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Examining the Role of Newspapers in Promoting Public Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals: A Case of *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi*

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Abstract. This study investigated the role of newspapers in raising public awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi*. A mixed-methods approach was utilized, integrating quantitative content analysis with qualitative thematic analysis to assess the extent and nature of SDG coverage, identify dominant themes, and capture readers' perceptions through article review and survey data. Results showed that in 2020, *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* published a total of 647 articles and 337 photographs pertaining to the SDGs. Coverage was predominantly centered on social goals—especially Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 4 (Quality Education), and Goal 5 (Gender Equality)—while economic and environmental goals received limited attention, with some entirely overlooked. Thematic analysis indicated that 54% of articles were informational, 23% addressed implementation, 7% provided analytical perspectives, and only 2% focused on project evaluation. Reader surveys revealed that 60% rated the coverage as ordinary and 40% as below average, with widespread calls for more comprehensive and in-depth reporting. The study highlights significant imbalances and a lack of depth in SDG coverage by Tanzanian newspapers, underscoring the need for more analytical and evaluative journalism. These findings contribute to media and communication theory by exposing gaps in SDG reporting and offer policy and practical recommendations for Tanzanian media to strengthen their coverage, thereby advancing both national and global development objectives.

Keywords. Newspapers, public awareness, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Tanzania

Introduction

After many countries failed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) implemented in 2000 to 2015, the United Nations announced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2014 (Kannengießer, 2023). This transition from the MDGs to the SDGs supplanted the term development with the concept of sustainability. According to Kannengießer (2023), the SDGs adopted in 2015 as 2030 a Sustainable Development Goals agenda which consist 17 goals and 169 targets. The 17 concrete goals listed and explained in the Agenda 2030 are: 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere, 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote

lifelong learning opportunities for all, 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, 6. Ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Goal 7 ensures access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive, sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation, Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries, Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss, Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and goal 17 is to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (General Assembly of the United Nations, 2015, p. 1). The Role of Media in Sustainable Development Goals

Over the past 25 years, there have been numerous instances when free media has aided in sustainable development. Scholars in communication, political science, sociology and anthropology, among other subjects, have explored the evidence of the media's influence, from studies on media effects and influence to studies on the role of the media in development and democracy (Singh, Grizzle, Yee & Culver, 2015). The study of Singh, Grizzle, Yee & Culver (2015) media and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations in the brief that follows. The importance of independent media in attaining the SDGs is evident as the fight to implement Agenda 2030 becomes increasingly more urgent. In addition to being directly mentioned in SDG 16 (public access to information is included in Target 16.10), independent media also aid in achieving other SDGs by serving as a prerequisite for advancement and a multiplier that amplifies change. However, media play a more significant role than SDG 16 and are necessary to achieve all development goals. Journalism functions as a powerful catalyst for societal transformation and remains foundational to a healthy information environment—one that enables societies to confront contemporary challenges and advance sustainable development (UNESCO, 2024). Its role is particularly critical across several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, recent data reveal that press freedom has significantly declined globally, marking the sharpest drop in 50 years—an erosion that is strongly associated with elevated poverty levels, underscoring the connection between media freedom and progress toward SDG 1 (No Poverty) (International IDEA, 2025; RSF, 2025). Concerning SDG 5 (Gender Equality), greater exposure to mass media has been shown to foster women's empowerment, reinforcing journalism's capacity to enable social change (UN Women, 2025; UNESCO, 2024). For instance, recent scholarship underscores journalism as a foundational catalyst for societal transformation and a vital component of a robust information ecosystem that enables societies to address current challenges and progress toward sustainable development (UNESCO, 2024). Its influence spans several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, declines in press freedom have been linked to rising poverty levels, reinforcing the importance of media freedom in achieving SDG 1 (No Poverty) (Reporters Without Borders [RSF], 2025; International IDEA, 2025). Similarly, media exposure has been shown to empower women, thereby supporting progress toward SDG 5 (Gender Equality) (UN Women, 2025).

In Kenya and Zimbabwe, the media has played a critical role in national development. In Kenya, a diversified media landscape—including numerous radio stations, television outlets, and newspapers—has contributed to reducing the information divide and supporting economic progress through improved public awareness and communication (Media Council of Kenya, 2025). In Zimbabwe, media organizations like Zimpapers, despite government influence, remain central to national discourse and development communication efforts (Zimpapers, 2025). Globally, media coverage of the SDGs exhibits distinct patterns. In the United States and Europe, SDG-related reporting tends to surge during United Nations summits and decline in off-peak years, while media coverage in developing countries such as India, South Africa, and Nigeria has remained relatively consistent (Brookings Institution, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2024). In Tanzania, media engagement with the SDGs has been bolstered through initiatives such as editor workshops organized by the UN and Tanzania Editors' Forum—efforts that emphasize media's role in enhancing accountability and public engagement (United Nations Tanzania, 2023).

Diverse studies (Hamidi & Mielke Möglich, 2021; Melkote & Steeves, 2015; Wilkens, Tuft, & Obregon, 2014) demonstrate that the media is crucial in promoting public dialogue, enhancing knowledge of sustainable development strategies, and holding governments accountable. Media opponents (such as Schudson, 2008; Herman & Chomsky, 2008) claim media do not prioritize news about development policies because they are more concerned with media proprietors' profits than the nation's development. Despite the importance of media in promoting development program, Tanzania failed to meet the MDGs, which were implemented between 2000 and 2015 (URT, 2015). The United Nations replaced MDGs with SDGs for implementation between 2015 and 2030 (Kannengießer, 2023). The National Voluntary Review (2019) indicates that Tanzania did not perform well in SDGs implementation and has pledged to increase SDGs implementation awareness and capacity building. Although the National Voluntary Review (2019) indicates that Tanzanian media has played an essential role in promoting SDGs, still is not known how much Tanzanian newspapers have covered the SDGs. This study aims to investigate the role that newspapers, specifically *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi*, play in increasing public awareness of sustainable development objectives.

Empirical Literature

The media, particularly newspapers, play an instrumental role in raising public awareness about sustainable development and catalyzing societal change. Nwanwene (2017) highlights that media platforms are central in educating individuals, communities, and broader society about sustainable development, promoting sustainable production and consumption, and motivating behavioral change toward a sustainable future. Empowering civil society, rather than relying solely on scientists or politicians, is essential for addressing complex environmental and developmental challenges (Nwanwene, 2017). The International Council for Science (2002) underscores the importance of accessible communication, recommending dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge through books, magazines, radio, television, and digital platforms to enable informed public debate. Likewise, the Department of Information and Media (2005) and the Centre for Environmental Education (2005) emphasize the cost-effectiveness and reach of mass media—particularly radio—in providing information and amplifying marginalized voices. These bodies argue that media not only shapes public opinion but also influences policy and encourages behavior change toward sustainability. Research in developing countries reveals unique challenges. Neverla et al. (2012) identify significant barriers in Bangladesh, such as low literacy rates, that impede effective media communication

on climate change. Their study found that while policymakers, environmental activists, and scientists are well-represented, ordinary citizens' perspectives remain underreported, highlighting a gap in inclusive coverage.

Content analysis studies offer insights into framing sustainability discourse in newspapers. Einseidel and Coughlan (1993) found that Canadian newspapers frequently use global frames and metaphors when covering environmental issues, which Nisbet (2009) later developed into a typology for science policy debates. In India, Nambiar (2014) conducted both quantitative and qualitative analyses of English-language newspapers during key global sustainability events, finding differences in coverage intensity and framing—*The Hindu* provided more consistent SDG coverage than *Daily Thanthi*. Similarly, Xalxo (2016) analyzed editorial coverage in *The Hindu* and *The Times of India* and found sustainable development issues to be underrepresented compared to political news and policy debates. Health, justice, and environmental topics received only modest editorial attention.

Odoom, Mensah, Dick-Sagoe, Lee, and Obeng-Baah (2023) examined public awareness of the SDGs in Ghana through empirical survey data, finding that while awareness has improved, the depth of understanding remains limited—suggesting that media exposure alone is insufficient for comprehensive public engagement (Odoom et al., 2023). Afful-Dadzie, Afful-Dadzie, Ofori-Amanfo, and Arwaa (2024) proposed a Sustainable Development Goals Reporting Metric tailored for developing economies, aiming to enhance the quality and comparability of SDG reporting across media and institutions (Afful-Dadzie et al., 2024). From a broader development perspective, Osei-Kusi, Wu, and Tetteh (2024) found that improving education quality in Sub-Saharan Africa significantly contributes to economic growth, reinforcing the importance of SDG 4 (quality education) for sustainable development (Osei-Kusi et al., 2024). Omisore (2018) emphasized that environmental challenges must be prioritized in Sub-Saharan Africa's pursuit of the SDGs, noting that neglecting environmental management undermines sustainable development efforts (Omisore, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by agenda-setting theory to describe both media coverage and readers' perceptions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As defined by McCombs (2014), agenda setting refers to the news media's ability to select and prioritize important issues for public attention. The theory addressed how the media influenced audiences by establishing which news topics were most important, a dynamic described by McCombs and Reynolds (2002). The prominence of this theoretical perspective increased with the expansion of agenda-setting research, which explored how communication practices shaped public discourse (Cacciatore et al., 2016). Agenda setting was found to require a precise sequence of steps to be effective (McCombs, 2005). Walter Lippmann, often recognized as the father of this theory, argued that the media possessed significant power to create and present images to the public—a view echoed in more recent scholarship (Nikata, 2016; McQuail, 2020).

