

**AN ASSESMENT OF THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN
UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF RADIO SIMBA 97.3 STATION**

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Abstract: The study's goals were to investigate the availability of the news media and the different types of coverage provided by the media in Uganda as a whole to what extent which media escalated and/or de-escalated disputes, and how specific individual characteristics (age, gender, social status, where they live, and religion) were impacted by media. It also sought to assess the impact of media on conflict resolution in Uganda with the use of the example of radio Simba 97.3 station. According to the research, a very big percentage of respondents believed that the media actively promoted hate speech, followed by a large percentage (33.2%), a small percentage (20.7%), a very tiny percentage (1.2%), and a very small percentage (11.6%). According to this data, 52.8% of the participants thought the media considerably supported hate speech, 20.7% agreed to a minor amount, and 26.6% disagreed. As a result, media heavily promoted hate speech. This will assist in minimizing the disparities in coverage to objectify identify areas of disagreement and acceptance with a view to promoting peaceful resolution to the issues at hand.

*Key words: **media and conflict management***

Background of the Study

The threat to international stability and peace is greater than ever as a result of the diversifying and fragmented nature of security concerns. The knowledge of the underlying reasons behind wars and the connections between security and conflict resolution from a global viewpoint have also grown more dynamic (Thompson, A., 2007). Because of this, many of today's security issues originate in individual communities and then extend across borders to the environment they live in. Unhealthy regional dynamics brought on by rivalry for power within and across governments, as seen in various emerging economies, notably in Africa, have exacerbated this. People become aware of significant advances in diplomatic relations much more and more quickly today than they did in

earlier ages due to the subsequent advancements in technologies for communication (Gilboa, 2002). There are thousands of thousands of global news organizations that broadcast live from all over the planet and via the World Wide Web, offering immediate access to happenings and, under certain circumstances, facilitating the settlement of conflicts. Over the past few decades, awareness has increased with regard to the role local civilian population play in armed conflict.

Statement of the Problem

Violence is the one thing that all wars and conflicts have in common. Everything is destroyed by violence, from people to organizations like schooling, political determination, hope, and trust to infrastructures people, and other material resources. Conflict has a huge economic cost that deprives people of their basic requirements and causes pain and poverty (Chretien, Spurk, & Christopher, 1995). As has been seen, most conflicts frequently occur in nations that are going through significant political transitions toward democratization. The access to reliable data and the liberty of expression are crucial in these nations in order to promote a more transparent and accountable government, healthy communication, lowered threat perceptions, and more stable and resilient political institutions (Rugumanu, T. 2002).

Objectives of the study

1. To establish the media accessibility and the various types of media coverage within Uganda.
2. To establish the extent to which media escalated and/or deescalated conflicts.
3. To determine how specific human factors (age, gender, social status, residence and religion) were influenced by media towards conflict and conflict management in Uganda

Research Questions

1. What is the degree of media accessibility and the media coverage in Uganda?
2. To what extent did media escalate and/or deescalate violence?
3. What influence did media have on human variables (age, gender, social status, residence and religion) towards conflict and conflict management?

Methodology

Research Design

According to (Croswell, 2009), qualitative research design is appropriate in unstructured environments. The qualitative approach provides more possibility for understanding and interpreting because the study primarily focused on respondents' impressions of media and conflict management concerns. According to Strauss & Corbin (1999), qualitative research can produce satisfactory outcomes and the right answers to the main research issues being examined. Due to its value in providing an overall view of the study, this design was chosen.

Study population

At each of the three workplaces visited, the researcher took into account one officer or administrator. This made it possible for the researcher to compile sufficient data on the confidentiality situation prior to, during, and following the confrontations. The investigator employed sampling snowballs to identify both the victims and those responsible of the violence by selecting one victim who then selected more victims. In order to learn more about the conflicts, including their causes, impacts, attackers, and peacemaking procedures, 178 victims and 150 more helpers were interviewed. This accounted for 88% of the responders who were chosen.

Sample size determination

The researcher used 373 respondents. The sample size was computed using sample size formula as prescribed in (Mugenda, M & Mugenda, 2003) as follows: Where: n = desired sample size; z = standard normal deviation at the required confident level; p = proportion of target population estimate; $q = 1-p$; and d = level of statistical significance set. Hence, the computed sample size from a population of 12,795 at 95% confident level and 5% confident interval was 373.

