions

There is a need for further examination of the role that religious leaders and institutions play in faith-based radio broadcasting and peacebuilding during general elections. Exploring their motivations, challenges, and the impact of their involvement in peacebuilding efforts can provide valuable insights into their influence on peace outcomes.

2.7.4 Interfaith Collaboration for Peacebuilding

Given the diversity of religious beliefs and practices, it is crucial to explore how different faith-based groups can collaborate through faith-based radio broadcasting to promote peacebuilding. Interfaith collaborations, such as between Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, and other faiths, could provide a broader and more inclusive approach to peacebuilding efforts, overcoming doctrinal differences for a common goal.

2.8 Research Gaps Matrix

Table 2.2 Research Gaps Matrix

| Author(s) & Year | Title/Study Focus | Methodology | Key Findings | Research Gaps | Current Study Focus |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| Abboud, Ajwang & Lugano (2024) | Social media and elections in Kenya | Media content analysis | Media shapes political opinions and can incite or prevent conflict. | Focused on digital media; faith-based radio overlooked. | Investigates how faith-based radio shaped peace narratives in 2022 elections. |
| Adhan (2020) | The role of media in maintaining peace and security in Africa: Case study of Kenya 2007-2017 | Case study analysis | Media plays a vital role in peace and security through responsible reporting. | Focused broadly on media; did not assess faith-based radio or thematic content. | Examines faith-based radio's peace messaging and editorial policies during elections. |
| Arregui, Thomas & Kilby (2020) | Peace journalism in theory and practice: Kenyan and foreign correspondent perspectives | Qualitative interviews and case analysis | Peace journalism can positively shape narratives during elections. | Focused on foreign correspondents and mainstream media; faith-based radio underexplored. | Explores peace journalism through faith-based radio during Kenya's 2022 elections. |
| Barry & Pul (2019) | USAID faith-based peacebuilding initiatives | Thematic assessment of peacebuilding projects | Involving religious leaders enhances peacebuilding success. | Focused on institutions and leaders, not radio as a communication tool. | Examines how faith-based radio, specifically, contributes to peacebuilding in electoral contexts. |

| Author(s) & Year | Title/Study Focus | Methodology | Key Findings | Research Gaps | Current Study Focus |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| Chepkorir (2019) | Role of faith-based radio in religious peacebuilding in Kenya | Literature review and case studies | Faith-based messages can promote peace; effectiveness increases with collaboration with religious leaders and NGOs. | Did not explore editorial policies or analyze peace messages in a recent electoral context. | Analyzes thematic focus of peace messages and role of editorial policies during 2022 elections. |
| Chitando (2023) | Religion and peacebuilding in African religious studies | Thematic literature review | Religious frameworks are central to African peacebuilding. | Did not include faith-based media as communication tools. | Explores how religious broadcasting contributes to peacebuilding in elections. |
| Deacy (2019) | Role of religious radio in UK civic discourse | Content analysis and surveys | Radio is trusted for civic and moral education. | Focused on UK context; lacked focus on electoral peacebuilding. | Explores trust and civic engagement through Kenyan faith-based radio. |
| Demuyakor (2023) | Role of local and community radio in political pluralism in Northern Ghana | Qualitative content and thematic analysis | Community radio fosters dialogue and political inclusion. | Context was Ghana, and focus was not on faith-based or electoral peacebuilding. | Analyzes Kenya's faith-based radio for peacebuilding during elections. |
| Frederick (2022) | Faith-based communication transformation during COVID-19 | Qualitative analysis of communication practices | Faith-based media adapted messaging to promote calm and resilience. | Focused on pandemic context, not elections or peacebuilding. | Studies how faith-based radio was used for strategic peacebuilding in elections. |

| Author(s) & Year | Title/Study Focus | Methodology | Key Findings | Research Gaps | Current Study Focus |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Jape & Mpuya (2024) | Religious-based radio and cultural heritage in Zanzibar | Qualitative field interviews | Religious radio helps preserve heritage and promote values. | Did not address electoral contexts or peacebuilding efforts. | Investigates peacebuilding role of faith-based radio during Kenyan elections. |
| Karombo & Kibombwe (2021) | Catholic radio and its importance in South Africa: A case study of Radio Veritas | Case study | Catholic radio is key in spiritual and moral formation. | Did not address peacebuilding or electoral contexts. | Focuses on the role of religious radio in strategic peacebuilding during elections. |
| Korir & Nabushawo (2021) | Programming diversity in Christian radio stations in Eldoret, Kenya | Content analysis and interviews | Faith-based radio focuses heavily on religious teachings; limited program diversity affects broader societal impact. | Did not assess peacebuilding effectiveness or specific strategies used during elections. | Assesses effectiveness of faith-based radio in strategic peacebuilding during 2022 elections. |
| Manje (2022) | Role of community radio in slum development | Interviews, FGDs, thematic analysis | Radio fosters peace and development in informal settlements. | Did not address faith-based content or electoral peacebuilding. | Focuses on electoral peacebuilding through faith-based radio. |
| Mwangi (2018) | Role of community radio in peacebuilding (Radio Amani) | Surveys and content analysis | Radio can promote peaceful coexistence among conflict-prone communities. | Focused on only one community radio, not faith-based stations; excluded editorial influence and faith-driven content. | Focuses specifically on faith-based stations and their role in strategic peacebuilding. |

| Author(s) & Year | Title/Study Focus | Methodology | Key Findings | Research Gaps | Current Study Focus |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Mwanzia (2017) | Peacebuilding role of Pamoja FM among youth in Kibera | Questionnaires and content analysis | Radio was effective in promoting youth participation in peacebuilding. | Focused on youth and community radio, not faith-based broadcasting. | Examines faith-based stations across demographics and geographic regions. |
| Ndhlovu (2021) | The importance of peace journalism | Practice-based perspective | Peace journalism helps mitigate conflict if well applied. | Did not assess application through religious media platforms. | Analyzes application of peace journalism via faith-based radio during elections. |
| Onguny (2020) | Limitations of faith-based radio in peacebuilding during Kenya's elections | Case study and document analysis | Some stations worsened tensions due to political/ethnic bias. | Limited scope in identifying broader challenges faced by faith-based stations. | Explores institutional and operational challenges faced by faith-based radios during peacebuilding efforts. |
| Owiso (2022) | Electoral violence and peacebuilding in Kenya | Peace studies and historical review | Kenya's election cycles are prone to violence and need peacebuilding mechanisms. | Lacked focus on faith-based radio as a peacebuilding mechanism. | Examines faith-based radio as a communication tool for strategic peacebuilding. |
| Taiwo, Adamu & Fatele (2023) | Faith-based radio as mediator in conflict-prone areas | Case studies and thematic analysis | Faith-based radio provides platforms for interfaith dialogue and peace. | Lacked focus on Kenya's electoral context and editorial policies. | Assesses editorial policies and messaging themes during elections in Kenya. |

| Author(s) & Year | Title/Study Focus | Methodology | Key Findings | Research Gaps | Current Study Focus |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|
| Tyali (2021) | Faith-based radio in Rwanda and Nigeria as peace agents | Comparative study | Faith-based content can reduce conflict through forgiveness narratives. | Did not explore operational or regulatory challenges. | Identifies challenges limiting faith-based radio's impact in Kenya. |
| Tyali (2021) | Community radio and religion in South Africa | Case analysis and literature synthesis | Community and faith-based radio platforms foster dialogue. | Limited focus on strategic peacebuilding or election contexts. | Focuses on strategic peacebuilding role of faith-based radio in Kenya's 2022 elections. |

Source: Researcher

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented information from scholarly publications, reports, and studies on themes closely related to the research problem, with a focus on the utilization of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. Insights have been drawn from international, regional, and local perspectives, establishing a foundation for understanding the intersection of media, religion, and peacebuilding.

Literature has been reviewed to explore faith-based radio programs and their effectiveness, highlighting the role of these stations in promoting messages of peace, unity, forgiveness, and non-violence. Faith-based broadcasters have been acknowledged for occupying a position of moral authority and community trust, especially during politically sensitive periods. However, challenges such as limited neutrality, financial

constraints, editorial restrictions, and political affiliations have also been noted from previous studies.

The chapter has also examined studies that attempted to investigate the thematic focus of peace messages, analyzing how these messages have been framed, targeted, and received. Religious teachings and culturally resonant narratives have been identified from previous studies as central components. Nevertheless, the literature has revealed a gap in the strategic use of these themes for electoral peacebuilding.

In regard to editorial policies, this chapter has reviewed studies that attempted to investigate how internal and external influences, including religious doctrines, media ethics, and political affiliations, have shaped content dissemination. Tensions between journalistic objectivity and religious obligations have been highlighted, underscoring the need to balance editorial freedom with responsible messaging.

Challenges confronting faith-based radio stations have been discussed, including regulatory pressures, financial limitations, limited reach, and trust issues among politically polarized audiences. These factors have been shown to hinder the strategic peacebuilding efforts of faith-based radio stations.

The review has been anchored on three theoretical frameworks, namely, peace journalism theory, social responsibility theory, and libertarian theory of the press. These theories provided analytical lenses for interpreting the study's four objectives. In addition, a conceptual framework has been presented, mapping the relationships between the dependent, independent and intervening variables.

Finally, significant research gaps have been identified, including the absence of empirical evaluations of faith-based radio's effectiveness in peacebuilding, a lack of audience-focused studies, minimal exploration of interfaith broadcasting collaborations, and a need for actionable peace communication strategies.

In conclusion, this chapter has thoroughly reviewed relevant literature on faith-based radio and peacebuilding, systematically addressing each of the study's four objectives. It has laid a strong theoretical and conceptual foundation and has established the academic and practical necessity of this study in bridging existing gaps in media and electoral peace research in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology used to guide and conduct this research. It highlights core methodological issues, including the research philosophy, approach and design. It further discusses the study area, sample size and sampling technique, target population, data collection tools, reliability and validity, the analysis and presentation of the collected data, and the ethical considerations adhered to.

3.1 Research Philosophy

This study adopted a pragmatist research philosophy that originated from Charles Sanders Peirce in the 1870s, and contributors such as William James, and John Dewey in the 20th century. This philosophy was adopted due to the nature of the research problem that required a mixed method approach in gathering, analyzing and interpreting data in order to strengthen the results. The researcher was guided by the principles of the pragmatist research philosophy which stipulate that researchers are free to choose the most suitable procedures, techniques and methods that will best answer the questions under investigation as supported by Tamminen and Poucher (2020). The research philosophy guides data collection, analysis, interpretation, and the researcher's philosophical stance.

Since this study adopted a mixed method research approach, it employed elements of both qualitative and quantitative research, though qualitative was dominant. This freedom to choose methods that the researcher feels are most suitable and appropriate to answer the

questions under research, even if it means using a mixed approach, is the main idea behind the pragmatist paradigm (Ormerod, 2021).

Advocates of the pragmatist research philosophy support that multiple realities on a research problem may exist, hence the need of using different ways to interpret issues and conduct research. Further, no single view point has the absolute ability to give a complete picture of things. Hence, the chosen methods can be multiple, but must be reliable, credible and relevant to the research (Morgan, 2020). Choosing this research philosophy was guided by the fact that elections are often sensitive, calling for cautious interrogation in order to establish the role played by faith-based radio broadcasting in strategic peacebuilding. This guided the researcher in allowing the respondents to give their views independently as advocated by pragmatists.

3.2 Research Approach

This study utilized a mixed method research approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research elements. Specifically, qualitative data were collected using in-depth interview schedules, focus group discussion guides, a key informant interview guide, and a semi-structured questionnaire. Quantitative approach was only used to generate descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. These statistics provided supportive context to the dominant qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis focused on thematic patterns emerging from interview transcripts and focus groups discussions. The integration of both data strands was done at the interpretation stage to ensure a richer understanding of the role of faith-based radio in peacebuilding.

As recommended by Dubey and Kothari (2022), this approach is effective when a researcher seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis that enhances the trustworthiness of findings. By combining numerical data with rich, descriptive insights, the mixed methods approach allowed for triangulation, ensuring that multiple perspectives contributed to the accuracy of results as suggested by Creswell (2022).

3.3 Research Design

This study employed a concurrent embedded mixed methods design. Qualitative research was the dominant strand and quantitative methods embedded to support and enrich the qualitative findings (Creswell & Plano, 2017). Data were collected simultaneously during the same phase of the research process but prioritized differently. Datasets from all the tools were then integrated to draw conclusions.

The qualitative component formed the core of the study, whose aim was exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of faith-based radio's role in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.

The quantitative component was embedded into the qualitative component, and used primarily to generate descriptive statistics on aspects such as the frequency of peace messages, reach of the programs, and basic demographic characteristics of the respondents. These assisted in contextualizing and supporting the qualitative findings, but were not used for inferential or hypothesis-testing purposes. The design allowed for a deeper exploration of the research problem.

3.4 Study Area

This study was conducted at the headquarters of the seven sampled faith-based radio stations in Kenya, namely Sayare FM and Upendo FM are located in Eldoret, Biblia Husema Broadcasting, Radio Waumini, Hope FM and Family Radio 316 in Nairobi, and MBCI Radio is located in Nakuru. These areas were selected because they were the top three high-risk for electoral violence according to the NCIC (2022) Conflict Hotspot Mapping Report, using the Kenya Electoral Violence Index (KEVI-C) which placed these counties at scores above 72%. Specifically, Nairobi County scored 79.85%, Nakuru County 75.77% and Uasin Gishu County 72.25%. Any County that scored above 71% was considered to be at a high risk to electoral violence (NCIC, 2022).

Eldoret is the main town in Uasin Gishu County and is also the fifth largest city in the country, whose coordinates are 0°31'N 35°17'E. Eldoret town, commonly referred to as the 'City of Champions', is categorized as an urban area whose population stood at 475,716 according to the 2019 Kenya National Population and Housing Census (KNBS, 2019). Eldoret was conferred city status in August 2024. Eldoret town is the home of Sayare FM and Upendo FM which broadcast from the heart of the city.

Nairobi City County is the third smallest County in Kenya but serves as the Capital City of Kenya, and also the most populous County whose coordinates are 1.2921° S, 36.8219° E. The population of Nairobi County, according to the 2019 Kenya National Population and Housing Census, stood at 4,397,073 (KNBS, 2019). Nairobi City County is the home of Biblia Husema Broadcasting, Radio Waumini, Hope FM and Family Radio 316 which all have their headquarters in the Capital City.

Nakuru Town is a City in the larger Nakuru County located in the larger Rift Valley, whose coordinates are 0°18'S 36°4'E. according to the 2019 Kenya National Population and Housing Census, Nakuru County is the third most populous county in Kenya with a population that stood at 2,162,202 people in 2019 (KNBS, 2019). Nakuru City is the home of MBCI Radio.

3.5 Target Population

The study targeted two key groups. The first group consisted of faith-based radio journalists who were directly and actively involved in peace-oriented programming during Kenya's 2022 general elections. These included radio producers, program directors, and radio presenters. The estimated target population for this group forty nine (49) individuals across the seven selected stations, since each station had an average of 7 personnel who were directly and actively involved in peace-oriented programming.

The second group comprised of 70 accessible radio listeners who directly and actively engaged with these faith-based radio programs during the 2022 general election period. These were drawn from the fan (salaam) club members of these radio stations.

This means that the total target population for the entire study was one hundred and nineteen (119) participants.

3.6 Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria in this study defines the inclusion parameters for selecting participants in the study.

3.6.1 Inclusion Criteria

For the faith-based radio stations to be included in the study, they had to be faith-based, have been in operation during the 2022 general elections, and broadcast peace-focused programming.

For radio station staff to be included in the study, participants had to be employees of the seven selected faith-based radio stations who were directly involved in faith-based broadcasting, content production, or peace-related programming during Kenya's 2022 general elections.

For radio listeners to be included in the study, they must have actively listened to and engaged with faith-based radio programs addressing peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. They needed to be 18 years or older to ensure informed participation in election-related discussions, and a resident of Kenya during the 2022 election.

3.7 Sampling

Sampling entails the process of selecting a smaller number of individuals or objects for analysis in order to find out more about an entire population from which the sample has been chosen or drawn from (Lohr, 2021).

3.7.1 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was employed to select seven faith-based radio stations that would best inform this study because they were actively involved in peace-oriented programming during the 2022 general elections. Purposive sampling was based on relevance. This means that only radio stations that met the specific inclusion criteria, namely, being faith-

based, having an established presence during general elections, and broadcasting peace-focused programming were selected. These stations were identified as strategically significant to the research problem.

The selection criteria included stations with a large, stable, and actively engaged audience base within their broadcast area, a focus of faith-based content and messaging, and the presence of peacebuilding content. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher, based on clearly defined criteria and informed judgement drawn from the study's objectives and context, carefully selects participants who are most relevant to the research, rather than relying on random selection (Clark, Foster, Sloan & Bryman, 2021).

Radio was selected as the primary communication medium for this study based on its prominence as documented in the Broadcasting Services Report for the Financial Year (FY) 2017/18 (2018, p. 14) by the Communication Authority of Kenya. The report identifies radio as the most preferred source of information among Kenyans (70%), followed closely by television. Additionally, the report highlights an increase in media incidence during October 2017, largely driven by heightened public interest in current affairs related to the electoral period (CAK, 2018).

Radio was also preferred because, according to the state of the media survey reports for 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 by the Media Council of Kenya, radio and television rank highest among the most preferred media channels at an average of 33% and 32% respectively, followed by social media at 18%. The 2022 Media Council of Kenya state of the media report noted that religious content accounted for the second most listened to

item on radio after news, with faith-based radio stations accounting for 22% of the radio stations most listened to (MCK, 2023).

Faith-based radio was specifically chosen due to its substantial presence in Kenya's broadcasting landscape. According to the Communications Authority's Broadcasting Services Reports from FY 2017/18 to 2023/24, religious content consistently ranks as the second most broadcasted category on radio, underscoring its significance and widespread impact (CAK, 2023).

These seven faith-based radio stations were selected because of their missions of promoting peace and reconciliation, by virtue that they are among the popular and most widely listened-to faith-based radio stations in Kenya, and also because they are located in the areas that have been experiencing a lot of violence and lack of peace during general elections. In the researcher's own judgement, these seven faith-based radio stations are the ones most likely to benefit the research and provide adequate information on the utilization of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.

Purposive sampling was also used to select radio presenters, radio programs managers and producers to give information about the messages they disseminate that are intended to promote peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya, and the challenges they face in peacebuilding, and if there are editorial policies that either hinder or promote strategic peacebuilding. According to Clark, Foster, Sloan and Bryman (2021), purposive sampling is appropriate in strategically selecting participants based on their unique characteristics that are relevant in informing the research questions.

The inclusion of 49 radio station staff was systematically determined based on the key roles relevant to content creation and dissemination within each faith-based radio station. One program director per station, totaling to seven, were selected because the program director oversees the overall programming strategy, making them essential for understanding how faith-based and peacebuilding content is prioritized and structured.

Five radio presenters per station totaling to thirty five were selected because presenters are the primary voices and influencers on air. Including multiple presenters per station ensures diverse perspectives across different time slots, show formats, and audience engagements.

One radio producer per station totaling to seven were selected because producers manage behind-the-scenes planning, editing, and coordination. Their inclusion provides insights into the production values, editorial choices, and compliance with institutional policies.

The study also included 70 active listeners, drawn from across the seven radio stations. The decision to focus on active listeners was grounded in the need to gather data from individuals who are not only regular consumers of the content but also likely to be engaged in program responses, call-ins, social media interactions, or community outreach linked to the radio station.

Purposive sampling is also suitable when a researcher seeks to collect in-depth information on a topic from a group of participants who are particularly experienced, knowledgeable, and interested in the topic under study, hence the choice of the selected radio program directors, presenters and producers. Lastly, purposive sampling is

commonly used in qualitative studies that use methods such as interviews and focus group discussions to seek rich descriptions and knowledge of a phenomenon.

3.7.2 Sample Size

The sample size selected for this study was a total of one hundred and nineteen (119) participants. These comprised of one (1) program director from each radio station, five (5) radio presenters from each radio station, one (1) radio producer from each radio station, and 70 active listeners from each radio station as depicted in table 3.1.

Purposive sampling to select most highly listened to faith-based radio stations (CAK, 2022). The sample size of 119 was arrived at as follows: 49 was the total number of journalists directly involved in program production; and 70 were the accessible listeners who comprised of fan club members that actively engaged with the peace programs at these stations.

Table 3.2 Sample Size

| Radio station | Program directors | Radio presenters | Radio producers | Listeners |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1 Sayare FM | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 |
| 2 MBCI Radio | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 |
| 3 Biblia Husema | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 |
| 4 Radio Waumini | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 |
| 5 Upendo FM | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 |
| 6 Hope FM | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 |
| 7 Family Radio 316 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 |
| TOTALS | 7 | 35 | 7 | 70 |

3.8 Data Collection Tools

According to Clark, Foster, Sloan and Bryman (2021), data collection tools refer to the specific instruments used by researchers to gather information using the data collection methods chosen. This study relied on a variety of data collection instruments to gather data that informed the study.

3.8.1 Qualitative Data Collection Tools

Qualitative data were collected using an in-depth interview schedule for faith-based radio station staff, a focus group discussion guide for faith-based radio station staff, a key informant interview guide for radio station staff, a semi-structured questionnaire for radio station staff, and a focus group discussion guide for faith-based radio audience.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through a concurrent embedded mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative techniques. The process began after obtaining research authorization from relevant institutional and governmental authorities. The researcher first contacted managers and program producers of selected faith-based radio stations to schedule interviews and focus group discussions. Qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with radio presenters, producers, as well as focus group discussions with listeners drawn from Nairobi, Nakuru, and Uasin Gishu Counties.

Key informant interviews were also held with station managers to provide expert insights into faith-based broadcasting and peacebuilding. The researcher personally administered the instruments, ensuring that participants clearly understood the purpose of the study and their rights. Triangulation of data sources and tools enhanced the validity and reliability

of the information collected. Completed questionnaires and interview transcripts were securely stored and later analyzed according to the procedures outlined in the data analysis section.

3.10 Trustworthiness of the Study

In a study that is predominantly qualitative in nature, trustworthiness can be guaranteed by ensuring credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, as opposed to the concepts of reliability and validity which best apply in quantitative research (Ahmed, 2024). These four criteria were applied in this study to ensure trustworthiness.

The quantitative component of the study relied on simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Since the focus was not on generalizing to a larger population or conducting hypothesis testing, inferential statistics and parametric assumptions such as normality and internal consistency testing were not applied.

Triangulation was used to enhance the credibility and reliability of this study's findings. This entailed using multiple methods, theories and datasets to address the research questions. Triangulation also entailed the convergence of information from a variety of sources in order to enhance validity. Throughout the study, reference was made to all sources from which information was collected.

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence and sureness in the truth or fact of the data and interpretations. This study employed methodological triangulation to enhance credibility. This entailed collecting data from multiple sources such as program directors, producers, presenters and listeners. It also entailed integrating information from focus group

discussions, key informant interviews, semi-structured questionnaires, and in-depth interviews. Finally, member-checking was carried out with select participants to ascertain that the findings were a true reflection of their perspectives.

3.10.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to the reliability, consistency, and stability of the research process over time. In this study, dependability was achieved through an evidently documented and repeatable research process. This included details of the data collection procedures, transcriptions, thematic analysis, and coding steps. The research instruments were pretested on two (2) radio presenters and two (2) program directors to identify and correct issues related to clarity, flow, and relevance of the tools. Peer review was also done by discussing the research process with peers and supervisors.

3.10.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which a study's findings are shaped by the responses and experiences of the participants, rather than the assumptions and biases of the researcher. Confirmability in this study was addressed by ensuring that findings were strongly grounded in evidence and data collected from participants rather than the researcher's preferences. Direct quotations from participants, verbatim transcriptions, and triangulation of multiple data sources were used to achieve this. The participants' input was used to draw all interpretations and conclusions.

3.10.4 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which a study's findings can be generalized, transferred or applied to other contexts beyond the one studied. Transferability in this study was supported by ensuring detailed descriptions of the study's context, nature of the sampled radio stations, and participant characteristics in order to offer invaluable insights applicable to similar contexts involving faith-based media and peacebuilding efforts in electoral environments.

3.11 Data Analysis and Presentation

According to Pandey and Pandey (2021), data analysis is the process of summarizing collected data that involves the logical and analytical identification, description and interpretation of trends, patterns and relationships in the collected data in order to make informed conclusions. Data presentation on the other hand entails organizing, providing and exhibiting the analyzed data in a clear, coherent, complete and concise format that will effectively communicate the findings of the study so that they are easy to interpret, understand and draw sensible conclusions (Pica, 2023).

Primary data that was collected in this study was majorly in narrative form and also descriptive. The primary raw data collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions and key informant interviews was in note form and was arranged then analyzed according to the objectives and major themes. Qualitative data were analyzed using the three-step method of data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification as proposed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014).

Data reduction entailed selection, focusing, simplification, abstracting and finally transforming the data that appears in the filled questionnaires, transcriptions and field notes. Data reduction was done by summarizing the collected data, choosing and focusing on the most important information related to the study objectives, identifying themes and patterns from the responses, and finally transcribing the data. Any irrelevant data that did not inform the objectives of the study was discarded and the relevant data was finally displayed in a descriptive manner.

Data display entailed displaying or exhibiting the reduced data in an organized, structured, comprehensible and compressed manner that simplified the drawing of conclusions. Data collected qualitatively is usually in narrative form that usually requires simplification without changing its contents (Ayesha, Hanif & Talib, 2020). Displaying the data paved the way for the third step of conclusion drawing and verification. Conclusion drawing entailed deciding the meaning of the displayed data by identifying patterns and regularities, and noting propositions and explanations.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research consist of the fundamental principles that guide a researcher to carry out a study in a manner that is morally sound and responsible. These guidelines and principles are aimed at protecting the rights and overall well-being of research participants. Ethical considerations are also intended to enhance the integrity of the entire research process. The ethical issues taken into consideration in this study included seeking approval from the relevant authorities, informed consent, ensuring

voluntary participation of the respondents, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, minimizing the potential for harm, and communicating the results.