McCombs and Shaw (1972) originally contended that the media instructed audiences not only about which public issues were important but also about how much significance to assign to each issue. Later research confirmed that the media agenda influenced the public agenda, which in turn affected policy agendas (Nikata, 2016; Kim et al., 2021). Editors and broadcasters played a critical role in determining which issues were highlighted for public consumption, thereby shaping public priorities and concerns (Nashombe, 2015; McQuail, 2020). In essence, the press exercised the power to selectively present information, influencing what the audience saw and heard. Recent studies have reaffirmed the continued relevance of

Agenda Setting Theory in the digital age. For example, Kim, Kim, and Zhou (2021) demonstrated that both traditional and digital media continued to shape public attention and policy debates on global issues, including the SDGs. This underscores the enduring influence of media institutions in framing public discourse and policy priorities.

Research Methods

This study adopted a descriptive research design utilizing a mixed methods approach to provide a comprehensive assessment of newspaper coverage and public perception of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Tanzania. The researchers grounded this approach in the pragmatic paradigm, which advocates for methodological flexibility and emphasizes the usefulness of employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to address research questions effectively (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Shannon-Baker, 2016). Pragmatism allowed the researchers to select the most suitable data collection methods, variables, and units of analysis, thereby enhancing the study's relevance, depth, and rigor (Fetters & Freshwater, 2015).

The study focused on the analysis of *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi*, two widely circulated Tanzanian newspapers, both published throughout 2020. *Habari Leo* is a government-owned publication, while *Mwananchi* is privately owned, providing a balanced perspective on public discourse. This year was selected purposefully, as it encompassed a general election and a period of intensified reporting on government performance, which typically stimulates heightened media attention to national policy issues, including the SDGs. The research also included a public opinion survey conducted in Dodoma Municipality, a hub for newspaper consumers and stakeholders engaged with SDG-related issues (Media Council of Tanzania, 2021).

The target population for content analysis included all issues of *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* published during 2020, totaling 730 newspaper editions (365 of each). For the survey component, the target population comprised 1,500 individuals residing in Dodoma, including politicians, journalists, and public servants with familiarity in government policy and the SDGs. The sample for content analysis included all 730 issues, while the survey sample consisted of 187 readers, selected using simple random sampling to minimize bias and ensure representativeness (Daniel, 2018). Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the newspapers, as it enabled the researchers to focus on sources most relevant to the objectives of the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Data were collected through both content analysis of newspaper articles and structured questionnaires administered to readers. The content analysis combined quantitative and qualitative techniques to examine the frequency, size, and placement of SDG-related news, as well as to identify key themes, framing strategies, and narrative tones (Neuendorf, 2017; Schreier, 2020). Quantitative content analysis quantified news coverage, while qualitative analysis explored deeper narrative elements, including implementation, advocacy, evaluation, and the portrayal of individual SDGs. Questionnaires were structured with both open- and closed-ended questions to facilitate the collection of both quantifiable data and richer, more nuanced perspectives (Saunders et al., 2019). This combination allowed the study to triangulate findings, thereby enhancing validity and providing a more holistic understanding of readers' perceptions. By enabling respondents to answer at their convenience, questionnaires also increased response rates and the reliability of the data collected. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and cross-tabulations, which were visually represented through tables and charts for clarity (Taherdoost, 2022). Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, supported by NVivo software, allowing for systematic coding and identification of patterns and themes in the

coverage and public perception of the SDGs (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Validity and reliability were addressed throughout the research process. The study's external validity was reinforced through multisource and triangulation methodologies, increasing the generalizability of findings to contexts with similar media, social, and political environments (Noble & Heale, 2019). Reliability was enhanced through the use of multiple data collection methods and careful documentation of research procedures, ensuring that the study could be replicated with consistent results (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Fawcett et al., 2020). Dependability in the qualitative component was maintained by providing a transparent record of coding and analysis decisions. Ethical considerations were rigorously observed. The researchers sought formal permission from newspaper publishers and local authorities and ensured that participants were fully informed about the study's aims, procedures, and their rights, including confidentiality and voluntary participation. All data were used exclusively for academic purposes, and ethical standards were upheld throughout the research process (Roper et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2019).

Findings

Objective One: To Examine the Extent to Which *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* Covered Sustainable Development Goals

The researcher conducted a meticulous and thorough analysis of Sustainable Development Goals news articles published in the *Mwananchi* and *Habari Leo* newspapers throughout 2020. The data indicates that the total number of articles published by both newspapers is 647, whereby *Mwananchi* published 327, equivalent to 52% of the articles, and *Habari Leo* published 320 (48%) articles, as Figure 1 indicates.

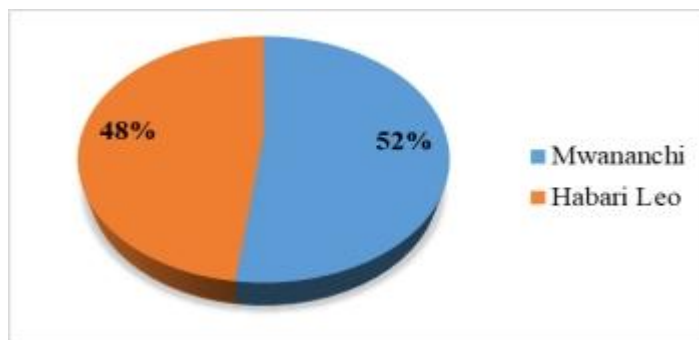


Figure 1: *Mwananchi* and *Habari Leo* SDGs Coverage

News Classification

A total of 320 news articles related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were identified in the *Habari Leo* newspaper. Of these, 170 were categorized as current news stories, constituting 53% of the total coverage. Feature articles accounted for 90 items (28%), while news analysis pieces comprised 34 articles (11%). Opinions made up 12 articles (4%), editorials accounted for 10 articles (3%), and columns represented the smallest share with 4 articles (1%). This distribution demonstrates that *Habari Leo* provides a comprehensive overview of SDG reporting, presenting a diverse range of article types that reflect the multifaceted nature of global sustainability objectives.

Similarly, the *Wananchi* newspaper published 327 SDG-related news articles. Among these, 176 were current news stories, representing 54% of the total. Feature articles numbered 98 (30%), while news analyses constituted 33 articles (10%). Opinion pieces comprised 10 articles (3%), editorials accounted for 4 articles (1%), and columns made up 3 articles (1%). The percentages for each article type illustrate the distribution of content categories within the overall SDG news output, underscoring the diversity of reporting formats utilized. This detailed breakdown facilitates a deeper understanding of the thematic and journalistic focus within SDG news coverage.

The analysis of both newspapers indicates robust engagement with sustainable development topics. The substantial number of articles dedicated to the SDGs in both *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* highlights the media's commitment to raising awareness and fostering discourse around these critical global issues, as further depicted in Figure 2.