Data collection methods

During the study, only qualitative data was collected. Primary and secondary sources of data will be used to enhance reliability. The instruments for primary data collection was interview guides and questionnaires. According to (Eriksson, M , 2002), interview guides and questionnaires were

useful for getting in-depth understanding of the issues under investigation rather than measuring those issues.

Data collection instruments

Data collection instruments are the selection or development of tools to make observations about variables in a research study

Self-administered questionnaires

A self-administered questionnaire is a structured form that consists of a series of closed-ended and open-ended questions.

Self-administered questionnaires were chosen because they reduce the costs of collecting data instead of traveling all the way to meet up with research subjects or hiring face to face interviewers, the researcher just sent questionnaires to the respondents.

Data Analysis

The study used qualitative data analysis in drawing linkages between the study problem and theory and it was tabulated using SPSS (Nelson. K, 2022). Specifically, content data analysis of secondary material was done for their relevance, strength and weakness as regards the study questions.

RESULTS

Response Rate

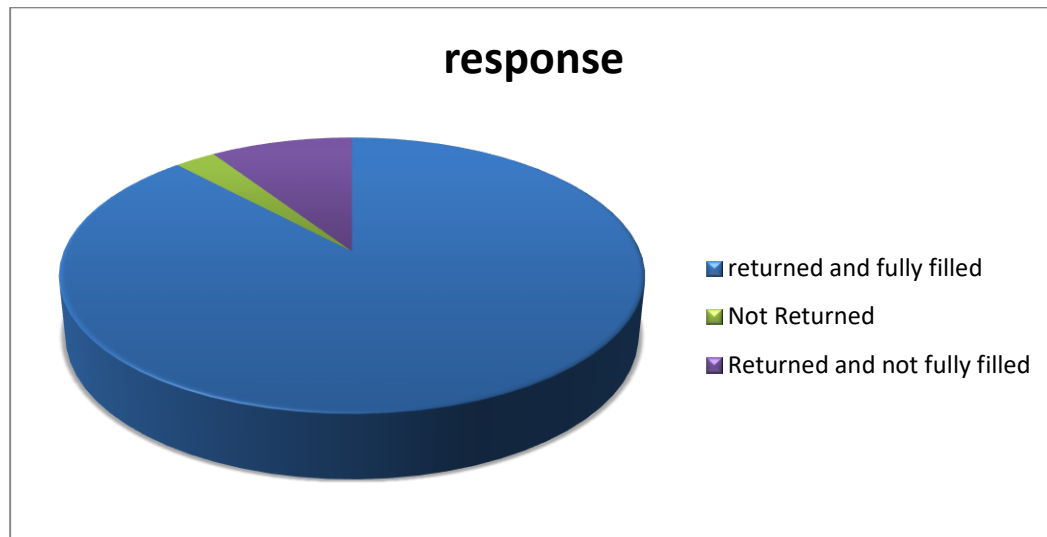
The study targeted a sample size of 373 respondents. All the issued questionnaires were returned but only 328 were duly filled. The researcher only considered the duly filled questionnaires for analysis. This accounted for approximately 88% response rate thus ideal for the study analysis to progress. The response rate is represented on Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1 Response

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Rate Response	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Not returned	10	2.70
Returned and fully filled	328	88.00
Returned and not fully filled	35	9.30
Totals	373	100