This research was designed and undertaken with the greatest standards of legal compliance, ethical propriety, integrity and quality. Firstly, the study was conceptualized, proposed, presented and defended at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology both at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, and the School of Arts and Social Sciences in order to get approval from the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies. Once the proposal was approved, the researcher was given permission to proceed to the field to collect data. The researcher applied for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) in order to comply with legal requirements guiding research.

Permission to collect data was sort in writing from the seven sampled faith-based radio stations. After approval, all potential research participants were informed about the study's objectives before data collection began to ensure that the principles of informed consent and voluntary participation were adhered to. The respondents were informed that the study was purely for academic purposes and that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity since no names were required or used in the study.

The participants were informed that they were required to fill the questionnaires and participate in focus group discussions and interviews for the sole purpose of informing the study, hence no potential harm would befall them. The identity of the researcher, his affiliation, his contact details and those of the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology were provided in case the participants experienced challenges with the

research process and needed to contact the researcher for further clarification. The informants were informed that they were not putting themselves in any risk by participating in the study since it was only for academic purposes. The respondents were also informed that they had the right to review the entire research proposal and withdraw from the study at any given point they wished. It was made known to the informants that the findings of the study may be made available to them once completed upon their request so that they can benefit from the conclusions and recommendations. The study was subjected to plagiarism checks to ensure that it has not directly copied other peoples' work without properly acknowledging them.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology that guided the study. It described the philosophical, methodological, and procedural frameworks used to examine the role of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. The study adopted a pragmatist research philosophy and employed a concurrent embedded mixed-methods design, with a dominant qualitative approach supported by limited descriptive quantitative analysis.

The chapter detailed the research area, target population, sampling procedures, and data collection tools, which included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and semi-structured questionnaires. It clarified the criteria for selecting participants and radio stations, explaining the rationale for inclusion and exclusion. Procedures for ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative data through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were presented.

The chapter also explained the data analysis process, describing how qualitative data were thematically analyzed and quantitative data summarized using descriptive statistics. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and research authorization, were addressed to ensure the integrity of the study. Overall, the methodology provided a solid framework for collecting and analyzing data aligned with the study objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

The findings of this study are presented, analyzed and discussed in this chapter. Narratives have been used to highlight and discuss the results of the qualitative data extracted from the data collection instruments, while charts, graphs and figures have been embedded into these to give additional insight, context, or corroboration. The findings have been discussed in light of previous studies, showing their similarities and contrasts with this study and existing theories.

Generally, this study sought to analyze the utilization of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections, with a focus on program content and its effectiveness, peace messaging, editorial policies, and operational challenges.

4.1 Response Rate

The response rate refers to the number of people who filled in the data collection tools and returned them successfully, divided by the total targeted sample size (Barnett, Torous, Reeder, Baker & Onnela, 2020). The study targeted a total of forty nine (49) journalists and seventy (70) listeners, totaling to one hundred and nineteen (119) respondents. Only thirty five (35) out of the forty nine (49) radio station staff were responsive as shown in table 4.1. Additionally, only fifty (50) out of the seventy (70) targeted listeners participated in the study. The study also targeted 70 listeners. Out of the 70 targeted listeners, only 50 participated in the study. This represented a total response rate of

71.43%. According to Sammut, Griscti and Norman (2021), a response rate of 50% for a scientific study is acceptable, valid and reliable.

Table 4.1 Response Rate

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|
| Responded | 85 | 71.43% |
| Did not respond | 34 | 28.57% |
| TOTALS | 49 | 100% |

4.2 Establishment of existing faith-based radio programs aired and their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya’s 2022 general elections

The first objective of this study was to determine existing faith-based radio programs aired and their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya’s 2022 general elections. This entailed establishing the existing radio programs of faith-based radio stations that were geared towards strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya, as well as their effectiveness. Establishing this was essential because radio programs that focus on educating the public about election matters, advocating for peaceful coexistence during general elections, and providing platforms for reconciliation and dialogue have the potential of contributing towards strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

4.2.1 Existence of Radio Programs Dedicated to Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents to questionnaires, who were journalists, were required to discuss whether their respective faith-based radio stations had programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. From the interviews, it emerged that all the sampled faith-based radio stations had programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya as shown in figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1: Radio Programs Purely Dedicated to Strategic Peacebuilding

At Sayare FM, the radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya included Tudumishe Amani, Heri Amani, Mwanadamu Hodari, Zuia Noma, and Kenya ni Moja. Sayare FM also has programs such as Jukwaa la Gumzo where political and religious leaders were frequently invited and offered a platform to hold discussions that call for peace during electioneering periods. According to the key informants at the station, these leaders were given the opportunity to use their

popularity and moral authority to communicate messages of unity, dialogue, reconciliation, and non-violence, significantly contributing to the overall peacebuilding efforts of the station during the election periods.

According to one of the key informants:

Yes, we have several programs such as 'Tudumishe Amani' (Let us uphold peace), Heri Amani (Peace is better), Mwanadamu Hodari (A courageous human), Zuia Noma (Prevent chaos), and Kenya ni Moja (Kenya is one) which air frequently during election periods. The programs feature discussions from presenters and religious leaders on the importance of peace, tolerance, and unity, especially during elections. We also bring in community members and listeners to share their experiences and views on peaceful coexistence (KI 001)

At MBCI Radio, the radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya included Macheo Show, Jaramandia and Mwangi Uongozini. Additionally, religious, political and opinion leaders were occasionally invited for talk shows at the station to call for peace before, during and after elections. According to the key informants, these leaders had significant influence over their followers and could meritoriously communicate messages of peace and unity. Radio drama shows intended to engage listeners emotionally, convey important peace messages, and influence the audiences' attitudes and behaviors towards peacebuilding were also broadcasted on a regular basis.

Another respondent noted that:

“Yes we have programs like Macheo Show (Sunrise show), Jaramandia, and Mwanga Uongozini (Light in leadership) focused on peacebuilding at election times. We invite religious, political, and opinion leaders who we believe have a strong influence on their followers” (KI 002).

At Biblia Husema Broadcasting, the key informants stated that there were two radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. However, none of the informants stated the exact names of the two programs. Nonetheless, during all programs aired at Biblia Husema Broadcasting, a call for peace is issued on a daily basis before, during and after the general elections. The station also invites and hosts special influential guests to advocate for peace among its listeners. Generally, programming during the general elections period at Biblia Husema Broadcasting is usually geared towards the promotion of peace. According to the station, it is vital for radio stations to align all their programming towards encouraging peace and averting conflict during general elections in Kenya.

A respondent was quoted as saying:

“At Biblia Husema Broadcasting, every program carries a message of peace—before, during, and after the general elections” (KI 003).

At Radio Waumini, the radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya included Amani Imani and Mdahalo wa Utawala. Additionally, Radio Waumini also held interview sessions with opinion leaders

to lead the peace conversation during the general elections period. Special messages from Bishops of the Catholic Church calling for peace during the general elections period were also aired during regular programming. According to the key informants at the station, these messages can be effective in advocating for peace during general elections because they are grounded in Christian teachings that emphasize peace, unity, love, and non-violence.

According to a respondent:

“There are programs like Amani Imani and Mdahalo wa Utawala focused on peacebuilding, alongside interviews with opinion leaders and peace messages from Catholic Bishops” (KI 004).

At Upendo FM, the radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya included Rauka, Upendo Express, and Tulia. Outside these programs, Upendo FM was largely engaged in advocating for peace during general elections by recording messages of peace from different community stakeholders and regularly airing them during the general election period. According to the key informants at the station, leveraging on the influence and moral authority of key stakeholders such as community elders, religious leaders, political figures, women’s groups and youth leaders can foster a culture of peace during general elections. Additionally, Upendo FM had on several occasions organized peace caravans that comprised opinion shapers and leaders before, during and after elections, leading it to be voted the top Catholic radio station in Kenya due to its unmatched commitment to peace during general elections.

A respondent indicated that:

“We try to promote peace through programs like Rauka (Arise), Upendo Express, and Tulia (Relax). The programs spread peace messages from community and religious leaders” (KI 005).

These findings agree with those of the study conducted by Barry and Pul (2019) which established that radio programs have the ability to discourage violence by advocating for peaceful behavior since they are highly trusted by their listeners. Also, according to Korir and Nabushawo (2021), programs by faith-based radio broadcasters purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections also have the potential to foster long-term peace beyond elections, promote inclusivity by ensuring diverse voices are heard, and counter misinformation which is rampant during elections by providing factual information. Their ability to drive conversations revolving around peace, justice, dialogue and reconciliation, if well utilized, can bear meaningful results in peacebuilding during general elections.

4.2.2 Target Audience for Peace-Focused Radio Programs

The key informants were required to identify the target audience for their radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The target audience for the peace-focused radio programs were identified as: the youth (51.4%); the general public (25.7%); leaders (11.4%), voters (8.6%); and parents (2.9%) as shown in figure 4.2.

One respondent noted that:

“The youth were our main target for the peace programs. Actually, over half of our efforts were focused on them, followed by the general public, leaders, voters, and even parents, since they influence their children” (KI 006).

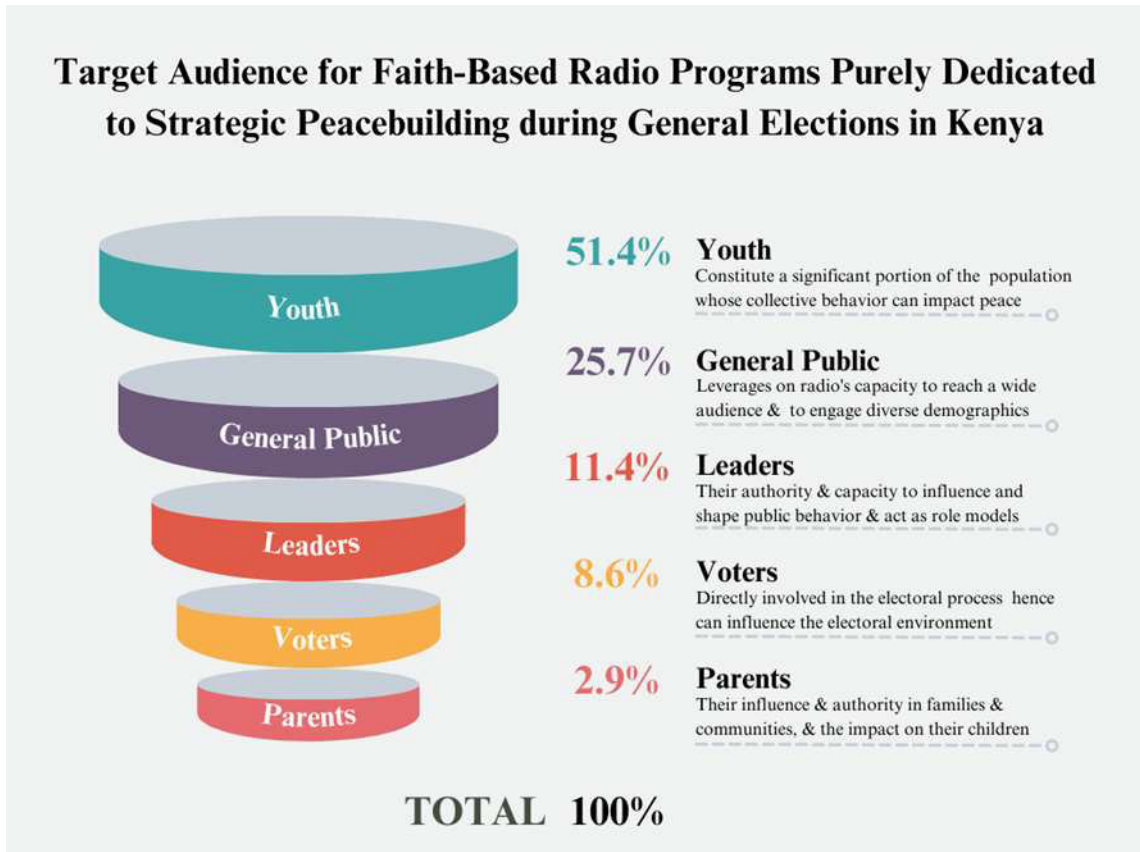


Figure 4.2: Target Audience for Radio Programs Purely Dedicated to Strategic Peacebuilding

These findings support the UNDP (2023) Project Report on youth participation to sustain peace during electoral processes which encourages focusing on the youth as the target audience for radio programs dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

The report notes that the youth are a crucial target audience due to their noteworthy

influence and active participation in contemporary political processes. The respondents' justification for identifying the youth as their largest target audience was because of their demographic significance.

The youth make up a significant percentage of the Kenyan population and are rising up to be at the forefront of political processes and activities (UNDP, 2023). According to UNDP (2023), the youth are influential in their peer groups and communities and can easily mobilize peers to take part in peace initiatives. Moreover, since the youth will become the leaders of the future, focusing on them as the main target audience in radio peace programs prepares them to become responsible leaders who are highly likely to value long-term peace in future. Involving the youth in peace initiatives not only contributes to peaceful elections but also plays a significant role in shaping young people to be more peace-oriented from an early age.

Focusing on the general public as target audience for radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections is supported by Shafiei and Overton (2023). According to Shafiei & Overton (2023), such an approach takes advantage of the wide reach of radio to engage diverse populations, thus promoting a general culture of peace, responsible civic participation, and non-violence, while raising the possibility of shaping public opinion. Leaders such as politicians, religious leaders, community elders, and other influential personalities are also key target audience because of their capacity to influence public behavior. Leaders are considered role models, decision makers and influential authority figures.

According to Min, Bai, Wang, Grzeslo and Jayakar (2022), radio broadcasters should target voters in their peace programming. It is important to engage and educate the electorate due to their direct influence on the outcome of general elections. Furthermore, informed voters are highly likely to make better and informed decisions regarding peaceful behavior during elections, thus contributing to an overall state of peace. Targeting parents as key audiences for radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections is crucial because of the influence they have in their respective families and communities. Parents can shape the behaviors and attitudes of their children, making their involvement in peacebuilding crucial (Fairey, 2023).

4.2.3 Faith-Based Content Intended to Promote Strategic Peacebuilding

The key informants were required to pinpoint the content and teachings of their radio broadcasts that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The content and teachings identified by the key informants revolved around the following themes: religious sermons that emphasize the importance of peace (63.3%); music and radio drama containing peace messages (16.7%); hosting peace-centered talk shows and discussions (10%); youth and community engagement programs (6.7%); and emphasizing on the detriments of lack of peace (3.3%).

According to a respondent:

“Most of our peace broadcasts were actually religious sermons that focused on the importance of peace in society. We also used music, drama, and talk shows to

spread the message, especially to the youth and communities that listen to us” (KI 007)

Majority of the respondents (63.3%) said that their faith-based radio stations used religious sermons that emphasized the importance of peace as the main content intended to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. They were followed by 16.7% of the respondents who said that their radio stations used music and radio drama containing peace messages, 10% who said that they hosted peace-centered talk shows and discussions, 6.7% who used youth and community engagement programs, and 3.3% who placed emphasis on the detriments of lack of peace as the main content intended to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya as shown in figure 4.3.

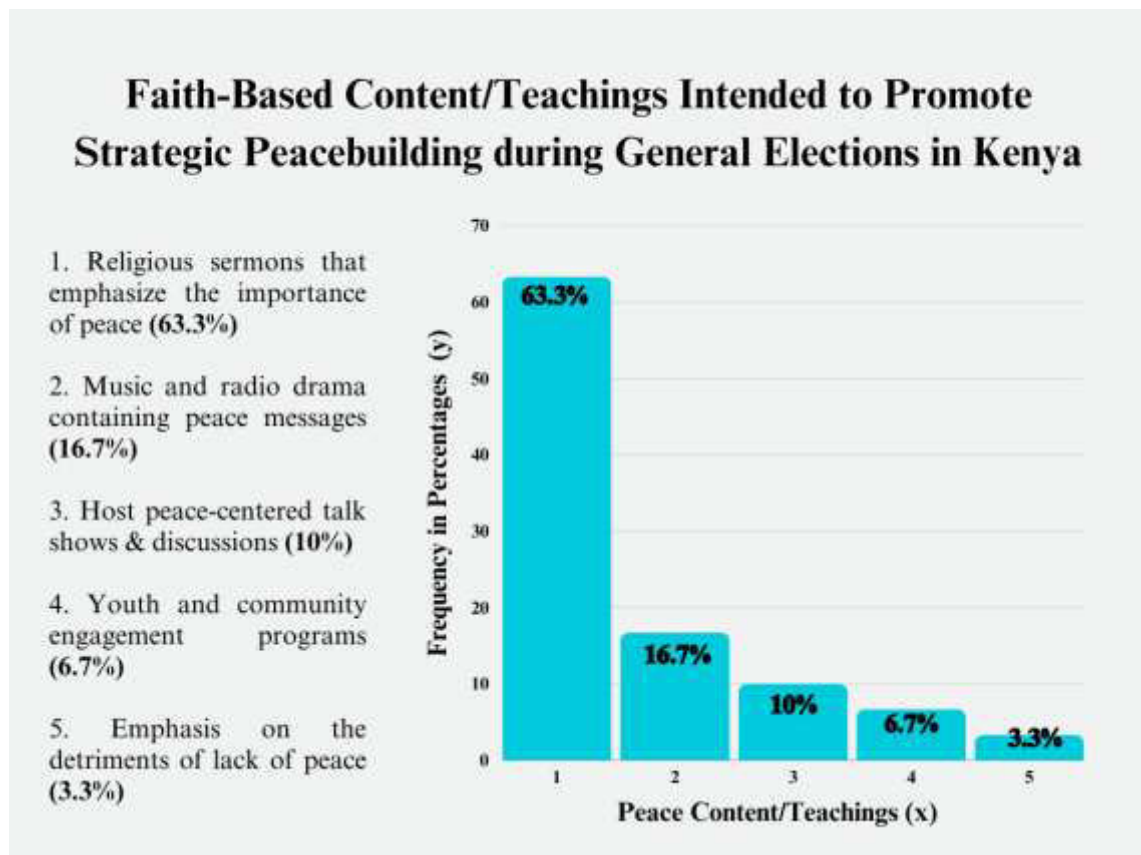


Figure 4.3: Faith-Based Content Intended to Promote Strategic Peacebuilding

It has been demonstrated by Omer and Tarusarira (2023) that religious sermons that emphasize the importance of peace can be powerful tools for promoting strategic peacebuilding during election periods. Considering the significant influence religious leaders have over their followers, conveying peace-focused messages can nurture a peaceful electoral atmosphere. Peace-focused sermons usually lay their emphasis on scriptural foundations revolving around themes and messages of brotherhood, love for ones neighbors, reconciliation, forgiveness, non-violence, and unity.

These findings are also in line with the assertions of Deacy (2019) who states that music and radio drama can be powerful tools to convey peace messages and promote strategic peacebuilding. The engaging and entertaining nature of music and drama aired on radio gives them the ability to reach and touch a broad audience, including listeners who may not interact with traditional peacebuilding activities. According to Potter (2023), hosting peace-centered talk shows and discussions provides a platform for open dialogue which can influence public opinion towards peaceful conduct before, during and after the elections.

The UNDP (2023) Project Report on youth participation to sustain peace during electoral processes supports youth and community engagement programs because of their ability to empower the youth and the broader community to actively and peacefully participate in the electoral process. Involving the youth in peace ambassador programs, youth dialogue forums and peacebuilding trainings has borne positive fruits in more than 100 countries supported by UNDP's youth empowerment for sustainable development and peace project.

4.2.4 Effectiveness of Faith-Based Radio Programs in Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of their radio programs in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. Majority of the respondents, accounting for 91.4%, stated that the radio programs aired by their respective radio stations were effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. 8.6% of the respondents stated that they were not sure whether the radio programs aired by their respective stations were effective or not in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya as shown in figure 4.4.

A respondent stated that:

“I think the programs were definitely effective. Almost all of us agreed on that”

(KI 008)

Effectiveness of Faith-Based Radio Programs in Promoting Strategic Peacebuilding during General Elections in Kenya

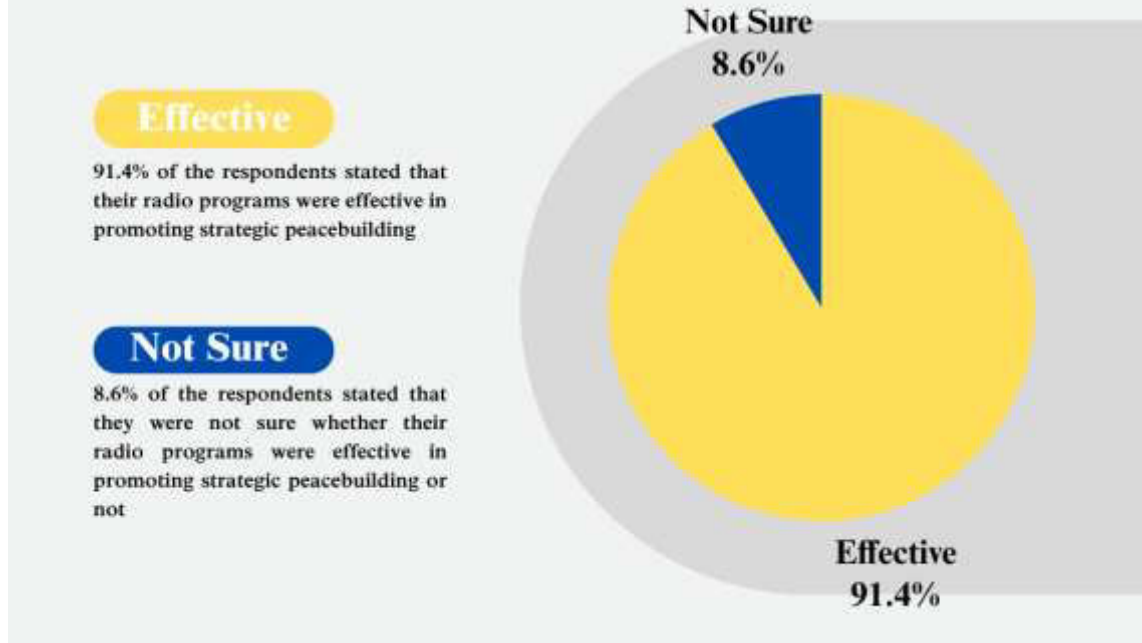


Figure 4.4: Effectiveness of Faith-Based Radio Programs in Promoting Strategic Peacebuilding

According to the respondents at Sayare FM, their radio programs have been effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding, particularly in the 2022 general elections because a lot of change was witnessed in people’s attitudes and behaviors towards maintaining peace in Eldoret. They stated that in the run up to the 2022 general elections, all Christian radio stations in Uasin Gishu County came together and held a live show simultaneously to call for peace before, during and after elections. The listenership of this live show was overwhelmingly large. One of the radio presenters at Sayare FM stated as follows:

Yes the programs are very effective in that there has been a lot of change even during the last election, many radio stations came together to campaign for peace.

For instance, in Uasin Gishu, all Christian stations came to do a live show simultaneously in order to call for peace. The number of listeners and positive feedback to our call for peace was quite overwhelming (KI 009).

This was the general view of the other respondents at Sayare FM. For instance, the one respondent stated that:

“Yes, the programs have been effective because some rival groups were brought together by the station and shook hands to promote peace” (KI 010).

Another respondent stated that:

“The programs are effective since hotspots were frequently visited by the station and most people agreed to maintain peace as urged” (KI 011).

In response to the question on the effectiveness of their radio programs in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya, one respondent at Sayare FM stated that:

“Yes, they have been effective since most listeners confess that they have tried to live in peace according to the scriptural teachings that they receive from the station, by emulating how Jesus lived.” (KI 012).

At MBCI Radio, the general view of the respondents from the focus group discussion was that their radio programs had been effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. According to one of the respondents:

Our radio programs have been very effective in promoting positive behavior change as seen in the speech and conduct of the target audience after information dissemination regarding peace. Many of our listeners make reference to our religious programs on social media calling for peace (KI 013).

Those that were not sure of the effectiveness of their radio programs in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya failed to give reasons for their responses.

“I am not really really sure 100% if the programs worked or not. I am not able to accurately judge that” (KI 014).

These findings resonate with those of Paul and Soukup (2023) whose study revealed that faith-based radio and television programs have proven to be highly effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. These programs have leveraged on religion’s moral authority and the popularity of religious institutions to preach and foster a culture of peace and unity. Regularly broadcasting messages of peace ensures that the target audience get continuous reminders of the importance of peace, particularly during volatile times such as the election period.

4.2.5 Mechanisms to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Radio Programs on Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to state whether their respective radio stations had mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of their radio programs in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. Majority of the respondents, accounting for 94.3%, stated that their respective radio stations had mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of their radio programs in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. Only 5.7% of the respondents stated that their radio stations did

not have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of their radio programs in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya as shown in figure 4.5.

One respondent stated that:

“Yes, we do have ways of checking if our programs are truly working. We have tried to put mechanisms in place for that” (KI 015).



Figure 4.5: Mechanisms to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Radio Programs towards Promoting Peacebuilding

The mechanisms used to evaluate the effectiveness of radio programs intended to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya were identified as: audience

feedback mechanisms (82.6%); monitoring peace indicators (8.8%); impact assessment studies (4.3%); and broadcast surveys (4.3%).

“We mostly rely on audience feedback to know if our peace messages are making a difference. That’s the main way we are able to tell if we are doing a good job or not” (KI 016).

Majority of the respondents, representing 82.6%, stated that they relied on audience feedback mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of their radio programs towards promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. These audience feedback mechanisms consisted of social media reactions by listeners, call-in segments during live shows, feedback from regular listener panels, and Short Messaging Service (SMS) polling as shown in figure 4.6.

