

**THE EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE PRACTICE OF
JOURNALISM IN UGANDA. A CASE STUDY OF
NTV UGANDA**

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ABSTRACT

The study's objective was to determine how much more the journalists in Uganda truly helped to the creation of policy. Its purpose was to assess the efficiency of the administration of Uganda's media regulation operation, the degree of awareness creation of those regulations, and the role of the media in the process. 150 individuals who had been deliberately selected from the intended audience were investigated using both research methods and qualitative techniques as part of a case study approach. The bulk of the suggestions were feasible for achieving a variety of goals, but execution funding was limited, they had primarily symbolic value, and the participants' understanding of the issues was inadequate. It was also discovered that the media had minimal impact on how regulations were developed. Based on the research's findings, the administration should educate the general public about the advantages of getting involved with the creation of public policy and media owners should devote more time to this topic in their shows. The study came to the conclusion that media owners that participate in the creation of public policy should receive government benefits.

Key words: government policies and practice of journalism

Background of the study

Reporting is the method of obtaining, collecting, and sharing information via a variety of venues, and it is seen as a crucial component of the news industry, as stated by Diksha Naytil (2020). The

history of reporting can be dated directly to Rome in around 59 BC. Television has come a long way since it first began to provide knowledge across numerous media and cover a wide range of topics and industries.

According to Nautiyal (2020), colonialism facilitated the development of journalism in India.

India's first newspaper, The Bengal Gazette, made its debut on January 29, 1780, marking the beginning of the nation's official media history. Initially, just written media was used regularly, but it evolved to include consideration of other media as well. Schlesinger (1990) asserts that formal education is provided to newspapers under the assumption that the government is the main information provider and that all that it does is important.

The journalism concept of the minimal effort states that it is quicker and easier to produce information that is administration-focused than it is to produce journalism that emphasizes social issues. According to Kupe (2004) and Mabweazara, African correspondents work in a variety of atypical settings that frequently starkly contrast with those of their counterparts in the northern nations (2011 & 2018). This illustrates a few of these peculiar circumstances. African reporters are underpaid and have significantly less equipment at their disposal.

Moreover, they are commonly utilized in diverse nations that are established themselves in various stages.

Statement of the problem

There are concerns that Ugandan public policies may harm the profession of journalists.

The Publication and Writer Act, which requires all correspondents to identify with the law enforcement agencies, and the Generally pro Act, which makes it unlawful to print anything that is believed to sponsor terrorism, are only two of the laws and regulations that have been imposed on the media sector.

These laws may be limiting press freedom and, as a result, the ability of journalists to cover issues of public interest.

Also, the administration is unable to impose other restrictions on press freedom, such as bullying and threatening journalists or shutting down media outlets.

Research objectives

- 1. To examine the effectiveness of media policy making process in NTV Uganda*
- 2. To examine the level of awareness of government media policies in NTV Uganda.*
- 3. To establish the contribution of media in policy making process.*

Research questions

- 1. How effective is the policy making process in Uganda?*
- 2. What is the level of awareness of government policies in NTV Uganda?*
- 3. What is the contribution of media on policy making process in Uganda?*

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Qualitative research, according to Amin (2005), is a strategy for carrying out a study.

The investigator used a case study method, which entails looking closely at such an existing reality.

This methodology could be used to investigate the impact of governmental activities on Uganda's journalism sector.

The case study method was used by the investigators because it provides in-depth direct experience and permits the use of a variety of investigational techniques (Kothari, 2005).

The study included both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies, enabling the researcher to compile data about the subjects under examination.

The researcher was able to overcome the limitations of using just one strategy by combining the two together.

Study Population

The study targeted a population of 150 respondents drawn from NTV Uganda located at Serena Conference Center Kampala District.

Sample size

According to Amin (2005), sampling is crucial for choosing components from a community in a way that ensures the sample components chosen accurately reflect the population. Using the table from Kregice and Morgan (1970), the researcher chose a group of 108 respondents from a total of a sample of 150 respondents. The table shows that a sample size of 108 is adequate for a population of 260.

Sampling Methods

The research employed simple random.

Amin (2003) asserts that simple random sampling ensures that each member of the population has an equal opportunity to be selected for the sampling.

Comes to choosing participants in the research, which used simple random selection, all people who indicated a propensity to watch Television were eligible.

150 people were included in the sample size (locals who were questioned regarding a variety of topics affecting the area).

Quota and deliberate sampling approaches were used in the author's non-probability sample selection.

This is due to the fact that in done on purpose choice, the researcher chose individuals on intention who, in his view, are regarded appropriate to the study issue.

Data collection instruments

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was chosen because of its ability to reduce any bias and the collection of authentic data important for data analysis. The researcher intended to use both closed ended and open-ended questionnaires aiming at testing the effect of government policies on the practice of journalism in Uganda.

