

**HINDRANCES FACING THE PRIVATELY OWNED (INDEPENDENT)
MEDIA IN UGANDA. A CASE STUDY OF MONITOR
PUBLICATIONS**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF
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DECLARATION

I, ONEN FRANCIS declare that this project is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for award of any academic certificate or degree. I solemnly bear and stand to correct any inconsistency.

Signature



.....

DATE:

04/09/2013
.....

APPROVAL

This research on **Hindrances facing the privately owned (Independent) Media** was conducted under my supervision and approval; it is now ready for submission to the academic board for the award of a bachelor degree of mass communication of Kampala International University.

Signed

.....

MR MUDOLA HERBERT.

Supervisor

Date.....

DEDICATION

This research is sharply dedicated to all upcoming journalists and brilliant broad cast writers, BTC-CTB members: Koen Goekint and Bernard Womasali, my mother Aparo Monic, my friends Anena Suzan, Atim Maureen, Mulungana George, Okumu Regan, brothers and sisters, my lecturers for the impacts they have contributed towards my education thank you, and may the Almighty God bless you.

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Big up to you all!

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ABSTRACT

Recent years have seen the development of more cost-effective news paper publication, improved availability of and access to digital technology and, most important, the liberalization of the technology that initiated news paper in many sub-Saharan African countries, Uganda inclusive. The result of these changes have been the proliferation of non-governmental commercial and Monitor Publications, as well as technological improvements in programming, not only in urban areas but also in Community areas of sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role played by Monitor publications in looking at the hindrances facing the privately owned (independent) media in Uganda. The methods used for data collection were questionnaires to the employees of news paper publications, interviews with management of the corporate news paper publishers (Monitor publishers). The findings revealed by 62.5% of respondents agreed that whether monitor publications help in disseminating information advocating for peace according to its social responsibility theory, another 87.5% of respondents agreed that media influences peace in their communities, this is through giving or high lighting the genera public particularly in increasing focus on family related matters, promote social networking and 50% of respondents agreed that Monitor publications particularly helps peoples without access to justice.

The study recommended that: Government should put in place a mechanism where corporate news publications can cross- subsidize media so that operational costs are not heavy on news paper readers. In line with this, news paper publication initiatives should be exempted, or at least should benefit, from tax holidays to give them time to establish themselves.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the problem.

Looking at the media today in Uganda as evidenced by the number of publications out there on the streets, the number of privately owned stations and what they publish and broadcast, you get the feeling that indeed in Uganda, media independence is supreme.

But when scrutinized in relation to law and practice, one realizes that this independence is very limited. One has to appreciate that so long as what is printed, telecasted or broadcasted is in favour of the political regime, and then it will appear to look like there is absolute independence of the media.

However, a free press is not necessarily how many publications are circulating at any one given time and nor media houses that are broadcasting all over the airwaves. It is, much more importantly, what they are able to say. Secondly, the state can not be a backer of a free press because the role assigned by the state to the media necessarily prevents the media to be free.

What comes out clearly is that media independence goes along with political freedom, yet in Uganda political freedom for a long time (until 1995) was limited to one group, the national resistance movement, NRM.

The problems of independent media in Uganda can be traced to the colonial times when a commission was established to look into the possibility of establishing a radio station. This was however mainly meant to cater for the interests of the colonial masters.

Up to the time of independence, radio broadcasting was dominated by the desire to counter nationalist propaganda and to exert influence over the Africans through their chiefs as had been done for a century. The local news was overshadowed by this tendency and no attempt to broadcast or publish news that reflected the aspirations of Africans was ever made.

During Amin's regime, media (television and radio) were the most widely used arms of state machinery. In fact, during Amin's regime, broadcasts started and ended with the government spokesman (Amin himself) and all reports in praise of him and his government. All regimes which have been in power in Uganda are guilty of manipulating the broadcast media thereby ensuring that it is not independent whatsoever, and using it to enhance their interests and were guilty of serving foreign and narrow local interest. As a correspondent for the new vision of 24th April, 1989 commented, "The press in Africa has mainly been on the side of foreign and local oppressors and exploiters."

When the national resistance movement (NRM) came to power in 1986, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni promised a fundamental change. Thus journalists hoped that independence of the media had received a new surge of life, and at last secured an honest partner in the NRM with whom to build the nation. Indeed a number of newspapers with varying political view points emerged. This was followed by liberation of electronic media which gave rise to television (UTV) now Uganda broadcasting corporation (UBC) and radio Uganda which had been used by previous governments primarily for propaganda purposes progressively.

In spite of these developments and regardless of the fact that guarantees to media freedom which translates to independence are enshrined in the 1995 constitution of the republic of Uganda, the NRM has systematically moved towards greater censorship thereby making media independence a myth and consequently a major challenge facing the independent media.

Since 1986, employed various tools designed to essentially kill the press including the use of draconian laws such as sedition and criminal libel. Journalists like Charles Onyango Obbo, Andrew Mwenda and recently Daniel Kalinaki have been subjected to arbitrary arrests, detention, intimidation and harassment. NRM also established a council known as the media council responsible for regulation of the mass media which has basically and still is ammunition by the government to cut on the media's horn.