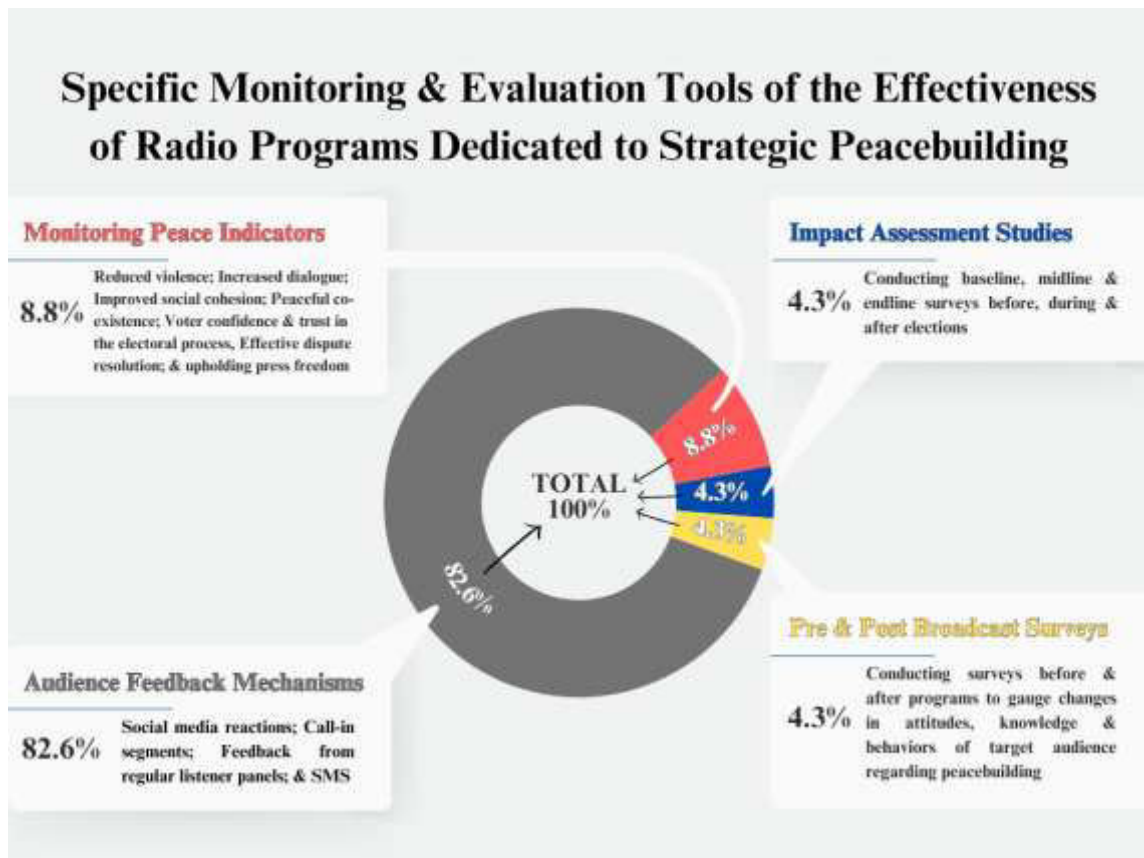


Figure 4.6: Specific Evaluation Tools of the Effectiveness of Radio Programs

8.8% of the respondents used peace indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of their radio programs towards promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. This strategy involved monitoring peace indicators such as reduced occurrences of violence in their areas of broadcast during the elections period, increased dialogue among conflicting parties, improved social cohesion, peaceful co-existence between warring groups, voter confidence and trust in the electoral process, effective dispute resolution mechanisms, and upholding of freedom of the press as shown in figure 4.8.

4.3% of the respondents indicated that they rely on impact assessment studies of their radio programs to evaluate their effectiveness towards promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. This involved conducting baseline, midline and endline

studies. The respondents that use this evaluation strategy reported that the baseline studies were usually conducted at the start of the election period to establish the perceptions of strategic peacebuilding among the target audience. Midline surveys were usually conducted as the electoral process was ongoing in order to track the progress and effectiveness of strategic peacebuilding efforts of the respective radio stations. Lastly, the baseline studies were conducted after the elections to determine the impact of the radio programs towards strategic peacebuilding as shown in figure 4.8.

Lastly, 4.3% of the respondents reported that they use pre-broadcast and post-broadcast surveys to evaluate their effectiveness towards promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. This was achieved by conducting surveys prior to and after the radio programs to gauge any meaningful changes in the attitudes, knowledge and behaviors of the target audience in relation to peacebuilding during general elections. Also, focus group discussions with regular listeners were occasionally held by these stations to acquire in-depth feedback on the impact of their radio programs in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections as shown in figure 4.8. This enabled the respective radio stations to take corrective measures in order to improve the impact of their radio programs in strategic peacebuilding.

These findings concur with those of Mwangi (2020) who investigated the role of media in conflict management in general elections in Kenya. According to Mwangi (2020), the media should constantly evaluate its peacebuilding efforts during general elections. This can be achieved by putting mechanisms in place to gather feedback from their target audience about the impact of their programs on peacebuilding during general elections. The media should also monitor peace indicators regularly in order to evaluate the

effectiveness of their programming towards peacebuilding during general elections. Evaluation of peace programs and initiatives will enable the radio stations to assess their effectiveness, measure their impact, plan strategically, allocate adequate resources, ensure continuous improvement, and inform future programming (Mwangi, 2020).

These findings contrast with those of Demuyakor (2023) who opines that proper evaluation of the effectiveness of radio programs towards peacebuilding should heavily rely on training and capacity building of radio broadcasters. According to Demuyakor (2023), peace initiatives by radio broadcasters can be made most effective if radio broadcasters are adequately trained in conflict-sensitive reporting and peace journalism. Ndhlovu (2021) also supports these findings by stating that empowering radio broadcasters through training and capacity building on peace journalism during general elections is highly likely to lead to conflict transformation and peace.

4.2.6 Role of Religion and Faith-Based Radio in Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to identify the role played by religion and faith-based radio in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The respondents identified the following to be the roles of religion and faith-based radio in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya: providing education and advocacy for peace (51.4%); providing spiritual and ethical guidance (25.8%); community mobilization (11.4%); building social cohesion (8.5%); and mediation and conflict resolution (2.9%) as shown in figure 4.7.

Role of Religion and Faith-Based Radio in Strategic Peacebuilding during General Elections in Kenya

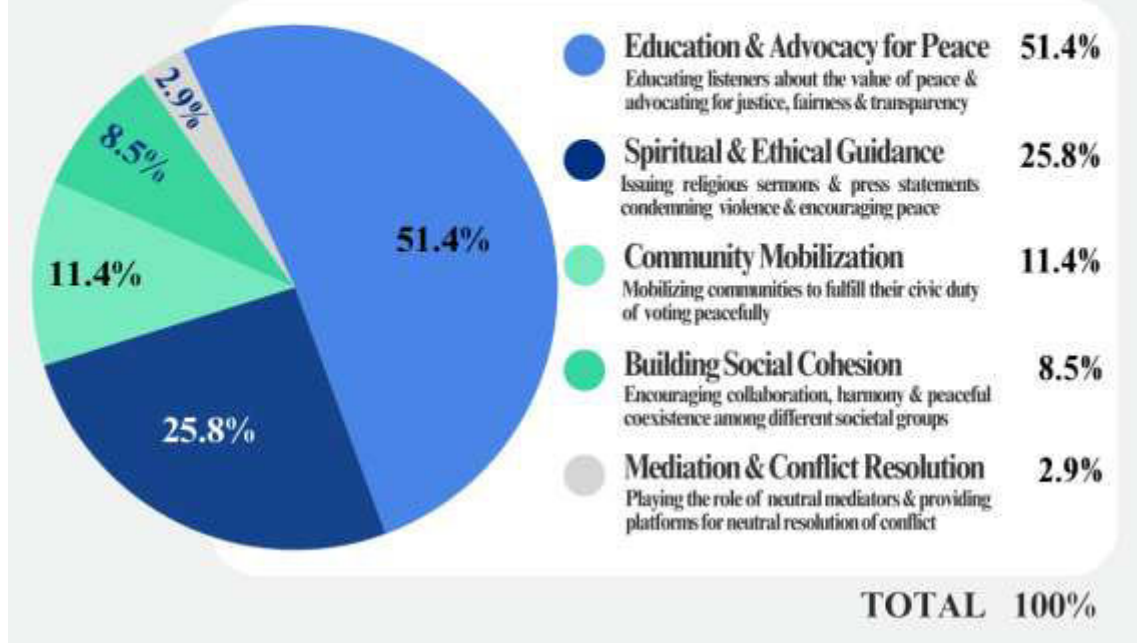


Figure 4.7: Role of Religion and Faith-Based Radio in Strategic Peacebuilding

One respondent said:

“Faith-based radio mainly helps by educating people about peace and advocating for it. It also offers spiritual guidance and brings communities together” (KI 017).

A different respondent stated:

“Our stations play a big role in peacebuilding through religious teaching, spiritual direction, community outreach, and even helping resolve small conflicts” (KI 018).

Majority of the respondents, representing 51.4%, stated that the main role played by religion and faith-based radio in strategic peacebuilding during general elections was the provision of education and advocacy for peace. Specifically, religious leaders used faith-based radio stations associated with their respective denominations to educate their listeners and the general public about the value of maintaining peace during general elections. The respondents also reported that religious leaders used faith-based radio as a platform to advocate for peace, fairness, transparency, and justice, which are all important ingredients in addressing underlying grievances that easily lead to lack of peace and electoral violence. Faith-based radio stations have been used by religious leaders to issue religious sermons and public statements that emphasize peace, transparency, and respect for democratic processes, and tolerance for one another.

25.8% of the respondents identified the provision of spiritual and ethical guidance as another role played by religion and faith-based radio programs in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The respondents stated that this has been achieved through issuance of religious sermons and press statements from religious leaders condemning acts of violence, and reiterating the importance of peace during general election periods. It was noted by the respondents that religious leaders and institutions have also used faith-based radio stations to encourage ethical behavior before, during and after elections, and also call for unity, fairness, integrity and honesty, lack of which can lead to electoral malpractices and contribute to the general lack of peace in the country.

11.4% of the respondents stated that religion and faith-based radio programs played the role of community mobilization, thus contributing to strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya. Religious institutions and leaders used faith-based

radio as a platform to mobilize community members to fulfill their civic duty of actively and peacefully participating in the electoral process. The respondents noted that their respective faith-based radio stations usually enjoyed a high level of trust among their listeners. As such, they leveraged on their religious influence to conduct voter education and encourage civic engagement.

8.5% of the respondents indicated that religion and faith-based radio programs contributed to building social cohesion, thereby promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The respondents noted that conflicts and violence before, during and after elections usually arose as a result of differences in political ideologies, political party affiliation, candidate preference, religion, and tribal and ethnic affiliation. As such, the respondents stated that it was imperative for these differences to be appreciated, and for their respective radio stations to encourage collaboration that can bring about unity within the different groups.

Lastly, a minority of the respondents, representing 2.9%, identified mediation and conflict resolution as a role played by religion and faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. These group of respondents stated that religious leaders ought to play the role of neutral mediators and peacekeepers whenever electoral disputes arise. They are believed to have the ability to bring conflicting parties together to negotiation tables for dialogue in case of election disputes. This has been achieved through a number of platforms, including faith-based radio stations.

These findings resonate with the conclusions of Taiwo, Adamu and Fatele (2023) who reiterate the significant role of religion in strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

Taiwo, Adamu and Fatele (2023) state that religion can take advantage of its moral authority to provide education and advocacy for peace, mediate and resolve conflict, provide spiritual and ethical guidance, mobilize communities towards peace, and bring about social cohesion. Religious sermons also play an important role in disseminating messages of peace since religious leaders continue to rely on the media as a platform to reach and preach peace to their followers (Young & Jones, 2022).

4.2.7 Audience Engagement/Participation in Peace Programming

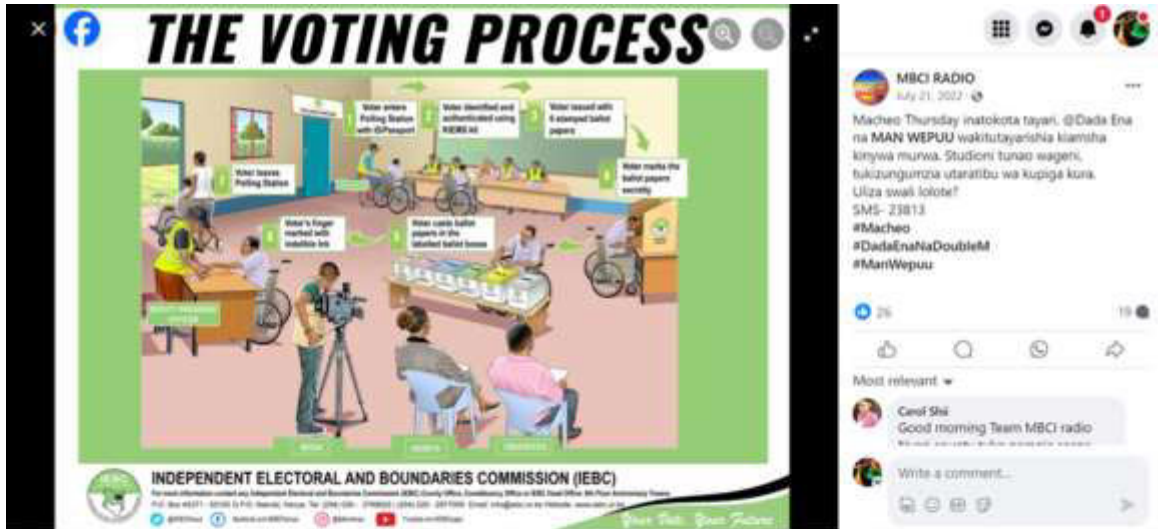
The respondents were asked to state the extent to which their respective radio stations ensured audience engagement in their peace programming. The following were identified as the ways in which the radio stations ensured that their audience engaged and participated in their peace programming: studio panel discussions (44%); call-in segments (20%); SMS (16%); social media engagement (12%); and on-the-ground engagement (8%).

One respondent stated that:

“We try to involve our listeners as much as possible, mainly through panel discussions, call-ins, and even SMS or social media” (KI 019).

Majority of the respondents, representing 44%, stated that studio panel discussions were the most utilized strategy in ensuring audience engagement and participation in peace programming. This was achieved by inviting listeners, either in person or virtually to their studios to participate in debates and panel discussions about the importance of maintaining peace before, during and after elections. The respondents also reported that they applied this strategy by facilitating interactive dialogue sessions between their listeners and

community leaders, peace advocates and other relevant stakeholders. During such sessions, issues revolving around peacebuilding such as tolerance, mediation, and conflict resolution were discussed in order to encourage listeners to uphold peace. Figure 4.8 shows how one of the sampled faith-based radio stations, MBCI Radio, held studio panel discussions on different occasions, with guests and officials from the IEBC and security agents from the Ministry of Interior and National Administration as part of its audience engagement strategies.



MBCI RADIO
July 21, 2022

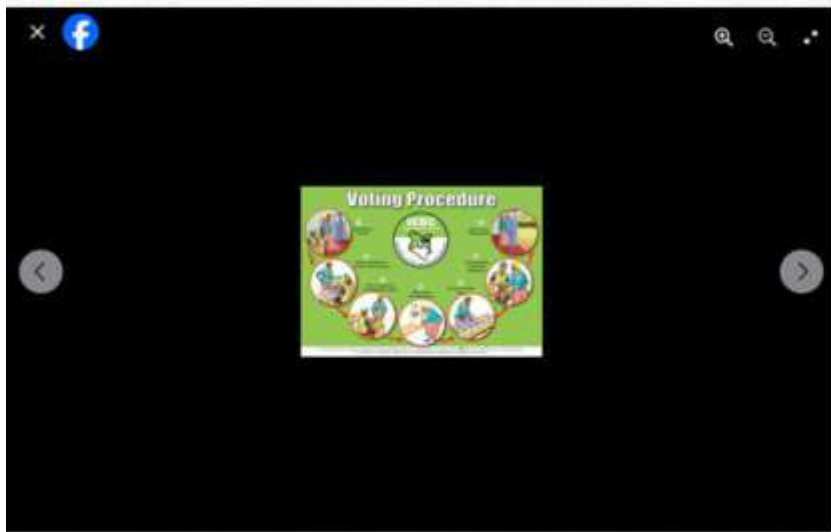
Macheo Thursday inatokota tayari. @DadaEna na MAN WEPUU wakikutayesha kiamsha kinywa murwa. Studio ni tunao wageni, tukuzungurza utaratibu wa kupiga kura. Uliza swali lolote!
SMS- 23813
#Macheo
#DadaEnaNaDoubleM
#ManiWepuu

26 19

Most relevant

Cecil Shi
Good morning Team MBCI radio

Write a comment...



MBCI RADIO
August 8, 2022

Je wewe kama mpiga kura una swali?
Uliza swali lako kwa manakata wa IEBC studio ni

37 12

Most relevant

Lenard Wambia
Kwale county tunad in

Like Reply

Mr Kinzoo Ka
Tafadhali wafimu msharibu kura kesho
Tiki weka kidogo
Hii ni ballot papers si homework

Write a comment...



Figure 4.8: Evidence of Studio Panel Discussions

20% of the respondents identified call-in segments as a way that was used by their radio stations to ensure audience engagement and participation in peace programming. Here, listeners were allowed to call the radio studios and have live discussions where they shared their views, asked questions, and participated in discussions that revolved around peace-related topics. The radio stations that used this strategy to engage their audience also reported that they invited experts on civic matters to answer pertinent questions on civic and election matters from their listeners live on air.

16% of the respondents stated that their respective radio stations relied on SMS to engage their audience in peace programming and ensure their active participation. This was achieved by allowing listeners to send in their peace-related comments, questions, suggestions and messages via SMS. These comments, messages, suggestions and questions were read out during the programs and addressed accordingly. SMSs received were also used by these radio stations to conduct surveys and polls that gathered and shared the opinions and feedback of their listeners regarding the maintenance of peace during the general election periods.

12% of the respondents stated that their respective radio stations relied on social media to engage and interact with their audience, and ensure their participation in peace programming. Common social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), and Instagram were used to hold crucial conversations on peace. Listeners were invited to join these conversations and play an active role in calling for peace during elections. Radio programs were also streamed live by some radio stations on their social media pages to enhance listener experience and make the radio programs more interactive. This also gave the radio stations an opportunity to engage with their listeners in real time, and respond to

their comments and feedback instantaneously as shown in figures 4.9, 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 respectively.

