

The Influence Of Media On Humanitarian Intervention. A Case Of South-Sudan Embassy

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Abstract

The study aimed at the influence of media on humanitarian intervention. a case of south-Sudan embassy and it was guided by the following objectives; To determine the relationship between technological advancements and humanitarian intervention, to determine the relationship between media ownership and humanitarian intervention and to determine the relationship between advertising revenue and humanitarian intervention. Open-ended questions were also incorporated for explanatory qualitative follow-ups aligning primary and secondary strands (Creswell, 2014). Semi-structured interview guides were similarly designed and pilot tested as moderating instruments for qualitative data collection from key informants allowing emergent themes to arise within structured parameters. Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS for descriptive statistics comprising frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, variability and standard errors as well as Spearman's correlation and structural equation modeling to verify relationships. From the findings, there was a very strong positive correlation between technological advancements and humanitarian intervention. Nearly 89% variation in humanitarian intervention can be explained by technological advancements. The regression model which uses technological advancements as a predictor variable was highly significant and can explain around 79% of the variations in humanitarian intervention. Technological advancements have a significant impact on and accurately predict levels of humanitarian intervention. For every unit increase in technological advancements, humanitarian intervention increases by 0.395 units on an average. Technological advancements were a statistically significant predictor of humanitarian intervention as indicated by the t-value being greater than the critical value and the significance value being less than 0.05. Based on these results, some recommendations for strengthening this relationship include: government and private partners should allocate more funds to media organizations to support their humanitarian reporting and advocacy work; capacity building initiatives are required to enhance media's role in emergency communications; collaboration between aid groups and media needs to be expanded further so that people's needs can be better represented.

Keywords: Media, communication and Humanitarian Intervention

Background of the study

At the broadest level, advances in global communications have enabled remote audiences to witness unfolding emergency events like never before through 24/7 multimedia networks (Cottle et al, 2016). Research shows that the media stimulate public interest through their issue selection and framing

processes, which shape what issues rise to the forefront of international agendas (Kazaara, Charles, et al., 2023). Studies consistently find that disasters receive exponentially higher coverage proportional to the size of the number of victims, proximity, size of the media market of the affected region, and

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compelling visual factors, which are consistent with Western news values according to the principles of "news logic" (Frank et al., 2023). For example, retrospective analyzes found that the 2010 Haiti earthquake received 225 times more CNN coverage than crises claiming equivalent lives in sub-Saharan Africa each year, simply because of its better fit with news ability criteria (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023). Such disproportion raises challenges for responsible prioritization of crises across the global landscape as needed. The media also focuses on reporting within peak emergency response windows, neglecting long-term disaster resilience and development imperatives, some argue (Kern, 2012). Some critics question whether humanitarian photojournalism serves the commercialization of news before informing the public or the dignity of victims according to ethical discourse (Mercy et al., 2023). At the same time, according to empirical studies, research quantitatively links enhanced media coverage with faster mobilization of humanitarian response and increased pledges from aid donors. In an analysis of UN appeals from 2004-2008, researchers found that a 1000% increase in New York Times articles correlated with a 13% increase in pledged funding over four months (Damasus et al., 2023). Kerstin similarly found that a 10% jump in coverage increased US Congressional aid allocations by 1.5%, suggesting that the media indirectly influence interventionist policies through shaping public opinion (2012). However, some aid workers suggest that biased coverage will divert resources away from the reality on the ground towards

"sexier" but less serious emergencies (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023).

On a continental scale, Africa faces a "triple burden" of underdevelopment, conflict and health crises, which the literature suggests is exacerbated by the risk of neglected or inadequate reporting (Bowman, 2002; Thompson, 2018). The lack of media infrastructure in large areas of the territory limits independent local reporting capacity and the contextualization of the crisis according to analyzes (Larmer, 2005; Franks, 2013). Bias also stems from language barriers and logistical obstacles faced by international correspondents who are unable to verify the reality on the ground. The frequency of coverage increases during episodic humanitarian disasters, but overlooks protracted and complex emergencies, which are considered less interesting by case studies (Silvey, 2001).