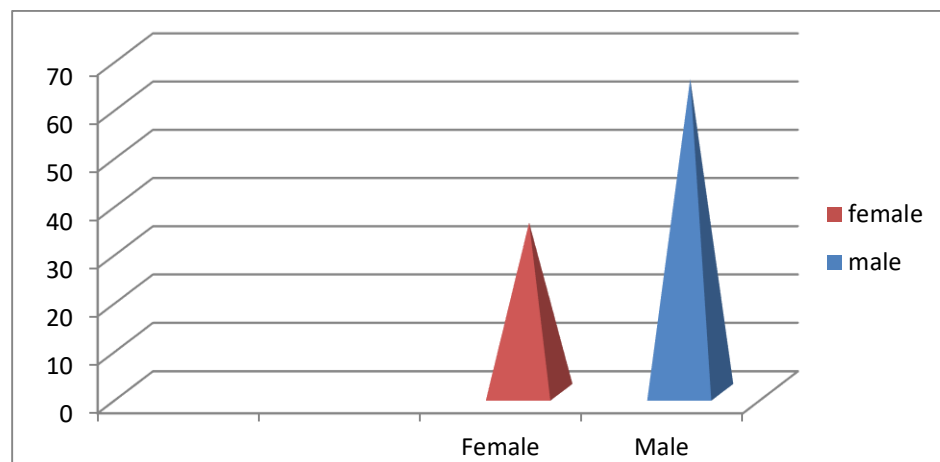
Figure 1: Response rate



Source: Primary Data, 2022

Gender Distribution

Figure 2: Gender distribution



Source: primary Data, **2022**

Figure 2 shows that 64.9% of respondents were male, and 35.1% were female. This means that male gender was the majority of sampled respondents. This was due to the fact that males were easily accessible and participated actively in the conflicts.

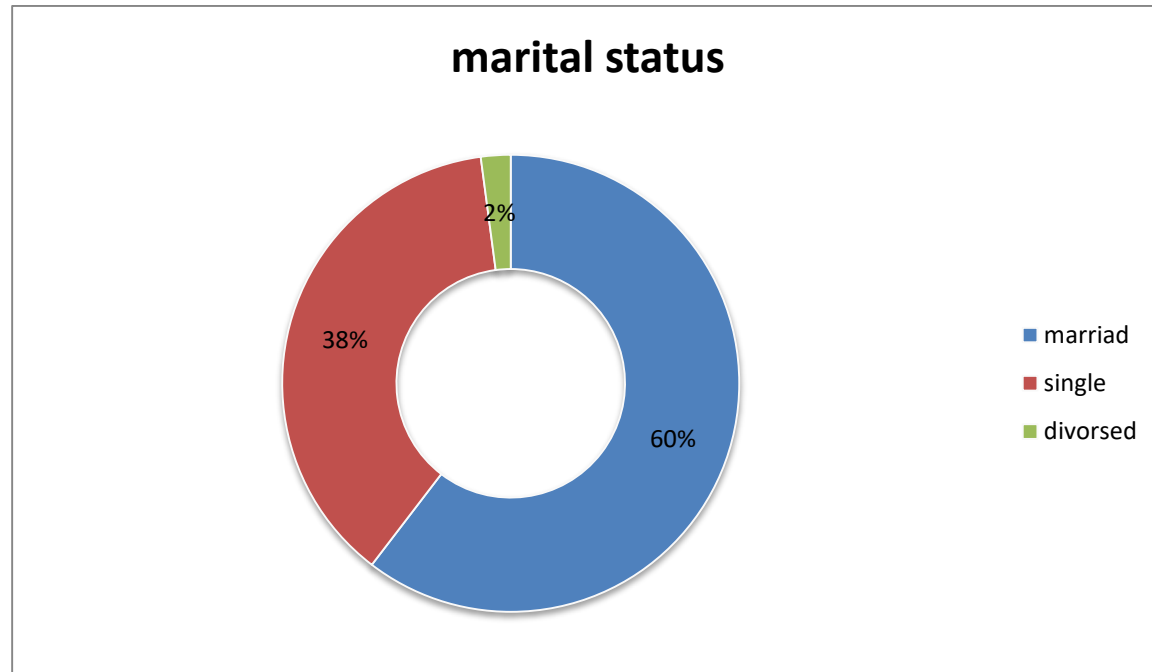
Marital Status Distribution

Table 2: Marital status

valid	frequency	percent	Valid percent
Married	198	60.4	60.4
Single	123	37.5	37.5
Divorced	7	2.1	2.1
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Source: **Primary Data**,2021

Figure 3: Marital status



Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

Table 2 and figure 3 shows that 60.4% of respondents were married, 37.5% were single and 2.1% were divorced. This means that married or couples were the majority of sampled respondents. However, youths, both married and single, accounted for sizable number of sampled respondents and were the most prone to participate in armed violence.

