The Role of the Press in Free and Fair Elections in Uganda: A Case Study of Daily Monitor News Paper

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ABSTRACT

The media is an essential component of any democratic election. This is illustrated in a way that keeps voters informed about the policies and agendas of different political parties and contenders. Until voters are aware of each candidate's position on every issue, they will not be able to completely exercise their right to vote. Conversely, the media can aid voters in their self-education by providing a comparative analysis of important issues. Numerous individuals have viewed the media's above-mentioned job as idealistic and unachievable, asserting that regular reporting on events is rife with "fake news" and falls short of the criteria of superior journalism. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the coded data, and information was generated and presented in the form of graphs, tables, and charts exhibiting frequencies and percentages. The study suggests that false news has existed since the internet's prehistory and is prevalent today. It highlights the negative impact of false news on media organizations, leading to credibility loss and costly investigations. Despite ethical journalism rules, media organizations face threats of closure or censorship. The general population is a significant source of fake news. False news in Uganda leads to various consequences, such as media organization closure, damage to brand reputation, and mistrust of news industries. It can also cause underdevelopment, increased demonstrations, hatred, and even innocent deaths. Despite adhering to ethical journalism rules, media organizations face threats of closure or censorship. False news in media organizations can lead to credibility loss, costly investigations, and threats of closure or censorship, while the general population is a significant source, causing incidents like demonstrations, hatred, deaths, and celebrity reputation damage.
Key words: Media, Democracy, Citizenship, Marketization, Election.

INTRODUCTION

Since multiparty elections are now commonplace globally, scholars and decision-makers view public trust in elections as essential to the legitimacy of a regime [1]. Election administration manipulation is one type of electoral fraud that incumbent governments commonly use to try to reduce the likelihood of electoral defeat while simultaneously using elections to create legitimacy. Nevertheless, apparent election administration manipulation in nations such as Russia [2, 3] has not led to a backlash against the incumbents or a decline in public support for these regimes. Despite being a prominent topic, the relationship between election manipulation and public legitimacy has received less attention in cross-national studies on the subject. The purpose of this study is to fill a vacuum in the literature by examining the relationship between election management and media influence and the public's perception of election integrity. Consider that the legitimacy of a regime depends on popular trust in elections [4]. Election administration manipulation is one type of electoral fraud that incumbent governments commonly use to try to reduce the likelihood of electoral defeat while simultaneously using elections to create legitimacy. But in nations like Russia, there hasn't been a backlash against the ruling elites or a decline in popular support for them despite clear election administration manipulation [5]. Despite being a prominent topic, the relationship between election manipulation and public legitimacy has received less attention in cross-national studies on the subject. Research to date has concentrated on defining the "menu" of manipulative techniques and figuring out if these tactics, used separately or in combination, can erode the legitimacy of a regime among political elites, internal actors, and foreign actors. By examining how media influence and election administration may impact voters' perceptions of election integrity, this study seeks to fill a vacuum in the literature [6].

The purpose of the research

This study's goal was to evaluate the press's contribution to free and fair elections in Uganda using the Daily Monitor News Paper as a case study.

Specific Objectives of the Research

The following objectives served as the study's guidelines:

i. To assess the press's performance and legal standing in promoting free and fair elections in Uganda.

ii. To find out how the public is affected by press reports regarding free and fair elections.

iii. Evaluating the role the media plays in an election and how they generally contribute to a politically stable environment.

Research Questions

To achieve the goals, the following research questions served as the study's guide:

i. How has the media handled and lawfully carried out its mandate to support free and fair elections in Uganda?

ii. How does the public perceive press coverage about free and fair elections?

iii. What role has the media played in fostering a stable political environment during an election?

Significance of the Research

The following are some advantages of the suggested study:

1. In order to create high-caliber programming, the findings will help media workers become more comfortable with new technology and realign their cognitive habits.

2. The results of this investigation will be utilized to assess the objectivity of news reports on Uganda's political issues.

3. The study's conclusions will add to the body of knowledge now available and be a helpful tool for students looking to do more research in the same field of study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of the media in promoting free and fair elections in Uganda.

