

Assessing The Impact Of Media On Culture Development In Uganda. A Case Study Of UBC (Uganda Broad Casting Corporation)

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Abstract

Social media is a rapidly evolving platform for people lately to communicate, express themselves and share content of all kinds regardless of the distance that separate them. It has given rise to a new cultural paradigm that drives technology and businesses while changing the way people interact. As a tool, social media is a double-edged sword; while it has many benefits, it can also influence people in unhealthy ways. The study focuses on the impact of social media on cultural practice. The study used non-probability sampling. It employed both the qualitative and quantitative data collection tools which included questionnaires, and, interviews. The study used both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools in order to ensure efficiency and accuracy in data collection. Qualitative data was analyzed the thematically by coding, while information from questionnaires was analyzed by use of statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) which generated the tables and percentages. The findings of the study revealed that social media has been a major part of our lives. It has totally affected our cultural practices in both positive and negative ways. There are so many positive impacts of social media on culture. Social media has increased connections between people and created an environment in which you can share your opinion, pictures and share knowledge on different spheres of life been academic, spiritual materials and just about life in general. It has also become important for businesses because at the same point, you need to use social media in your business for example for marketing and advertising. On the other hand, social media has influenced our cultural practices in negative ways. People can share whatever they want to on social media and some of this information might be inappropriate. People have become more conservative about each other's perceptive related to political views, religion, social rights and culture. The ugly part of social media is that there tons of unnecessary information shared by people and also bullying and harassment on social media has been increased.

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Background of the study

Culture is an integral part of every society, shaping people's way of life and national identity. In Uganda, as in many African countries, cultures have traditionally been passed down between generations orally through folk stories, songs, dances and ceremonies (Moses & Nancy, 2024). However, with advances in technology, mass media platforms are increasingly becoming important tools for preserving as well as influencing cultural practices, values, and development (Muhamad & Alex, 2024). Uganda currently has a vibrant media sector comprising both public and private radio, television stations as well as print and online publications. The sector has grown rapidly over the past two decades from a few state-owned outlets to more than 200 licensed stations across the country (Kazaara et al., 2023). Specifically, the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) established in 1964 remains the oldest and largest public broadcaster with a mandate to inform, educate and entertain Ugandans while promoting unity and national culture (UBC, 2022). Through its radio and television networks across the country, UBC strives to broadcast diverse local content reflecting different cultural practices and traditions (Davids et al., 2023).

However, the influx of foreign media, especially entertainment programs on satellite television, is viewed with concern by some cultural entities as eroding African cultural values, especially among the youth. Studies (Sophie & Crispus, 2024) have documented increasing instances of conflict between traditional norms and modern lifestyles promoted through imported content. At the same time, existing local broadcasting policies still emphasize the use of lingua franca to reach a wider audience, but some cultural experts argue that this undermines minority ethnic languages and identities (Barugahare, 2011). There is also limited empirical evaluation of the overall impacts of both public and private media on the preservation and development of Uganda's diverse cultures over the years (Kazaara et al., 2023). As Uganda's oldest and largest public broadcaster, UBC has played a significant role in preserving and promoting the country's rich cultural diversity for more than five decades since its inception. Through its radio and television networks that cover all regions, it provides a critical platform for broadcasting the traditions, practices, languages, music and arts of various ethnic communities to a wider audience at the national level. This promoted cultural education and identity across different groups even in remote areas (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). However, with technological advances and the liberalization of the broadcasting sector, UBC now faces significant challenges in optimally using its mandate and resources to influence culture. Increasing commercialization of operations to increase revenue has in some cases limited air time for specialized vernacular and cultural education programs. In addition, the broadcaster operates in a highly competitive multi-phase media environment with many private and external sources competing for audiences. This has created pressure to adopt mainstream content styles that potentially undermine efforts to consciously shape societal values and mindsets regarding cultural heritage.

The growing influence of attractive foreign content spread on television and online platforms, especially among urban youth, also poses the risk of disrupting long-established traditions and locally rooted worldviews. While certain changes and modern influences are inevitable due to globalization trends, stakeholders fear the loss of community ethos and indigenous knowledge systems (Sophie & Crispus, 2024). There are also concerns that current broadcasting policies may not sufficiently empower marginalized ethnic communities to meaningfully engage and broadcast in their own dialects. Therefore, this study aims to provide an in-depth assessment of UBC's performance in terms of its dual cultural mandate over the decades since its founding.