Age Distribution

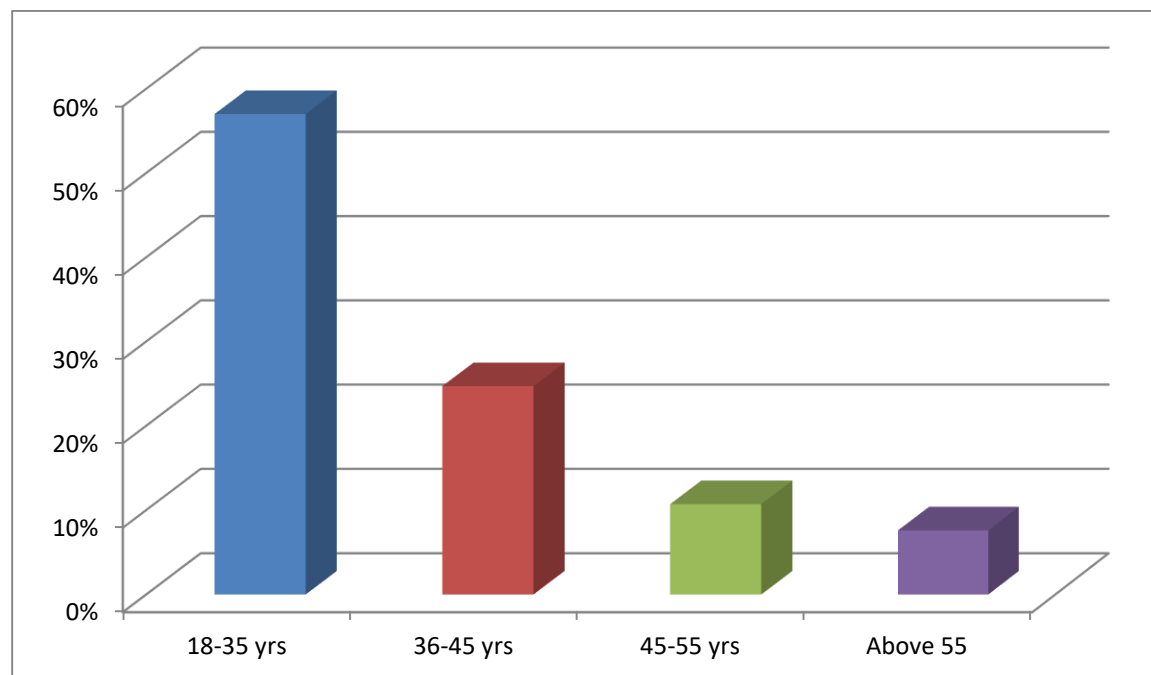
Table 3: Age Distribution

Valid	Frequency	percent	valid percent
18-35 yrs.	187		57.0
36-45 yrs.	81		24.7

45-55 yrs.	35	10.7	10.7
Above 55	25	7.6	7.6
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Source: The Research Findings 2022

Figure 4: Age Distribution



Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

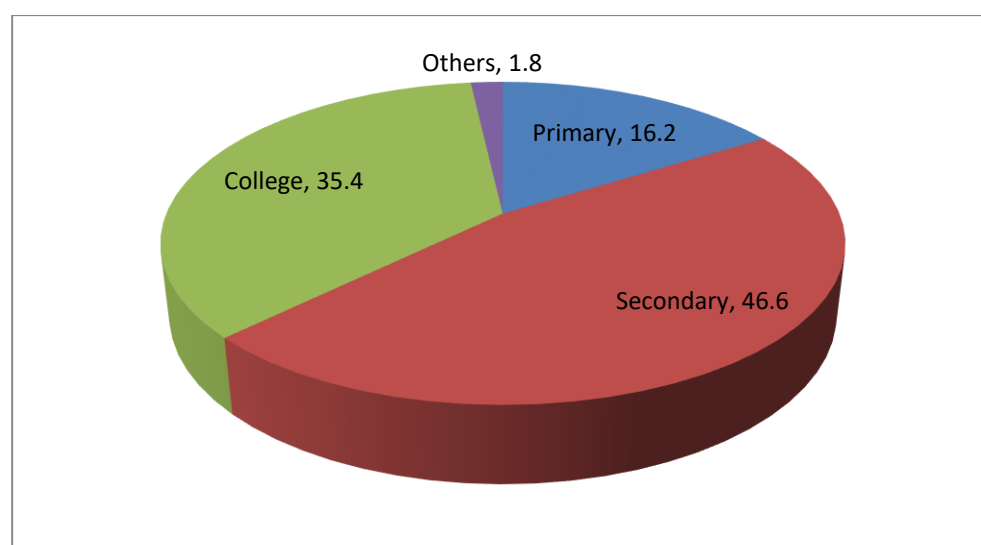
The findings in Table 4 and figure 5 shows that 57.0% of respondents were aged between 18-35 years, 24.7% were aged between 36-45 years, 10.7 % were aged between 45-55 years and 7.6% were aged above 55 years. This indicates that youths were the majority of respondent as they constituted approximately 82% i.e. aged between 18-45 years. In addition, youths were also considered to be the most active and influenced age bracket thus easily took part in the PEV.