In its report on press freedom from 2016, Freedom House provides us with some dismal statistics: Approximately 46% of people worldwide lack access to a free press, 41% have a partially free press, and only 13% have a free press where political news coverage is robust, journalist safety is guaranteed, state intrusion in media affairs is minimal, and the press is not subjugated [7]." Press freedom in the world declined to its lowest level in a decade in 2015, according to the same research, with the worst-affected nations being Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Turkey, Burundi, France, Serbia, Yemen, Egypt, and Macedonia [8]. Reporters have accused most of the nations on the list of continuing to suppress the press and denying them freedom. Conversely, it is notable that France has been included to this list. Official policies or crackdowns have nothing to do with the decline of journalistic independence in France. In accordance with democratic norms and political theory, the French government and its institutions afford the press the maximum degree of freedom [9–10]. There seem to be two distinct approaches to the attack on the freedom of the press in France and some other liberal democratic nations. This onslaught is indicative of a global problem. First, some extremist religious groups and individuals have questioned, attacked, and even ridiculed books that don't align with their own belief systems. A frightening message is sent to others and press freedom is negatively impacted globally when violence is used against journalists in a European nation [11]. It has been claimed by politicians and ideologues that both the left and the right are impacted by the press's inaccurate reporting and political side-taking. The press's primary goals of providing fact-based news reporting and raising public awareness are allegedly threatened by critics who claim that the press is too involved in current affairs and detrimental to democratic governments and institutions [12]. This critique is not without merit, though, and the overall pattern is still incorrect. As a prerequisite for building public confidence in the media, the criticism contends that press reporting is no longer impartial and does not adhere to the fundamentals of competent journalism.

Public's perception of the impact of news coverage on free and fair elections.

In a democracy, the people are the ultimate authority and power in a state, and public officials and governments are subject to removal or replacement from office in accordance with the law and after a certain period of time [13]. Holding democratic elections is a prerequisite for meeting the aforementioned duties. By enabling the people to exercise their sovereignty, elections, on the one hand, restore it to them. A democracy's ultimate authority is supposed to rest with its citizens, but in practice, elected officials and their representatives—rather than the people themselves—exercise this power on a daily basis within democratic governments and institutions. The power of the people is restored through elections [14]. Voters have the power to choose their governments and representatives in democratic elections, however. By voting, people can elect new representatives and a new government. Within the aforementioned electoral procedures, the media plays a crucial role [15].

Media coverage of elections and their overall role in maintaining a stable political environment

Understanding that the media's role has changed throughout time in reaction to historical and cultural factors, notions of citizenship, and—most importantly—the introduction of new instruments and technologies is essential to understanding the full ramifications of the media's involvement in democratic elections [16]. Many years ago,

radio, television, and traditional media outlets like newspapers and magazines constituted the main sources of information. But while the use of internet news and media sources is increasing, their popularity is declining significantly. This decline is especially apparent when it comes to print media. Newspapers and magazines have stopped publishing in large numbers throughout the past ten years [17]. Despite their struggles to remain profitable and in operation, television channels are still a great source of entertainment and news. This is because the way information is delivered, consumed, and flowed has changed as a result of technical developments in human communication devices like computers, smart phones, wifi, and online access. "Simply put, media have always changed alongside the people who use them and the greater economy of inscription" [18, 19]. Due to their increased reliance on social media in their daily lives, people's behavior and preferences during elections have started to reflect this change. Marked decline in their popularity along with an increase in the use of internet news and media sources [20]. This decline is especially apparent when it comes to print media. Newspapers and magazines have stopped publishing in large numbers during the past ten years. Despite their struggles to remain profitable and in operation, television channels are still a great source of entertainment and news. This can be attributed to the way that information is now processed, delivered, and consumed, thanks to technological improvements in human communication devices like computers, smart phones, the internet, online connectedness, and social media [21, 22]. "The statement that media have historically changed along with their users and the broader economy of inscription is a truism" [23]. Due to their increased reliance on social media in their daily lives, people's behavior and preferences during elections have started to reflect this change.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Design of Research
The structure of a research endeavor, or the glue holding everything together, is called a research design. The Daily Monitor News Paper in Kampala served as the primary focus of the study's scope, which was the Ugandan press.