Data Analysis and interpretation

Together with using realistic data methodologies and, when appropriate, SPSS, constant data preparation and assessment were conducted.

The frequency of the new problems was then determined, and the information was presented in a tabular format.

The researcher took great care not to discard any data because doing so would result in an incorrect liter analysis.

The appropriate quotes were taken down.

The results were descriptively provided to highlight the key findings of the survey after the answers were individually reviewed to select areas of focus according to categories.

RESULTS

Analysis of response rate

The study targeted a sample of 150 respondents. Therefore, a total of 150 questionnaires were printed and distributed to the sample. The researcher encouraged all the respondents to answer all the questions with in a time frame of a week. 5 members of the sample were purposively selected for the interviews.

Table 1: Distribution of the response rate

<i>Details</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
<i>Total of questionnaires given out</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>Returned questionnaires</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>Key informant interviews made</i>	<i>10</i>

Source: Primary data (2022)

As seen in table 1, there was a return of 96.8%. The return rate was due to the fact that the researcher followed up the respondents throughout the data. The high response rate can also attribute to the high number of respondents who were available and willing to participate in the study. This response rate deemed to be sufficient and respective for the study because Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) asserted that a response rate of 50% and above was adequate for analysis and reporting.

Characteristics of respondents

The researcher collected data from respondents to enable her to define their demographic characteristics presented below;

Gender of distribution

Respondents were asked to select their gender. The distribution of gender in the responses is shown in the table below;

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Female</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>100</i>

Source; Primary data (2022)

The table 2 above shows the classification of respondents by sex. It reveals that a large number of the respondents 175% are male, 25% are female, this clearly shows that there is gender bias towards men in the study are and also, it is because men are easily accessible by the researcher.

Respondents by Age

Respondents were required to select their age group ranging from 10 to 55 and above. The age groups were categorized in that range since respondents have no categorized age to enjoy the use of the media. The distribution of the age groups of the respondents is shown in the table below;

Table: Age group of the respondents

<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
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10-18 years	3	2
19-25 years	20	13
26-35 years	27	18
36-45 years	46	31
46-58 years	52	35
55+years	2	1

Source; Primary data

The table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 10-18 years constituting 2% followed by those in the age of 19-25 with 13%, followed by 26-35 years with 18%, those in the group of 36-45 with 31%, 46-58 years constituting 35% and then those in group of 50 and above with 1%. This implies that most of the respondents are mature enough to make decisions regarding the government policies which affect them.

Marital status of distribution

The researcher collected data to know which marital status affects the practice of journalism media. The table below shows the marital status distribution of respondents.

Table 4: Marital status distribution of respondents

<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Single</i>	41	27
<i>Married</i>	97	65
<i>Separated</i>	6	4

Widow	5	3
Widower	1	1

Source; Primary data

Table 4 above shows that the majority of the respondents 97 constituting 65% are married followed by 41 respondents constituting 27%. This implies that the majority mind about family and they will be interested on those policies which will help them to meet their ends.

Distribution of Education levels of respondents

The researcher collected education level data so as to know reasoning and knowledge about the suggested topic of study “ the effect of government policies on the practice of journalism in Uganda.”

Table 5: Educational level of respondents

<i>Education level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Primary level</i>	25	17
<i>Ordinary level</i>	27	18
<i>Advanced level</i>	54	36
<i>Diploma</i>	23	15
<i>Graduate</i>	21	14

Source; Primary data

The table 5 above gives the classification of respondents by level of education. A number of respondents 54 (36%) had completed advanced level, 27 (18%) respondents had completed ordinary level of education, It is observed from the above table that the distribution of respondents

in terms of education is more or less evenly distributed implying that they should be interested to know the policies of the government and how it affect them

Findings according to the research objectives

Below is the presentation of the findings according to the study objectives:

Effectiveness of the media

Table 6: Responses on the effectiveness of the media.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>percentage</i>	<i>Response</i>
<i>Goals are compatible to satisfy very diverse groups</i>	<i>3.93%</i>	<i>Very satisfactory</i>
<i>Many policies have primarily symbolic value</i>	<i>3.80%</i>	<i>Very satisfactory</i>
<i>Government agencies have a strong vested interest in “proving” that their programs have positive impact.</i>	<i>3.62%</i>	<i>Very satisfactory</i>
<i>Heavy investments on policies which do not work.</i>	<i>3.40%</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>
<i>Any serious study on policy impact undertaken by a government agency would involve some interference with ongoing programmer’s activities.</i>	<i>2.05%</i>	<i>Fair</i>

<i>Lack of funds, facilities, time and personnel for implementations hinder procurements.</i>	<i>3.02%</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>
<i>Legislative and bureaucratic interests resist the effectiveness of policies</i>	<i>2.07%</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Concentrated benefit with dispersed costs</i>	<i>3.05%</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>
<i>Instrumentalism at work</i>	<i>2.09%</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Average total</i>	<i>3.00%</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>

Source: Primary data, (2022)

Table 6 presents respondents' opinions on how the media contributes to the formulation of public policy.