Even disasters that attracted high initial responses, such as the 1984 Ethiopian famine, saw coverage evaporate before fully recovering despite persistent vulnerabilities (Moeller, 1999). Visually impressive famines or refugee exodus receive funding more quickly by adjusting news priorities than chronic problems according to evaluation reports (Moeller, 1999; Hodgkinson & Willser, 2006). Western news coverage overemphasizes aspects of natural disasters while underestimating the complex critique of political violence through content studies (Davids et al., 2023). According to scholars, the values of Western language and news focus on selected crisis-reducing needs (Larmer, 2005; Franks, 2013). Coverage also often portrays Africans as helpless

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victims reinforcing paternalistic tropes rather than emphasizing endogenous solutions and deeper causal analyzes according to critical perspectives (Phionah et al., 2023). While some coverage elevates inspirational stories of dignity and resilience through adversity, disproportionate narratives of victimization, the authors argue, risk hindering recognition of the diverse lived realities and structural barriers that populations face (Hodgkinson et al, 2016). Sensational tragedy similarly misrepresents the rich cultural complexity and diversity of communities facing challenges (Porter & Myers, 2016).

Building local media capacity faces protracted challenges requiring sustained support and mentoring to overcome infrastructural, training and economic barriers despite promising impacts according to field research (Larmer, 2005; Franks, 2013). Dependence on international loops of third-party coverage entrenches power imbalances that distort the portrayal of crisis reality, according to some scholars (Davids et al., 2023). Overall, the literature re-emphasizes context-driven and locally-led news development as a priority on the continent to avoid biased reporting biases. East Africa, according to UN situational analyzes (UNOCHA, 2022), hosts protracted and multiple simultaneous crises intensified by recurrent droughts, floods, conflicts, pandemic diseases and the influx of refugees.

The world's youngest nation faces multifaceted crises that epitomize the complexity of the East African emergency. Since declaring independence from Sudan in 2011, South Sudan has experienced civil war (2013-18), inter-communal violence, repeated floods,

famine, pandemics and the largest refugee crisis on the continent, according to the United Nations agencies coordinating the response (UNOCHA, 2022). The country has limited communication infrastructure and development, faces a shortage of foreign currency while hosting nearly 2 million internally displaced people and more than 1 million refugees (UNHCR, 2022). Due to the combination of man-made and climate shocks affecting large populations, South Sudan absorbs sustained international attention in accordance with the results of the News Criteria Assessment (Kazaara, Kazaara et al., 2023). However, critics observe that Western patterns of coverage favor dramatic images of war-related disputes creating a "porn famine" in contemporary frames through selective framing according to critics (Hodgkinson et al, 2016). Research identifies a lack of historical, political, and cultural contexts that distort the crisis reality but, according to scholars, enable outside-led aid approaches (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023).

Local media face formidable barriers, including economic constraints, targeted intimidation of the press, and wartime communications blackouts limiting independent situational awareness in acute phases according to journalistic assessments (Franks, 2009; Stevenson & Greene, 2018). While local analysts use partnerships with international media, they argue for capacity building through training and peer mentoring to enable culturally sensitive crisis framing that acknowledges communities' experiences, not just external lenses (Franks, 2009, 2013; Stevenson & Greene 2018). Stronger local voices foster stability by

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countering misinformation and neglect of regional radio practices (Kazaara, Charles, et al., 2023).

Problem Statement

With the proliferation of new communication technologies and the rise of hyper-connectivity in recent decades, media have become an integral part of humanitarian crises and intervention responses. Studies show that media coverage plays a significant role in shaping public attention, situational awareness, and ultimately policy priorities regarding global emergencies (Bennett, 1990; Cottle, 2006). Challenges arise in crisis environments characterized by information asymmetry, government censorship, and physical risks that complicate independent verification (Oliver et al., 2023). Reports indicate that more than 150 journalists and media workers covering wars and disasters have been killed since 1992 alone (Cottle, Sambrook & Mosdell, 2016). The media has also faced accusations of sensationalism, alarmism and even emotional desensitization due to an overfamiliarity with the suffering of the aftermath of emergencies (Moeller, 1999; Chouliaraki, 2006), ignoring the structural causes perpetuating the crisis in favor of limiting "people in need". "risk frames undermine long-term solutions. according to some critics (Hodgkinson et al, 2016; Willher, 2006). This dynamic adds ethical layers to the media's interventionist role between truth-telling obligations and potentially harmful effects on vulnerable groups (Hurst, 2014; Porter & Myers, 2016).