Study Limitations
This study's focus is on the press's role in promoting free and fair elections; the Daily Monitor News Paper serves as the study's English-language reference point, restricting the study's audience to readers of the language.
This research, which concentrated on the press's function in guaranteeing free and fair elections in Uganda, was based on the Daily Monitor newspaper.

Sample size and design
For a descriptive study, a sample size of at least 10% of the target population is practical. The necessary number of respondents were chosen at random from the population frame to construct a sample. Out of the almost seventy individuals in the target group, the researcher selected sixty at random. The study's applicability, relevance, correctness, and sufficiency—as well as the time and expense of data collection—were taken into consideration when processing the data.

Tools for Gathering Data
Every member of the target group was given a survey questionnaire because the researcher used them as the main tool for gathering data. With the questionnaire, the researcher sought to learn more about the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of the respondents.

Procedure for Gathering Data
The process of gathering information with the intention of confirming or refuting specific facts is known as data collecting. The researcher got approval from the station manager at the station headquarters to carry out the investigation. Before distributing the surveys, the researcher assured the respondents that the information they provided would be kept private.

Data Analysis
The material was evaluated using basic statistics. We checked the questionnaires for accuracy, consistency, and completeness. Along with being checked for errors and omissions, the surveys were also checked for suitable information, legibility, and pertinent responses. The statistical package for social sciences was then used to analyze the data. The quantitative information derived from the open-ended questions was coded to facilitate quantitative analysis. To elucidate details, offer justifications, and convey viewpoints that the questionnaires might not have captured, qualitative data was employed. The coded data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and information was produced and shown as tables, charts, and graphs showing percentages and frequencies.

ANALYZING, INTERPRETING, AND PRESENTING DATA
Response Rate to Questionnaires
In order to enhance comprehension of the press's function in free and fair elections in Uganda, comprehensive questionnaires were created and distributed to members of the Kansanga community, KIU students, and staff members of the Daily Monitor, who were chosen at random. The selected respondents received sixty (60) questionnaires; of these, fifty-six were completed and returned. This yielded a response rate of more than 90%,

which was adequate to draw conclusions for the study. The number of surveys distributed and returned by respondents, together with their response rate, are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Response Rate

Respondents	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate
	60	56	93.3 %

Source: researcher, (2021)

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION
Demographic Details

The results of the respondents' demographic characteristics were examined in the first portion of the questionnaire. The sociodemographic attributes of the participants comprised of their age, gender, educational attainment, and job experience. The percentages of the respondents who were chosen for this survey are indicated by these variables.

Table 2: Gender of the Respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	33	59
Female	23	41
Total	**56**	**100**

Source: researcher, (2021)

Since it may be leveraged to boost team performance overall, gender equity is an essential quality [8]. According to him, it promoted cooperation, a sense of solidarity, and the significance of teamwork toward a shared objective, with each person's contribution—male or female—being essential to the accomplishment of the overall objectives. However, this also showed that participants in the study were of various genders, meaning that gender bias did not affect the results.

