

THE ROLE OF UGANDA MEDIA IN PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN

UGANDA, A CASE STUDY OF NEW VISION NEWS PAPER.

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ABSTRACT

It is impossible to ignore the media's importance in defending women's rights.

Nonetheless, it is a widely held belief among media experts today that media attention of women's issues is gradually declining. Women are still viewed as dependent, docile people who scarcely participate to socioeconomic development, despite the fact that the study's men-to-women ratio is 49:51. The study's premise is that media portrayals of women's difficulties have not received enough notice, aid, or concern. The study also aims to provide light on the various ways that women are portrayed in the media.

According to the figures, 32% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, only 2% were unsure, 23% disagree, and 7% severely disagreed with the assertion regarding rejection of critical journalists.

Also, the chart showed that 8% of participants answered and 12% strongly disagreed with the assertion. Due to the New Vision newspaper's extensive distribution throughout Uganda, it was chosen as the media outlet for the case study.

The study's results validate its working theory. Most of the news about women was stereotypical, based on beauty and fashion, and defined women mostly in their 'natural' role as mothers and wives, rather than contributors to societal developments. The study generally recommends the media to highlight women's contribution, whether in political, economic or social spheres.

Key words: *media and women's rights*

Background of the study

East African landlocked nation of Uganda.

Kenya, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania form its eastern, northern, western, and southern borders, respectively.

A sizable portion of Lake Victoria, which Tanzania, Kenya, and the rest of the country share, is located in the southern part of this country.

Uganda is located in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the country's current president, took office in January 1986 following a protectorate-sponsored six-year guerrilla campaign. Our opinions and notions regarding the role of women and girls in society are still greatly influenced by media, including both conventional legacy media and online media (Gracious. A, 2023).

Women continue to be underrepresented on a variety of fronts, and news stories typically do not challenge gender stereotypes, which is an essential trend that we have seen up to now in the mainstream news media.

According to the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), just 25% of news subjects and sources in print, radio, and television were women on a global average.

According to the research, one could argue that a person's ability to speak or be heard in the news represents the importance placed on their viewpoint (Bassette. G, 1996).

Gender disparities Women tend to (be invited to) speak mostly on issues supposedly of interest to them – or gender specific issues, such as sexual harassment against women or income inequality. However, if they appear only to talk about gender-related issues, their voice was excluded from mainstream or traditionally male-oriented issues (like politics and government), which affect women too.

Problem statement

According to (UDI-IS, 2016), women in Uganda are more than twice as likely to experience sexual violence as men. Hence there is a need to dig deeper and find out as to what extent the

media is really playing its role in promotion and advocacy of women's rights.

Objectives of the study

- 1. To assess the roles of media in promotion of women's rights in Uganda.*
- 2. To find out the challenges faced by the media in promoting women's rights in Uganda.*
- 3. To analyze relevant recommendations to enhance protection of women's rights by media.*

Research questions

- 1. What is the roles of media in promotion of women's rights in Uganda?*
- 2. What are the challenges faced by the media in promoting women's rights in Uganda?*
- 3. What are the relevant recommendations to enhance protection of women's rights by media?*

Methodology

Research Design

This research used descriptive research design. Sahin and Mete (2021) notes that descriptive design allows the researcher to describe the variables and their relationships. This design was the best for this study in that it enabled the researcher to impact of media in protection of women's rights. Descriptive designs result in a description of the data, either in words, pictures, charts, or tables, and indicate whether the data analysis shows statistical relationships or is merely

descriptive. The design allowed the researcher to focus on media and the role it played in protection of women's rights.

Study Population

The study population was 90 respondents including managers, General staff of New vision and local people (community members). New vision employs employees in different capacities, ranging from cleaners to the Manager.

Sample Size and Selection Method

A total sample of 25 respondents were purposively selected from the managers, general staff of the new vision and community members.

The sample size was determined using the framework of Krejcie and Morgan 1970.

(Amin M.E, 2005) adds that purposive sampling means a sampling technique in which a researcher uses her own knowledge of the population and selects the knowledgeable sample for the research study. Therefore, purposive sampling in this study was used to select managers and employees of new vision newspaper because they had more knowledge about media and human rights.

Data Collection methods and instruments

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research instrument of a set of standardized printed or written questions with a choice of answers, devised for purposes of a survey or statistical study (Trochim, 2017). He further defines structured questionnaire as a document that consists of a set of standardized questions with a fixed scheme, which specifies the exact wording and order of the questions for gathering information from respondents. The researcher used a structured questionnaire as a

primary data collection instrument.

Interviewing

This method involved an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interaction was either face to face or over the phone. For this research, in particular, this method was used on almost all planned respondents including key respondents and community members. The interview guide or schedule was used as the tool for this method.

Data analysis

The collected data was processed using a combination of Microsoft Excel packages. The processing stage involved editing, classification, coding, transcription and tabulation. In the analysis of data, descriptive analysis was employed and the results were presented in frequency tables against percentages and also on graphs and pie charts. Finally, a research report was written from the analyzed data in which conclusions and recommendations were made.

RESULTS

Response Rate

The primary data was collected from employees of New Vision and the community in Uganda. In total the sample size of the respondents issued with the questionnaires were 25. Out of the 25 questionnaires issued, 23 questionnaires were fully filled and returned back for analysis. This formed a response rate of 92%. This is in line with Kothari (2007) who observes that, the response rate of 70% and above is good for analysis.

Additionally, Cooper and Schindler (2003) also indicated that a response rate which exceeds 30% of the total sample is appropriate for analysis and provides enough data that can be used to

generalize the characteristics of the study problem to the target population. Figure 1 presents a summary of the response rate.