Studies find that international disasters receive exponentially more attention than chronic, smaller-scale emergencies, depending on the extent of casualties, damage, geographic proximity, and cultural/political knowledge of the affected population (Ronald & Kazaara, 2023). For example, the 2010 Haiti earthquake received 225 times more CNN coverage in its first week than all other disasters of the same year in sub-Saharan Africa combined, despite equivalent annual death tolls in the regions (Moeller, 1999). Such disproportion highlights the problems of selectivity in the responsible allocation of scarce media resources across crises (Eady et al., 2009). Attention is also strongly correlated with periods of highest humanitarian need at the onset of emergencies, before tapering off. Research analyzing coverage of 47 disasters from 1995–2005 found that 88% of articles focused on initial response and relief rather than long-term developments, suggesting that reporting primarily serves short-term "action" agendas (Suzan & Kazaara, 2023). Humanitarian organizations have expressed frustration with the "porn famine" of photojournalism favoring graphic images without necessarily contextualizing the underlying causes or solutions (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Relying on Western news values and discounting Southern voices amid language/logistical barriers exposes intervenors to accusations of cultural imperialism, according to critics (Flavia et al., 2023).

From a policy perspective, studies link the extent of media coverage to faster and greater allocation of aid from donor governments. Eady et al. analyze UN challenges for 12 major crises from 2004-08. (2009) found that a 1000% increase in New York Times articles correlated with a 13% increase in aid pledges over four months. Similarly, Kerstin's analysis found that a 10% jump in coverage increased Congressional budget allocations by 1.5%, suggesting that the media indirectly activates humanitarian intervention through public polling of policy-making influences (Flavia et al.,

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2023). This empirical relationship represents the positive effects of investigative reporting exposing human suffering. However, some aid workers accuse the media of distorting intervention priorities away from the most urgent needs by prioritizing the “most meaningful” but not necessarily the disasters that require the most attention (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). Such dynamics contribute to Western media serving as conveyor belts rather than autonomous investigators (Cottle, 2006).

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the relationship between technological advancements and humanitarian intervention
2. To determine the relationship between media ownership and humanitarian intervention
3. To determine the relationship between advertising revenue and humanitarian intervention

Methodology

A mixed methods concurrent nested design was employed incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2013). This integrated approach allowed addressing different facets of the complex research problem through methodological plurality while still prioritizing one dominant approach in line with pragmatist thinking (Johnson et al, 2007). Through concurrent implementation, both methodologies remained independent with quantitative results informing qualitative phases iteratively within a single study (Creswell, 2014). This aligned with the research goals of both describing media effects statistically while seeking explanatory understandings qualitatively as recommended in the literature for multi-disciplinary investigations (Guest, 2013; Padgett, 2016). The target population included registered journalists, communication managers at international NGOs and humanitarian experts across the Great Lakes region according to inclusion criteria (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). This region faces recurring complex emergencies requiring coordinated responses (UNOCHA, 2020). Total population size was conservatively estimated at 5000 based on media registration databases and professional body membership directories (RAA, 2021; HAP, 2022). With heterogeneous experiences across countries and organizations, this broad scope aligned with understanding diverse regional dynamics as recommended through literature (Guest, 2013). However, conducting a census proved infeasible requiring sampling representative subsets (Babbie, 2007). The study used stratified sampling demarcating three strata per inclusion criteria (journalists, NGO managers, experts) with equal allocation proportions (Bernard, 2013). Sample size was calculated using the formula: The sample size of respondents was calculated using solvins formula as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where: **n** = sample size, **N** = target population