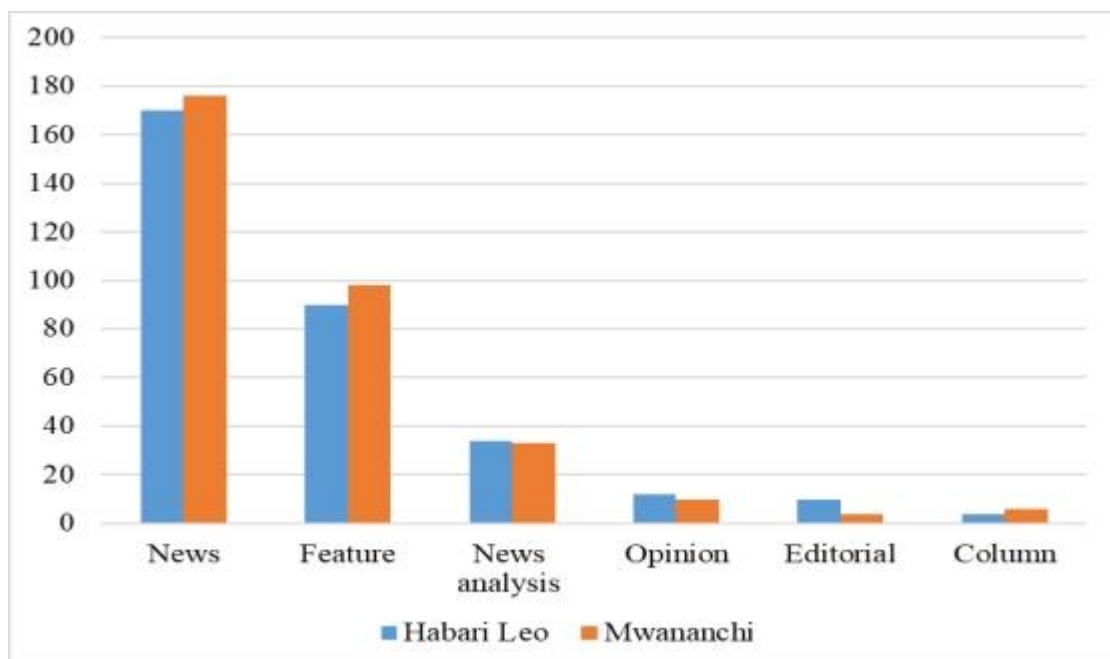


Figure 2. New Writers

News Writers

The *Habari Leo* newspaper published a total of 320 SDG news articles. Among these, 108 were authored by Correspondents, representing 34% of the total articles. Of the total news articles, 190 were authored by writers, accounting for 59%. There were six articles, or 2%, that were anonymous. Additionally, 12 articles, representing 4%, were produced by news analysts, while four articles, or 1%, were written by columnists. In *Mwanachi*, there were 327 SDG news articles in total. Of these, 102 were authored by Correspondents, accounting for 31%. Writers contributed 181 articles, making up 55%. Additionally, there were 28 anonymous articles (9%), 10 from News analysts (3%), and six from Columnists (2%). This breakdown illustrates the diverse range of authors contributing to the SDG news articles in *Mwanachi*, highlighting the significant role played by both Correspondents and Writers in shaping the content. The presence of anonymous contributions and pieces from analysts and columnists further emphasises the varied perspectives within the reporting landscape. The landscape of SDG news articles in *Mwananchi* reveals a vibrant tapestry woven by a variety of contributors, each playing a unique

role in shaping the narrative around sustainable development goals. With writers dominating the scene at 55%, their collective voices serve as the cornerstone of content creation, while the presence of 28 anonymous articles adds an intriguing layer of complexity, inviting readers to engage with diverse viewpoints without the influence of authorial identity. The contributions from news analysts and columnists, though modest at 3% and 2% respectively, underscore the importance of expert analysis and opinion, enriching the discourse with specialised insights. Collectively, these elements not only highlight the multifaceted nature of reporting but also demonstrate how diverse perspectives foster a more comprehensive understanding of pressing global issues as indicated in Figure 3.

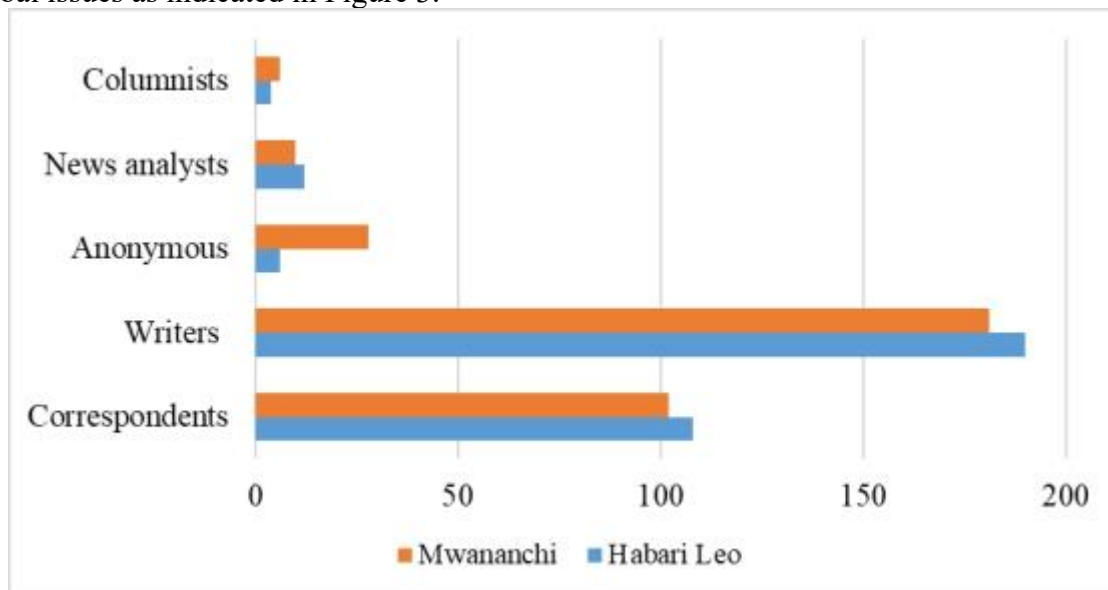


Figure 3. News Writer

News Placement

The *Habari Leo* newspaper published a total of 320 SDGs news articles. Among these, 102 (31%) appeared on the the upper part of the the newspaper, 61 (19%) in the middle, 57 (18%) in the part, and 90 (28%) on the full page of the newspaper. In Mwananchi, there were 327 SDG news articles in total. Among these, 112 (35%) appeared on upper of newspaper, 60 (18%) in the middle, lower 50 (21%) in the lower part, and 95 (28%) on the full page of the newspaper.as indicated in figure 4.

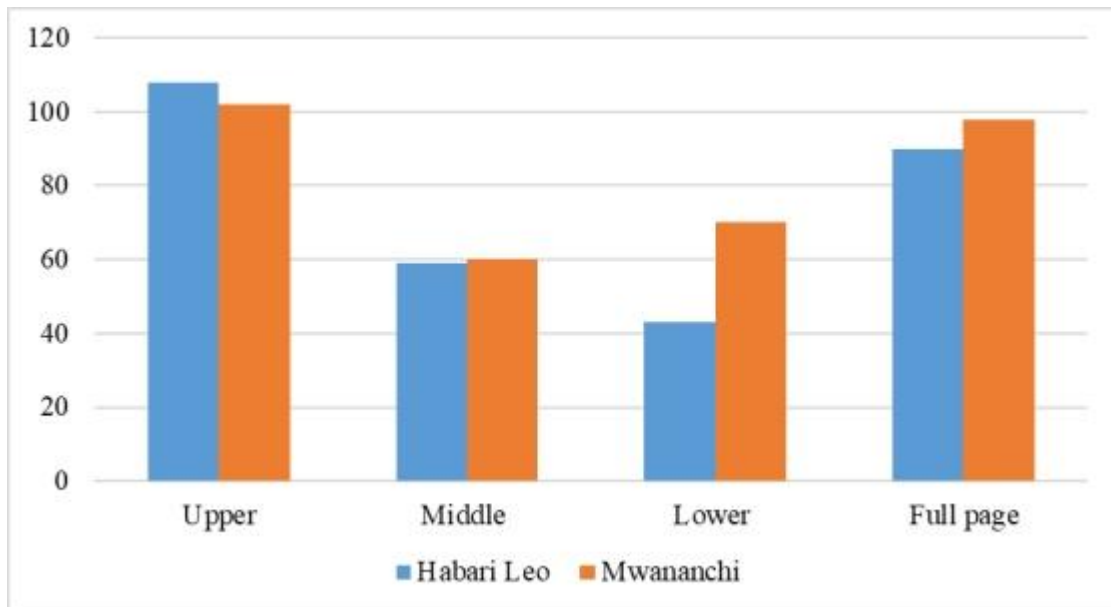


Figure 4. News Placement

Themes Categories

Research on SDG news published in the newspapers *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* has identified four key themes. The information theme covers SDG events; the implementation theme relates to the execution of various SDG projects; news analysis comes from journalists who provide in-depth explanations and interpretations of SDG-related news, enabling citizens to understand and engage in discussions; and evaluation involves assessing projects to highlight successes and challenges to develop effective strategies for achieving the SDG objectives by 2030. Of the 657 SDG news stories, 424 (66%) pertain to information, 165 (25%) to implementation, 46 (7%) to news analysis, and 12 (2%) to evaluation as indicated in Figure 5. This distribution demonstrates the media's focus on providing information and insights about the progress and challenges of SDG implementation. It highlights the crucial role of journalism in promoting public understanding and fostering dialogue around the Sustainable Development Goals.