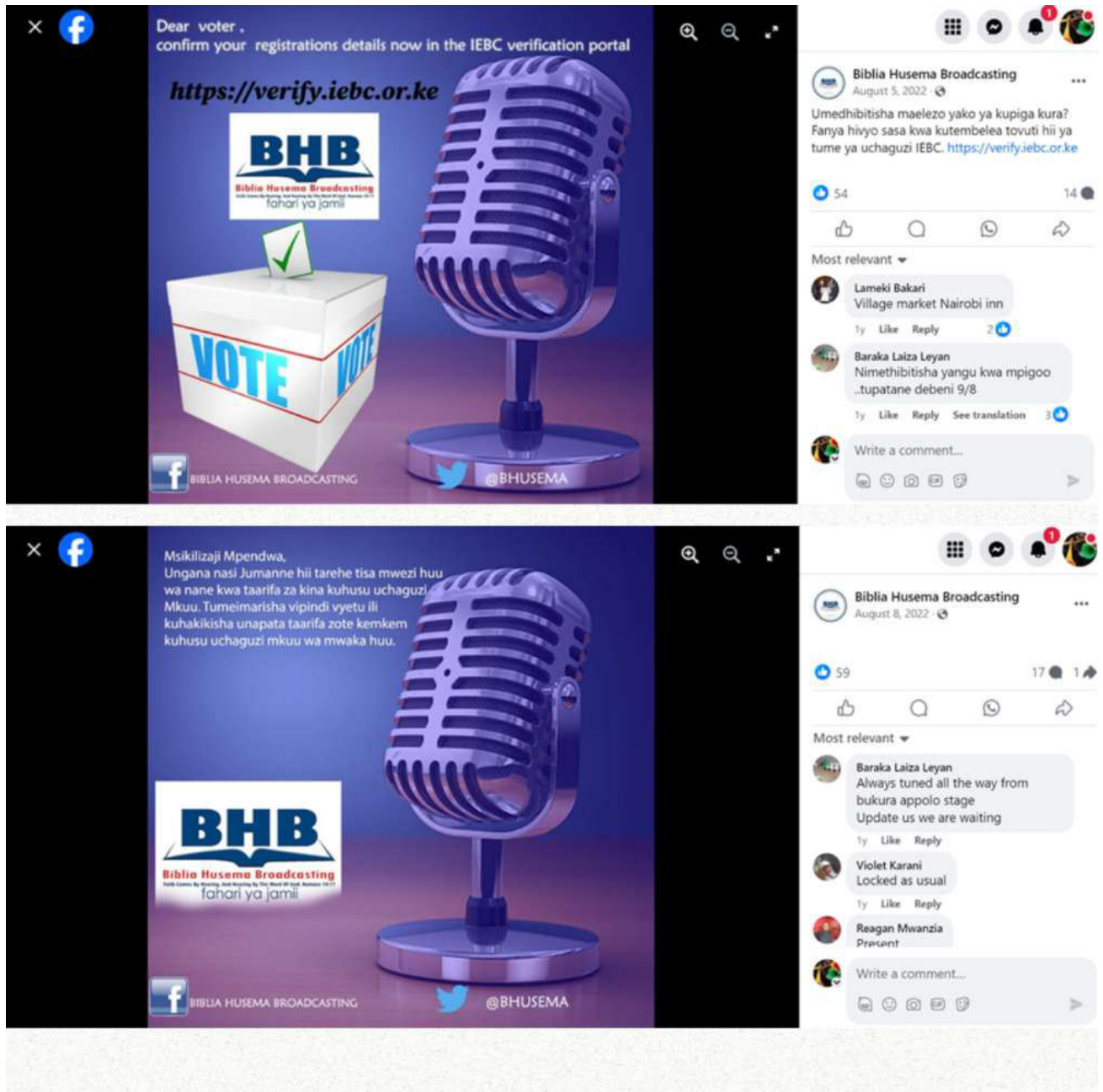


Figure 4.9: Social Media Engagement for Peace by Biblia Husema Broadcasting



Figure 4.10: Social Media Engagement for Peace by MBCI Radio

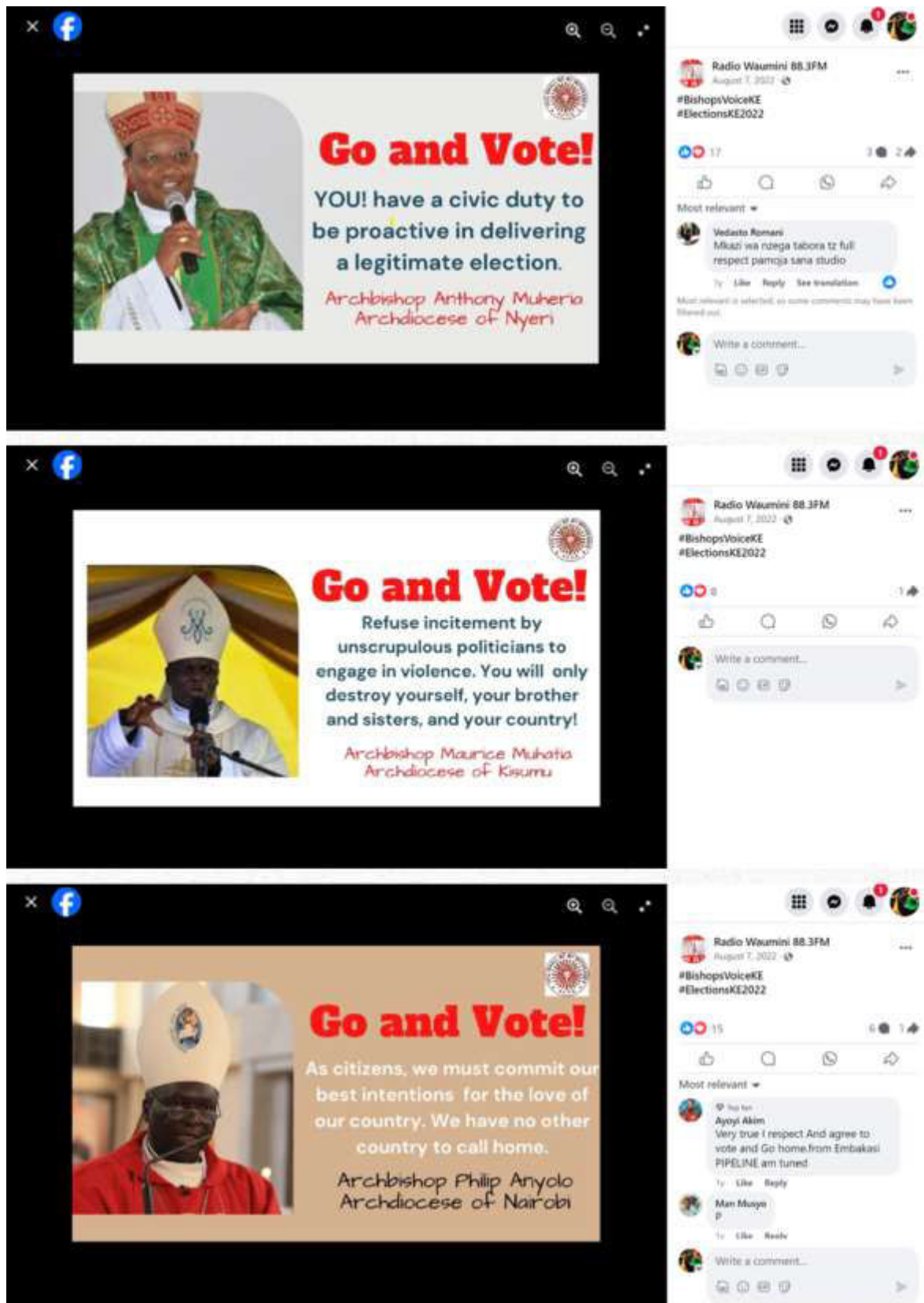


Figure 4.11: Social Media Engagement for Peace by Radio Waumini 88.3FM

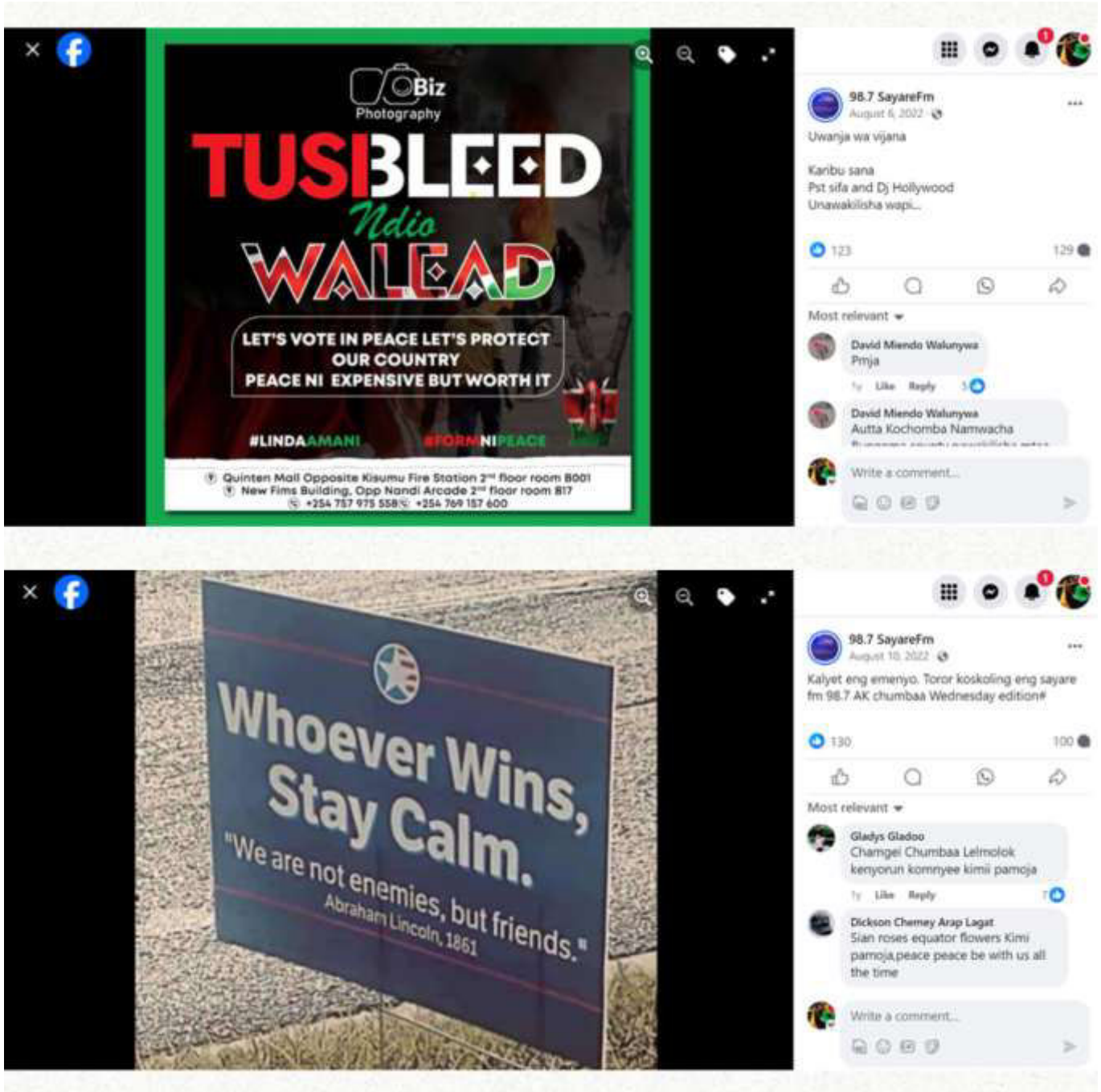


Figure 4.12: Social Media Engagement for Peace by Sayare FM

One respondent said:

“We use platforms like Facebook, Twitter which is formerly X, and Instagram to hold peace conversations. Some of our programs are streamed live so we can engage with listeners in real time and respond to their feedback” (KI 020).

Another respondent stated that:

“Social media really helps us make the programs interactive. People comment during live streams, and we respond right away—it makes the message of peace more powerful” (KI 021).

Lastly, 8% of the respondents stated that they utilized on-the-ground engagement channels to interact with their audience one on one in order to ensure that they are actively involved in their peace programs. The radio stations that utilized this strategy stated that they occasionally organized community events and broadcasted from different locations where they engaged and interacted directly with their target audience. Peace events and rallies were also organized by some radio stations such as Radio Waumini 88.3 FM peace ambassadors walk as shown in figure 4.13.



Figure 4.13: Radio Waumini 88.3 FM Peace Ambassadors Walk

One key informant noted that:

“Sometimes we take the station to the people. We go directly to where our listeners are. We have done this through peace events, live broadcasts, and community outreach. It helps us connect with the audience directly” (KI 022).

Another respondent noted that:

“We don’t just stay in the studio. We organize peace walks and community events so we can meet our listeners face-to-face and involve them more” (KI 023).

4.2.8 Role of the Government in Supporting Faith-Based Radio Programs that Promote Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to indicate the role which the government in order to support faith-based radio programs that promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections

in Kenya. The respondents indicated that the government can play a multitude of roles to support faith-based radio programs that promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya, including: financial support (56%); creation of peace-promoting content (20%); collaborations and partnerships for peace (12%); holding peace campaigns (8%); and policy development (4%) as shown in figure 4.14.

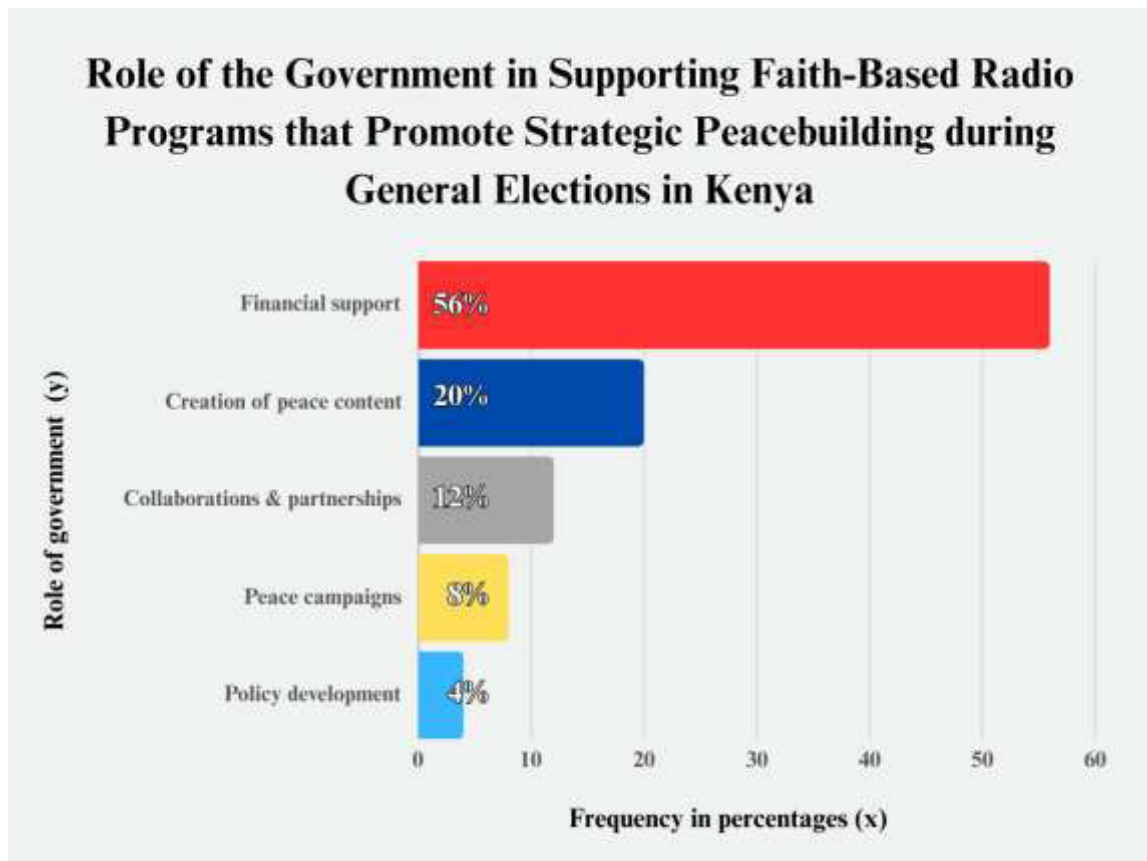


Figure 4.14: Role of Government in Supporting Faith-Based Radio Programs

According to one respondent:

“The government can really help by funding peace programs, partnering with us and other radio stations, and even creating content that promotes peace during elections. But financial support is a big one” (KI 024).

Majority of the respondents, representing 56%, indicated that the government should focus mostly on financially supporting faith-based radio programs so that they can be able to effectively fulfill the responsibility of strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. Any responsible government should ensure that peace prevails at all times. As part of their broader election peacebuilding budget, governments should be able to dedicate funds and resources that can support the production and dissemination of peace-oriented messages and content, especially for faith-based radio stations. According to the respondents, such assistance can also come in the form of technical support such as training faith-based radio personnel on conflict-sensitive reporting. Doing this can greatly contribute to the effectiveness of strategic peacebuilding efforts by faith-based radio stations during general elections.

20% of the respondents stated that the government should support their respective radio stations by creating and sharing with them content that strategically promotes peacebuilding during general elections. The respondents were of the opinion that peace can be realized if the government collaborates with their respective radio stations to generate content that emphasizes non-violence and focuses on peace, tolerance and unity. Such content could be in form of educational programs that educate members of the public on the importance of maintaining peace during the election period, as well as highlighting the consequences of violence in order to deter it. Creating messages of peace by key government officials and collaborating with the faith-based radio stations to disseminate them was also stated as one of the ways in which the government can help in peace-related content generation.

12% of the respondents noted that collaborations and partnerships with the government in peace initiatives could support their role as radio broadcasters in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The respondents stated that it is crucial for the government to collaborate with key stakeholders and religious organizations to support faith-based radio peacebuilding initiatives. This can be done by holding joint peace initiatives or campaigns that are intended to promote peace during general elections in order to boost their overall impact. The government can also participate in meaningful engagements with religious leaders and institutions, who often times tend to be very influential to their followers, by ensuring that they preach messages of peace and unity during general elections.

8% of the respondents reported that the government should be more involved in holding peace campaigns to support the peacebuilding programs of faith-based radio broadcasters during general elections in Kenya. According to the respondents, the government ought to leverage on the wide reach and trust among the followers of faith-based radio stations to participate and support peace campaigns during the election period. The government should organize and finance nationwide peace campaigns, and utilize the various media platforms such as faith-based radio stations to reach different segments of the population with messages of peace and unity.

4% of the respondents stated that the government should focus on developing policies that recognize and support the role played by their respective faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. These respondents felt that it was prudent for the government to come up with supportive policies that create an enabling environment for faith-based radio stations to operate freely in the promotion of

peace during general elections. Such policies should be focused on requiring all faith-based radio stations to focus on peace for specific periods of time during their programming, protecting them from political interferences, and safeguarding freedom of the press.

4.2.9 Conflict Analysis to Determine the Underlying Causes of Conflict during General Elections in Kenya

The respondents were required to state whether their respective radio stations had ever conducted conflict analysis to determine the underlying causes of conflict during general elections in Kenya. Conducting a thorough conflict analysis to determine the underlying causes of conflict during general elections involves an examination of the various factors that contribute to tension and violence during general elections. None of the faith-based radio stations reported to have ever conducted an exclusive conflict analysis to determine the underlying causes of conflict during general elections in Kenya.

One respondent said:

“Conflict analysis...To be honest, we have never really carried out a proper conflict analysis. We’ve never done a serious deep dive into what really causes election-related violence. We simply try to address conflict when it arises” (KI 025).

A different respondent opined that:

“Well, we haven’t done any exclusive conflict analysis as a station. We talk about peace, yes, but we’ve not formally studied what causes the conflict” (KI 026).

Adanlawo and Reddy (2020) opined that it is prudent for the media to conduct conflict analysis during electioneering in order to target their peacebuilding efforts appropriately. Conducting conflict analysis during electioneering periods by the media leads to informed decision making since media houses are better placed to plan strategically on how to use their platforms to mitigate conflicts. Also, resource allocation can be done more prudently if conflict analysis is conducted since limited resources will be allocated and utilized more effectively to areas where they will have the greatest impact on strategic peacebuilding efforts.

4.2.10 Audiences' Perception of the Effectiveness of Faith-based Radio programs in Strategic Peacebuilding

Participants of the focus group discussions shared that they tuned in regularly, either daily or weekly, especially for programs that included religious teachings, prayers, gospel music, and discussions on social topics. During the election period, many observed a noticeable increase in programs focused on peace, with dedicated time slots addressing national unity and reconciliation.

One focus group discussion participant stated that:

“I always listen to this station in the morning and evening because that is when I can spare time. During the elections, I noticed more programs were on peace, urging us to coexist peacefully” (FGD 001).

During the focus group discussions, another participant mentioned that:

“I listen almost every day, especially to the gospel music, sermons, and prayer sessions. The station tends to overemphasize on peace during the elections, and also talking about peace and unity” (FGD 002).

However, some participants pointed out that certain stations had limited reach in rural areas, and their reliance on traditional broadcasting methods made them less accessible to some listeners.

One participant noted that:

“This station sometimes don’t reach the rural areas well. When I travel up country, I am unable to tune in to my favorite station. If you don’t have a strong signal or a good radio, you miss out” (FGD 003).

Most participants acknowledged that faith-based radio stations played a crucial role in promoting peace and unity. They highlighted how religious messages, community-driven discussions, and segments focused on conflict resolution were particularly effective in fostering harmony and understanding. Many recalled specific programs that stood out for their ability to bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds, including political opponents, to engage in constructive dialogue. These programs often emphasized the importance of peaceful coexistence, transcending ethnic and political divides.

The teachings in the programs were very relevant. They reminded us that elections come and go, but we still have to live together as neighbors, as brother, as sisters. (FGD 004).

Additionally, participants appreciated the stations’ efforts to address sensitive issues with sensitivity and balance, creating a platform for open conversation and mutual respect.

Some also noted that the personal stories and testimonies shared on these programs resonated deeply, inspiring listeners to adopt a more peaceful and inclusive mindset in their daily lives. Some participants, however, felt that the programs could have been more interactive, with increased involvement from local community leaders, peace ambassadors, and youth representatives. Overall, faith-based radio was seen as a vital tool in bridging divides and nurturing a culture of peace during challenging times.

During the focus group discussions, it was noted that:

Hizi stations za Mungu zilikuwa tofauti na zile political talk shows. Hazikuleta moshene ama kuchochea. Zilikuwa zinabeba peace vibes mostly...ziki-relax watu badala ya kuwamobilize vibaya. Messages kutoka kwa hizi stations zilikuwa mostly za amani, lakini bado kuna wasee waliamua kuspread chuki online, especially kwa social media. Shida ni ati si kila mtu huskiza radio sai. (FGD 005)

Translation:

Faith-based stations were different from political talk shows. They helped calm tensions instead of fueling them. The messages from these stations were generally peaceful, but some people still spread hate on social media. The challenge is that not everyone listens to radio.

While many participants recognized the effectiveness of peace messaging on faith-based radio stations, they also highlighted several challenges that hindered their full potential. Some felt that these stations often shied away from addressing deep-rooted political tensions, possibly to avoid controversy or backlash. This reluctance, they argued,

sometimes left critical issues unaddressed, limiting the stations' ability to fully contribute to conflict resolution. For instance, it was noted that:

“I found some programs to be too general. They kept telling us to maintain peace but didn't address why conflicts happen in the first place. There can be no peace without justice” (FGD 006).

Another participant noted that:

“This radio stations tried to stay neutral, which is good, but sometimes they avoided difficult political discussions that needed to be addressed. It's like they're playing it safe” (FGD 007).

Additionally, language barriers were identified as a significant obstacle, as some programs were broadcast in languages that not all listeners could understand, reducing their reach and impact. Participants also observed that many programs lacked structured frameworks for conflict resolution, which made it difficult to translate the messages into actionable steps for listeners. For instance, one participant noted that:

Most programs were in Swahili and English. In rural areas, people prefer local dialects. The language can be a barrier. Not all listeners follow the message when it's not in their local language. I have once tuned in when in the village and some of my relatives could not understand what was being discussed (FGD 008).

Another notable concern was the perception that faith-based radio stations primarily catered to religious audiences, potentially excluding secular listeners who could also

benefit from peace-focused content. This narrow focus, some argued, limited the broader societal impact of these programs. One participant stated that:

“Saa zingine inaonekana kama hizi peace messages ni za watu wa church tu. Ukikosa kuwa wa hiyo group, unaskia umeachwa nje, na yet peace ni ya kila mtu”
(FGD 009).

To address these challenges, participants suggested that stations adopt more inclusive programming strategies, such as incorporating diverse perspectives, using multiple languages, and creating content that resonates with both religious and non-religious audiences. They also recommended collaborating with experts in conflict resolution to develop more structured and practical approaches to peacebuilding. By broadening their reach and addressing these gaps, faith-based radio stations could significantly enhance their role in fostering unity and reconciliation across all segments of society. It was pointed out that:

“Wangejaribu ku-mix lugha na kuleta ma-expert wa conflict resolution. Si kila mtu ni wa church, so wakifanya content yenye kila mtu anaweza relate nayo, itasaidia sana kuleta unity” (FGD 010).

Translation:

“They should make the programs more inclusive—use different languages, bring in experts in conflict resolution, and create content that even non-religious people can relate to. That way, the message of peace can reach everyone,” suggested one focus group participant”

Participants offered a range of suggestions to strengthen the role of faith-based radio in peacebuilding. One key recommendation was the creation of more interactive and locally relevant content, ensuring that programs resonate with the specific needs and experiences of different communities. They also stressed the importance of collaborating closely with community elders and leaders, whose insights and influence could help amplify messages of peace and reconciliation. Additionally, participants highlighted the need to broadcast programs in a variety of languages to overcome linguistic barriers and reach a wider, more diverse audience. A participant opined that:

“The radio stations should involve more youth and community leaders in discussions, not just religious leaders. They should create more programs that allow for direct engagement, like town hall discussions aired live” (FGD 011).

Another suggestion was to provide specialized training for faith-based radio broadcasters in conflict-sensitive journalism. This would equip them with the skills to address contentious issues responsibly and constructively, without exacerbating tensions. Participants also proposed that radio stations produce documentaries or special features exploring past instances of election violence and the subsequent efforts toward reconciliation. Such programs, they argued, should be aired throughout the election period since they could serve as powerful tools for education and reflection, helping listeners learn from history and fostering a collective commitment to peace. By implementing these strategies, faith-based radio stations could significantly enhance their impact, promoting unity and understanding across all segments of society. A participant stated that:

“We need peace messages throughout the election cycle, not just close to voting time” (FGD 012).

The findings from the FGDs indicate that faith-based radio stations played a vital role in promoting peace during Kenya's 2022 general elections. Their messages were widely received and appreciated, although there were concerns about accessibility, interactivity, and the depth of discussions. Moving forward, there is a need for faith-based radio to engage communities more inclusively, incorporate conflict-sensitive approaches, address underlying conflict issues more directly, and incorporate different media strategies such as social media to reach the youth. Increased collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including youth groups, local leaders, and civil society organizations, could further enhance the effectiveness of faith-based peace messaging.

“They should use social media platforms alongside radio to reach younger audiences. Most people are on social media nowadays” (FGD 013).

4.3 Examination of the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations on promoting strategic peacebuilding

The second objective of this study was to examine the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations on promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. The peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio broadcasters, if carefully crafted, have the potential to encourage calmness, promote cohesion, support understanding, and prevent violence during general elections. Due to religion's moral legitimacy, its potential to call for peace, forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be undermined since most religious faiths place immeasurable value in forgiveness, reconciliation, peaceful coexistence and loving one another. Peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio broadcasters are crucial in the promotion of strategic

peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. By emphasizing unity, non-violence, respect for democratic processes, and the teachings of their respective faiths, these broadcasters play a vital role in fostering a peaceful and cohesive society during volatile times such as general elections.

4.3.1 Broadcasting of Peace Messages during General Elections

The respondents were asked to state whether their respective faith-based radio stations aired any peace messages during general elections in Kenya. They were also required to provide some examples of the peace messages that were disseminated by their respective radio stations to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. 100% of the respondents stated that their respective faith-based radio stations disseminated some peace messages before, during and after the general elections. This was done live on air, through their social media pages such as Facebook and Instagram, and also going to the ground to meet their target audiences in person to disseminate peace messages. These peace messages revolved around common themes of voting peacefully, accepting election results, loving one another, respecting the property of others, shunning ethnic violence, embracing diversity, and respect for democratic processes.

In response to what peace messages are aired that are geared towards strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya, one of the respondents stated as follows:

Yes, our radio station airs peace messages during the general electioneering period in Kenya. Most of our peace messages usually revolve around urging our target audience to accept the final results and be ready to continue with their day

to day life activities even after elections. We also strive to make it clear that in any elections, there is winning and losing, which we must all accept (KI003).

The participating faith-based radio stations also relied on social media to disseminate messages intended to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya as shown in figures 4.17, 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20.