Statement of the problem

Culture is the core of every society, shaping people's way of life, values and national identity. In Uganda, diverse cultures are traditionally preserved and transmitted across generations through communal practices, folklore and oral traditions (Faridah et al., 2023). However, with the expanding access to mass media platforms in recent decades, broadcast channels have increasingly become an influential force in both cultural promotion and socialization among communities (Damasus et al., 2023). As the oldest and largest public broadcaster, UBC plays a vital role in this regard through its national radio and television networks. However, several issues currently limit the fulfillment of the company's mandate. According to UBC's recent annual reports, declining budget allocations strained operations and cutbacks to specialized cultural programming, especially on television. At the same time, commercial pressures to attract advertisements have led to reductions in the airtime of some language and traditional music/dance programmes. Studies by scholars such as (Faridah et al., 2023) further indicate problems with the perception of UBC's role in preserving ethnic identities and worldviews in the prevalent use of lingua franca in public radio. Added to this is high consumer demand and the availability of attractive foreign content through private media, satellite television and online platforms. Concerns are growing that this influential content over time promotes lifestyles that threaten revered traditions, knowledge systems, and communal ethics (Nelson, Christopher, Teddy, et al., 2022). These issues negatively affect intergenerational transmission of cultures as well as identity formation, especially among Ugandan youth. Despite UBC's decades of operation, there is limited research on its performance in making the best use of scarce resources to shape thinking about cultural heritage and continuity. There is also a lack of empirical data on how the dynamic media landscape shapes the practices and self-perceptions of different communities in modern contexts. Thus, the statement of the problem calls for an in-depth assessment of the capacity and role of UBC in holistic promotion of Ugandan cultures (Flavia et al., 2023).

Objectives of the study

1. To determine the relationship between organizational policies and culture development in Uganda
2. To determine the relationship between funding sources and culture development in Uganda
3. To determine the relationship between technology and culture development in Uganda

Methodology

The research intended to use descriptive and analysis research design. The design was used on a case study of UBC (Uganda Broadcasting Corporation) (Nafiu et al., 2012). These were selected because they were effective ways of research presentation. It was survey-based on quantitative. The research was conducted in one area that is UBC TV station in Kampala city which is the Uganda's capital city (Nafiu, 2012). The research took a period of two months. The area was basically chosen because the researcher was familiar with the area and was able to speak the most common languages in the area of the study. Also, according to Roscoe 1975), sample sizes of between 30 and 500 are appropriate for most studies. However, though this sampling technique is chosen, it has a weakness that inadequate information can sometimes be given because the selected respondents may be less informed on the topic of research. The sample size of 100 respondents were chosen and this include; 70 Star TV journalist, 20media analysts, 10culture activists, and the 70 community members (Lu et al., 2013). Random sampling was used in that the size of the respondents was predetermined before the research was conducted without bias. A sample size of 100 respondents was used and was randomly selected from the sheets of paper spread. This was when using stratified random sampling. After that systematic random sampling was used, this later gave the actual sample size (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). Quantitative data collection was then being used which will involve editing, encoding and later tabulation of the collected materials. The following data collection instruments were used; This was designed in line with the topic, objectives and hypothesis. They included both open and closed-ended questions. This instrument was selected because it was efficient and convenient in a way that the respondents were given time to consult the documents before answering the questions (Nafiu et al., 2017). The tool was selected because it gave accurate, correct and historical data, which was used for future aspects. The source of the information were the libraries, data banks, newspapers and any other published information that can readily be available for use as regards the topic of research. Editing is the process whereby the completed questionnaires and interviews schedulers are analyzed in the hope of amending recording errors or at least deleting data that are obviously erroneous (Rasheed et al., 2022). This is aimed at improving the quality of information from respondents. The researcher fills out few unanswered questions. However, answers filed are deducted from the proceeding answers or questions. The purpose of coding in research was to classify the answers to questionnaires into meaningful categories so as to bring out their essential patterns (Jallow et al., 2021). Coding was used in this research in order to summarize data by classifying different response given into categories for easy interpretation (Nafiu et al., 2013). For each question, list of probable answers was prepared. Data was analyzed inform of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS & STATA (Nelson, Christopher, & Milton, 2022).

Results**Table 1: Correlation between organizational policies and culture development**

		Organizational policies	Culture development
Organizational policies	Pearson Correlation	1	.669**

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	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Culture development	Pearson Correlation	.669**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2024

The table shows the results of the Pearson correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between organizational policies implemented at UBC and their impact on culture development in Uganda based on data collected from 100 respondents, depicting that organizational policies which refer to the internal guidelines, regulations and priorities set by UBC to achieve its mandate have a positive correlation coefficient value of .669 at a significance level of 0.01 or 1% with culture development in the country, defined in terms of efforts made towards preservation of diverse ethnic cultures, promotion of traditional knowledge and practices, as well as shaping public perceptions about cultural heritage through specialized programming, indicating that as organizational policies at the national broadcaster are strengthened and optimized according to stakeholders' perspectives gathered, it has a strong positive effect on fostering continued vibrancy, education and constructivism of cultures as the desired goal of UBC's establishment and operations (Nelson et al., 2023).