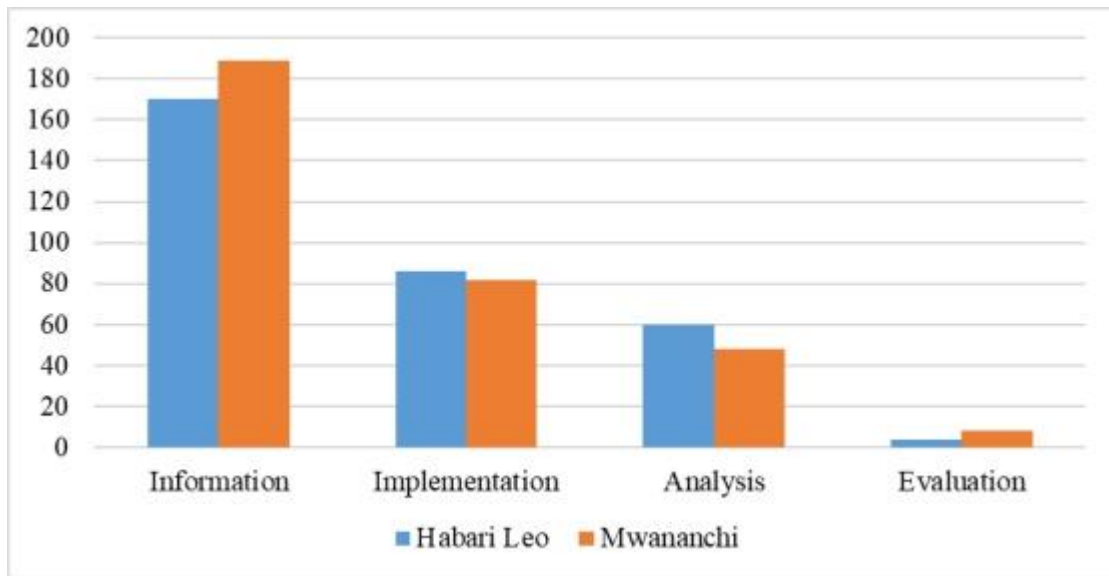


Figure 5. Themes Categories

SDGs News Tone

The findings indicate that 173 (54%) of the SDG news published by *Habari Leo* was positive, 53(17%) was neutral, and 94 (29%) was negative. In the case of *Mwananchi*, the breakdown shows 92 (28%) as positive, 45 (14%) as neutral, and 190 (58%) as negative. The findings have significant implications, as they reveal that *Habari Leo* prioritized the reporting of success stories, whereas *Mwananchi* emphasised the challenges encountered by citizens and the obstacles in implementation as indicated in Figure 6.

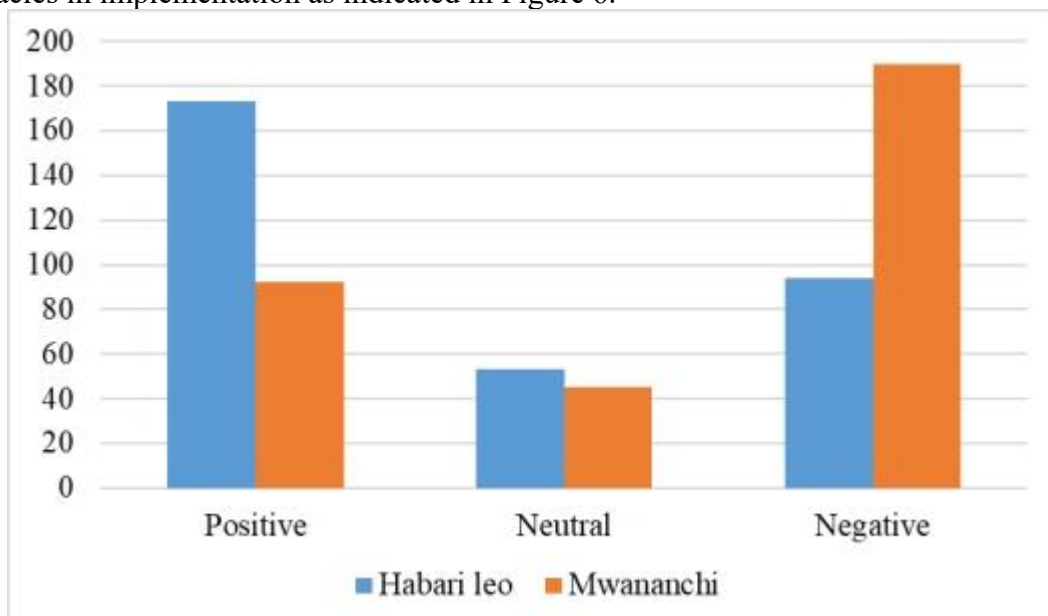


Figure 6. News Tones

Habari Leo and Mwananchi SDGs Coverage

Findings indicated that Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being received the highest coverage, at 19%, followed by Goal 4: Quality Education, at 18%, and Goal 1: No Poverty, at

12%. The findings also showed that Goal 5: Gender Equality received 9% coverage for *Habari Leo* and 7% for *Mwananchi*. The coverage of Goals 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, 13: Climate Action, and 7: Affordable and Clean Energy was similar, averaging 7% for both *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* while Goal 2: Zero Hunger. Goal 10: Reduced Inequality Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, Goal 15: Life on Land Goal 16: Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions, and Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals received an average of 2% each in both newspapers, as indicated in Figure 7. The findings illustrated that Goal 14: Life Below Water received the lowest coverage of one percent in both newspapers.

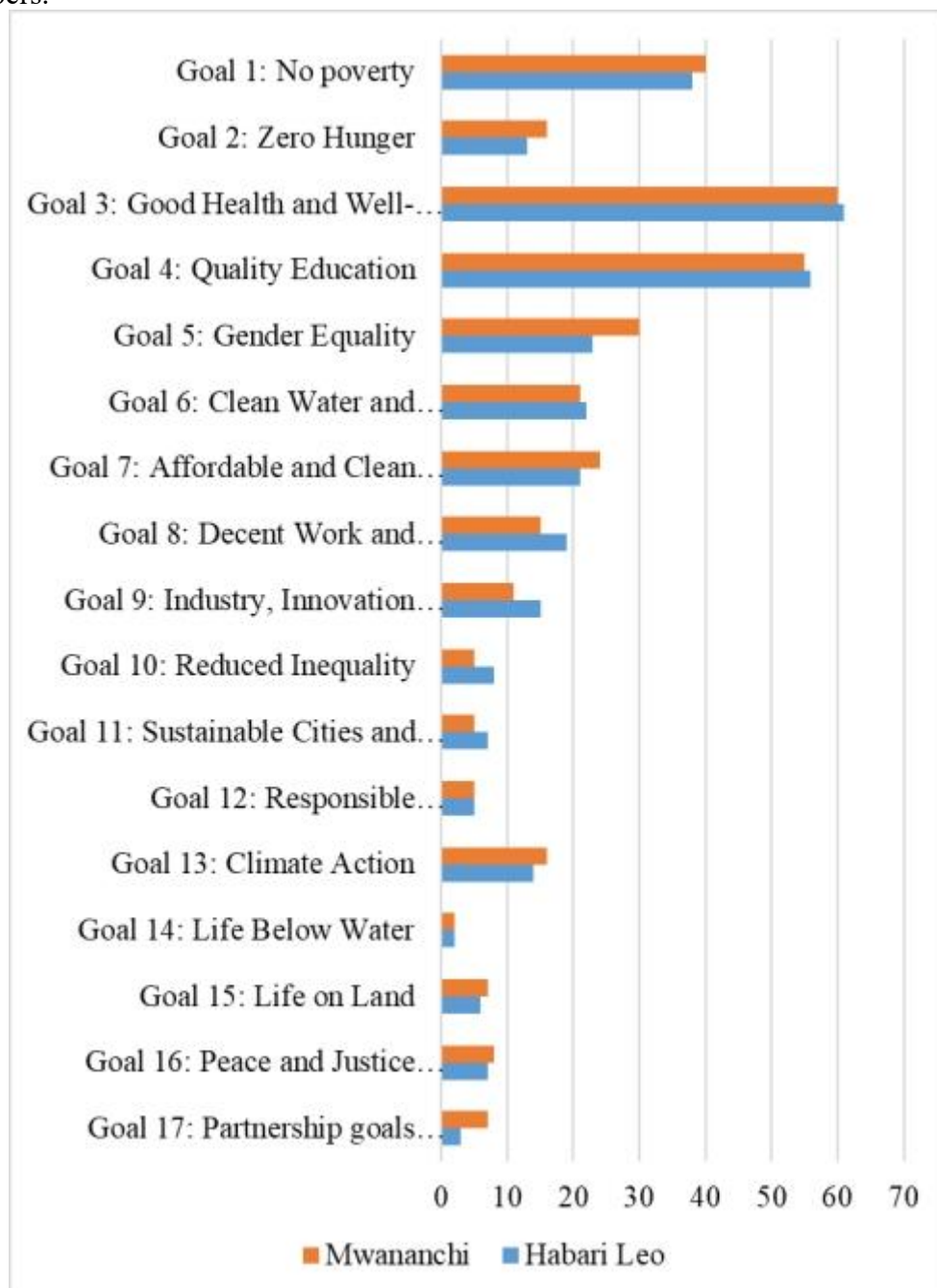


Figure 7. Habari Leo and Mwananchi SDGs coverage in 2020

The findings of this study support the conclusions drawn by Bodt (2009) that the media serves as a vital two-way instrument, disseminating information from policymakers to the general public at the grassroots level and allowing the public's thoughts, ideas, and opinions to be communicated back to policymakers. According to communication development analysts, *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi*'s coverage is crucial in ensuring that residents are provided with reliable information coverage, enabling them to participate in the implementation of the SDGs as demonstrated in The International Conference on Education for a Sustainable Future (Centre for Environmental Education, 2005) serves. The media has a vital role in fostering debate, influencing public opinion, and encouraging people to make behavioural changes towards sustainability. Additionally, the Tanzanian media coverage aligns with the themes outlined by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (UN, 1997), which state that information and knowledge are central to democracy and serve as conditions for development. UN (1997). "Address to World Bank Conference Global Knowledge 1997."