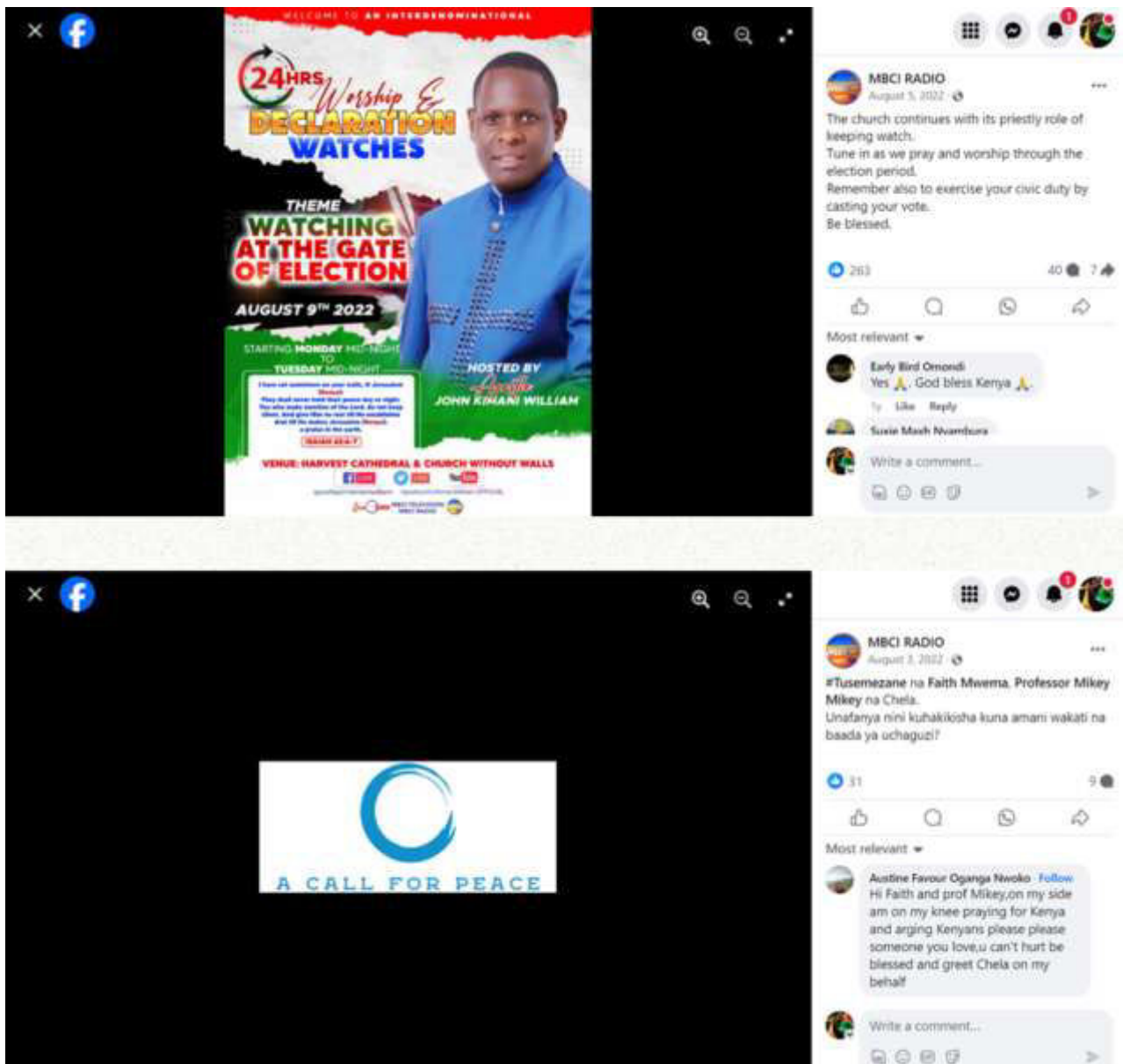


Figure 4.15: Peace Message by MBCI Radio on Social Media

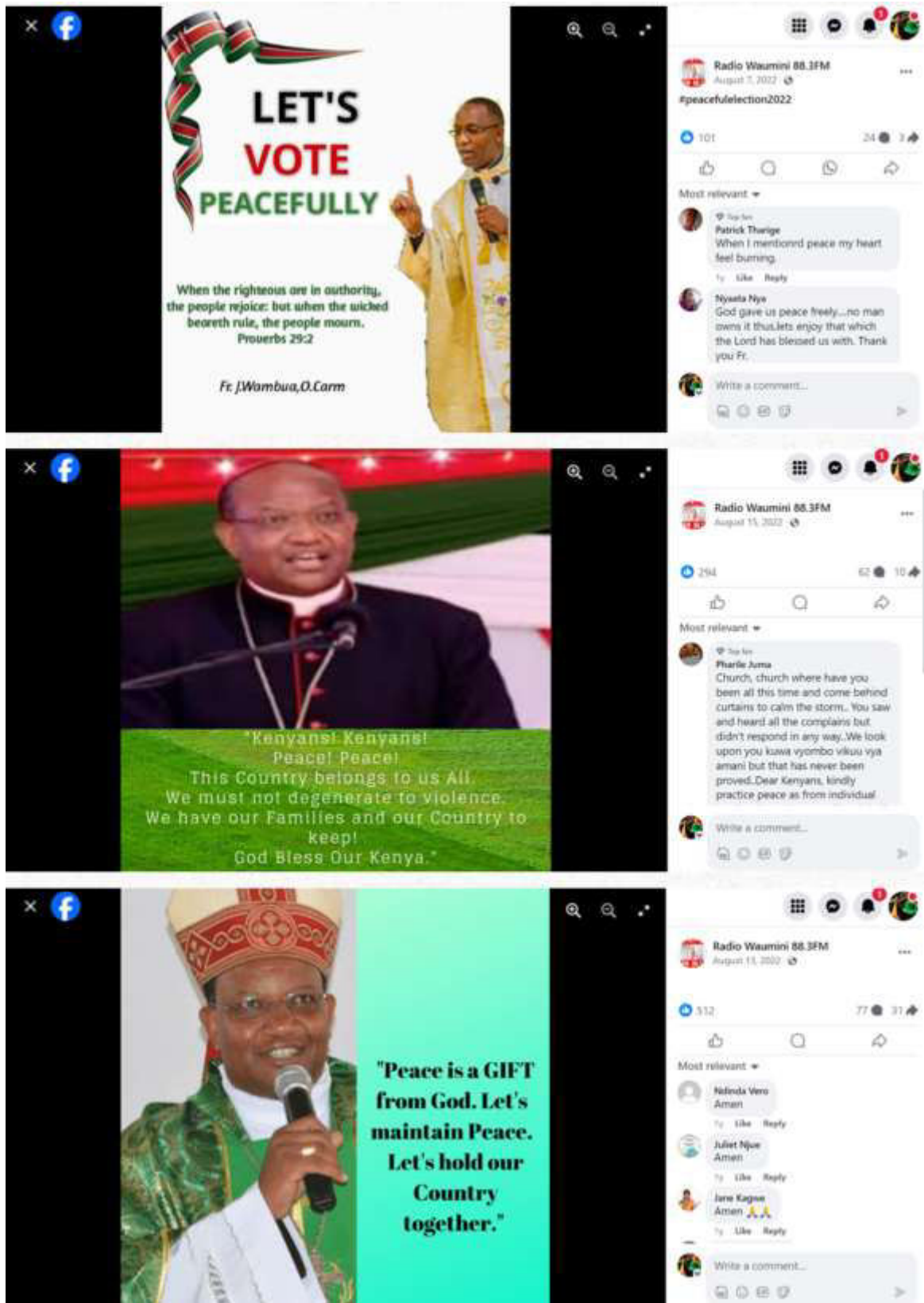


Figure 4.16: Peace Message by Radio Waumini on Social Media

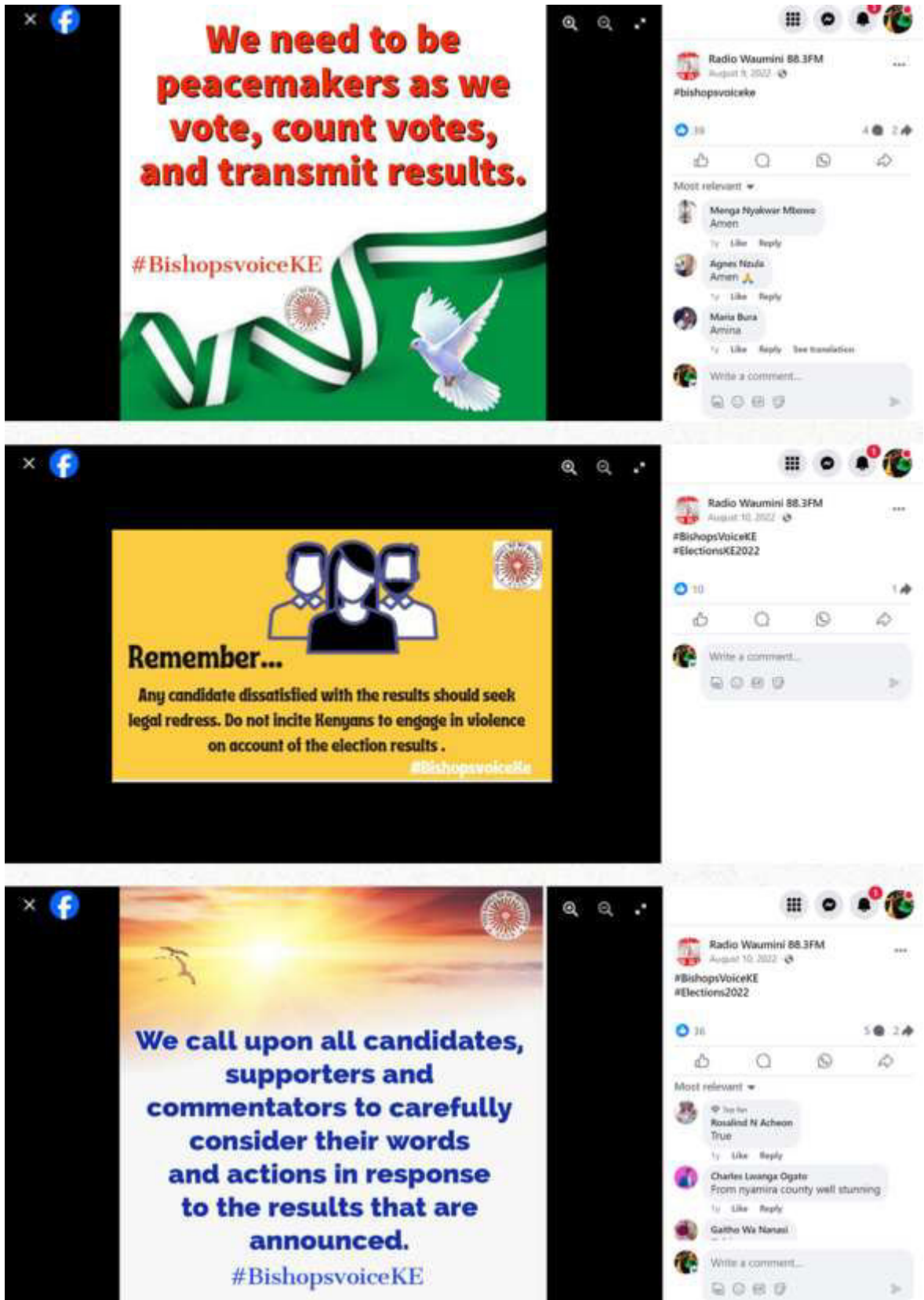


Figure 4.17: Peace Message by Bishops from Radio Waumini

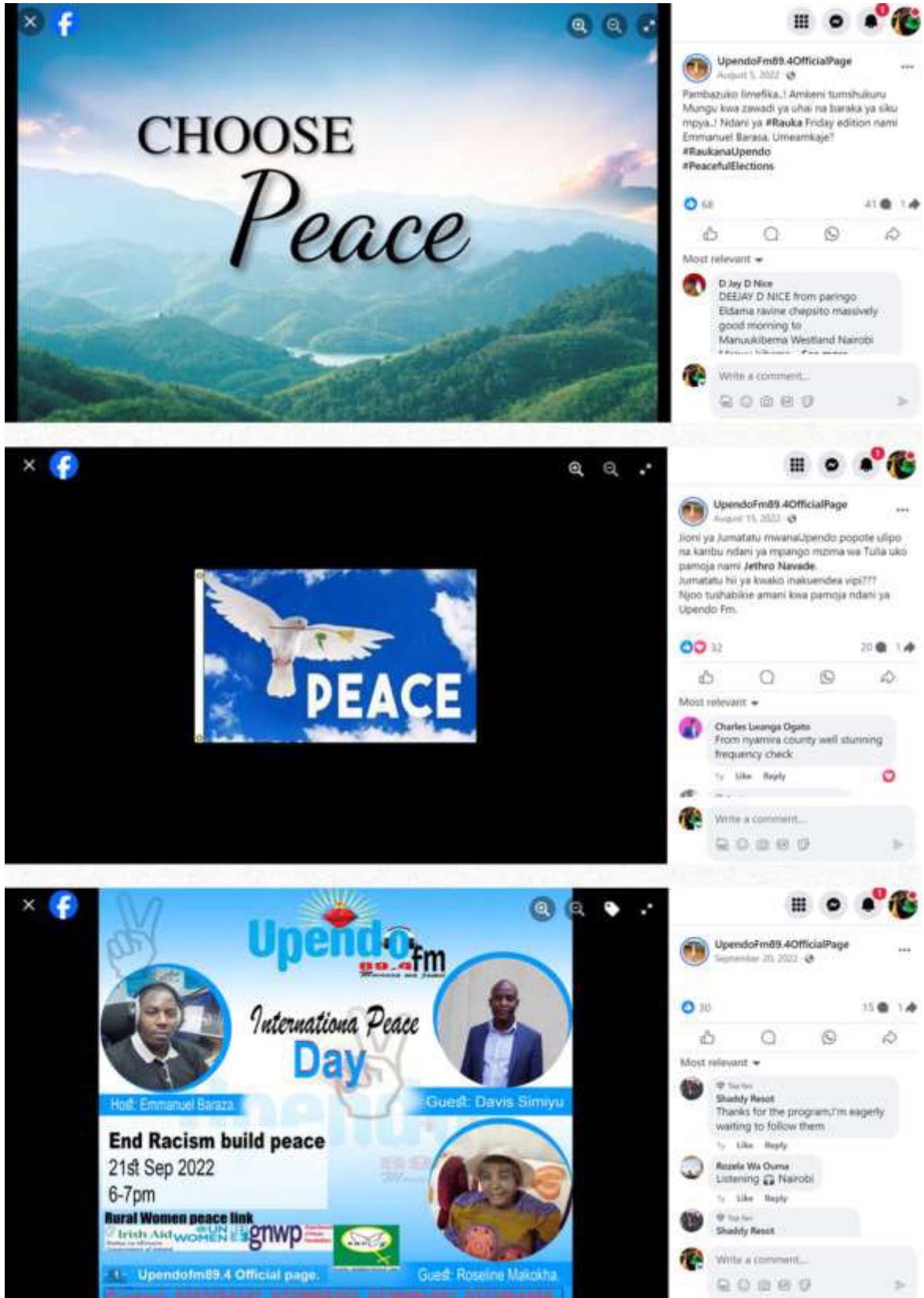


Figure 4.18: Peace Message by Upendo FM on Social Media

4.3.2 Target Audience of Peace Messages during General Elections

The respondents were asked to identify the target audience for the peace messages that they disseminate during general elections. The respondents identified the following as the main target audience of the peace messages by their respective radio stations during general elections: youth and parents (42.9%); the general public (40%); politicians and candidates (11.4%); and voters (5.7%) as shown in figure 4.21.

Majority of the respondents, representing 42.9%, reported that their respective radio stations usually targeted the youth and parents. This was because the youth are the one who form a majority of the population and are also the one who take part in electoral-related violence the most. They were grouped together with their parents because they are highly likely to be influenced by their parents the most, to either take part in violence or to shun violence. Parents are also responsible for offering guidance that can promote peace.

40% of the respondents stated that their respective radio stations usually targeted the general public, mostly because of the wide reach that radio enjoys. Through radio, they can be able to reach and engage a wide audience simultaneously, and easily disseminate peace messages to them. Also, religion is largely trusted by a significant proportion of the population, hence targeting the general public can be an effective way of communicating peace messages.

11.4% of the respondents identified politicians and the candidates vying for elective seats as their target audience. These respondents stated that they target politicians and candidates vying for elective positions because they often have a strong influence over

their supporters and their actions and rhetoric can either calm or inflame tensions. Targeting this group of audience and encouraging them to support peace during the electioneering period can set a good example to their followers, hence contributing to the existence of peace. Targeting this group of audience is also an effective way of reminding politicians and candidates of their responsibility as leaders of promoting cohesion, maintaining national unity and avoiding actions or words that can disturb the peace during elections.

Lastly, 5.7% of the respondents identified voters as their target audience. Voters are the group that are directly involved in electing their preferred leaders in an election. Radio messages can easily influence their behavior and encourage them to exercise their civic duties responsibly, reject violence, and embrace peace during electioneering periods.

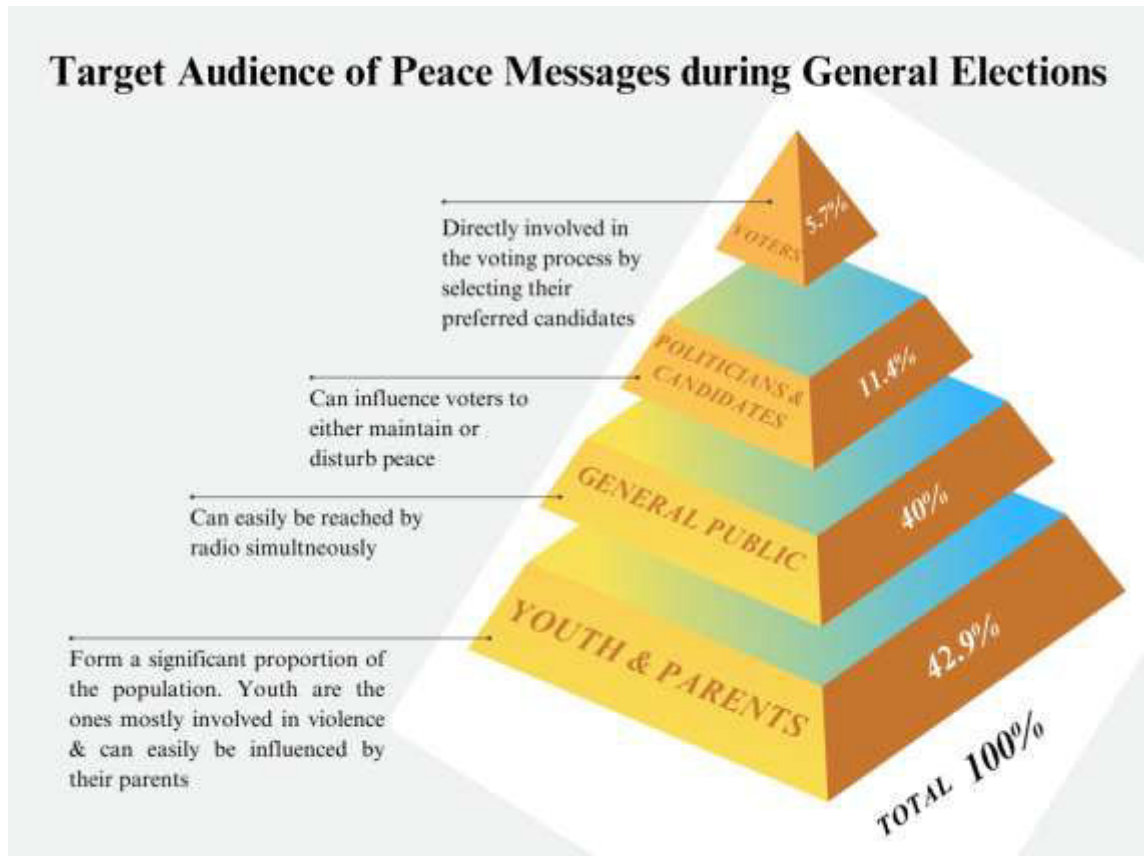


Figure 4.19: Target Audience of Peace Message during General Elections

4.3.3 Religious Content of Peace Messages Geared Towards Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to indicate the religious content of the peace messages that they broadcasted which were geared towards strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The religious content in the peace messages was found to be disseminated through: scriptures on peace and love (64%); peace-oriented music (16%); religious sermons on peace (12%); and prayers for peace (8%) as shown in figure 4.22.

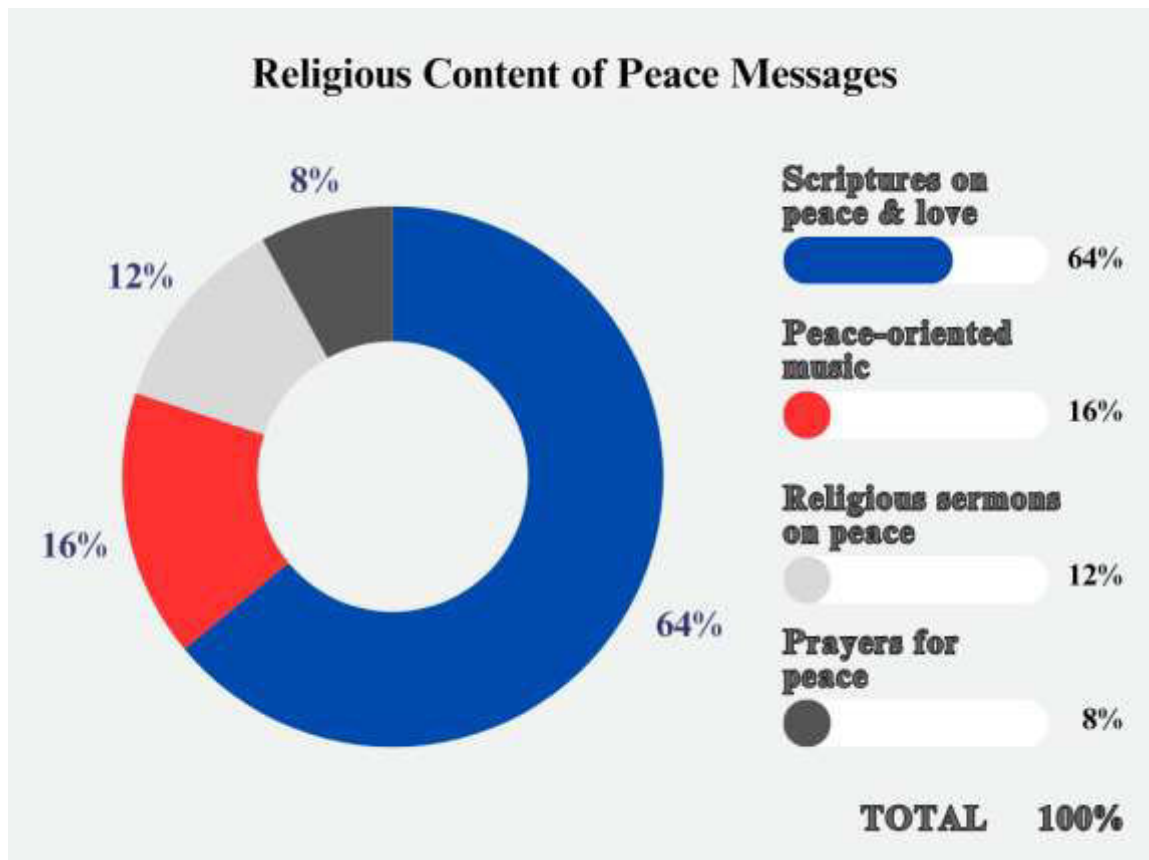


Figure 4.20: Religious Content of Peace Messages

4.3.4 Role of Peace Messages in Promoting Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to identify the ways in which the peace messages broadcasted by their respective radio stations had contributed to the promotion of strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The respondents reported that the peace messages disseminated by their respective radio stations had contributed to the promotion of strategic peacebuilding in the following ways: promotion of peaceful co-existence (40%); positive behavior change (24%); highlighting the detriments of violence (16%); blurring tribal lines (12%); and acceptance of election outcomes (8%) as shown in figure 4.23.

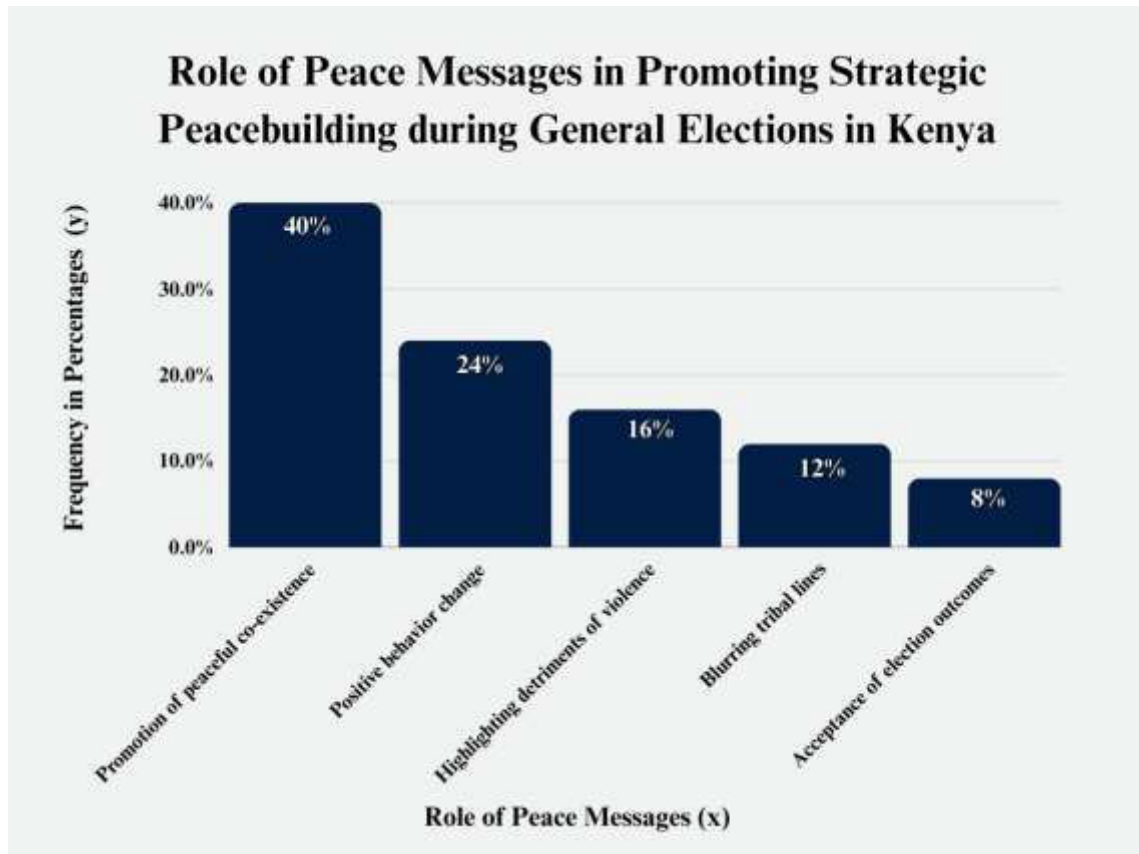


Figure 4.21: Role of Peace Messages in Strategic Peacebuilding

Majority of the respondents, representing 40%, reported that the peace messages broadcasted by the respective radio stations had promoted peaceful coexistence among their target audience. The peace messages were used to emphasize national unity and shun violence, hence promoting a sense of shared identity that contributed to peaceful coexistence. Encouraging citizens to maintain peace during the election periods helped to ensure that no group felt left out or marginalized. This fostered a sense of inclusive participation in the electoral process, further contributing to peaceful coexistence among different groups.

24% of the respondents stated that the peace messages broadcasted by the respective radio stations had contributed to positive behavior change against violence among their target

audience. Peace messages that had continuously advocated for non-violent behavior encouraged targeted audience such as voters, politicians, candidates, and other stakeholders to avoid actions that could lead to conflict and resolve disputes peacefully. The peace messages were also effective in reminding members of the public and political players of the laws governing electoral conduct, hence encouraging them to behave accordingly or face the consequences.

16% of the respondents reported that the peace messages broadcasted by the respective radio stations had played the role of highlighting the detriments of violence among their target audience. Reinforcing the dangers of engaging in actions or words that could have led to violence contributed to deterring violence during electioneering periods. According to these respondents, highlighting the consequences of not maintaining peace during elections to their target audience was an effective way of encouraging them to maintain peace.

12% of the respondents stated that the peace messages broadcasted by the respective radio stations had played the role of blurring tribal and ethnic lines among their target audience. These respondents were mostly located in urban areas which were metropolitan in nature. They reported that they used peace messages to expose divisive tactics used to manipulate and divide voters along tribal lines. Making their listeners aware of such underhand tactics contributed to reducing their effectiveness, thus contributing to strategic peacebuilding efforts.

Lastly, 8% of the respondents indicated that the peace messages broadcasted by their respective radio stations had contributed to the acceptance of election outcomes among

listeners. These respondents reported that they continuously disseminated messages that educated the public on the electoral process so that they can understand the entire process, hold stakeholders to account, and build public trust in the legitimacy of the process when the law was followed to the letter. Doing this prepared the target audience for different outcomes, encouraged them to have realistic expectations about results, understand that there would be winners and losers, and encourage patience during the wait for the announcement of official results.

These findings concur with those of Mwangi (2020) who stated that the role of the media in electoral conflict management was to spread positive messages that would encourage their target audience to coexist peacefully, change their behaviors positively and accept the outcomes of any legitimate electoral process. According to Mwangi (2020), the media should also carry out its function as a public watchdog and ensure transparency of the electoral process in order to legitimize election outcomes.

4.3.5 Effectiveness of Peace Messages in Promoting Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were required to evaluate the effectiveness of the peace messages they disseminated in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. 92% of the respondents reported that the peace messages disseminated by their respective radio stations were highly effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. 4% of the respondents stated that the peace messages disseminated by their respective radio stations were fairly effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. Another 4% of the respondents reported that they were not sure whether the peace messages disseminated by their respective radio stations were effective or not

in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. This is shown in figure 4.24.