Table 2: Correlation between funding sources and culture development

		Funding sources	culture development
Funding sources	Pearson Correlation	1	.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
culture development	Pearson Correlation	.705**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2024

The results presented in this table indicate the findings of the Pearson correlation analysis conducted to identify the relationship between funding sources available to UBC as the largest public service broadcaster in the country and their impact on culture development efforts according to the perspectives obtained from 100 respondents through the study, showing that funding sources which refer to means of financial support through government budgetary allocations, donations, fees, and revenue generation streams available to UBC have a high positive correlation

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coefficient value of 0.705 at a significance level of 0.01 or 1% with culture development initiatives across communities, meaning that as adequate and sustainable funding is mobilized and channeled towards programs, infrastructure and personnel required to accomplish UBC's dual mandate of broadcasting diverse cultures while preserving ethnic identities, it has a robustly positive effect on fostering continued transmission of cultural heritages across generations, education of communities about their rich traditions and shaping their mindsets regarding importance of cultural patrimony through content designed for such objectives according to the performance analysis.

Table 3: Correlation between technology and culture development

		Technology	culture development
Technology	Pearson Correlation	1	.588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
culture development	Pearson Correlation	.588**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2024

This table demonstrates the outcomes of the Pearson correlation analysis carried out to examine the relationship between technology as a determining factor and its association with culture development efforts in the country based on responses from 100 participants in the study, wherein technology refers to the modern technical tools, digital platforms and broadcasting infrastructure employed by UBC to reach wider audiences across diverse regions, the results exposed that technology has a moderately high positive correlation coefficient value of 0.588 at a highly significant level of 0.01 or 1% with culture development initiatives targeted towards sustaining intergenerational exchange of cultural heritages, promoting lesser known traditional skills and crafts, as well as inculcating a sense of belonging and connection to ethnic identities among communities through specialized content delivered using modern equipment and networks according to feedback, implying that as UBC optimizes the use of cutting-edge technological solutions coupled with expansion of transmission networks to remote and marginalized locales, it has a robustly positive impact in facilitating continued vibrancy, revitalization and appreciation for cultural treasures retained by various ethnic groups residing within Ugandan borders.

Conclusions

People have to balance their entertainment and most important personal and professional life. In as much as new technology is rising making the world a global village there is need for the society to uphold cultural practices because it gives us the identity for which we are what we believe in and what for. If social media is not properly handled as

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we have seen from the research, cultural practice will lose their values completely and the next generation will not have an identity. Cultural practices remind us we are part of history that defines our past, shapes who we are today and who we are likely to become. Once we ignore the meaning of cultural practices, we're in danger of damaging the underpinning of our identity. Cultural practices contribute a sense of comfort and belonging. They bring families, government, mosques, churches and society in general together and enable people to reconnect with friends. It reinforces values such as freedom, faith, integrity, a good education, personal responsibility, a strong work ethic, and the value of being selfless.

Cultural practices enable us to showcase the principles of our founding fathers, celebrate diversity, and unite as a country. They offer an excellent context for finding meaning, pausing and reflection. Cultural practices serve as an avenue for creating lasting memories for our families and friends and an opportunity to say thank you for the contribution that someone has made. Culture is the life hood of a vibrant society, expressed in many ways. We tell stories, celebrate, remember the past, entertain ourselves, and imagine the future. Our creative expression helps defines who we are, and helps us see the world through the eyes of others. Participating in cultural practices can benefit individuals in many ways, some of which are deeply personal. They are a source of delight and wonder, and can provide emotionally and intellectually moving experiences, whether pleasurable or unsettling, that encourage celebration or contemplation. Culture is also a means of expressing creativity, forging an individual identity, and enhancing or preserving and developing culture in a community's sense of place.

Recommendation

The results are that our beliefs, norms, culture are getting diluted over time that our ways of life will become foreign to us. If we disregard our culture, we'll open our eyes one day and won't be able to recognize our world anymore. The values that support the backbone of our country, our family, and our faith will have drifted for so long that the fabric of our society will be torn.

The government, TV stations, parents, mosques and churches should work together on how best culture practices should be preserved despite the use of social media. There is need for the government to regulate what is posted on social media and also stations should give first opportunities to cultural programs to be broadcasted.

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