Figure 1: Age distribution of the respondents

Age distribution of the respondents
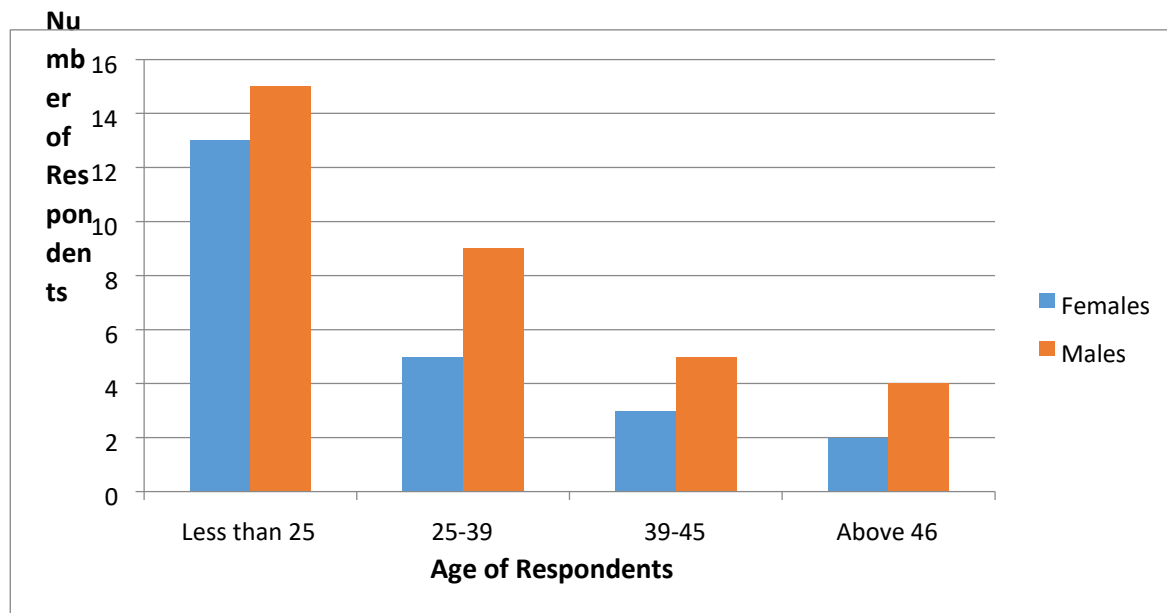
Source: researcher, (2021)

According to the study and the above figure, 13 females and 15 men were under 25, 5 females and 9 males were between 25 and 39, 3 ladies and 5 males were between 39 and 45, and 2 females and 4 males were over 46. The fact that the youngsters responded well to the research study suggests that they were quite adaptable and approachable, as seen by the image above. As a result, it was claimed that young people were more supportive

since they are thought to use social media the most and are frequently the victims of false information or others they know are victims. According to the data, respondents who are older than 46 seem to be exposed to greater press coverage, and some of them perceive this as unfairness on the part of the press and existing regimes in promoting free and fair elections. They contend that the findings that have been made public have a blinding influence on the Electoral College. Furthermore, because they choose news they perceive to be reliable from newspapers, television, or radio, younger people and older people are more prone to consume bogus news [21]. They also think that young people use social media for popularity and money because older people don't want them to leave their offices so they can get experience in the workforce. In conclusion, young people and the elderly play a role in supporting free and fair elections in Uganda as participants, victims, or influencers.

Qualifications for Education

In order to ascertain the respondents' educational attainment, the study asked them to provide this information. This allowed researchers to investigate whether or not the respondents' educational attainment contributed to their ability to address the growing problem of fake news.