Level of Education

Table 5: Level of Education

valid	Frequency	percent	Valid percent
Primary	53	16.2	16.2
college	153	46.6	46.6
Others	116	35.4	35.4
total	328	100.0	100.0

Figure 6: Level of Education



Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

In Table 6 and Graph 7, the findings reveal that 16.2% of respondents had Primary school level of education, 46.6% had Secondary school certificate, and 35.4% were both diploma or degree holders and 1.8% held other qualifications. This shows that more than 80% of respondents had post primary qualification. Therefore, respondents were able to understand, read and write English and other languages apart from the native language, thus being able to make informed decisions from media broadcasts.

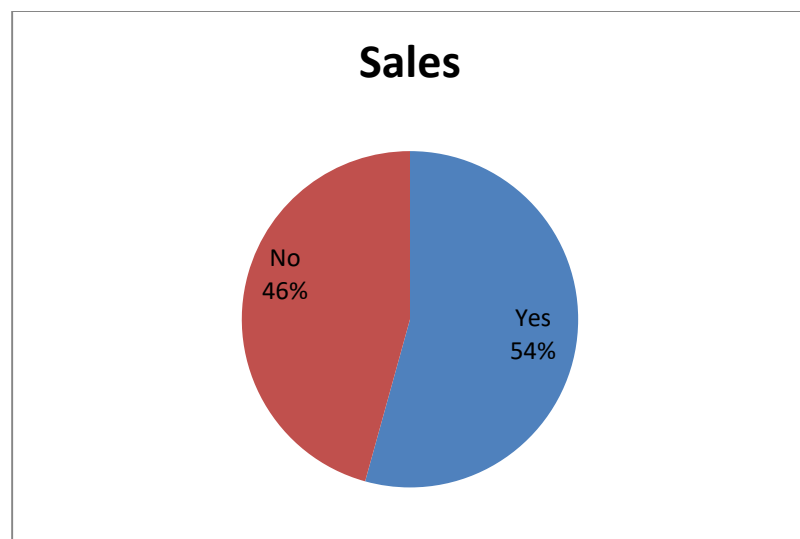
Victims of Political Violence

The study also sought to determine whether respondents suffered or were victims of political violence. Findings are presented in Table 7 and figure 8.

Table 7: Victims of Political Violence

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Yes	178	54.3	54.3
No	150	45.7	45.7
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Figure 8: victims of political violence



Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

These finding shows that 54.3% of respondents were victims of election violence, while 45.7% never suffered election related violence. This is also supported by the fact that the region was the epicenter of violence in Kasese and Northern Uganda.