The findings revealed that Tanzanian media focused on social issues and provided minimal coverage of development goals that promote economic growth, such as Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, which aim to achieve standards of living above those goals. Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure Goal 10: Reduced Inequality Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production Goal 13: Climate Action. Goal 14: Life Below Water. Goal 15: Life on Land. The findings are similar to those of Neverla et al. (2012), which focused on the challenges faced by developing countries in covering climate change in the media. Tanzanian media is supposed to incorporate the findings of research done by Bodt (2009), emphasising the need for media in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to address global challenges by prioritising decent work, economic growth, and addressing inequality. They encourage equitable opportunities, responsible consumption, and environmental protection. By committing to these goals, Tanzania will improve the quality of life and preserve the natural world for future generations, fostering a sustainable future that benefits both people and the planet. The study highlighted that providing knowledge about climate change issues in Bangladesh is challenging due to the country's low literacy rate.

Objective Two: To Identify themes covered by *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* Newspapers About of Sustainable Development Goals

The researcher identified the categories of material documented to determine whether it pertains to information, project implementation, project developments analysis, or project evaluation news analysis.

1. GDGs Informed News

The study's findings for each Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) demonstrate that findings indicated that Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being received the highest coverage of 25% followed by Goal 2: No Poverty (19%), Goal 4: Quality Education, (13%), Goal 5: Gender Equality (7%) Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation and 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, (6%), Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, 2 (5%) Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (4%) and the rest goals has lowest coverage of 1% as figure 10 indicated.

2. SDGs News Analyses

The researcher examined whether *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* published news analyses concerning the SDG goals. The results indicated a total of 46 articles concerning news analysis. Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being led with 17%, followed by Goal 4: Quality

Education at 13%, and Goal 1: No Poverty at 11%. Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (9%); Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy (7%). Objective 5: Gender Equality, Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. Goals 10: Reduced Inequality, 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, 13: Climate Action, 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and 17 each received 2% coverage. The news analysis did not address Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, nor Goal 14: Life Below Water as indicated in Figure 10. The pursuit of sustainable development hinges on a multifaceted approach that addresses both immediate needs and long-term aspirations. With 11% of the global population still living in poverty, prioritising Goal 1 remains crucial for equitable progress. Concurrently, the focus on Goal 8 underscores the importance of fostering decent work and economic growth, which is essential for lifting communities out of poverty and enabling them to thrive. Furthermore, the commitment to Goal 7 highlights the pressing need for affordable and clean energy solutions, which are vital for both economic stability and environmental sustainability. Equally important are Goals 5, 10, and those related to infrastructure, innovation, and gender equality; these elements collectively contribute to a more just society while addressing systemic inequalities. Although Goals 12 and 14 regarding responsible consumption and life below water warrant greater attention, it is evident that an integrated strategy encompassing all these goals is necessary for achieving a holistic vision of sustainable development. Embracing this comprehensive framework will enhance resilience against current challenges and pave the way for future generations to flourish in a fairer world.

3. SGD News about Projects Evaluation

The study's results indicate that both publications covered SGD assessment news very minimally. Only 12 of the 424 news pieces addressed assessment difficulties. This underscores a significant gap in media coverage of critical issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals. This lack of attention could impede public understanding and engagement with the challenges of achieving these goals. To encourage a more informed dialogue, media outlets need to prioritise comprehensive reporting on both successes and obstacles in sustainable development. As a result, there is a need for increased awareness and, importantly, broader reporting on these issues to inform and involve the public effectively.

This emphasis on broader reporting highlights the importance of transparency and accountability in SDG reporting. Of these, 25% related to goal number 9, while 17% addressed issues linked to objectives. Goal 1: No Poverty, 2: Zero Hunger, 4: Quality Education, 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, and 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. No reports evaluated Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Goal 5: Gender Equality, Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure Goal 10: Reduced Inequality, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, Goal 13: Climate Action. Goal 14: Life Below Water, Goal 15: Life on Land Goal and 16: Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions. The landscape of sustainable development reporting reveals an urgent necessity for a more inclusive and transparent approach. Although some progress is evident—such as in the 25% of reports focused on Goal 9 and the 17% on Goals 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8—the notable absence of evaluations for key targets like Goals 3, 5, and 17 underscores significant gaps in our understanding of both achievements and challenges. To genuinely foster public engagement and stimulate collective action, future reports must present a comprehensive overview covering all aspects of sustainable development. Addressing these overlooked areas can mobilize support from diverse sectors of society and cultivate a more meaningful dialogue around the sustainable future we aspire to achieve as indicated in Figure10. (Talabi, & Adaja, & Sanusi, (2024).) Came to a similar conclusion, arguing that addressing social amenities,

poverty, healthcare, and climate change through the implementation of practical methods is the essence of development in Africa. To encourage long-term development and raise living standards throughout the continent, these factors are essential. Africa can build a better future for its people by focusing on five critical areas. Despite the importance of SDG 15, the media provided less coverage of it. The goal can foster Tanzania's development because it addresses the protection, restoration, and promotion of the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; the sustainable management of forests; combating desertification; halting and reversing land degradation; and halting biodiversity loss. SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all; and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

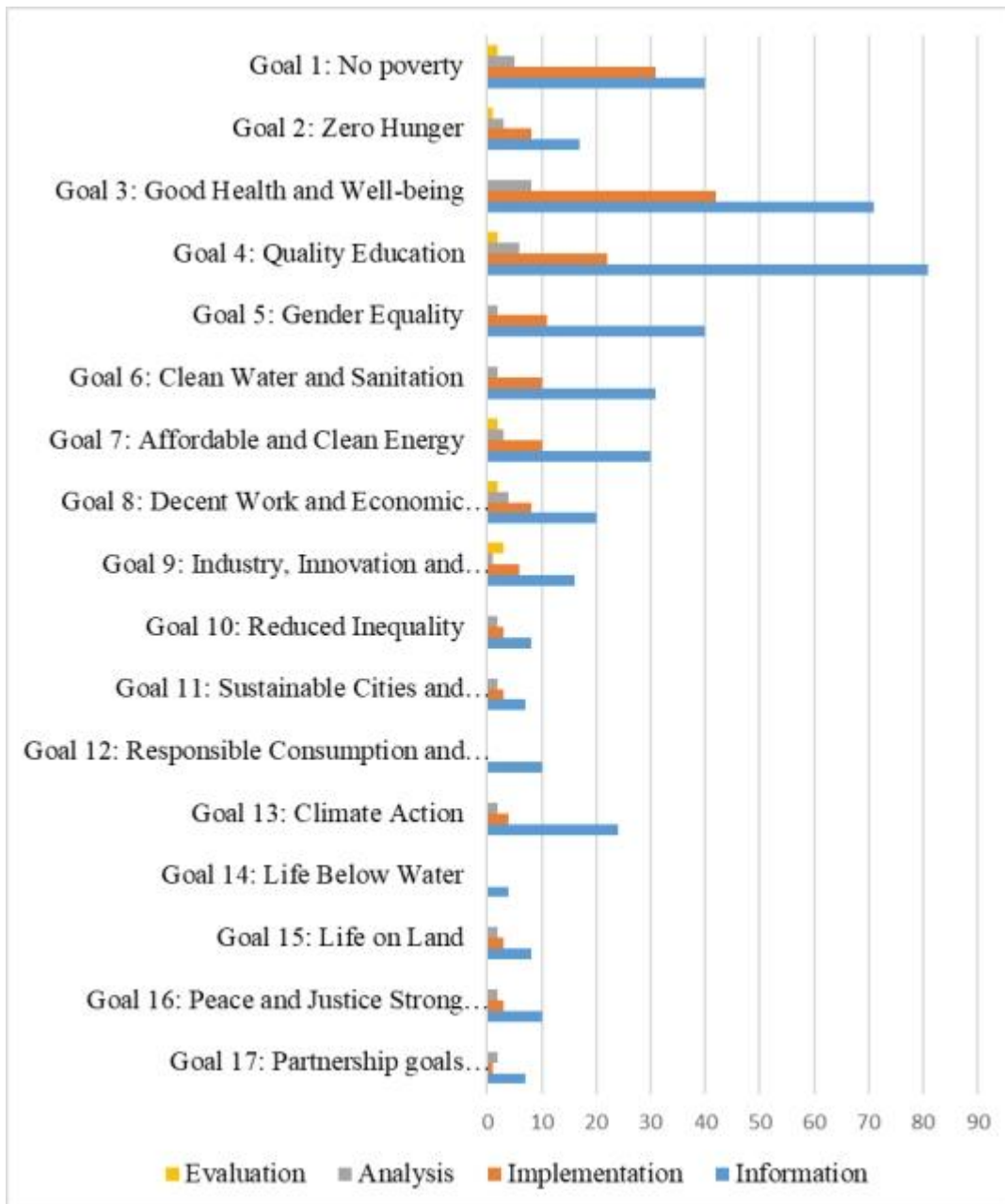


Figure 8. Habari Leo and Mwananchi SDGs News themes

News Tones for Each Goal

1. The researcher's evaluation of news tones is a significant step in understanding the media's role in developmental issues. The analysis includes published articles with a positive tone regarding developmental successes, neutral articles concerning implementation and general information, and adverse reports that underscore various challenges encountered by citizens, including project implementation issues such as resource scarcity, inadequate tools, insufficient skills, funding deficits, and subpar performance that obstruct strategies aimed at achieving the 2030 sustainable goals.