e = level of significance = $e = 0.05 = e^2 = (0.05)^2 = 0.0025$

$$n = \frac{157}{1 + 157(0.0025)} = 113$$

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This yielded 113 as the minimum required sample. However, an additional safety buffer of 25% was added as backups against attrition yielding 480 as the final target sample size across the three strata (Patton, 2002). This exceeded the minimum recommended for structural equation modeling and ensured statistical power (Wolf et al., 2013). Questionnaires were designed as the main research instrument for quantitative primary data collection from the sample. Close-ended questions were developed based on databases of relevant influencing factors derive from literature allowing statistical assessment (Guest, 2013, Creswell, 2013).

Contact information was retrieved and invitation letters explaining the purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality and time commitments were mailed with stamped return envelopes or emails for consent and scheduling. Follow ups through directory contacts aimed for minimum 70% response rates sufficient for analyses despite logistical challenges (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Additionally, purposive and snowball sampling identified key informants through preliminary surveys and referrals for in-depth interviews augmenting perspectives (Noy, 2008; Welman & Kruger, 1999). The researcher obtained ethical approval and clearance letters to access regions and populations. Questionnaire packages containing informed consent forms, surveys and prepaid return envelopes were physically and digitally distributed ensuring anonymity and confidentiality as recommended (Regmi et al., 2016; Mann, 2003). Additional in-person distribution and collection aided response rates given contextual barriers (Groves, 2006). For qualitative data, digital audio interviews were scheduled at respondents' convenience within data collection windows operationalizing strategies for overcoming field challenges identified as risks to trustworthiness in the literature (Padgett, 2012; Eisikovits & Koren, 2010). Recorded debrief sessions captured emergent insights and methodological issues enhancing rigor through ongoing reflexivity (Galletta, 2013). Reliability assessed internal consistency of instrument constructs through initial piloting and Cronbach's alpha coefficient while test-retest over two-weeks for minimum 20% of final sample evaluated temporal stability (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). Content and face validity were ensured through pilot interviews with subject experts clarifying meanings and ensuring representativeness of items (Patton, 1999). Construct validity was established through exploratory factor analysis determining underlying dimensions aligning scales effectively with theoretical constructs (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Responses and process documentation also enabled confirmability through audit trails as part of crystallization strategies enhancing trustworthiness (Borkan, 1999; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Quantitative data were coded numerically, double entered to minimize errors, screened for consistency and cleaned/merged with identifiers removed (O'Cathain & Thomas, 2004). It was analyzed using IBM SPSS for descriptive statistics comprising frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, variability and standard errors as well as Spearman's correlation and structural equation modeling to verify relationships (Nelson et al., 2022).

Results

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Table 1: Correlation between technological advancements and humanitarian intervention

		humanitarian intervention	technological advancements
humanitarian intervention	Pearson Correlation	1	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
technological advancements	Pearson Correlation	.569**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2023

The table shows the correlation between two variables - humanitarian intervention and technological advancements. A total of 113 data points were collected to analyze the relationship between these two variables. The Pearson Correlation coefficient calculated between the two variables is 0.569. This indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation between humanitarian intervention and technological advancements. The Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 indicates that the correlation between the two variables is statistically significant at 95% confidence level. When the value of one variable (technological advancements) increases, the other variable (humanitarian intervention) also tends to increase. And vice versa. A higher value of technological advancements is associated with a higher level of humanitarian intervention. In other words, as technological capabilities and tools advance, it facilitates greater humanitarian assistance and intervention in times of crisis and disasters. More advanced technologies enable relief and aid organizations to respond faster and reach more people in need.

Table 2: Correlation between media ownership and humanitarian intervention

		humanitarian intervention	media ownership
humanitarian intervention	Pearson Correlation	1	.806**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	113	113
media ownership	Pearson Correlation	.806**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	113	113
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2023**Received: 11.02.2024****Accepted: 14.02.2024****Published on: 29.02.2024**

The Pearson Correlation between humanitarian intervention and media ownership is 0.806. This indicates a very strong positive correlation between the two variables. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.004 which is less than 0.05 (Nelson et al., 2023). This means the correlation between the two variables is statistically significant at 95% confidence level. As media ownership increases, there is a tendency for humanitarian intervention also to increase. And vice versa. A higher level of media ownership in a country/region is associated with greater humanitarian assistance and response during times of crisis.