Main Source of Information and Preferred Media House

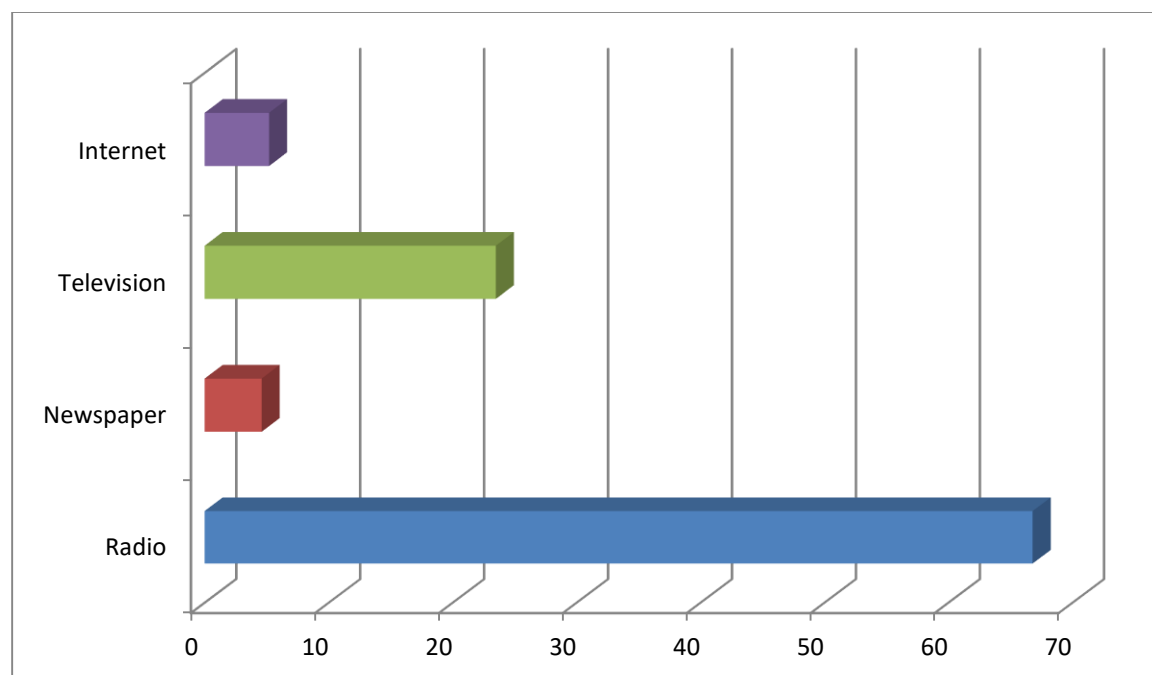
Table 8 and figure 9 show that 66.8% of respondents listened to radio as their main source of information, 4.6% read newspapers, 23.5% watch television and 5.2% use internet as their main source of information.

Table 9: Main Source of Information

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Radio	219	66.8	66.8
Newspaper	15	4.6	4.6
Television	77	23.5	23.5
Internet	17	5.2	5.2
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

Figure 10: Main Source of Information



Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

These results suggest that television and radio stations are the most frequently used information sources in the research area. Table 4.10's findings on the most popular media outlets also reveal that Standard Newspaper was the most popular paper with 4.6%, Capital FM was the most popular radio station with 27.1%, and NTV was the most popular television channel. Graph 4.6 displays the response regarding other sources of information. Both English-language stations programming in language, Capital FM and BBC FM, were favored by 0.9 and 1.2% of listeners, respectively. The high number of people from many ethnic groups in the sampled locations was the cause of this. This indicates that despite having access to FM stations in their mother tongue (KASS FM), the majority of the participants admitted to listening to English.

Discussion of Findings

The Role of Media

Specific objective two was designed to establish the extent to which media could have escalated and/or de-escalated violence in the study area. In order to respond to this, respondents were asked whether media could have played a role during the conflicts. 82.6% of respondents agreed that media played a role while 17.4% declined. Furthermore, 30.2% of respondents agreed that media escalated the conflict, 16.2% said that media de-escalated the conflict, 39.6% agreed that media performed both roles and 14% said that media did not perform any role.

Table 10: The Role of Media

Valid	frequency	percent	Valid percent
Escalated conflict	99	30.2	30.2
Deescalated conflict	53	16.02	16.2
Both roles	130	39.6	39.6
None	46	14.0	14.0
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

According to these studies, the media has a significant impact on the escalation of a conflict. With its libertarian theory-required professional goals of objectivity, accuracy, and public accountability,

the media ought to ideally contribute to fostering peace. These findings, however, showed that the media really contributed to conflict escalation throughout wars and conflicts.

The conclusion that the media contributed to conflict escalation refutes the model of social responsibility of media reporting, which holds that media outlets must accept moral and legal accountability for everything they report in the interests of society at large without causing any harm. Conflict was sparked by this role of escalation, which resulted in property damage and fatalities. Even though the social responsibility theory requires mass media to highlight injustices within the community and enlighten people on their rights and privileges, the predicament is that as people become more enlightened, the push for their rights through whatever means available, could lead to conflict as witnessed in after the 2007 general elections.

Media and Hate Speech

Findings on whether media could have encouraged hate speech during the 2007 general election showed that 61.3% of respondents agreed and 38.7% declined. The extent to which media promoted hate speech is shown in Table below.