Response rate of the respondents

As shown in the figure 2 above, 40% of the respondents were aged between 20-29 years, 33% were between the ages of 30-39 years while 20% were aged between 40-49 years and the least were 50+ covering 8%. By implication, it means that majority of respondents belongs to the highly productive age groups.

Gender Distribution

The respondents were required to indicate their gender, that is, either male or female. The response provided is shown by the table 1.

Table 1: Gender distribution of the respondents

<i>Gender distribution</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Female</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>100</i>

Source; Primary Data, 2022

From the table 1 above, the gender composition of respondents was 60% females while their male counterparts comprised 40%. It means the responses were balanced and not biased.

Education level

The educational qualifications of the respondents were also put into considered. The respondents had attained different academic qualifications. The levels attained were; certificate, diploma, degree, masters and above.

Figure 3 above indicated the 60% of the respondents had a degree as their highest educational qualification. 5% had a diploma, 12% had attained a certificate while 8% had attained masters. It therefore means that majority of respondents were literate and able to understand the questionnaire with clarity.

Marital status of respondents

The research findings aimed at getting to know the Marital status of respondents as shown in the table 2 below;

Table 2: level of marital status of the respondents

<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Single</i>	6	24
<i>Married</i>	15	60
<i>Divorced</i>	4	16
<i>Total</i>	25	100

Source: Primary Data

From the findings in table 2, majority of the respondents were married with 60%, 24% were single while 16% were divorced. As seen, majority of the respondents were in some form of relationships whereas the single respondents were mainly young adults who are yet to get married.

Descriptive analysis

Roles of media in promotion of women's rights in Uganda.

This study further sought to establish the roles of media in promotion of women's rights in Uganda.

This section therefore, required the respondents to indicate their extent of agreement or

disagreement on various statements regarding the roles of media in promotion of women's rights in Uganda.

Table 3: Roles of media in promotion of women's rights in Uganda

Statement	F	SA	F	A	F	NS	F	D	F	SD
Dissemination of knowledge	15	60%	10	40%	0	0.00%	3	12%	2	8%
Innovation by making gender issues in programs Sensitizing the public on the dangers of domestic violence	10	40%	12	48%	1	4%	2	8%	0	0.0%
Interpretation of knowledge by women role models	15	60%	8	32%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	8%
Dissemination of news	13	52%	4	16%	1	4%	7	28%	0	0.0%

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 above elaborate that 13 (43%) of the respondents agreed that media role is to disseminate knowledge on gender. 8 (27%) of respondents agreed that media is supposed to innovate by making gender issues in the programs. A total of 5 (17%) of the respondents concurred to the role of media in the interpretation of knowledge by women role models. Some 4 (13%) of the respondents said media is there to disseminate news in terms of current affairs.

Challenges faced by the media in promoting women's rights in Uganda.

The study sought to examine the challenges faced by media in promoting women's rights in Uganda. The information was obtained using questionnaires and the findings are summarized in table 4 below:

Table 4: Challenges faced by the media in promoting women's rights in Uganda.

Statement	F	SA	F	A	F	NS	F	D	F	SD
Competition of audiences has become fierce and the quality of reporting has sometimes been compromised	10	40%	8	32%	1	2%	5	20%	2	8%
Political interference	15	60%	10	40%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Lack of press freedom	11	44%	10	40%	0	0.0%	4	16%	0	0.0%
Intolerance of critical journalists	8	32%	10	40%	1	2%	2	8%	3	12%
Criminalization of media offences	6	24%	5	20%	3	12%	9	36%	2	8%

Source: field data 2022

The table 4 above indicated that 40% strongly agree, 32% agree, 2% of the respondents are not

sure, 20% disagree while 8% strongly disagreed with the statement that Competition of audiences has become fierce and the quality of reporting has sometimes been compromised which has affected promotion of women rights by media, the table also indicates that political interference also affected the promotion of rights of women by media where by 60% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, and none disagreed with the statement in that majority of respondents claimed that journalists and media houses are abused now and then due to politics in Uganda which hinders the promotion of rights of women. Further still, the table above indicated that 44% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, none were not sure, 16% disagreed while none strongly disagreed that Lack of press freedom by media has limited the promotion of rights of women.

On Intolerance of critical journalists, the statistics show that 32% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, only 2% were not sure, 23% disagree and 7% strongly disagree with the statement. The table also indicated that 8% of the respondents disagreed while 12% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Despite the challenges, media in Uganda are very competitive because of the volumes of information of they are giving to Ugandans.

Recommendations to enhance protection of women's rights by media.

The study sought to examine the Recommendations to enhance protection of women's rights by media. The information was obtained using questionnaires and the findings are summarized in figure 4 below:

Conclusions

World over, the mass media have the capacity of reinforcing or increasing the already existing inequalities between the minority and the majority groups of the society. Although the media have consistently stood out to report on women's issues, the stereotypical tendencies haven't been erased completely. By this kind of portrayal, the entire society gets to believe that women can't do anything better besides their responsibilities of mother and wife. The findings of the study

proved that there are still a lot of violation of women's rights that occur on day-to-day basis but are left un addressed by the media. Most of the violations occur in the rural setting where majority of the women are illiterate or are not aware of their rights.

Recommendations of the Study

As much as the media have tried to cover different issues that affect women, they should create a balance between political, social and economic news. This is highly recommended because from the study, it's the role of the media to make sure that people are informed, and through information, they became educated and empowered.

The media should 'engender' its policies, especially concerning the number of journalists and staff in decision making positions. This in turn influenced more coverage of women issues especially in political and economic circles.

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