Positive News Tone

2. The findings indicated that for a positive news tone, Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being received 19%, Goal 1: No Poverty 15%, Goal 4: Quality Education 14%, Goal 5: Gender Equality and Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy 8%, Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation and Goal 13: Climate Action 5%. The findings indicated that Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure received 4% of Neutral news tones while Goal 2: Zero Hunger, Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 10: Reduced Inequality, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 15: Life on Land Goal 16: Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions and 17 received only 2% media coverage regarding news tone. The findings indicated that Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production and Goal 14: Life Below Water were did not received any coverage under neutral news tones as indicated in Figure 9

Neural News Tone

3. The researcher has examined SDGs news coverage in relation to neural news tone. The findings revealed that Goal 4: Quality Education received 21%, Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being (11%), and Goals 2: Zero Hunger and 5 received 8%. Goal 1: No Poverty and Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth 7%, Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation 6%, Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy 5%, Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 4%. The findings revealed 10: Reduced Inequality, Goal 15: Life on Land, Goal 16: Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions received 3%. While Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, and Goal 13: Climate Action and Goal 14: Life Below Water got 2% of media coverage, as indicated in Figure 11. The final part of the input highlights several Sustainable Development Goals that received a lower percentage of focus or achievement, indicating that while progress has been made in some areas, significant work remains to be done in promoting sustainability and addressing pressing global challenges. This suggests a need for increased attention and resources to ensure these goals are adequately addressed.

Negative News Tones

4. Regarding negative news tones, Goal 3: Positive Health and Well-being received 21%. Goal 4: Quality Education (18%), Goal 1: No Poverty (11%), Goal 5: Gender Equality (9%), Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation (8%), Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (7%). Goal 2: Zero Hunger received 5% of negative news coverage. Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure received 4% coverage, while Goal 13: Climate Action also received 4%. Additionally, Goals 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions each received 2% coverage, as did Goal 6:: Clean Water and Sanitation. Goal 15: Life on Land and Water received (1%) coverage, while Goal 10 focused on reducing inequality. Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and

Production, and Goal 14: Life Below Water did not receive any coverage under negative news tones as indicated. The interplay between negative news coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) illuminates the challenges faced in achieving a more equitable and sustainable world. Goal 9, which emphasises industry, innovation, and infrastructure, often receives scant attention amid reports that highlight failure rather than progress. Similarly, the urgent calls for climate action under Goal 13 can be overshadowed by sensationalist portrayals of environmental crises, which detract from the success of these initiatives. The aspiration for Sustainable Cities and Communities (Goal 11) frequently encounters obstacles in public perception due to negative narratives about urban challenges. Furthermore, the pursuit of Peace and Justice (Goal 16) and the promotion of Reduced Inequality (Goal 10) are similarly hindered by a focus on conflict and disparity rather than constructive dialogue and solutions. Responsible Consumption and Production (Goal 12), along with efforts to safeguard Life on Land (Goal 15) and Life Below Water (Goal 14), also struggles against a backdrop of pessimism that can stifle public engagement.

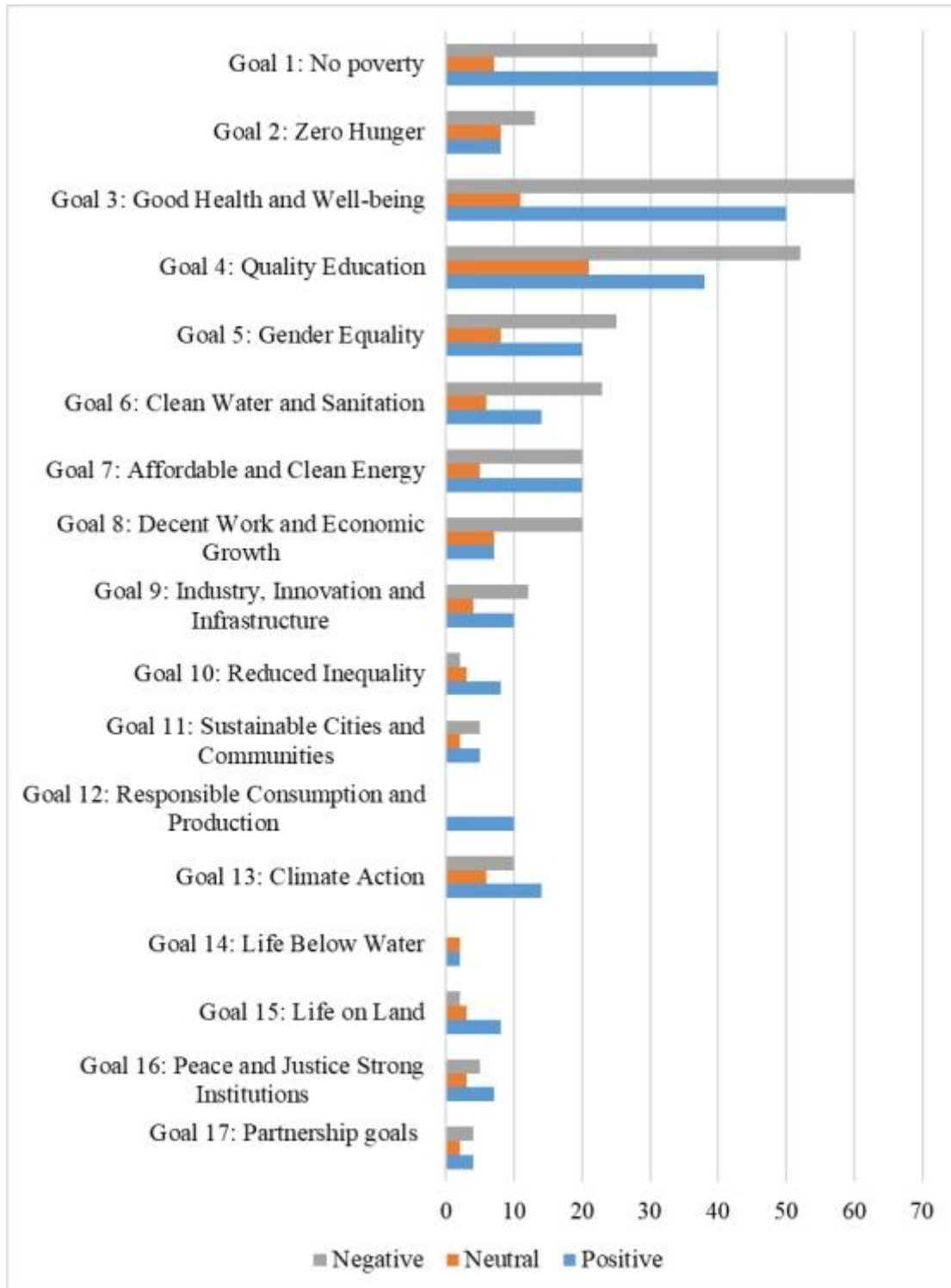


Figure 9. SDGs News Tone

Photographs About SDGs

The research examined photos accompanying news about the SGDS and the study's findings, which indicate that they appeared in the *Habari Leo* newspaper. The findings revealed that Goal 3: Improved Health and Well-being received 45 photos (25%), Goal 4: Quality

Education received 26 photos (22%), Goal 5: Gender Equality received 17 photos (10%), and Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation received an unspecified number of photos. Goal 13: Climate Action received 12 photos, which is equivalent to 7%. Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy received 9 photos (6%); Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth received 8 photos (4%); and Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure received seven photos (4%). Goals 1: No Poverty, 2: Zero Hunger, 10: Reduced Inequality, 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions each received three photos, amounting to 2%. Goals 14: Life Below Water, 15: Life on Land, and 17 each received one photo, representing 1%. However, Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production did not receive any images.

Regarding *Mwananchi*, The findings revealed that Goal 3: Improved Health and Well-being received 45 photos (26%), Goal 4: Quality Education received 36 photos (21%), Goal 5: Gender Equality received 15 photos (9%), and Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation and Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy received 10 photos (6%).

Goal 13: Climate Action received 12 photos, which is equivalent to 7%. 9 photos (6%); Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth received 8 photos (4%); and Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure received seven photos (4%). Goals 1: No Poverty, 2: Zero Hunger, 10: Reduced Inequality, 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions each received three photos, amounting to 2%. Goals 14: Life Below Water, 15: Life on Land, and 17 each received one photo, representing 1%. However, Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production did not receive any images.

This distribution of photos highlights the varying levels of emphasis placed on different goals, reflecting priorities in visual representation. The absence of Goal 12 suggests a potential oversight or lesser focus on responsible consumption and production in this context. The analysis of the distribution of photos across the various sustainability goals reveals both commendable efforts and notable gaps. Goals 14 and 15, which address life below water and life on land, respectively, each garnered a modest share of 1% of the total images, highlighting their presence in the visual narrative surrounding sustainability. In contrast, Goal 12, which emphasises responsible consumption and production, was conspicuously absent from this visual representation, suggesting a significant oversight that could undermine broader awareness and engagement with this critical issue. This uneven distribution calls for a reevaluation of how different goals are prioritised in public discourse and visual media, ensuring that all aspects of sustainable development receive equal attention and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of our global challenges.

Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 2: Zero Hunger, Goal 10: Reduced Inequality, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and Goal 16: Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions. Each received three photos, equivalent to 2%, while Goals 14: Life Below Water, 15: Life on Land, and 17 received one photo each, which is 1%. However, Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production did not receive any images. This distribution of photos highlights the varying levels of emphasis placed on different goals, reflecting priorities in visual representation. The absence of Goal 12 suggests a potential oversight or lesser focus on responsible consumption and production in this context. The analysis of the distribution of photos across the various sustainability goals reveals both commendable efforts and notable gaps. Goals 14 and 15, which address life below water and life on land, respectively, each garnered a modest share of 1% of the total images, highlighting their presence in the visual narrative surrounding sustainability. In contrast, Goal 12, which emphasises responsible consumption and production, was conspicuously absent from this visual representation, suggesting a significant oversight that could undermine broader awareness and engagement with this critical issue. This uneven

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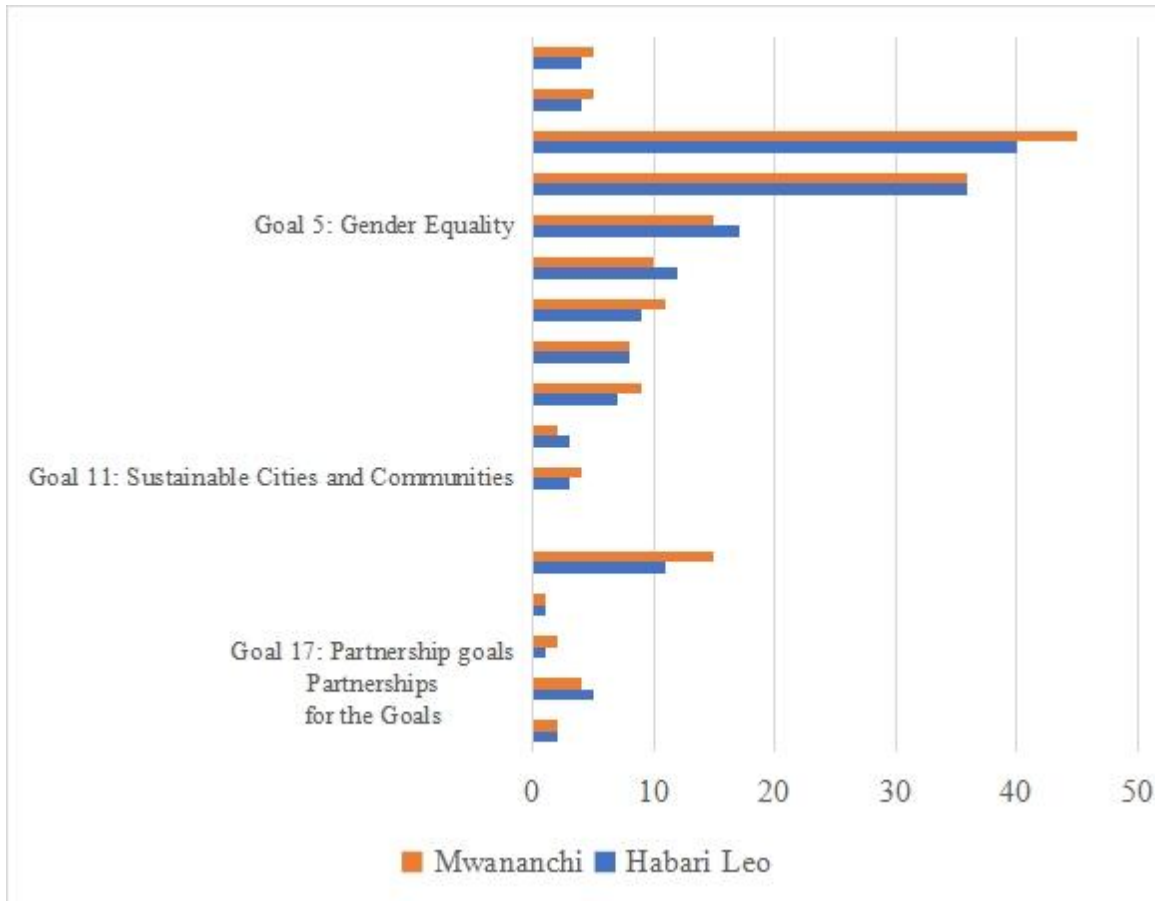


Figure 10: Photographs about SDGs

Photo News Tones

The researcher analysed the tonal quality of the news photos, revealing that they exhibited positive, neutral, and negative tones. Images, often conveying a reporting tone, play a crucial role in shaping public perception and articulating their significance within the story of each goal. This research underscores the importance of visual communication in the context of sustainable development. The study further analyses the tone of the images used in news articles concerning the SDGs. Of the 163 photos published in Habari Leo, 72 photos (44%) conveyed a positive tone regarding the achievements made, 27 photos (17%) maintained a neutral news tone, and 64 photos (39%) expressed a negative tone. *Mwananchi* published 174 photos, revealing that 55, or 32%, exhibited a positive tone, 33 (19%) displayed a neutral tone, and 86 (49%) conveyed a negative tone, as indicated in Figure 3. The findings reveal that there is a higher prevalence of images conveying a negative tone in comparison to those that depict positive achievements or neutral tones that offer information or education regarding the SDGs. Images characterised by negative tones illustrate a range of challenges, including insufficient social services, such as access to clean and safe water; inadequate road infrastructure; limited

availability of clean energy; a shortage of desks and laboratory equipment; and subpar healthcare services.

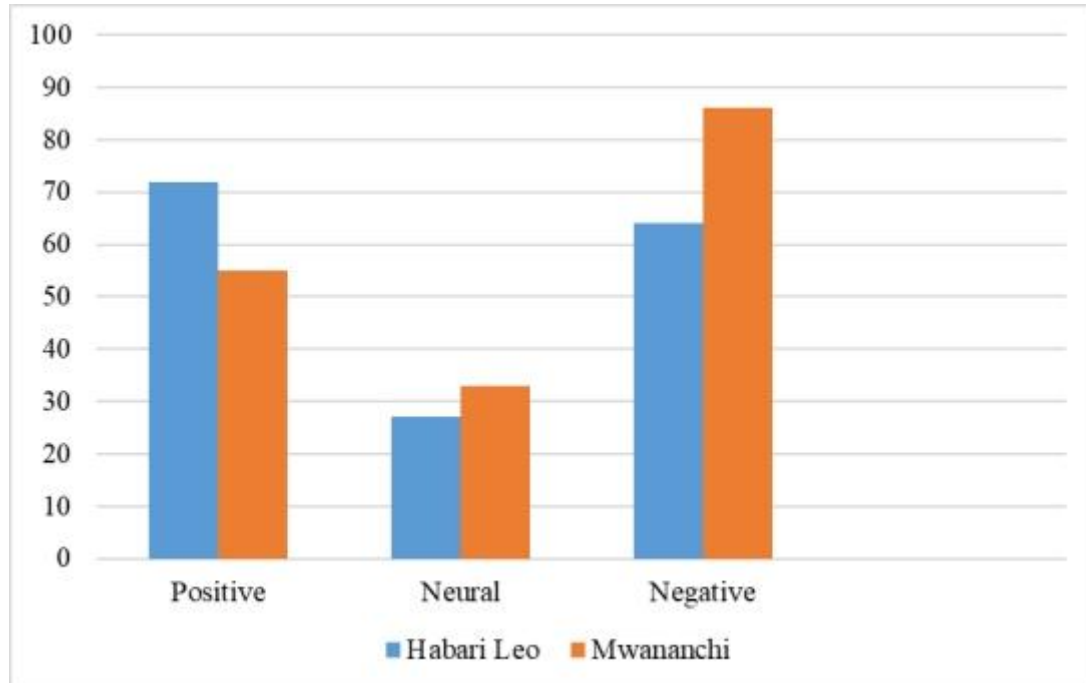


Figure 11. SDGs Photo News Tones

The findings regarding *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* themes coverage indicated that Tanzania media is participating in SDGs campaign particularly social issues and address and resolve the needs and challenges faced by the community. The research findings align with previous research by Rahim (1994), Servaes (1995), and Bakke & Subedi (2008), which stated that effective and efficient dialogue is essential for achieving the objectives of the development project (Melfalopulos, 2005: 254). However, *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* are expected to expand their coverage of news analysis and evaluation of the project, enabling the public to engage with the SDGs to incorporate previous researchers such Chitnis (2005a:239) who defines empowerment as the capacity to influence decision-making in issues and circumstances that affect our lives. Dialogue empowers individuals and communities by giving them a voice and the power to shape their destinies. To further this endeavor, media outlets like *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* must broaden their scope by enhancing news analyses and project evaluations, thereby facilitating informed public engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By doing so, they nurture an empowered citizenry and cultivate a culture of active participation that is essential for achieving sustainable development in our communities. Ultimately, it is this synergy between knowledge, engagement, and empowerment that will pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future.