Figure 2: Education Qualifications of the respondents

## Education qualifications of respondents
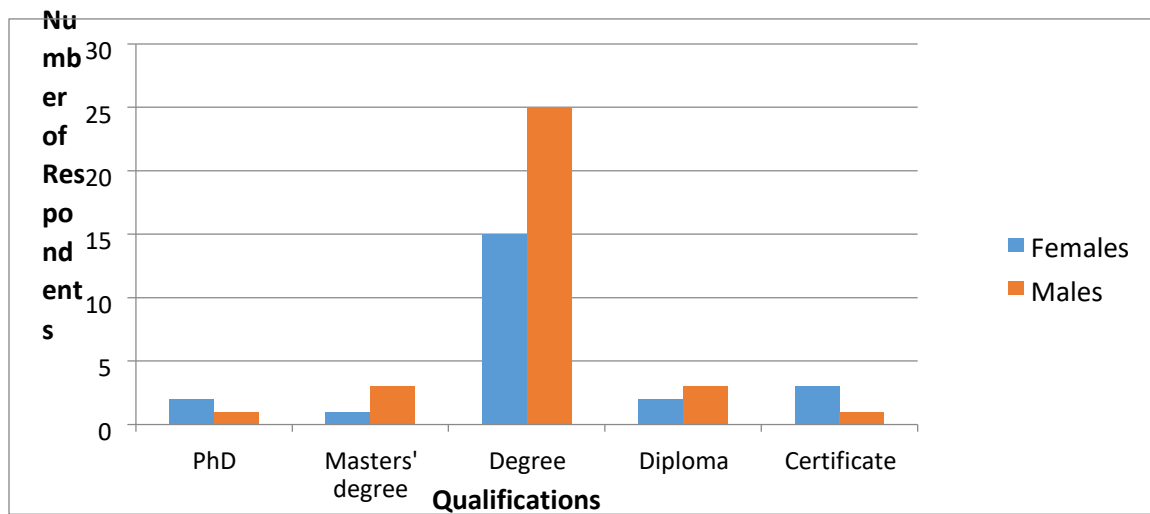
Source: researcher, (2021)

Based on the aforementioned statistic and the study, two females and one male possess a PhD, one female and three males a Master's degree, fifteen females and twenty-five males a Bachelor's degree, two females and three males a diploma, and three females and one male a certificate. As a result, according to the study's findings, male respondents had greater academic qualifications than female respondents.

Employment History

The duration of administration or employment in an association determines one's level of familiarity with the topics under investigation. When responding to the topics the study seeks to address, the respondents should be aware that there will likely be numerous changes in institutional and working conditions as a result of inventive advancements and globalization. As a result, the study has attempted to establish the respondents' length of time spent covering news.

Figure 3 provides an introduction to the results
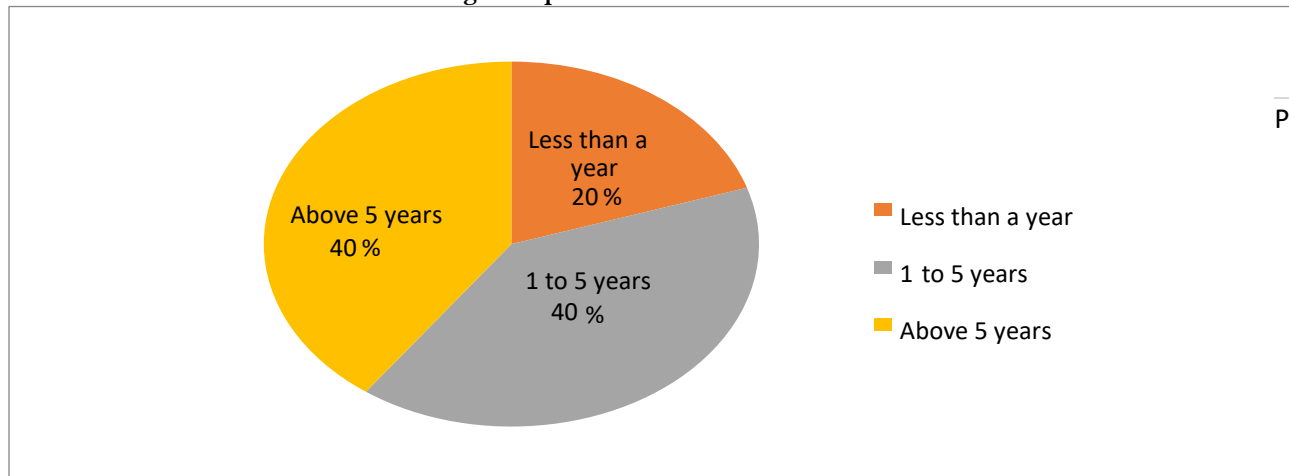
Source: researcher, (2021)

The figure above shows the years respondents have worked at Daily Monitor; Gold color shows that 20% of respondents have worked at Daily Monitor for less than a year, 40% have worked there for one to five years, and 40% have worked there for more than five years. The grey color scheme denotes respondents who have worked at Daily Monitor for longer than five years. This clarifies even more how well-informed the chosen respondents were about their company, how sincere their information was, how interested and supportive they were of the subject, and how accurate their knowledge of the study was.