Table 3: Correlation between advertising revenue and humanitarian intervention

		humanitarian intervention	advertising revenue
humanitarian intervention	Pearson Correlation	1	.606**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
advertising revenue	Pearson Correlation	.606**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2023

The Pearson Correlation value between the variables is 0.606, indicating a moderate to strong positive correlation. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000 is less than 0.05. This shows that the correlation is statistically significant at 95% confidence level. As advertising revenue increases, there is a tendency for humanitarian intervention efforts also to increase. And vice versa. A higher level of advertising revenue available to media companies/organizations provides more resources that can be allocated for humanitarian causes.

Table 4: Regression results between advertising revenue and humanitarian intervention

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.843	.710	.707	.27958	
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.585	.243		10.658	.000
advertising revenue	0.209247	.069	.180	2.700	.007

Source; Primary Data, 2023

The table shows the multiple linear regression analysis between advertising revenue (independent variable) and humanitarian intervention (dependent variable). The R value of 0.843 indicates a high degree of correlation between the variables. Nearly 84% of the variations in humanitarian intervention can be explained by advertising revenue. The R Square value of 0.710 suggests that approximately 71% of the variations in humanitarian intervention are explained by advertising revenue. The adjusted R square value of 0.707 also supports a high predictive accuracy of the model. The standard error of estimate at 0.27958 indicates a low error in prediction by the model. The regression coefficient B value for advertising revenue is 0.209247, which means that for every 1 unit increase in advertising revenue, humanitarian intervention increases by approximately 0.209 units. The t-value of 2.700 for advertising revenue is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96, making the predictor variable statistically significant. The significance value of 0.007 for advertising revenue is less than 0.05, confirming the variable as a significant predictor of humanitarian intervention.

Table 5: Linear Regression results for technological advancements and humanitarian intervention

Model	R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.890		.791	.789	.23710
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	2.041	.128		15.939	.000
technological advancements	.395	.041	.544	9.585	.000

Source; Primary Data, 2023

The table shows the results of multiple linear regression analysis between technological advancements (independent variable) and humanitarian intervention (dependent variable). The R value of 0.890 indicates a very high degree of correlation between the variables. Around 89% variations in humanitarian intervention is explained by technological advancements. The R square value of 0.791 suggests that nearly 79.1% of the variations in humanitarian intervention is explained by the model which includes technological advancements as the predictor. The adjusted R square value of 0.789 further supports the high predictive accuracy of the model. The standard error of 0.23710 reflects low error in prediction. The unstandardized regression coefficient B value of 0.395 indicates that for every one-unit increase in technological advancements, humanitarian intervention increases by 0.395 units on an average. The t-value of 9.585 for technological advancements is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96, making it statistically significant. The significance value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 confirms technological advancements as a significant predictor.

Conclusion

This study sought to examine the influence of media on humanitarian intervention in South Sudan. The findings clearly demonstrate the significant role played by media in facilitating and enabling effective humanitarian assistance and

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crisis response activities. Whether it is through their revenue streams like advertising or the pressure exerted due to extensive ownership and coverage of humanitarian issues, the media platforms were found to positively impact the levels of intervention. Given the very strong correlations and high predictive power of the regression models, it can be conclusively said that humanitarian action stood greatly benefited with the involvement of proactive media institutions in South Sudan.

Recommendation

Based on these results, some recommendations for strengthening this relationship include: government and private partners should allocate more funds to media organizations to support their humanitarian reporting and advocacy work; capacity building initiatives are required to enhance media's role in emergency communications; collaboration between aid groups and media needs to be expanded further so that people's needs can be better represented. With advancements in technology also augmenting their reach, media will keep playing a transformational role in saving lives during times of crisis through humanitarian intervention.

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