Table 11: Media and Hate Speech

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Very large extent	77	23.5	23.5
Large extent	109	33.2	33.2
I have no idea	32	9.8	9.8
Small extent	68	20.7	20.7
Very small extent	4	1.2	1.2
None	38	11.6	11.6
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

From the findings, respondents said the media encouraged hate speech to a very large extent, 33.2% said to a large extent, 9.8% indifferent, 20.7% said to a small extent, 1.2% said to a very small

extent and 11.6% said none. This reveals that 52.8% of respondents agreed that media greatly encouraged hate speech, 20.7% agreed to a small extent and 26.6% agreed that media did not encourage hate speech. Therefore, media encouraged hate speech to a large extent.

How Media Influenced Human Variables towards Conflict

The specific objective three was intended to assess the influence media has on selected human factors/variables towards conflict. Five human variables were identified for analyses i.e. age, gender, status, religious and residence factor. These factors were rated on a scale of 1-6 clustered to three levels as Low (1 and 2), Medium (3 and 4) and High (5 and 6).

Age Factor

Findings on age factor shows that 29% of respondents said low influence, 22.3% medium influence and 48.7% high influence.

Table 12: Age Factor

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Low	95	29.0
Median	73	22.3
High	160	48.7
Total	328	100.0

Source: **Primary data**, 2022

These finding on age factor influence can be attributed to youth unemployment (KNCHR, 2008b). The Ugandan youths are products of a society that is characterized by inequalities and lack of opportunities for social advancement, in addition to social exclusion and limited access to basic social amenities. Unemployment rates have been compounded further by failure of successive governments to comprehensively address the issues facing the youth.

Gender Factor

26.5% of respondents said media has low influence on factor gender, 25.9% medium influence and 47.6% high influence as shown below. Therefore, media has high influence based on gender.

Table 13: Gender Factor

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Low	87	26.5
Median	83	25.9
High	156	47.6
Total	328	100.0

Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

Gender is an important element of any social-cultural analysis of conflict. This cross-tabulation analysis (Table 13) reveals that male is the more influenced gender, as it accounts for 27.7% and 53.1% of medium influence and high influence respectively.

Status Factor

Findings on status factor shows that 40.2% of respondents said low influence, 19.2% medium influence and 40.6% high influence as shown in Table 14 with a mean of 2.0 and deviation of 0.9. Therefore, media moderately influence people based on social status.

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Low	123	40.2	40.2
Medium	63	19.2	19.2
High	133	40.6	40.4
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Source: **Primary Data**, 2022

Table 15: Residence factor

The findings shows that 50.6% of respondents agreed that media has low influence on people based on their residence, 15.2% medium influence and 34.1% high influence. Therefore, media has low influence on people based on their residences.

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Low	166	50.6	50.2
Medium	50	15.2	15.2
High	112	34.1	34.1
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Religious Factor

Findings on religious factor showed that 25.9% of respondents said low influence, 9.5% medium influence and 64.6% high influence as shown in the table. Therefore, media had high influence on people based on their religion.

Table 16: Religious Factor

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Low	85	25.9	25.9
Medium	31	9.5	9.5
High	212	64.6	64.6
Total	328	100.0	100.0

Source; **Primary Data**, 2022

Summary of Findings

From 88% response rate, male was the dominant gender accounting for 64.9%, youths aged 18-45 years accounted for 81.7% of respondents, 82% of respondents had post primary qualification, 54.3% of respondents was victims of election violence with more female (62.61%) than male (49.75%).

Findings revealed that 82.6% of respondents agreed that media played a role while 17.4% did not agree. Furthermore, 30.2% of respondents agreed that media escalated conflict while 16.2% agreed that media de-escalated the conflict. Equally, 39.6% agreed that media played both roles while 14% agreed that media did not play any role.

Conclusions

Based on the results, the study draws the conclusion that radio and television are the most popular media for gathering data in the study area, with radio Simba 97.3 being the most popular radio station, NTV being the most popular television network, and New Vision Newspaper being the most popular newspaper.

The study comes to the conclusion that media significantly contributed to conflict escalation. Inciting hate speech to a greater extent, operating parallel calculating centers to a large extent, refusing crucial disagreement information to a lesser extent, knowledge deception to a greater extent, encouragement to a greater extent, taking sides in political disputes to a very great extent, and corruption to a lesser extent were some of those roles.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations:

Based on the findings that there exists a significant variation amongst news reported by various media houses, the study recommends that media houses should adopt a common conflict reporting approach. This will help in mitigating the discrepancies in coverage to unearth areas of dispute and consensus objectively with a view of encouraging amicable solution to the matters at hand.

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