Free and fair elections: the press

The purpose of the study was to determine how the press performed in promoting free and fair elections. According to the results, 64% of the respondents said that the press performed a good job of promoting free and fair elections by giving activists, marketers, and businesses platforms to promote their ideologies while politicians ran for office. While 11% of respondents indicated to a moderate extent that fake news originated from those in government trying to blackmail those in opposition, 25% of respondents affirm that fake news emerged top on most headlines to create tension among the electorate because there was panic over what would happen should those in power fail to make it again. This suggests that fake news has a significant negative impact on society because people tend to trust it so much that they call it phony. Table 3 displays an overview of the findings that were found.

Table 3: Sources of fake news on society

	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	14	25
Great extent	36	64
Moderate extent	6	11
Total	**56**	**100**

Source: researcher, (2021)

Table 4: Effects of fake news on society and operational performance of print media in Uganda

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std deviation
The use of the new media technologies such as smart phones has contributed to the spread of false news	38	15	2	1	0	1.40	0.21
False news destroys one's credibility in such a way that if your arguments are built on bad information, it will be much more difficult for people to believe you in the future.	42	8	5	1	0	1.05	0.24
False news appeals to emotion, it plays on one's feelings by making them angry or happy or scared	40	14	1	1	0	1.00	0.26
Most authors of false news aren't even journalists but paid trolls	32	20	2	2	0	1.40	0.19
False news can't be found anywhere else in that if you look up the main idea of false information, you might not find any other news outlet (real or not) reporting on the issue	26	28	2	0	0	1.60	0.21

Source: researcher, (2021)

The potential reasons why fake news appears in print and social media
The goal of the study was to identify potential sources of fake news in Ugandan print and social media. According to the results, a significant portion of the respondents—57%—said that fear, racism, bullying, violence against innocent people, and politics could be linked to the spread of incorrect information on social media and print media. While 14% of respondents suggested to a moderate degree that fake news in Uganda's print and social media could be due to modern technology, 29% of respondents indicated to a very great level that this could be caused by no more than two of the aforementioned criteria. This suggests that new media technologies have a significant impact on print media's performance in Uganda. Table 5 displays an overview of the findings that were found.

Table 5: The possible causes of fake news in social and print media

	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	16	29
Great extent	32	57
Moderate extent	8	14
Total	**56**	**100**

Source: researcher, (2021)

Table 6: spotting fake news or accounts in Uganda

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std deviation
I consider the source by clicking on the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info	39	14	3	0	0	1.15	0.23
I read beyond; this is because headlines can be outrageous in effort to get clicks	37	16	3	0	0	1.45	0.22
I often make a quick search on the author to find out if they are credible or real	30	20	2	3	1	1.90	0.19
Am able to find out supporting sources by clicking on the available links to determine if the info given actually supports the story	25	30	1	0	0	1.55	0.30
Am able to check my biases in order to consider if my own beliefs could affect my own judgment	15	36	2	2	1	1.60	0.27

Source: researcher, (2021)

Assessing the effects of incorrect information on the public and media outlets
The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of fake news on the public and media outlets. According to the findings, 50% of the respondents agreed that the public's trust in media outlets, particularly print media, was greatly eroded as a result of the spread of false information because they trusted written works for reading and expressing opinions on sensitive social issues. Meanwhile, 36% of the respondents agreed that the public's hatred and insecurity were greatly increased by false information, among other reasons. Only 14% of the respondents claimed that they had lost large sums of money as a result of false deals because they relied on unreliable sources of information. This suggests that the public's trust in media outlets, particularly print media, was significantly damaged by incorrect information.

Table 7: Extent to which new media technologies have been incorporated into the press operations

		Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent		20	36
Great extent		28	50
Moderate extent		3	14
Total		**56**	**100**

Source: researcher, (2021)

Table 8: Consequences of false news to the media houses and the public in Uganda

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	deviation Std
The issuance of false news resulted in loss of public trust in media houses especially the print simply because I believed in them so much until a story was run about the overturn of elections only to realize it was not true	47	7	2	0	0	1.45	0.22
False news issuance has also promoted insecurity between countries for example; the recent arrest of former Inspector General of Police in 2019 was misrepresented as media houses went on writing that Rwandan government was involved hence creating tension	28	27	1	0	0	1.25	0.26
Recently in 2020, news went on circulation about the death of Buganda Royal King, only to realize it was false news and as a result, tension and tribalism was seen rising among his subjects on his where about	46	6	4	0	0	1.45	0.28
False news on politics has also divided people in that those pro government view those in opposition as enemies of the state hence resulting into political instability	48	8	0	0	0	1.30	0.23