Figure 4.22: Effectiveness of Peace Messages in Strategic Peacebuilding

4.3.6 Mechanisms of Evaluating the Effectiveness of Peace Messages

The respondents were asked to state whether they had mechanisms in place used by their respective radio stations to evaluate the effectiveness of the peace messages they disseminated towards strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. 80% of the respondents stated that their respective radio stations had mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the peace messages they disseminated. On the other hand, 20% of the respondents stated that they did not have mechanisms of evaluating the

effectiveness of the peace messages they disseminated. Those who stated that they had mechanisms of evaluating the effectiveness of their radio programs were further asked to identify those mechanisms.

The mechanisms used to evaluate the effectiveness of radio programs intended to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya were identified as: audience feedback mechanisms (70%); impact assessment studies (15%); broadcast surveys (10%); and monitoring peace indicators (5%) as shown in figure 4.25.

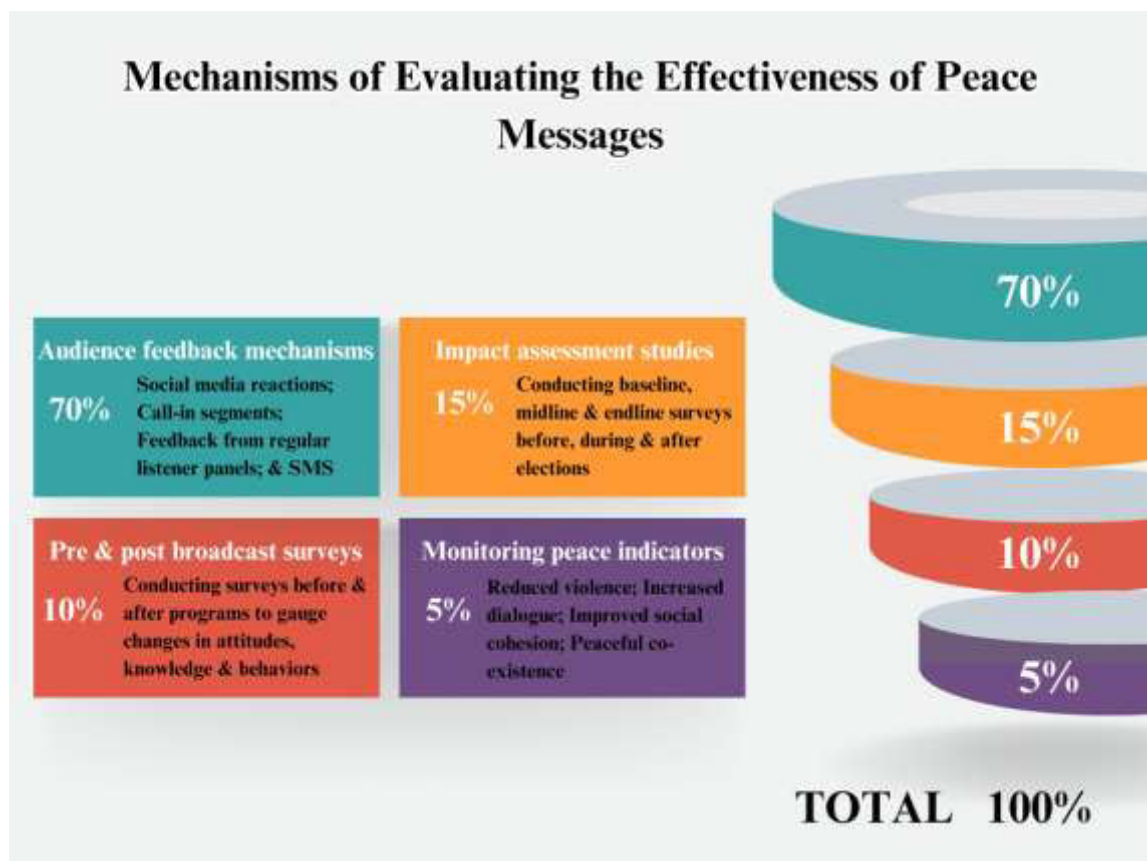


Figure 4.23: Mechanisms of Evaluating the Effectiveness of Peace Messages

4.3.7 Strategies of Disseminating Peace Messages to Target Audience

The respondents were asked to identify the strategies used by their respective radio stations to disseminate peace messages to their target audience during general elections in Kenya. The respondents stated that they used the following strategies: live programs and presenter messages (19.1%); social media (17%); road shows (14.9%); religious leaders (12.8%); inviting aspirants and leaders to pledge peace (10.6%); oral campaigns (8.5%); radio fan clubs (6.4%); posters and visual campaigns (4.3%); community outreach programs (4.3%); and sending SMS (2.1%) to disseminate peace messages to their target audience as shown in in figure 4.26.

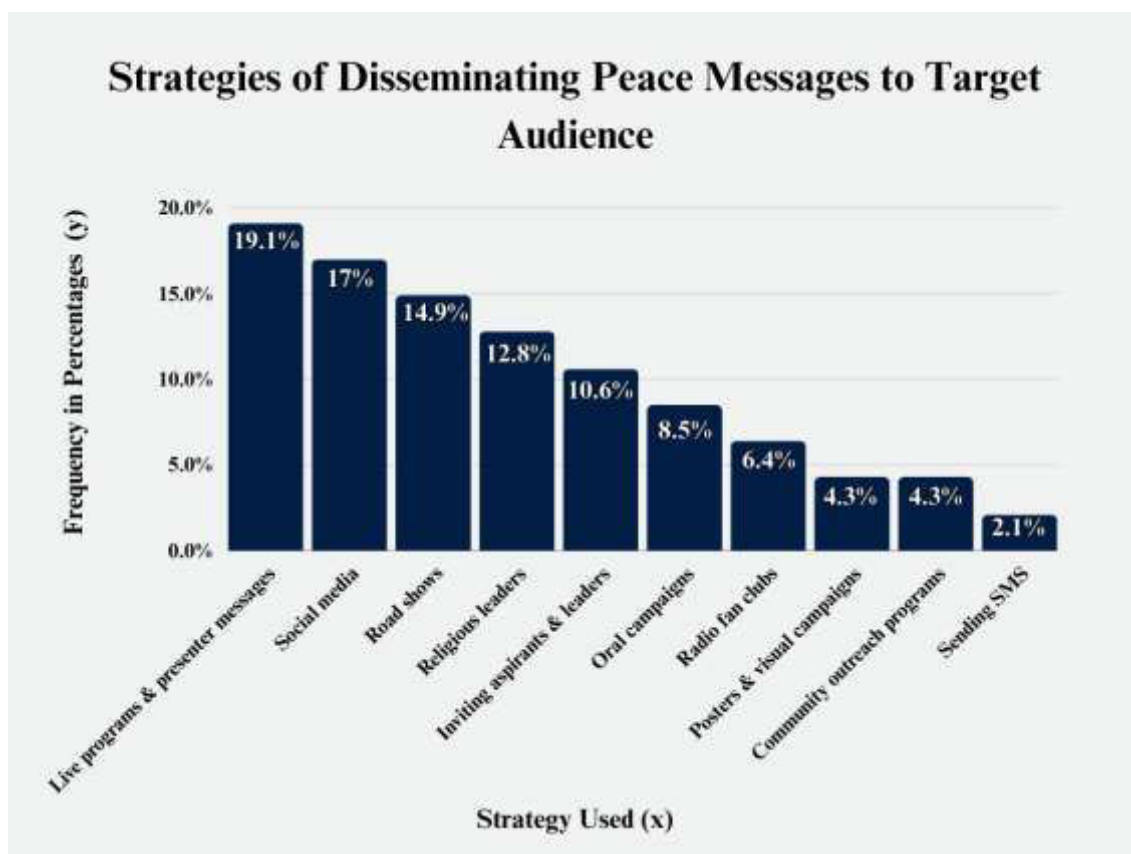


Figure 4.24: Strategies of Disseminating Peace Messages to Target Audience

Majority of the respondents, representing 19.1%, stated that their respective radio stations utilized live programs and presenter messages as their main strategy of disseminating peace messages to their target audience during general elections. These stations reported that they leveraged on the power and influence of live radio broadcasts where presenters framed their discussions around the importance of peace during elections. During these live programs, experts were also invited to talk about peace with the target audience. Stories highlighting peaceful conflict resolution and mediation also formed part of the discussion during these live broadcasts. These live programs also featured call-ins or interactive segments where listeners shared their thoughts and messages on peace.

17% of the respondents stated that they used social media to disseminate peace messages to their target audience during general elections. Peace related hashtags such as *#Tusemezane* by MBCI Radio, *#BishopsvoicesKE* by Radio Waumini, and *#peacefulelections2022* by Radio Waumini, among others were created and promoted across various social media platforms such as Facebook, X and Instagram. According to this group of respondents, the hashtag strategy was employed in order to generate a large conversation, promote audience engagement, and boost visibility of the peace messages on social media. Infographics, posters, and short videos that convey peace messages were also created and shared across the various social media platforms of these radio stations in order to encourage their followers to amplify the reach of the peace messages.

14.9% of the respondents stated that they used road shows as one of their strategies of disseminating peace messages to their target audience. This was achieved by organizing mobile road campaigns that travelled and traversed through various towns and communities delivering messages of peace and hope to their targeted audience. The

respondents reported that they preferred road shows because of their effectiveness in directly engaging with communities and encouraging one on one dialogue, interaction and participation of target audience on the importance of maintaining peace during general elections.

12.8% of the respondents reported that they relied on religious sermons, teachings, and messages from religious leaders as one of their strategies of disseminating peace messages to their target audience. The respondents reported that they preferred this method because religious leaders were a trusted voice among their target audience. These respondents further reported that they encouraged religious leaders affiliated to their faith-based radio stations to incorporate peace messages into their teachings and sermons. Some religious leaders affiliated to these radio stations also visited communities to spread peace messages.

10.6% of the respondents stated that they relied on inviting aspirants and political leaders to their stations to pledge peace during electioneering periods as one of their strategies for disseminating peace messages during general elections. Community leaders and political aspirants were invited to these radio stations to make public declarations and pledges of promoting and maintaining peace during the electioneering periods. These pledges and declarations were usually captured and shared by the radio stations through various platforms such as social media and during live programs in order to maximize their impact and contribution to strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

8.5% of the respondents stated that their respective radio stations relied on oral campaigns to disseminate peace messages to their target audience during general electioneering

periods in Kenya. In actualizing this strategy, the radio station personnel, together with volunteers and influential community leaders conducted door to door peace campaigns and held small group meetings with community members to encourage people to maintain peace during elections. They reported that they relied on this direct engagement with the public to share and disseminate peace messages to their target audience since it was personalized and significantly effective.

6.4% of the respondents reported that they used radio fan clubs to disseminate peace messages to their target audience during general elections in Kenya. Radio fan clubs were preferred because of their effectiveness in bringing listeners together and ensuring listener engagement. Radio fan clubs were used to disseminate peace messages because they gave listeners a platform to freely interact with each other and discuss peace-related issues, especially on social media or during fan club sessions. Peace-themed content was usually created during these fan club sessions in order to drive discussions towards peace.

4.3% of the respondents stated that they used posters and visual campaigns as a strategy of disseminating peace messages to their target audience during general election periods. This was achieved by creating posters and other visual aids such as fliers, banners and billboards containing calls for peace and strategically placing them in areas where they were highly likely to be seen and read. Such spaces included high-traffic areas such as public transport termini, religious centers, schools, and markets among others.

Another 4.3% of the respondents reported that they relied on community outreach programs as a strategy of disseminating peace messages to their target audience during general election periods. These community outreach programs comprised of well-

organized training sessions where community members were educated on the importance of peace, conflict resolution, and peaceful coexistence during elections. The youth, being the largest target audience, were mostly involved and empowered by these community outreach programs to act as peace ambassadors in their respective communities.

Lastly, 2.1% of the respondents stated that their respective radio stations sent out peace-themed SMS messages to their target audience as a strategy of ensuring strategic peacebuilding during electioneering periods. They employed the strategy of targeted messaging to send out short and impactful SMS messages directly to the mobile phone numbers of their target audience. These peace-themed SMS messages acted as periodic reminders to the targeted audience to maintain peace during elections and calls to action for community members to become peace ambassadors.

These findings concur with those of Ortiz dos Santos (2021) who studied the role of radio journalism in conflict prevention. According to Ortiz dos Santos (2021), these methods are all effective strategies that can be used by radio in conflict prevention during volatile times such as electioneering periods. However, these strategies can be more effective if they are combined because they will have the potential of creating a more comprehensive peace campaign that can effectively reach and influence a wider audience towards peace. Ortiz dos Santos (2021) further states that using a multi-channel approach disseminates peace messages through a variety of platforms, thereby reaching and engaging a wider audience.

4.3.8 Peace Messages that can be added to Radio Programs to Promote Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to suggest what peace messages they felt could be added to their programming to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. It was reported that messages from contesters and political leaders calling on their supporters to maintain peace, reject violence and tolerate each other should be given prominence. Leaders should set a good example and guide their followers towards maintaining peace. The respondents also stated that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission should be on the forefront in preaching peace during electioneering periods. Other respondents reported that religious teachings on peace, as well as songs and compositions on peace should also form part of radio programs. Recognizing and rewarding peace makers during regular programming was also cited as a strategy that can contribute to peacebuilding during general elections. Lastly, it was reported that highlighting the dangers and detriments of not maintaining peace during general elections could also contribute to strategic peacebuilding since it has the potential of discouraging people from taking the root of violence.

4.4 Role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections

The third objective of this study was to establish the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. The editorial policies of faith-based radio broadcasters can play a crucial role in making sure that their content supports strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections.

Editorial policies of faith-based radio broadcasters usually guide their commitment to non-partisanship, as well as ethical journalism, accurate and responsible reporting during sensitive times such as general elections, as well as partnerships with key peacebuilding partners. Editorial policies also guide radio broadcasters on issues of crisis management, conflict sensitivity, inclusivity, dissemination of hope, peace journalism, and dedication to peace. Strict adherence to the principles of non-partisanship, promotion of peace and unity, ethical journalism, and engaging with the community, faith-based radio broadcasters can play a substantial role in upholding peace during election periods.

4.4.1 Role of Editorial Policies of Faith-Based Radio Stations in Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked whether the editorial policies of their respective radio stations either impede or promote strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya. The respondents who stated that the editorial policies of their respective radio stations impeded strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections were asked to identify possible ways through which that situation could be changed. Majority of the respondents, representing 97.1%, stated that the editorial policies of their respective radio stations promoted their strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections. Only 2.9% of the respondents felt that the editorial policies of their radio stations impeded their strategic peacebuilding efforts as shown in figure 4.28. One of the respondents who felt that the editorial policies of their radio stations impeded their strategic peacebuilding efforts stated that they were usually required by their editorial policies to play safe during, thus often failing to address and report about the real situation on the ground.

Those who stated that the editorial policies of their respective radio stations impeded their strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections reported that the situation can be changed if editorial guidelines emphasized the importance of promoting peace, unity, and tolerance, in line with faith-based teachings. They also reported that radio journalists ought to be trained in conflict-sensitive journalism and peace journalism so that they can be able to report information as it is on the ground but still understand the impact of their words and report in a manner that promotes understanding rather than division.

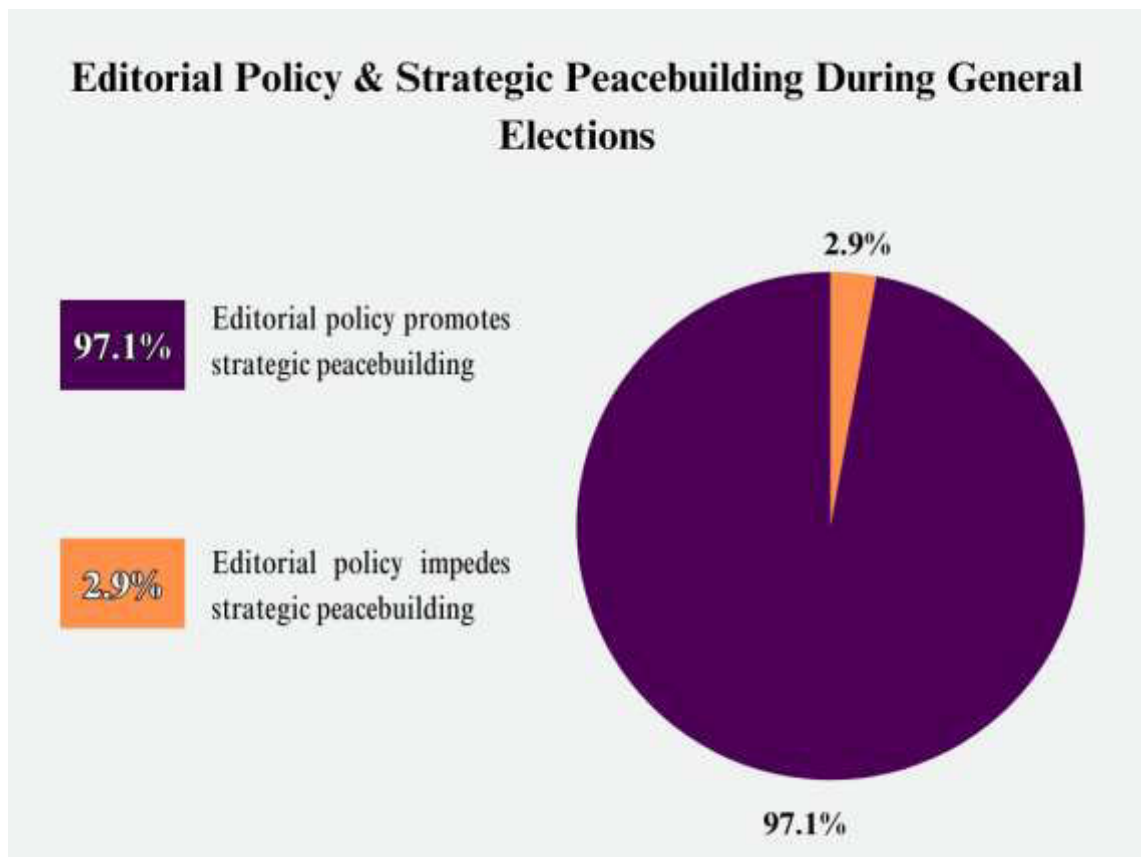


Figure 4.25: Editorial Policy and Strategic Peacebuilding during General Elections

4.4.2 Role of Government Regulations on Media in Editorial Policy Formulation

The respondents were asked to elaborate whether government regulation on the media sector, particularly radio contributed to their editorial policies impeding strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya in any way. Majority of the respondents, representing 56.25%, stated that government regulations on media in editorial policy formulation contributes to impeding their strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya. 43.75% of the respondents stated government regulations on media in editorial policy formulation do not impede their strategic peacebuilding efforts.

The respondents who reported that government regulations impede their strategic peacebuilding efforts stated that there had been instances where they were forced to avoid discussing certain topics which they felt could have contributed to their strategic peacebuilding efforts. This situation occurred when there were strict controls imposed by the government on radio or the media in general. This contributed to limiting the scope of the peace messages and content disseminated, especially if that content was considered politically sensitive. They further reported that there have been instances where media regulations were applied selectively, targeting specific political or religious groups. This forced the faith-based radio stations to adopt editorial policies that align with the government's stance, even if the policies contradicted their broader peacebuilding efforts.

The respondents who reported that government regulations on media in editorial policy formulation do not impede their strategic peacebuilding efforts stated that these regulations have helped to keep them in check and ensure that they report responsibly

during electioneering periods. However, it was also stated that there is need to establish legal safeguards that defend the editorial independence of faith-based radio, allowing them to promote strategic peacebuilding without undue influence from government or political forces.

4.5 Challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya’s 2022 general elections

The fourth objective of this study was to investigate the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya’s 2022 general elections. Faith-based radio broadcasters play a very key role in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. Considering the sensitive nature of general elections in Kenya, this role cannot be one without challenges.

4.5.1 Specific Challenges faced by Faith-Based Radio Broadcasters in Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to state the unique challenges faced by their respective radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The challenges identified by the respondents included: financial constraints (26%); lack of neutrality (22%); political polarization and interference (20%); negative audience perception (10%); ethnic and religious divides (8%); limited reach and influence (6%); lack of government support (4%); regulatory constraints (2%); and safety concerns (2%) as shown in figure 4.30.

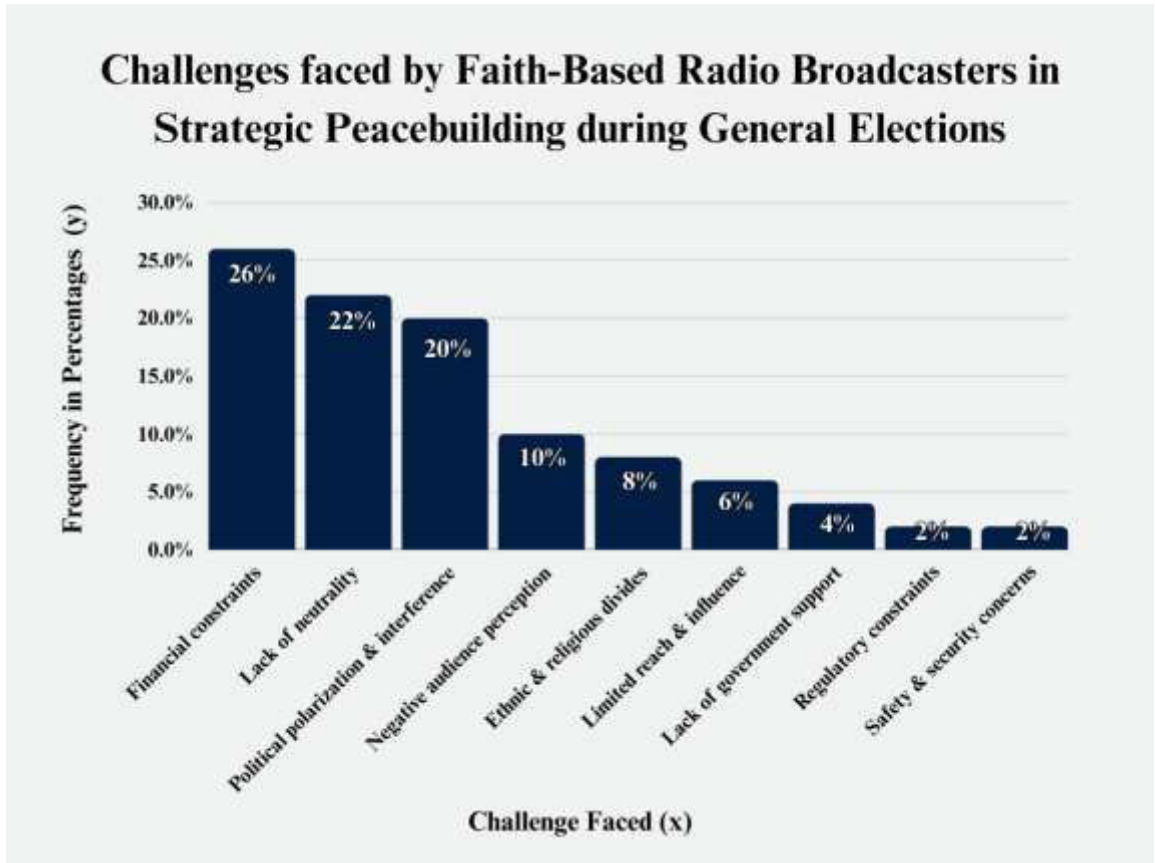


Figure 4.26: Challenges faced by Faith-Based Radio Broadcasters in Strategic Peacebuilding

Majority of the respondents, representing 26%, stated that financial constraints were their greatest challenge as faith-based radio broadcasters in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. Most of them stated that they operated with limited financial resources. This restricted their ability to produce impactful, engaging, persuasive, and high-quality peace-themed content. Most of these stations were owned, run and funded by religious organizations, which sometimes came with restrictions or expectations that limited their editorial independence.

Running highly effective peace-themed programs requires hiring experienced and well-trained journalists, which was reported to be quite financially demanding. The respondents also reported that they require training and capacity building on conflict-sensitive reporting in order for them to stay updated on the best peace journalism practices. However, these trainings were not done adequately as required due to financial constraints. They only relied on stakeholders such as the Media Council of Kenya which would offer such trainings once in a while. Community engagement initiatives such as road shows were also quite costly to run since they involved hiring and fueling of trucks customized for roadshows, as well as personnel such as dancers, deejays, and entertainers to keep the target audience engaged.

22% of the respondents cited lack of neutrality as another challenge facing faith-based radio broadcasters in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. Maintaining impartiality by the media is necessary during volatile times such as general elections. However, it was reported that the alignment with specific political parties, candidates and coalitions by different religious organizations that owned faith-based radio stations brought difficulties in maintaining neutrality. The respondents reported that there have been instances where they struggled to remain neutral because of the stands taken by the religious organizations, leaders or denominations that owned their stations. This contributed to the alienation of part of their audience whenever the stations were seen to be taking sides.

Wherever there was a perception of bias, the credibility of these faith-based radio stations as neutral media to promote peace and unity was greatly eroded. For instance, in the 2007 general elections in Kenya, some religious leaders aligned to certain evangelical churches

were accused of aligning with certain political factions that supported Mwai Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU). At the same time, some Catholic and Anglican churches were perceived as preferring Orange Democratic Movement's (ODM) Raila Odinga. The respondents reported that, to some extent, they felt the effect of this in their respective radio stations that were owned by these churches and had to strike a balance between remaining neutral and opposing their employer.

Similarly, in the run-up to the 2013 general elections in Kenya, some religious leaders were seen to be taking sides, especially in their stands in the International Criminal Court (ICC) cases that were facing key politicians such as William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta. Ruto and Kenyatta were openly supported by some church leaders who considered the ICC cases to be unfair, while some other religious leaders were more critical and wanted justice to be pursued to the end. The same situation was replicated in the 2017 and 2022 general elections. Since a good number of faith-based radio stations are owned by these same religious leaders and churches, the journalists grappled with striking a balance between maintaining neutrality and taking stands that would not go down well with their employers.