With a combined average score of 3.93 and 3.80, it is clear that policies' fit for a variety of aims and their relevance in terms of visibility were highly valued.

This indicates that the administration has tried to expand its plans and policies, but that their implementation has not been successful.

Materialist philosophy received low scores from respondents as a result of the planning processes being dominated by bureaucratic interests.

With a mean score of 3, the effectiveness of the regulatory process was generally regarded as adequate.

To get the desired effects, the government must ensure that policies are carried out effectively.

Awareness level of government media policies

The second objective of the study was to examine the level of awareness of government media policies. In order to achieve the objective, respondents were asked to show their level of agreement to choose the type of media used choosing very satisfactory, satisfactory and fair. The responses are presented in the table with their frequency, percentage and response.

Type of media	Frequency	Percentage	Response
News paper	25	17	Fair
Radio	43	29	Satisfactory
Television	23	15	Fair
Both	59	39	Very satisfactory

Source of information; Primary data (2022)

Table 7 shows the opinion of respondents regarding their source of information. It is observed that 39% of the total respondents get to know about the policies through both the media, 29% through radio, 17% through reading newspaper and television constitute only 15% of respondents. This implies that access to the media is not a problem to most of the respondents only that the media is not providing coverage for government policies.

Table 8: Awareness of government policies

YES/NO	Frequency	Percentage	Response
Yes	82	55	Agree
No	68	45	Disagree

Source; Primary data (2022)

The table above shows that 55% agreed that they are aware about the government policies while 45 percent disagreed. This implies that there is much to be done to sensitize people on the importance of their contribution to policy making process. It was also noted from the respondents that only few policies they were aware of i.e., educational and agricultural policies while much of other policies were neither disclosed to them nor the media addressed them, also majority of the respondents use their leaders to express their ideas and the FM radio.

Contribution of the media

The third objective of the study was to establish the contribution of media in policy making process. In order to achieve the objective, respondents were asked to respond to a set of 7 statements on a liker scale showing their level of agreement on a 1point liker scale choosing very satisfactory, satisfactory and fair.

The table 9 below shows a summarized commutated descriptive statistic of respondents' responses on this objective by presenting the frequency, percentage and responses of respondents.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Response</i>
<i>Enabled citizen to monitor and hold government to account for its action</i>	<i>1.90</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Encouragement of government responsibilities to citizen's demand</i>	<i>2.01</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Raised awareness of social problems</i>	<i>2.50</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Improved understanding of and support for government policies and encourages citizen ownership of reform</i>	<i>2.10</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Influenced political outcomes</i>	<i>3.07</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>
<i>Led to rapid and fairer economic growth</i>	<i>2.25</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Led to better governance and dynamic civil society</i>	<i>3.40</i>	<i>Very satisfactory</i>
<i>Average total</i>	<i>2.47</i>	<i>Fair</i>

The function of the media in the creation of public policy is examined in Table 9.

The respondents were asked to agree or oppose an assertion, and the mean replies were then computed.

Although the results show an estimated scale rate of 2.47, which was regarded as fair, it is clear from the above table that the media has very little influence.

It has made a greater effect in shaping political outcomes and governance (3.40), but hasn't done much to increase transparency and make the authorities responsible (1.90).

The main causes of this are the public's fear of being taken advantage of by the administration and the media's insufficient reporting of government decisions.

Table 10: Response to establish the contribution of media in policy making process

YES/ NO	Frequency	Percentage	Response
Yes	56	37	Agree
No	94	63	Disagree

Source; Primary data (2022)

The table above shows that majority of the respondents 63% disagreed with the statement that media has contributed in disseminating information regarding government policies, other than news, much of the programs are just for entertainment. 37% agreed that media has made a contribution in disseminating information regarding government policies

Conclusion of the study

The study's first purpose, which concerns the effectiveness of main stream media policy creation, culminated in the finding that policies' fitness for attaining various goals and overall message were scored highly, also including.

This finding implies that although the government has tried to create sound policies, their implementation has not been successful.

In the study's second purpose, which examined respondents' awareness of government news policies, just 55% of participants indicate comprehension of these restrictions, suggesting that more research is required.

The majority of respondents polled disagreed with the study's main goal, which was to ascertain the influence of media in government, while a smaller percentage agreed with it.

only to emphasize how crucial it is to keep an eye on government activities.

Recommendations

- 1. The government should sensitize the public on the importance of participation in the policy making process so as to monitor its policies.*
- 2. The owners of the media need to increase the coverage of policies in their programs.*
- 3. Government should provide incentives to those media owners who are making a contribution to the policy making process*

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