Source: researcher, (2021)

Preventing the spread of false news in Uganda

The study sought to establish the extent to which the spread of false news in Uganda can be prevented. From the findings 79% of the respondents indicated that to a great extent that emphasis on the law against false news should be revised; increasing media taxes to lessen media access should be thought of; creating an App that detects fake news stories and fake accounts and completely removing social media in Uganda, 17% of the respondents affirmed to a very great extent in line with the above measures whilst 4% of the respondents indicated to a moderate extent. This therefore implies that the spread of fake news in Uganda can be prevented to a great extent.

Table 9: Preventing the spread of false news in Uganda

	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	10	17
Great extent	44	79
Moderate extent	2	4
Total	**56**	**100**

Source: researcher, (2021)

The most effective way to stop fake news from spreading throughout Uganda

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements regarding the strategy for stopping the spread of false news in Uganda. Based on the study's findings, it was determined that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that false news frequently goes viral and that, even when a message is shared numerous times, it doesn't necessarily mean it is true. This was indicated by a mean of 1.88; alternatively, if a respondent wasn't sure if a message was true, they would check reliable news sources and search the internet for information, as indicated by a mean of 1.78. However, it should be emphasized that, as indicated by a mean score of 1.60, respondents thought that the least effective way to stop the spread of misleading information was to keep an eye out for messages that looked different. Checking photos and media carefully was reflected by a mean value of 1.30, while understanding when a message was forwarded simply because it had the "Forwarded" label helped one determine if their friends or relatives wrote the message or if it originated from someone else. Finally, a mean of 1.95 indicated that assessing one's biasness was equally significant because it enabled respondents to make well-informed decisions about what to leave and what to keep. Table 10 below provides an overview of the findings.

Table 10: Approaches used in preventing the spread of false news in Uganda

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std deviation
Understand when a message is forwarded; Messages with the "Forwarded" label help you determine if your friend or relative wrote the message or if it originally came from someone else. When a message is forwarded from one user to another more than five times, it's indicated with a double arrow icon. If you're not sure who wrote the original message, double check the facts.	26	22	8	0	0	1.50	0.25
Check photos and media carefully; Photos, audio recordings, and videos can be edited to mislead you. I look at trusted news sources to see if the story is being reported elsewhere. When a story is reported in multiple places, it's more likely to be true.	27	23	6	0	0	1.30	0.29
Look out for messages that look different; Many messages or website links I receive containing hoaxes or false news have spelling mistakes. I look for these signs so I can check if the information is accurate.	16	30	10	0	0	1.60	0.21
Check your biases; I watch out for information that confirms my pre-existing beliefs and review the facts before sharing information. Stories that seem hard to believe are often untrue.	24	20	6	6	0	1.95	0.20
False news often goes viral; Even if a message is shared many times, this doesn't make it true. I don't forward a message because the sender is urging me to do so. If I see something that's false, I tell the person that sent it to me and ask them to verify information before they share it. If a group or a contact is constantly sending false news, I report them.	34	20	2	0	0	1.88	0.24
Verify with other sources; If am still not sure if a message is true, I search online for facts and check trusted news sites to see where the story came from. If I still have doubts, I ask fact-checkers or people I trust for more information.	32	20	2	2	0	1.78	0.28

Source: researcher, (2021)

DISCUSSION

According to the report, government propaganda sources, activists, marketers, companies, hoaxers, fake news websites, and inadvertent propagators are among the sources of incorrect information in Uganda. These organizations have a significant impact on the procurement and dissemination of misleading information, notwithstanding the limited uptake of new media technology. False information spreading has been connected to politics, violence, bullying, racism, and terror. It also fosters animosity and insecurity and results in a decline in public confidence in media outlets, particularly print. The report suggests rewriting Uganda's fake news

legislation, raising media taxes, developing an app to identify bogus accounts and news reports, and banning social media altogether in order to stop the dissemination of false information.