Political polarization and interference were cited by 20% of the respondents as one of the challenges they face as faith-based radio broadcasters in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. Some faith-based organizations and denominations sometimes bow to pressure and openly endorse or take sides of certain political candidates. This sometimes trickled down to the faith-based radio stations owned by these religious denominations, hindering their ability to remain neutral and maintain peace. Political interference has also been witnessed numerous times during

electioneering periods in Kenya. For example, politicians have been seen moving around churches and other places of worship making hefty donations towards certain projects. It is difficult for such churches, as well as the faith-based radio stations they own to remain neutral when they accept such donations. Consequently, some churches have ended up openly endorsing the candidature of some of these political candidates, thus compromising neutrality and other strategic peacebuilding efforts.

10% of the respondents reported that negative audience perception was also a challenge they faced by faith-based radio broadcasters in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. This challenge was closely tied to issues brought about by lack of neutrality and political interference. When it came to promoting peace messages, faith-based radio stations grappled with the challenge of maintaining trust among their diverse target audience. This was because some of their peace messages were usually interpreted differently by their diverse audience. Whenever listeners perceived a particular faith-based radio station to be biased, the influence of those radio stations on strategic peacebuilding was also perceived to be diminishing. The respondents also reported that there have been instances where segments of their audience have been skeptical about them, especially when they were viewed as pushing religious agendas rather than focusing on genuine peacebuilding.

8% of the audience reported that they faced the challenge of ethnic and religious divides when promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. To a great extent, Kenya is ethnically and religiously diverse and polarized. As a result of ethnic diversity, the respondents stated that language barrier was a challenge on numerous occasions. For instance, divisions have been created when a message that was intended to

create peace in one community got misinterpreted and rejected by a different community. Also, considering Kenya's diverse religious landscape, faith-based radio broadcasters have been forced to exercise extreme caution in their messaging to avoid offending other religions. This difficulty in balancing the diverse religious beliefs of listeners has posed challenges of creating all-round content that resonates well with everyone and contributes to strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

6% of the respondents reported that their respective faith-based radio stations grappled with limited reach and influence to their audience. Unlike most commercial radio stations which enjoy a wider and nationwide coverage, some faith-based stations grappled with limited broadcast ranges which restricted their ability to reach and influence a wider audience on peace-related content. The competition with secular media was also cited as a challenge that contributed to the limited reach and influence of faith-based radio stations. Secular stations may have access to more resources and revenue, especially since they are allowed to advertise more controversial products such as alcohol, cigarettes, condoms, parties, nightclubs and bars among others which faith-based radio stations cannot advertise since they violate their religious values.

4% of the respondents cited lack of government support as another challenge that they grappled with when promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. These respondents stated that the government had not been doing enough to recognize and support the strategic peacebuilding efforts of faith-based radio stations. The government had not been using faith-based radio stations to advertise and disseminate peace messages adequately. There had been instances where certain faith-based radio stations felt sidelined since government agencies failed to prioritize them when disseminating important

information relating to elections and peace matters. Government-initiated peace initiatives also excluded faith-based media organizations in general from key collaborations and partnerships revolving around strategic peacebuilding. It was also reported that the government had also largely contributed to lack of peace in a number of instances such as when an incumbent president openly endorses a candidate to succeed him and pushes that agenda at the expense of democracy. Lastly, the respondents complained of a general lack of a policy framework that recognizes, empowers and supports the unique role of faith-based media in strategic peacebuilding.

2% of the respondent cited regulatory constraints as yet another challenge hindering their strategic peacebuilding efforts as faith-based radio stations during general elections. The media has on numerous occasions faced censorship and restrictions on content. This has been witnessed in the past where government authorities have regulated the broadcast of content that appears to be critical of the government or anything that is considered as being politically insensitive. The respondents reported instances where their faith-based radio stations have also suffered from such restrictions, thereby limiting their ability to address issues that are critical for strategic peacebuilding.

Lastly, another 2% of the respondents cited safety concerns as a hindrance to their strategic peacebuilding efforts as faith-based radio stations during general elections. These faith-based broadcasters who had been strong advocates of neutrality and peace during general elections reported that they had on different occasions faced harassment and threats from various political actors and their supporters who were opposed to their messaging. This led to a hostile environment which stifled their freedom of expression and peace advocacy efforts. In areas that had deep-rooted political and ethnic tensions, some broadcasters

reported that they felt their security and safety would be at risk if they disseminated messages that some community members did not agree with, especially during road shows and other community engagement initiatives.

4.5.2 Addressing the Challenges faced by Faith-Based Radio Stations in Strategic Peacebuilding

The respondents were asked to suggest specific ways that can be used to address the unique challenges faced by their respective radio stations in strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya. The respondents reported that the challenges faced by faith-based radio broadcasters in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya can be addressed through: enhanced financial support (28.9%); government collaboration and support (22.2%); ensuring continuity of peace efforts (13.4%); partnering with civil society (11.1%); maintaining neutrality (8.9%); enhanced protection and security (6.7%); having supportive editorial policies (4.4%); fostering interfaith collaboration (2.2%); and having a supportive regulatory environment (2.2%) as shown in figure 4.31.

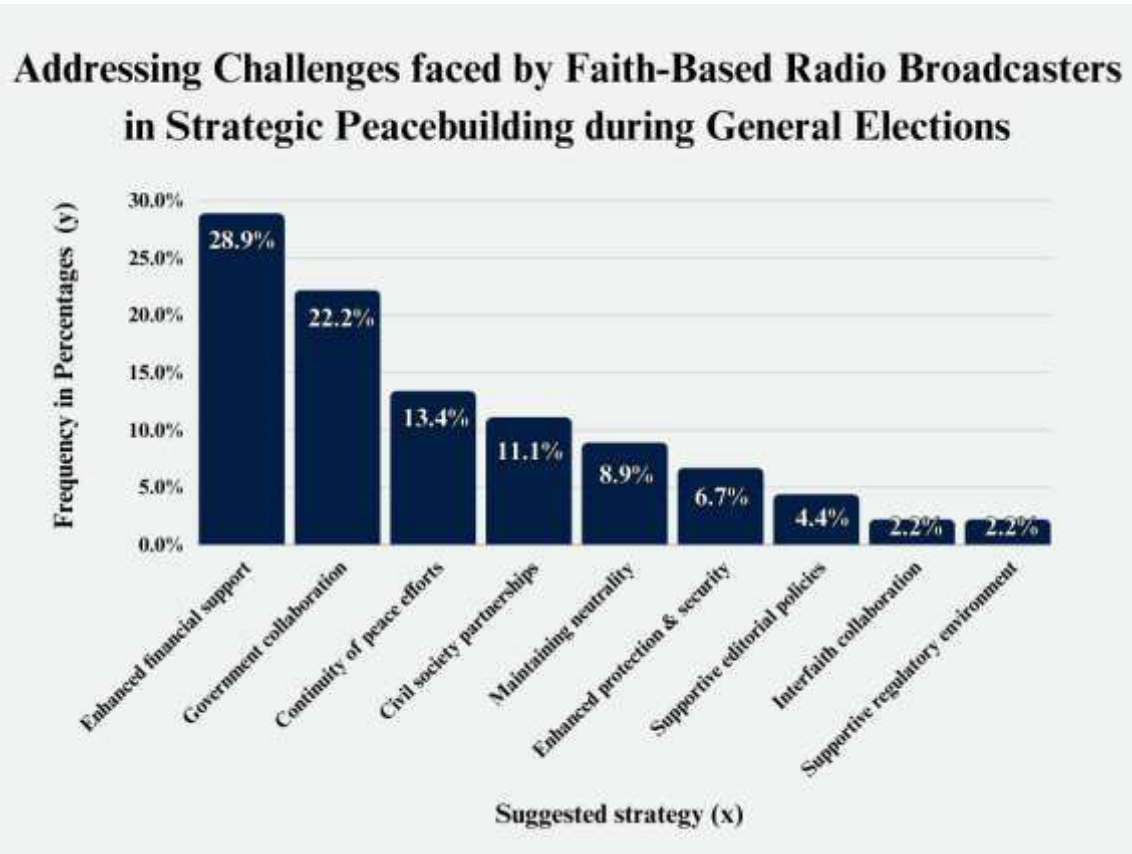


Figure 4.27: Addressing the Challenges faced by Faith-Based Radio Stations in Strategic Peacebuilding

Majority of the respondents, representing 28.9%, stated that the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections can be addressed by enhanced financial support. As earlier established, strategic peacebuilding initiatives are costly. Most of the faith-based radio stations that participated in this study reported that they operated with limited financial resources that restricted their ability to produce impactful, engaging, persuasive, and high-quality peace-themed content. As such, financial support from the government, private sector, NGOs and international organizations in form of funding and grants could go a long way in supporting strategic peacebuilding initiatives of the faith-based radio stations. This financial support can help

to cater for the costs of community outreach programs, expanding coverage, and producing quality peace-themed content. The respondents also stated that leveraging on their respective religious communities to raise funds through donations and crowdfunding could boost their financial capacity, especially in funding strategic peacebuilding initiatives. Engaging the religious community in raising funds can also increase the chances of them participating in strategic peacebuilding initiatives since they will feel like they are part of the process.

22.2% of the respondents suggested that government collaboration with faith-based radio stations would help to support their strategic peacebuilding initiatives. This can be achieved if the government actively involves faith-based radio stations in its national peacebuilding initiatives. The respondents reported that faith-based radio stations should be included in public service announcements touching on peacebuilding and security. The government can also provide access to information to faith-based radio stations that can help promote strategic peacebuilding initiatives. The government can support strategic peacebuilding efforts of faith-based radio stations by developing policies that recognize and support the unique role played by these radio stations in strategic peacebuilding. These policies could include measures such as having streamlined licensing processes, subsidies for equipment, and tax incentives among others.

13.4% of the respondents stated that addressing the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections required ensuring continuity of peace efforts and initiatives beyond the electioneering period. In achieving this, faith-based radio stations should not only focus on strategic peacebuilding during the general elections but should ensure that these efforts continue throughout the five-year

election cycle. Peace ought to be preached even when it exists just to emphasize its importance in a country. As such, in order to ensure long lasting peace, strategic peacebuilding should be a continuous process that goes beyond the general elections.

11.1% of the respondents suggested that partnering with civil society would help in addressing the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. According to the respondents, there are numerous civil society organizations specializing in peacebuilding, governance, and human rights issues. Faith-based radio stations can partner with these organizations, hold joint campaigns, pool their resources, expertise, and network with each to enhance the effectiveness of strategic peacebuilding initiatives. Further, they can also partner with research organizations to constantly evaluate the impact and effectiveness of strategic peacebuilding programs and messages. This can help improve these peacebuilding initiatives and reiterate the value of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding.

8.9% of the respondents stated that part of the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding could be addressed by maintaining neutrality. The faith-based radio stations are owned and managed by religious organizations and leaders. These religious organizations sometimes fail to remain non-partisan and appear to endorse certain political candidates and parties. This usually trickles down to the faith-based radio stations. According to the respondents, to address this challenge, faith-based radio stations should strive to remain non-partisan and provide a balanced coverage that does not appear to be making any political endorsement. Maintaining neutrality can help in stopping the spread of tensions that could arise as a result of taking sides. Religious leaders affiliated

to these faith-based radio stations should also remain non-partisan, and avoid inflammatory rhetoric during electioneering periods.

6.7% of the respondents stated that enhancing protection and security, especially of faith-based radio broadcasters can also help address the challenges faced in promoting strategic peacebuilding. According to the respondents, faith-based radio broadcasters ought to be protected from attacks, intimidation and threats in the course of their efforts to promote peace during general elections. Human rights organizations can come in to document and push for the addressing of threats against faith-based media personnel during volatile electioneering periods. The government should be held accountable for the protection of media workers, including faith-based radio stations. This can help in creating a safer and conducive environment for peacebuilding initiatives.

4.4% of the respondents stated that faith-based radio stations should have supportive editorial policies that can support strategic peacebuilding initiatives. According to the respondents, faith-based radio stations should have editorial policies that are committed to neutrality, promote peaceful messaging, avoid inflammatory content, ensure balanced representation, uphold fact-checking and accuracy, and ensure community engagement. Editorial policies must explicitly commit to neutrality and ensure that their coverage is balanced, fair, and avoids favoritism or bias towards any political candidate or party. Editorial policies should also prioritize promoting peaceful messages and content that promotes non-violence, unity and peace. Further, editorial policies must ensure that content does not exacerbate tensions or incite violence. As such, the policies must ensure that language used in their programs and by their guests is not inflammatory.

2.2% of the respondents stated that interfaith collaboration could help in addressing the challenges that face faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. According to the respondents, this can be achieved by participating in joint peace messaging, where different faith-based radio stations from different religious faiths and denominations partner to broadcast joint peace messages. This can also be achieved when religious leaders from various faiths partner to promote unified messages of peace that reinforce national cohesion. Faith-based radio stations can host interfaith discussion panels and invite leaders from various religions to discuss the importance of peace during elections. These discussions should highlight how faith can prevent election-related violence. Additionally, faith-based radio stations can also collaborate to disseminate shared religious values and teachings that focus on common religious values such as peace, love for one another, and justice during electioneering periods. Such content is highly likely to resonate with a wider audience that transcends religious divides.

Lastly, 2.2% of the respondents stated that a supportive regulatory environment could help address the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. According to these respondents, the government should establish and enforce laws that support peace-focused journalism, comprising provisions dedicated to faith-based media. The laws should guard the rights of these faith-based radio stations in broadcasting peace-themed content and ensuring that they operate freely during elections without undue influence. Regulatory bodies such as the Communications Authority of Kenya can also develop and implement specific guidelines for faith-based radio, given their uniqueness.

4.6 Faith-based Radio and Religion in Strategic Peacebuilding

During the focus group discussion, the participants were asked to discuss how the media, particularly faith-based radio, can come in and support religion in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. According to the discussants, religion should play the roles of promoting peace and unity, conflict resolution and mediation, supporting marginalized and vulnerable groups, championing for healing and reconciliation, collaborating with government and civil society, providing civic education and voter engagement, holding leaders accountable, and supporting media engagement and public participation.

4.7 Role of Faith-Based Radio Personnel in Promoting Strategic Peacebuilding

During the focus group discussion, the participants were asked to discuss whether they fully understood their role as radio station personnel in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The discussants reported that most of the faith-based radio station personnel understood their role in promoting strategic peacebuilding. This role revolved around broadcasting peaceful messages, providing non-partisan and balanced coverage, educating voters, facilitating mediation and dialogue, dealing with misinformation, and highlighting peacebuilding initiatives. However, it was noted that the need for additional training and capacity building for journalists in peace journalism is apparent in order to equip them with knowledge and skills of conflict-sensitive reporting.

4.8 Impact of Ownership and Religious Affiliation of Faith-Based Radio Stations on Strategic Peacebuilding

During the focus group discussion, the participants were asked to discuss whether the ownership and religious affiliation of their respective faith-based radio station affected their strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya. The discussants reported that the ownership and religious affiliation of their faith-based radio stations affected their strategic peacebuilding efforts, but not to a significant extent. In some few instances, the discussants mentioned that their editorial independence was affected whenever religious leaders affiliated to their faith-based radio stations appeared to take sides and favor certain political parties or candidates.

Ownership of the faith-based radio stations also affected technical and financial resource allocation. This limited resource allocation affected the capacity of these stations to effectively promote strategic peacebuilding initiatives during general elections. Ownership and religious affiliation was also found to affect message framing since different religious affiliations emphasize different traditions, values and aspects of peace. Some focus on reconciliation, mediation, and forgiveness, while others focus on communal harmony, and upholding the principles of justice and fairness. This significantly influenced the way peace messages were framed.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented, analyzed, and discussed the data collected for the study. It provided an overview of the response rate and clarified the composition of participants drawn from faith-based radio staff, listeners, and key informants. The findings were

organized according to the study objectives and supported by tables, figures, and narratives.

The chapter first examined the existing faith-based radio programs aired during Kenya's 2022 general elections and assessed their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding. It showed that faith-based radio stations played a significant role in fostering peace through programs that encouraged dialogue, reconciliation, and civic responsibility.

The chapter then analyzed the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by the stations, revealing that most messages emphasized unity, tolerance, forgiveness, and national cohesion. It further explored the role of editorial policies and found that institutional guidelines and ownership structures influenced how peace content was framed and broadcast.

The discussion also highlighted the main challenges that hindered faith-based broadcasters, including limited funding, political pressure, lack of neutrality, and inadequate policy support. Data from focus group discussions, interviews, and questionnaires were integrated to provide a comprehensive view of the findings. Overall, the chapter demonstrated that faith-based radio programming contributed meaningfully to strategic peacebuilding but required stronger institutional and policy backing to enhance its impact.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter provides a synopsis of the entire study by providing a conclusive summary of the findings, the conclusions drawn from the research conducted, and recommendations on how faith-based radio broadcasters can enhance their capacity and crucial role in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya.

5.1 Summary

Generally, this study set out to establish the role of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during the 2022 general elections in Kenya. Specifically, the study aimed to: determine the existing faith-based radio programs aired and their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections; examine the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations on promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections; establish the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections; and investigate the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections..

This study utilized a mixed method research approach whereby elements of both qualitative research was dominant, while quantitative research was embedded to enrich the qualitative findings. A concurrent mixed embedded research design was adopted in this study. The study was conducted at the headquarters of the seven sampled faith-based radio stations in Kenya. Sayare FM and Upendo FM are located in the Rift Valley,

specifically in Eldoret City. Biblia Husema Broadcasting, Radio Waumini, Hope FM and Family Radio 316 are located in the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi, while MBCI Radio is located in Nakuru City, Kenya. These areas were selected by virtue of being located in areas which have witnessed significant lack of peace during general elections in Kenya in the past.

Purposive sampling was used to select the seven faith-based based radio stations for this study. Purposive sampling was also used to select the radio presenters and radio programs managers and producers to give information about the programs and messages they disseminate that are intended to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya, the challenges they face in strategic peacebuilding, and if there are editorial policies that either hinder or promote strategic peacebuilding. The sample size selected for this study was one hundred and nineteen (119). Of these, forty-nine (49) were journalists and 70 were listeners.

Primary data, which entailed collecting data directly from the source, was done through interviews and focus group discussions. The key informants in this study were the radio program directors from the seven faith-based radio stations. Focus group discussions were held with the program directors, radio presenters, radio producers and listeners. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to the radio presenters to respond to the research questions. Secondary data was collected through library research and document analysis from information sources such as books, theses, journals and other research publications related to the study topic.

5.2 Conclusion

The first objective of this study was to determine the existing faith-based radio programs aired and their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. The study established that each of faith-based radio stations had radio programs that were purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. During the broadcasting of these programs, political, religious, and opinion leaders were frequently invited and offered a platform to hold discussions that called for peace during electioneering periods. The programs also involved holding talk shows to call for peace before, during and after elections. Radio drama shows intended to convey important peace messages, and influence the audiences' attitudes and behaviors towards peacebuilding were regularly broadcasted. Additionally, calls for peace were issued regularly before, during and after the general elections.

The target audience for the peace-focused radio programs were identified as the youth, the general public, leaders, voters, and parents. The content and teachings of these faith-based radio programs revolved around religious sermons that emphasize the importance of peace, music and radio drama containing peace messages, peace-centered talk shows and discussions, youth and community engagement programs, and emphasizing on the detriments of lack of peace. The peace programs were generally found to be effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding. This effectiveness was measured using audience feedback mechanisms, monitoring peace indicators, conducting impact assessment studies, and pre and post broadcast surveys.

The role of religion and faith-based radio programs in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya was identified as providing education and advocacy for peace, providing spiritual and ethical guidance, community mobilization, building social cohesion, and mediation and conflict resolution. The faith-based radio stations ensured that their audience engaged and participated in their peace programming through studio panel discussions, call-in segments, SMS, social media engagement, and on-the-ground engagement. Nonetheless, the sampled faith-based radio stations reported to having never conducted an exclusive conflict analysis to determine the underlying causes of conflict during general elections in Kenya.

The second objective of this study was to examine the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations on promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. All the faith-based radio stations sampled disseminated some form of peace messages before, during and after the general elections. The target audience for these peace messages comprised of youth and parents, the general public, politicians and political candidates, and voters. The religious content in the peace messages was disseminated through scriptures on peace and love, peace-oriented music, religious sermons on peace, and prayers for peace. The peace messages disseminated by the faith-based radio stations contributed to the promotion of strategic peacebuilding through the promotion of peaceful co-existence, positive behavior change, highlighting the detriments of violence, blurring tribal lines, and vouching for the acceptance of election outcomes.

The peace messages disseminated by the sampled radio stations were generally found to be effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. Their

effectiveness was monitored using audience feedback mechanisms, impact assessment studies, pre and post broadcast surveys, and monitoring of peace indicators. These peace messages were disseminated using live programs and presenter messages, social media, road shows, religious leaders, inviting aspirants and leaders to pledge peace, oral campaigns, radio fan clubs, posters and visual campaigns, community outreach programs, and sending SMS to their target audience.

The third objective of this study was to establish the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. Generally, the editorial policies of the sampled faith-based radio stations promoted their strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections. Government regulations on media in editorial policy formulation were commonly found to impede the strategic peacebuilding efforts of faith-based radio stations during general elections in Kenya. For instance, these stations have been forced to avoid discussing certain peacebuilding topics due to strict controls imposed by the government, thus limiting the scope of the peace messages and content disseminated, especially if that content was considered politically sensitive. Further, there were instances where media regulations were applied selectively, targeting specific political or religious groups. This forced the faith-based radio stations to adopt editorial policies that align with the stance of the government, even if those policies contradicted their broader peacebuilding efforts.

The fourth objective of this study was to investigate the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. The challenges identified included financial constraints, lack of neutrality, political polarization and interference, negative audience perception, ethnic and religious divides,

limited reach and influence, lack of government support, regulatory constraints, and safety concerns. It was suggested that these challenges could be addressed by enhanced financial support, government collaboration and support, ensuring continuity of peace efforts, partnering with civil society, maintaining neutrality, enhancing protection and security, having supportive editorial policies, fostering interfaith collaboration, and having a supportive regulatory environment.

Finally, the main findings of this study suggest that faith-based radio broadcasters play an exceptional and significant role in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. Courtesy of religion, they leverage on their moral authority, community trust, and religious teachings to influence public discourse on peacebuilding. This has contributed to reducing inflammatory rhetoric and encouraging peace during elections. Faith-based radio broadcasters have mediated conflicts between parties by providing them with platforms for dialogue. Similarly, these stations have also been on the forefront in disseminating messages of hope, reconciliation and tolerance, despite the numerous challenges they face.

This study further concludes that faith-based radio broadcasters remain crucial actors in Kenya's strategic peacebuilding landscape, especially during general elections. These broadcasters have the capacity to balance spiritual guidance with civic education, giving them the potential to be effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding. However, the impact of these faith-based stations remains underutilized in formal strategic peacebuilding discussions and frameworks. Stakeholders need to recognize and support the contributions of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding in Kenya's electoral context.

The study's conclusions align with global trends showing that faith-based and community media have become key actors in conflict transformation and peace communication. Across different regions, media that integrate moral, cultural, and spiritual perspectives have been increasingly recognized for their capacity to shape attitudes, encourage reconciliation, and counter hate narratives. Kenya's faith-based radio experience reflected this wider movement toward leveraging localized, value-driven communication for sustainable peace. The findings therefore reinforced the idea that peace-oriented broadcasting is not only a national imperative but also part of a global shift toward inclusive, ethical, and community-centered media practice. Strengthening policy frameworks, capacity building, and cross-sector partnerships could further position faith-based broadcasters as vital contributors to both national stability and global peacebuilding efforts.

5.3 Recommendations

From the study's findings, it is evident that faith-based radio broadcasters play a vital, influential and unique role in promoting strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya. Despite this potential, faith-based radio stations continue to face numerous challenges in executing their role as promoters of strategic peacebuilding during general in Kenya. Additionally, from the study's findings, the unique role played by faith-based radio stations remain unappreciated and under-recognized. To address the challenges they face and fully exploit their impact, influence and potential, faith-based radio stations need to adopt collaborative and structured approaches. These approaches must align well with other stakeholders such as governments, electoral management

bodies, civil society, conflict resolution experts, citizens, target audiences, and community elders among others.

In view of the above identified issues, this study recommends as follows:

- i. Governments must recognize the uniqueness of faith-based radio broadcasters, and effusively support their efforts in promoting strategic peacebuilding initiatives during general elections. This support can come in the form of funding, creation of peace-promoting content, collaborating and partnering with these radio stations for peacebuilding, and holding peace campaigns in collaboration with these radio stations.
- ii. Faith-based radio broadcasters should increase and diversify their strategic peacebuilding radio programs, messages, and initiatives by giving prominence to peace efforts from contesters and political leaders calling on their supporters to maintain peace, reject violence and tolerate each other. These leaders, politicians, and contesters ought to be provided with a platform by the faith-based radio stations to set good examples and guide their followers towards maintaining peace.
- iii. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and other electoral management bodies should empower faith-based radio stations in Kenya to be on the forefront in preaching peace during electioneering periods. This can be achieved by partnering with them in supporting religious programs, messages, and teachings on peacebuilding in these radio stations, as well as taking full advantage of the platforms provided by these stations to educate listeners and the general public about peace and strategic peacebuilding.