Objective Three: To explore the Readers' Perception on *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi* Regarding to Sustainable Development Goals Coverage

In an analysis of newspapers' role in raising public awareness about sustainable development goals: a case of *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi*, assessing demographic factors was vital for the purpose of understanding the nature of the respondents.

4. *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi*'s Coverage of the SDGs

The findings from the assessment of *Habari Leo* and *Mwananchi*'s coverage of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the year 2021 provide valuable insights into the newspapers' role in raising public awareness about various aspects of sustainable development. Across the goals, there were variations in the perceived level of coverage, with some goals receiving higher ratings than others. When asked whether media coverage enable you to know how Tanzania implementing all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, all respondents stonily agreed. The finding aligns with the perspective of Guy Berger, Director for Freedom of Expression and Media Development at UNESCO (UNESCO, 2019), who emphasises that the achievement of SDG Goal 16, Target 10, which focuses on public access to information and fundamental freedoms, is contingent upon the presence of independent media. This media is essential for advancing all SDGs, including gender equality, climate change mitigation, poverty elimination, reduction of inequalities, and the development of sustainable cities. The findings showed that the media in Tanzania are doing a good job in supporting SDG 16, which is necessary for achieving all development goals. The role of Tanzanian media in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 16 is not only vital but multifaceted, serving as a cornerstone for fostering an informed and engaged society. The synergy between robust media practices and the objectives of SDG 16 underscores the importance of nurturing this sector to ensure that the aspirations of all Tanzanians can be realised.

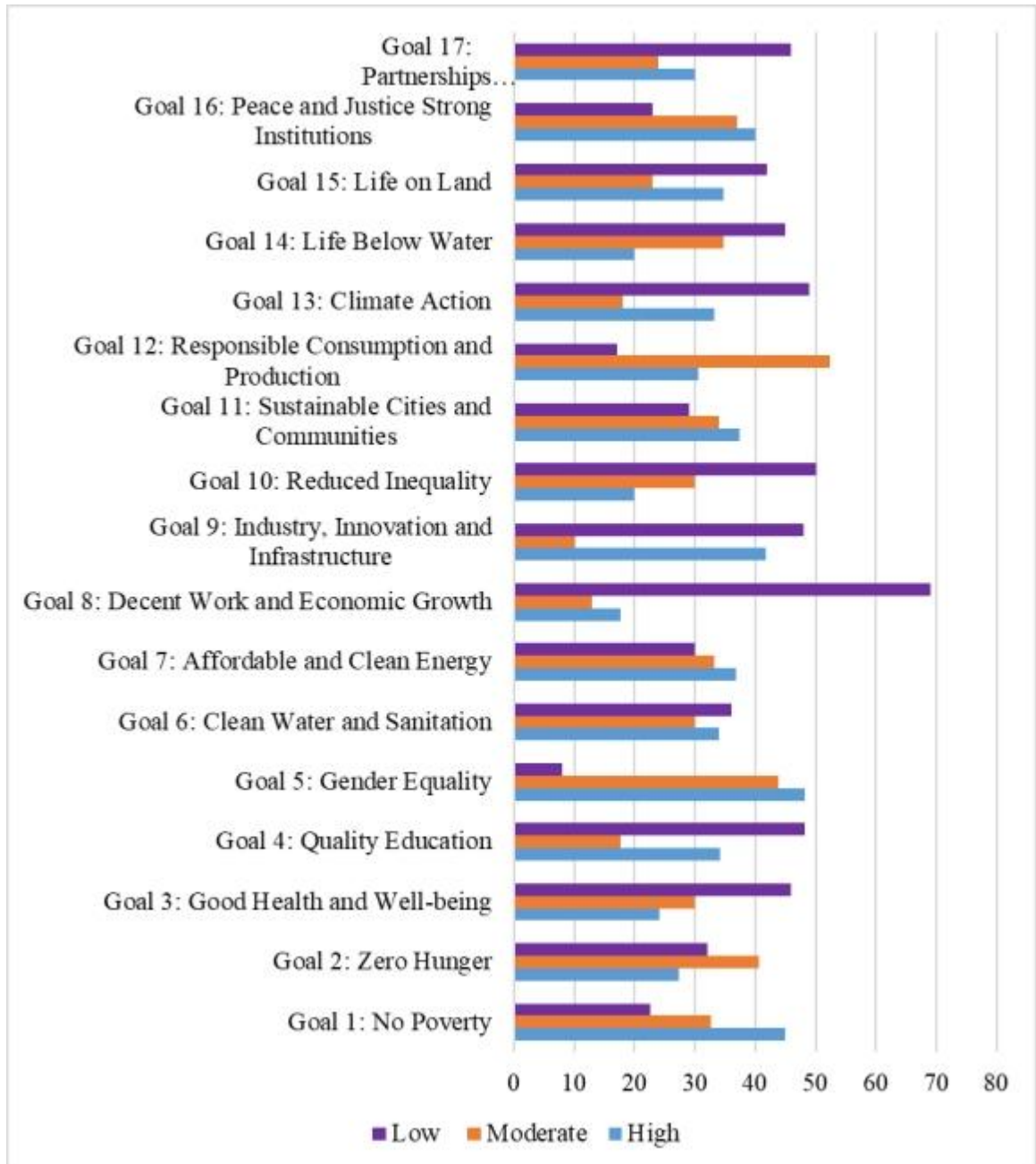


Figure 12. Respondents rates

Research indicates that Habari, Habari Leo, and *Mwananchi* have disseminated news articles and photographs related to the SDGs to varying extents. The analysis reveals a marked emphasis on social concerns, with the majority of coverage focusing on the following goals: Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy). Collectively, these goals accounted for approximately 60% of total SDG-related content.

Conversely, coverage of other critical SDGs—such as Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), Goal 10 (Reduced

Inequality), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Goal 13 (Climate Action), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)—remained below average. Notably, Goals 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and 14 (Life Below Water) received minimal attention, despite their significance for long-term sustainability.

Moreover, the research highlights a substantial deficit in analytical reporting, which is essential for enhancing public understanding of SDG implementation. There is also a lack of evaluative news coverage, limiting the media's ability to inform the public about both the achievements and challenges associated with the SDGs. The absence of comprehensive evaluation and in-depth analysis impedes nuanced public discourse, leaving a significant gap in awareness and engagement.

The limited analytical and evaluative coverage of the SDGs in these newspapers undermines the media's potential to inform and mobilize the public. Without thorough reporting, stakeholders lack the necessary information to assess progress and advocate for effective policy interventions. A more robust and transparent approach to media coverage is essential for fostering informed dialogue, promoting accountability, and empowering communities to participate actively in sustainable development efforts.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the coverage of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by Tanzanian newspapers—specifically Habari, Habari Leo, and *Mwananchi*—remains uneven and predominantly focused on a limited set of goals related to social issues such as health, education, and gender equality. While these areas are rightfully prioritized, other equally critical SDGs, including responsible consumption, climate action, and life below water, receive minimal attention. Moreover, the lack of analytical and evaluative reporting restricts public understanding of the complexities, challenges, and progress associated with SDG implementation.

The findings highlight the need for media organizations to diversify their coverage, adopt more analytical approaches, and engage in collaborative efforts to enhance the effectiveness of SDG communication. By addressing these gaps, the media can significantly contribute to raising awareness, fostering accountability, and promoting informed public dialogue on sustainable development. Future research should build on these insights to explore innovative strategies and emerging technologies for improving SDG coverage, ultimately supporting the broader goal of sustainable and inclusive development in Tanzania and beyond.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed for media organizations and stakeholders:

Enhance Coverage Diversity: Newspapers should broaden their coverage to include a wider array of SDGs, moving beyond frequently addressed goals such as health and sanitation. Fostering interdisciplinary collaborations can ensure balanced and inclusive reporting.

Audience Engagement Strategies: Media outlets should adopt tailored engagement strategies, including audience surveys and interactive multimedia content, to better understand and address audience preferences.

Impact Assessment Studies: Rigorous studies should be conducted to quantitatively measure the influence of media coverage on public awareness and behavior regarding sustainability issues. Findings should be shared to inform evidence-based communication strategies.

Collaborative Partnerships: Media organizations should form partnerships with policymakers, NGOs, and private sector entities to amplify SDG messaging and promote collective action.

Capacity Building: Investments in training programs for journalists are essential to enhance their understanding of sustainability concepts and reporting best practices.

Transparency and Accountability: Media outlets must uphold standards of accuracy, fairness, and ethical reporting, with clear guidelines for responsible journalism on sustainability issues.

Areas for Further Study

Further research is recommended in the following areas:

- Comparative analyses involving newspapers from diverse regions to explore differences in SDG reporting.
- Qualitative studies, such as focus groups or interviews, to probe audience perceptions and engagement.
- Examination of online platforms and social media as channels for SDG-related content dissemination.
- Assessment of collaborative media initiatives for SDG communication.
- Analysis of media framing and agenda-setting processes in SDG coverage.
- Exploration of emerging technologies, such as AI and data visualization, in advancing SDG communication.

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