Effects of the press on Uganda's print media's operational efficiency and free and fair elections
The study sought to establish the level at which respondents agreed or disagreed with the above statement relating to effects of the press on free and fair elections and operational performance of print media in Uganda, from the findings the study established that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that false news destroys one's credibility in such a way that if your arguments are built on bad information, it will be much more difficult for people to believe you in the future as shown by mean of 1.05, false news appeals to emotion, it plays on your feelings by making one angry or happy or scared as shown by mean of 1.00, the use of the new media technologies such as smart phones has contributed to the spread of false news just as strongly as most authors seen as not even journalists but paid trolls as shown by a mean of 1.40 in each case, finally other respondents agreed that false news can't be found anywhere else in that if you look up the main idea, you might not find any other news outlet (real or not) reporting on the issue as shown by a mean of 1.60. Table 4 above summarizes the findings that were found.

Recognizing Untrue Reports or Stories in Uganda

The study sought to determine the level at which respondents agreed with the statements relating to spotting false news or accounts in Uganda, from the findings, the study established that majority of the respondents strongly agreed they considered the source by clicking on the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info as shown by mean of 1.15, others were able to spot false news or accounts by reading beyond; this is because headlines can be outrageous in effort to get clicks as shown by mean of 1.45, those who often made a quick search on the author to find out if they are credible or real in an effort to spot false news or accounts were shown by mean of 1.90 and those that were able to find out supporting sources by clicking on the available links to determine if the info given actually supported the story in an effort to spot false news or accounts were shown by mean of 1.55 and finally the least number of respondents who strongly agreed and were able to check their biasness in order to consider if their own beliefs could affect their own judgment in an effort to spot false news or accounts were shown by mean of 1.60. Table 6 above presents an overview of the findings that were found.

The effects of fake news on Uganda's media outlets and general populace

The study sought to determine the level at which respondents agreed with the statement relating to consequences of false news to the media houses and the public in Uganda, from the findings the study established that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that; False news on politics has divided people in that those pro government view those in opposition as enemies of the state hence resulting into political instability as shown by mean value of 1.30, the issuance of false news resulted in loss of public trust in media houses especially the print simply because respondents believed in media especially print media so much until a story was run about the overturn of elections only to realize it was not true as shown to reflect a mean of 1.45, a minimum number of respondents confirmed that fake news issuance promoted insecurity between countries for example; the recent arrest of former Inspector General of Police in 2019 was misrepresented as media houses went on writing that Rwandan government was involved hence creating tension, this was shown by a mean of 1.25. According to a mean of 1.45, an average number of respondents agreed that fake news has been the root cause of tribalism in society because media outlets occasionally publish stories that subsequently incite public tension. For instance, the recent viral news about the disappearance of the Buganda Royal King (Kabaka) caused tension among his subjects, who demanded to know where he was and if anyone should release him alive or dead.

CONCLUSION

False information has existed on the internet since its inception and is still pervasive today. It has an impact on media companies, leading to a loss of reputation and expensive inquiries. Even with ethical journalism and adherence to media policies, media companies continue to fear censure or shutdown as a result of government control. Fake news spreads more widely throughout the populace, which might result in events like protests, animosity, fatalities, underdevelopment, and harm to the reputations of well-known individuals. Concerning Ugandans, the study also revealed that the majority is ignorant of the regulations governing social media news.

RECOMMENDATION

The study shows that technology plays a major role in the dissemination of misleading information in Uganda. The government should enact legislation prohibiting fake news, permit journalists to disseminate real news, and reduce the value added tax on new media equipment in order to counteract this. Ugandans should be made aware of the significance of developing an app that can identify fraudulent accounts and misleading news. The government ought to give priority to research in science and technology, train staff members in print media, and mandate IT literacy instruction in higher education. Theories like the Reality Monitoring Theory and the Four-Factor Hypothesis should be incorporated into future research.

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