- iv. The government should ensure regulatory support through its various media regulatory bodies such as the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) and the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) among others. These agencies can work with faith-based radio stations to ensure compliance to ethical standards and promotion of peace-themed programming. The government should also formulate policies that support the role of faith-based media in strategic peacebuilding and offer a conducive operating environment for such programs. These policies should protect the independence of faith-based media and ensure that they function well without any form of political interference, especially during electioneering periods. Faith-based broadcasters can also be included in national election monitoring teams and peace committees in order to make their role in strategic peacebuilding and conflict prevention more structured.
- v. Training and capacity building should be adequately provided to faith-based media personnel on mediation, conflict sensitive reporting and peace journalism. This can equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills for promoting strategic peacebuilding, avoiding inflammatory language, maintaining neutrality, and also empower them to handle sensitive electoral matters, as well as avoid unintentional escalation of conflicts. Through faith-based radio, this training can also be extended to local organizations and community members committed to strategic peacebuilding to enhance their capacity and strategic peacebuilding efforts.
- vi. Faith-based radio stations must strive to maintain objectivity and neutrality when reporting about electoral matters in order to uphold their credibility and trust among their target audience. Faith-based radio broadcasters should avoid taking sides and being drawn into partisan politics since doing this can easily erode the credibility

and trust bestowed upon them by their listeners, and water down their strategic peacebuilding efforts. Religious leaders affiliated to faith-based radio stations should be ambassadors of peace and also not force their political preferences on these faith-based radio stations.

- vii. Faith-based radio stations should regularly conduct conflict analysis to determine the underlying causes of conflict during electioneering periods. Thorough conflict analysis usually helps faith-based radio stations to understand the deep-seated issues that contribute to conflict during general elections, giving them an opportunity to inform their messaging and programming towards promoting peacebuilding. An understanding of the root causes of conflict can also make it easier to be more objective, provide more balanced reporting, and develop more effective conflict prevention strategies in their programming and messaging.
- viii. Constant research, monitoring and evaluations should be carried out by faith-based radio stations to regularly monitor the impact of faith-based radio broadcasters on strategic peacebuilding efforts. Constant research, monitoring and evaluation will enable faith-based radio broadcasters to determine the changing political dynamics, measure success, identify areas that need improvement, and make necessary adjustments. Monitoring and evaluation will also enable faith-based radio stations to know where they stand in terms of promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections.
- ix. Faith-based radio stations should make use of technological tools such as SMS polling, mobile applications, social media, and online surveys to collect real-time feedback from their listeners about the impact of their peacebuilding programs, messages and initiatives. Doing so can ensure that faith-based radio stations identify

the needs of their target audiences in strategic peacebuilding matters, ensure that they are met, and also continually improve their peacebuilding efforts and initiatives.

- x. Faith-based radio stations should enhance their collaboration with peacebuilding agencies and institutions such as the NCIC and other bodies such as civil society organizations and NGOs. This can help strengthen their strategic peacebuilding efforts and initiatives and provide them with an opportunity to ensure that their peacebuilding strategies are more effective and cohesive. Partnering with such organizations can also help them to source for funds to support their strategic peacebuilding initiatives.
- xi. Faith-based radio stations should work more closely with local peacebuilding groups, committees and individual peace ambassadors in order to strengthen the impact of their peace programs, messages and initiatives. Focusing at the individual and community level can easily foster localized peacebuilding initiatives that cater to the unique community issues and needs during general elections, thus contributing to the overall effectiveness of faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections. This can be further achieved by strategically tailoring their programs and messages to not only address religious or spiritual matters, but also socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political issues affecting citizens.
- xii. Since strategic peacebuilding initiatives are costly, faith-based radio stations should seek to enhance their budgets geared towards strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections. This will boost their ability to produce impactful, engaging, persuasive, and high-quality peace-themed content and messages. Financial support can come from the government, private sector, NGOs and international

organizations in form of funding and grants. Such support could go a long way in supporting strategic peacebuilding initiatives of the faith-based radio stations. This financial support can help to cater for the costs of community outreach programs, expanding coverage, and producing training journalists on peace journalism. Leveraging on the respective religious communities and followers of the faith-based radio stations can also help raise funds through donations and crowdfunding. This can boost their financial capacity, especially in funding strategic peacebuilding initiatives.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

This study focused on the role of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. While it provided valuable insights into the influence of religious broadcasting on electoral peace, several areas remain open for further investigation. Future studies could examine the impact of other media platforms such as television, podcasts, and digital faith-based channels to establish how emerging technologies shape peace communication. Comparative research involving both secular and faith-based media would also enrich understanding of how different ownership structures influence peace narratives.

Longitudinal studies could explore how consistent peace-oriented broadcasting contributes to sustained social cohesion beyond election periods. Additionally, there is need for studies that assess audience reception in greater depth, particularly how listeners internalize and act upon peace messages delivered through faith-based media. Finally, further research could investigate the role of gender and youth participation in faith-based

media production to reveal how inclusivity affects the effectiveness of peace communication.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Letter of Introduction

Dear Respondent,

This letter introduces **Isaac Wamalwa Manje**, a PhD candidate in Communication Studies at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, registration number BJM/H/01-70045/2020.

The candidate is conducting a research study titled: **ROLE OF FAITH-BASED RADIO PROGRAMMING IN STRATEGIC PEACEBUILDING DURING KENYA'S 2022 GENERAL ELECTIONS.**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the existing faith-based radio programs aired and their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.
2. To examine the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations on promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.
3. To establish the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.
4. To investigate the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections.

As a key stakeholder and informant in this field, you are requested to participate in this study by objectively responding to the questionnaires and discussions. The findings are intended to inform policy, practice, and other stakeholders such as the media, election management bodies and religious leaders/institutions/organizations in strategic peacebuilding during general elections.

Any information you give shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. To ensure privacy and anonymity, you do not have to disclose your name, identity or personal details.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,



Isaac Wamalwa Manje

isaacmanje@gmail.com | +254 720224779

APPENDIX II: Research Participant Informed Consent Form

1.0 TITLE OF THE STUDY

Faith-Based Radio Programming in Strategic Peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 General Elections

2.0 PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Isaac Wamalwa Manje

Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Masinde Muliro University of Science & Technology

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3.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To establish to the place of faith-based radio programming and messaging in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya.

4.0 STUDY PROCEDURES

- i. Interviews of key informants (program directors).
- ii. Focus group discussions (program directors, producers, radio presenters, and listeners).
- iii. Administration of semi-structured questionnaires (radio presenters).
- iv. Secondary research from library information resources.

5.0 BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY

This study is important because it will:

- i. Sensitize faith-based radio broadcasters about their role and the role of faith-based radio programs in peacebuilding during elections.
- ii. Act as a reference material that can be used to guide faith-based radio broadcasters who are interested in peacebuilding.
- iii. Advice faith-based leaders and organizations that own and manage faith-based radio stations to focus on peacebuilding during general elections.

- iv. Prepare players in the radio sector on how to use it as a tool for peacebuilding and conflict transformation through peace journalism, objective reporting and incorporating peace messages in programming schedules.
- v. Highlight challenges faced by faith-based radio broadcasters in their peacebuilding efforts and offer possible solutions.
- vi. Offer an understanding on how faith-based radio broadcasters can either promote peace or escalate conflicts during general elections.
- vii. Highlight the need for faith-based radio broadcasters to be peace ambassadors during general elections and work with like-minded entities that seek to promote peacebuilding efforts before, during and after general elections.
- viii. Point out opportunities that faith-based radio broadcasters can exploit in order to make a more meaningful contribution to peacebuilding efforts and enhance their peace programming.

6.0 RISKS

There are no risks whatsoever associated with participating in this study as it is purely for academic purposes.

7.0 RIGHTS OF PARTICIPANTS

As a participant, it is your right to:

- i. Decline to answer any or all of the questions.
- ii. Withdraw from this study anytime you wish to without any implications to you.
- iii. Participate or not participate in this research without any prejudice against you.
- iv. Request for the research findings, reports, summary and recommendations.
- v. Be protected from any harm as a result of this research.
- vi. Have your privacy, confidentiality and anonymity protected.
- vii. Contact the researcher and his/her affiliated institution to raise any concerns you may have about this study.

CONSENT

I have read and understood the information provided. I understand that participating in this study is purely voluntary and I can withdraw at any time. I understand that the study is purely for academic research purposes and that my participation in it does not place me at any risk. I understand that my privacy and confidentiality will be protected and no personal information will be revealed.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX III: In-depth Interview Schedule for Faith-based Radio Station Staff

1.0 Preamble

This interview seeks information that is purely for academic research purposes only. The study aims to establish the role of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The findings are intended to inform policy, practice, and other stakeholders such as the media, election management bodies and religious leaders/institutions/organizations. Your confidentiality is guaranteed.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Identification of faith-based radio programs and their effectiveness in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya

1. Can you describe any faith-based programs on your radio station that focus on strategic peacebuilding during general elections?
2. What inspired the development of these programs?
3. Who is the primary audience for these programs, and why did you choose to target this group?
4. What type of faith-based content or teachings do you use to promote peacebuilding?
5. In your opinion, how effective have these programs been in fostering peace during elections?
6. Have you received any feedback from listeners on the impact of these programs?
7. How do you ensure audience engagement and participation in your peace programming?
8. What mechanisms, if any, do you have in place to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs?
9. From your perspective, what role does religion and faith-based radio play in peacebuilding during elections?

OBJECTIVE TWO: Analysis of the thematic focus of peace messages disseminated by faith-based radio stations in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya

1. Does your station air specific peace messages during election periods? If yes, what are the most common themes in these messages?
2. Who are the main recipients of these messages, and why is this audience important?
3. What religious content do these messages contain?
4. Have you observed any tangible effects of these messages in promoting peace?
5. What methods do you use to disseminate these messages effectively?
6. Have there been any instances where these messages have successfully prevented or mitigated conflict?
7. How do you assess whether the peace messages are making an impact?
8. In your opinion, what additional messages or strategies could strengthen peace programming?

OBJECTIVE THREE: Assessment of the role of editorial policies of faith-based radio stations on strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya

1. How does your station's editorial policy influence your peacebuilding efforts during elections?
2. Have you encountered any challenges in implementing peace-centered editorial policies?
3. How do government regulations affect your ability to broadcast peace-related content?
4. What changes or improvements do you think could enhance faith-based radio's role in peacebuilding?

OBJECTIVE FOUR: Identification of the challenges faced by faith-based radio stations in fostering strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya

1. What challenges do faith-based radio broadcasters face in promoting peace during general elections?
2. Can you share any specific incidents where these challenges were particularly evident?
3. What strategies have you used to overcome these challenges?
4. What kind of support do you think faith-based radio stations need to be more effective in peacebuilding?
5. How do you think the government and other stakeholders can support faith-based broadcasters in this role?

APPENDIX IV: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Faith-based Radio Station Staff

These questions purely for academic research purposes only. The study aims to establish the place of faith-based radio broadcasters in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya. The findings are intended to inform policy, practice, and other stakeholders such as the media, election management bodies and faith-based leaders/institutions/organizations. Your confidentiality is guaranteed.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Faith-Based Radio Programs and Their Effectiveness in Promoting Strategic Peacebuilding

1. What role does religion play in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?
2. Where should the media, particularly faith-based radio, come in to support religion in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?
3. What specific faith-based radio programs were developed to promote peace during the 2022 general elections?
4. How effective were these programs in promoting peace and preventing electoral violence?
5. What were some notable success stories of peace promotion through faith-based radio programs?

OBJECTIVE TWO: Thematic Focus of Peace Messages Disseminated by Faith-Based Radio Stations

1. What key themes did faith-based radio stations focus on in their peace messages during the elections?
2. How were these themes selected, and who was involved in the decision-making process?
3. Were messages tailored to address different audiences, such as youth, women, religious leaders, and politicians?
4. How were faith-based teachings integrated into the peace messages?

5. Were any partnerships or collaborations formed to enhance message dissemination?
If so, with whom?

OBJECTIVE THREE: Role of Editorial Policies on Strategic Peacebuilding

1. Are your editorial policies supportive of your strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya?
2. How do these policies influence the selection of peace messages and programs aired during election periods?
3. Does the ownership or religious affiliation of your radio station affect or influence your strategic peacebuilding efforts?
4. How do your editorial policies ensure neutrality and avoid political bias in peace messaging?
5. Have there been instances where editorial policies clashed with peacebuilding efforts?
If so, how were they resolved?

OBJECTIVE FOUR: Challenges Faced by Faith-Based Radio Stations in Fostering Strategic Peacebuilding

1. What are the main challenges your radio station faces in promoting peace during elections?
2. Has your radio station ever conducted a conflict analysis to determine the underlying causes of conflict during general elections in Kenya?
3. Do you understand the underlying root causes of conflict during general elections in Kenya?
4. What financial, technical, or human resource limitations affect peace-focused programming?
5. What external factors (e.g., political interference, government regulations, audience reception) impact your peace messaging efforts?
6. What can be done to aid the efforts of faith-based radio broadcasters in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

APPENDIX V: Key Informant Interview Guide for Radio Station Staff

SECTION A: Faith-Based Programming and Effectiveness (Objective 1)

1. What types of peace-oriented programs did your station broadcast during the 2022 general elections?
2. Who were the key stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of these programs (e.g., religious leaders, civil society, government)?
3. How were the programs structured to promote peace?
4. In your opinion, how effective were these programs in preventing or de-escalating electoral tensions?
5. Did you receive any feedback (positive or negative) from listeners regarding peace-related programs?
6. Can you share any specific examples or outcomes that demonstrate the impact of your programming?

SECTION B: Thematic Focus of Peace Messages (Objective 2)

7. What were the main themes emphasized in the peace messages aired during the election period?
8. How were these themes selected or developed?
9. Were the messages aligned with religious teachings or values? Please elaborate.
10. Did the themes vary depending on audience demographics (age, gender, region, etc.)?
11. Were there any deliberate efforts to counter misinformation, hate speech, or incitement?

SECTION C: Editorial Policies and Strategic Peacebuilding (Objective 3)

12. Does your station have editorial guidelines or policies that govern peace-related content?
13. How do editorial policies influence program content during elections?
14. How do you ensure neutrality and fairness when covering election-related topics?
15. Have there been any tensions between religious messages and journalistic objectivity during election coverage?
16. To what extent do editorial decisions support or hinder peacebuilding initiatives?

SECTION D: Challenges Faced in Peacebuilding Programming (Objective 4)

17. What challenges did your station face while implementing peace-focused programming during the 2022 elections?
18. Did you encounter any political or regulatory pressure?
19. Were there financial or logistical limitations that affected your programming?
20. How did audience perceptions or political polarization impact your efforts?
21. What support (training, resources, partnerships) would enhance your station's capacity to contribute to strategic peacebuilding in future elections?

SECTION E: Recommendations and Final Thoughts

22. What lessons did you learn from broadcasting during the 2022 elections?
23. What role should faith-based radio play in future electoral peacebuilding efforts?
24. Do you have any recommendations for policymakers, religious institutions, or media regulators regarding faith-based broadcasting and peacebuilding?

APPENDIX VI: Semi-structured Questionnaires for Radio Station Staff

1.0 Preamble

This questionnaire seeks information that is purely for academic research purposes only. The study aims to investigate the utilization of faith-based radio programming in strategic peacebuilding during Kenya's 2022 general elections. The findings are intended to inform policy, practice, and other stakeholders such as the media, election management bodies and religious leaders/institutions/organizations. Your confidentiality is guaranteed.

2.0 OBJECTIVE ONE

Faith-based Radio Programs Geared towards Strategic Peacebuilding during Kenya General Elections

a) Does your radio station have any faith-based radio programs purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

Yes No

b) If you have answered 'yes' in (a) above, list the specific names of the faith-based radio programs/shows purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya and how often they are aired.

c) Who are the target audience for your radio programs that are purely dedicated to strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya? Explain your choice.

d) What faith-based content/teachings do you broadcast to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

e) How effective do you think faith-based radio programs can be in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

f) Based on your answer in (e) above, have the faith-based radio programs been effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections? Explain your answer.

g) Are there mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of your radio programs towards promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya? If yes, what are they?

h) In your opinion, what role is played by religion and faith-based radio programs in strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

i) To what extent do you ensure audience engagement/participation in your peace programming?

j) What role can the government play in supporting faith-based radio programs that promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

k) Has your station ever conducted a conflict analysis to determine the underlying causes of conflict during general elections in Kenya?

l) Do you understand the underlying root causes of conflict during general elections in Kenya?

3.0 OBJECTIVE TWO

Faith-based Radio Peace Messages Geared towards Strategic Peacebuilding during Kenyan General Elections

a) Does your radio station air any peace messages during general elections in Kenya?

Yes No

b) If you answered 'yes' in (a) above, what peace messages does your station air that are geared towards strategic peacebuilding during Kenyan general elections?

c) Who are the target audience of your peace messages during general elections?

d) What is the religious content of the peace messages you disseminate that are geared towards strategic peacebuilding during general elections?

e) In what ways have the peace messages promoted strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

f) Have the peace messages been effective in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections? Explain your answer.

g) Do you have a mechanism of evaluating the effectiveness of the peace messages disseminated by your faith-based radio station towards strategic peacebuilding during general elections? If yes, please explain.

h) What strategies do you utilize to disseminate peace messages to your target audience during general elections?

i) What peace messages do you feel can be added to your programming to promote strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

4.0 OBJECTIVE THREE

Faith-based Radio Editorial Policies and Strategic Peacebuilding during Kenyan General Elections

a) Does your editorial policy impede or promote strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya? Explain your answer.

b) If your editorial policy impedes strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections, what do you suggest can be done to change this?

c) Do government regulations on media contribute to your editorial policy impeding or promoting strategic peacebuilding efforts during general elections in Kenya in any way? Explain.

5.0 OBJECTIVE FOUR

Challenges Faced by Faith-based Radio Broadcasters in Strategic Peacebuilding during General Elections in Kenya

a) What challenges do faith-based radio broadcasters face in promoting strategic peacebuilding during general elections in Kenya?

b) Suggest ways in which the challenges in (a) above can be addressed.

APPENDIX VII: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Faith-based Radio Audience

Target Audience: Radio listeners who engaged with faith-based radio programs during the 2022 general elections in Kenya.

Objective: To measure the effectiveness of faith-based radio programs in peacebuilding.

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for participating in this discussion. The purpose of this Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is to explore your experiences and perceptions of faith-based radio programs and their role in promoting peacebuilding during the 2022 general elections in Kenya. Your insights will help to measure the effectiveness of these programs in fostering peace and addressing election-related conflicts. All responses will remain confidential, and there are no right or wrong answers. The goal is to learn from your perspectives.

Section 1: Listening Habits and Engagement with Faith-Based Radio

Objective: To establish how frequently and actively listeners engage with faith-based radio programs on peacebuilding.

1. Which faith-based radio stations do you listen to most frequently?
2. How often do you listen to faith-based radio programs? (Daily, Weekly, Occasionally, Rarely)
3. What types of programs related to peacebuilding did you notice during the 2022 general elections?
4. Did you actively participate in these programs (e.g., through call-ins, social media discussions, attending events)?
5. What factors influence your choice of faith-based radio programs during election periods?

Section 2: Effectiveness of Faith-Based Radio Programs in Promoting Peace

Objective: To assess the impact of faith-based radio programs on promoting peace and reducing electoral violence.

6. Do you think faith-based radio programs helped promote peace during the 2022 general elections? Why or why not?
7. What specific messages or themes stood out to you as promoting peace?
8. Did these programs influence your attitude or behavior towards peace and coexistence?
9. Were there any instances where faith-based radio programs helped de-escalate tensions in your community?
10. How do faith-based radio messages compare to those from other media sources (e.g., mainstream media, social media)?

Section 3: Challenges and Limitations of Faith-Based Radio Programs in Peacebuilding

Objective: To determine the challenges listeners perceive in faith-based radio programming on peacebuilding.

11. Did you notice any challenges in how faith-based radio stations addressed peace and election-related issues?
12. Were there instances where programs seemed biased or failed to address key conflict concerns?
13. Do you think faith-based radio programs had enough reach and accessibility for all audiences?
14. Were the messages inclusive of all communities, or did they favor certain groups?
15. What barriers (e.g., language, accessibility, credibility) affected how people received peace messages?

Section 4: Recommendations for Improving Faith-Based Radio Peace Messaging

Objective: To gather listener perspectives on how faith-based radio can be more effective in promoting peace.

16. What aspects of faith-based radio programs do you think were most effective in promoting peace?
17. What improvements would you suggest for faith-based radio programs in future elections?
18. How can faith-based radio stations collaborate with communities to enhance peace efforts?
19. Would you like to see more interactive or community-based peace programs on faith-based radio?
20. What additional content or program formats would make peace messaging more impactful?

APPENDIX VIII: Approval of Research Proposal



MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MMUST)

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Ref: MMU/COR: 509099

Date: 12th March 2024

Manje Isaac Wamalwa
BJM/H/01-70045/2020
P.O. Box 190-50100
KAKAMEGA

Dear Mr. Wamalwa

RE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies has considered and approved your PhD. Proposal entitled: *'Religious Radio Broadcasting and Strategic Peacebuilding During General Elections in Kenya'* and appointed the following as supervisors:

1. Prof. Egara Kabaji - MMUST
2. Dr. Lydia Anyonje - MMUST
3. Rev. Fr. Dr. Kizito Muchanga -MMUST

You are required to submit through your supervisor(s) progress reports every three months to the Director of Postgraduate Studies. Such reports should be copied to the following: Chairman, School of Social Arts and Social Sciences Graduate Studies Committee and Chairman, Department Journalism and Mass Communication. Kindly adhere to research ethics consideration in conducting research.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe a deadline of three years from the date of registration to complete your master's thesis. Do not hesitate to consult this office in case of any problem encountered in the course of your work.

We wish you the best in your research and hope the study will make original contribution to knowledge.

Yours sincerely,




Prof. Stephen O. Odebero, PhD, FIEEP
DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

APPENDIX IX: Research Permit (NACOSTI)

| | |
|--|--|
|  REPUBLIC OF KENYA |  NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION |
| Ref No: 520151 | Date of Issue: 31/May/2023 |
| RESEARCH LICENSE | |
|  | |
| <p>This is to Certify that Mr.. Isaac Wamalwa Manje of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi, Nakuru on the topic: RELIGIOUS RADIO BROADCASTING AND STRATEGIC PEACEBUILDING DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS IN KENYA (2007-2022), for the period ending : 31/May/2024.</p> | |
| License No: NACOSTI/P/23/26263 | |
| 520151 |  |
| Applicant identification Number | Director General |
| NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION | |
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|  | |
| <p>NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.</p> | |
| See overleaf for conditions | |

APPENDIX X: Confirmation of Data Collection



SAYARE R.T.V.N

Reaching out with the gospel



SAUTI YA REHEMA

P.O BOX 4139-30100, ELDORET KENYA

TEL: 07 12 178 748,

EMAIL: info@sayare.co.ke, Website: www.sayare.co.ke

This is to confirm that, Isaac Wamalwa Manje, a PHD student from Masinde Muliro University of science and Technology, REG NO: BJM/H/01-70045/2020, Conducted a research at Sayare radio and TV to inform his study titled "RELIGIOUS RADIO BROADCASTING AND STRATEGIC PEACE BUILDING DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS IN KENYA".

The researcher issued consent forms to the participants and assured them of their anonymity and privacy. All research ethics were adhered to before and during data collection.

Questionnaires, interviews guides and focus group discussion guides were issued to the head of radio who assisted in collecting data from the respondents.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Wandera

General Manager

+254 724 347661

GO YE THEREFORE ... MATHEW 28:19

RADIO: 98.7 FM ELDORET | 102.9 KISHI | 93.3 FM LODWAR

TELEVISION: SIGNET CHNL 806 | STAR TIMES CHNL 810



This is to confirm that Isaac Wamalwa Manje, a PhD student from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Registration number BJM/H/01-70045/2020, conducted research at MBCI radio to inform his study titled "**RELIGIOUS RADIO BROADCASTING AND STRATEGIC PEACEBUILDING DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS IN KENYA (2007-2022)**".

The researcher issued consent forms to the participants and assured them of their anonymity and privacy.

Questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussion guides were issued to the Head of Radio, who assisted in collecting data from the respondents.

Isaac Wamalwa Manje
Isaac Wamalwa Manje
C/o Head of Radio



This is to confirm that, Isaac Wamalwa Manje, a PhD student from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Registration number BJM/H/01-70045/2020, conducted research at Biblia Husema Broadcasting to inform his study titled "RELIGIOUS RADIO BROADCASTING AND STRATEGIC PEACEBUILDING DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS IN KENYA (2007-2022)".

The researcher issued consent forms to the participants and assured them of their anonymity and privacy. All research ethics were adhered to before and during data collection.

Questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussion guides were issued to the Head of Radio who assisted in collecting data from the respondents.





5th August 2024

To whom it May It Concern,

RE: CONFIRMATION OF DATA COLLECTION

This is to confirm that, Isaac Wamalwa Manje, a PhD student in Communication Studies at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, of Registration number BJM/H/01-70045/2020 conducted research and collected data at Upendo FM 89.4 Eldoret to inform his study titled: **FAITH-BASED RADIO BROADCASTING AND STRATEGIC PEACEBUILDING DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS IN KENYA.**

The researcher issued consent forms to the participants and assured them of their anonymity and privacy. All ethical considerations were adhered to before and during the data collection.

Questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussion guides were issued to the Head of Radio who assisted and coordinated the data collection from the various groups of respondents.

In case of any clarification, please contact the undersigned.



Telephone: 053 2030304 | Email address: upendofm.1@gmail.com or info@upendofm.co.ke | P.O BOX 842-30100, Eldoret, Kenya

STUDIO DIRECT LINES: 0729 29 17 03; 0771 60 19 19; 0787 45 41 47 SMS LINE: 0729 095 235

APPENDIX XI: Plagiarism Report

3/10/2025, 12:55

Feedback Studio

1 of 1: Manje Isaac Wamalwa

ROLE OF FAITH-BASED RADIO PROGRAMMING IN STRATEGIC PEACEBUILDING DURING KENYA'S 2022 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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Appendix XII: Geographic Map of Study Areas



Source: Nations Online Project (2024)