In fact independence of the media is merely superficial and does not actually exist in reality. It is regarded as a fallacy, even an oxymoron and viewed in terms of degree rather than absolutes. It is therefore still elitist, urban centered and vertical in nature reducing rural communities into mere spectators. It therefore implies that the independent media (privately owned) face a lot of challenges and problems in an attempt to play its role of being the fourth estate of the government and the people's watchdog on the executive. However during the recent state of the nation speech on 7 June, 2012 at Serena hotel by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni he said "the media has the obligation to produce balanced and objective news to the nation."

The situation narrated above pose a problem which requires a remedy. And it is against this background that the researcher is compelled to find out the challenges and obstacles facing the independent media in Uganda.

1.2 Statement of the problem.

In spite of the provisions of Article 29 (1) (a) of the constitution, Article 43 (1) provides for a general limitation on the enjoyment of the rights contained in the bill of rights which is contained in chapter four of the constitution. These limitations include non-prejudice of the rights of others and of the public interest. Though the constitution defines the term "public interest," the definition is neither exhaustive nor objective. The term "public interest" has always been abused by the government officials who hide under the interest of national security, defense and public morality as a means to gag the media. Officers from the criminal investigations department (CID) have on numerous occasions subjected editors from the Monitor that is Daniel Kalinaki and other critical reporters to rigorous interrogation. On one occasion, a visit to the monitor the CID officers retorted, "there was public concern and a lot of official rage at stories which the government consider false, baseless, alarmist and insensitive to the needs of the society." This list is by no means exhaustive.

Like any other enterprise, one of the major sources of revenue is through advertisements. In Uganda, most of the financially lucrative advertisements traditionally come from the

government and government departments. One of the tools employed by the NRM government against the media which it deems acting contrary to its interests is to deny them advertisements and thus the revenue which accrues there from. This tool was applied to the monitor and the crusader newspapers in the form of a ban issued against advertisements in this paper. Every department in the government sector is instead directed to advertise only in the government owned- the New Vision. Luckily for the readers, this denial of advertising revenue may not have changed the editorial policy of the newspaper to provide balanced news. However, it certainly affects the paper financial health and thus ability to extensively pry into the matters of public interests.

The term “propaganda” is used in this context to refer to the methods employed by the government to impress the idea on both the citizenry and the international community that Ugandans enjoy all freedoms, especially freedom of the press. The NRM government tactfully allowed the registration and publication of newspapers, magazine and setting up of private radio and television stations to effect this impression. In my view however the existence of so many newspapers circulating at a given time is not necessarily an indication that the media enjoys freedom. On the contrary, the NRM regime has put in place tools to curtail such freedom. These tools employed by the regime are accompanied by several challenges to the independent media in Uganda. More over a careful scrutiny of the newspapers in circulation today indication that the majority of them are wanting in quality and limited in circulation. This further limits public debate on vital national issues. In my opinion, what matters is not the number of publications in existence but rather the content of the publications. What is unfortunate is that the government’s use of propaganda may not easily be detected by a distant observer trapped in a double falsehood that the public feels “comfortable criticizing the government and vociferously so.” And that the media freedom is just red earrings. This is actually feigned displayed of media freedom by the NRM and consequently, a lot of pressures and challenges keep the media off balance and at a loss on what not to tread on or what to carry on with. Therefore one needs to go further in order to appreciate this situation through an examination of the broader political context in which such challenges have occurred.

1.3. Purpose of the study.

1.3.1 Study objectives.

(i) General objective/ broad objective.

The broad objective of this study was to examine the hindrances facing the privately (independent) media in Uganda in their effort to inform society using the Monitor newspaper as the research study.

(ii) Specific objective.

To establish whether the media operates independently

To examine how the privately owned media operate.

To find out the role played by the independent media in articulating issues.

1.3.2 Research questions.

1. What provisions of the constitution pose a challenge to the independent media?
2. What challenges does the political regime pose to the independent media?
3. How do the media operate independently without government interference?

1.4 Scope of the study.

The study will investigate the hindrances facing the privately (independent) media in Uganda in their effort to inform society using the Monitor newspaper as the research study.

The study will be carried out in Kampala, Uganda and limited by the objectives of the study. The study will be carried out for a period of four months from April 2013 to September 2013.

1.5 Significance of the study.

The importance of this research was that it was going to act as an eye opener to the media, the government as well as the general public.

Also it was to make the government realize how it tramples on the rights of independent media, the public's right to information and the media houses of this country.

During the study recommendations were made. This helped the legislature of this country strike out a better deal with the media in general and independent press in particular.

It was worthwhile to do this study so that proprietors of independent media houses as well as journalists attached to these particular media houses know that the challenges facing them have to be tackled intelligently and that the struggle to overcome these nagging challenges in order to have a vibrant yet so independent media is yet over.

The outcome of the study was also to enrich people's views on challenges of the independent media over the time period cited. The research is a premise for future study and can be used in universities and other learning institutions. In a developing economy like Uganda's, where relative economic stability is being realized, it is important to examine what challenges the independent media face.

1.6 Area of study.

The study was conducted in Nakawa, central, Rubaga, Kawempe and Makindye divisions of Kampala district in central Uganda. The district is relatively dense in terms of population and comprises of a conglomeration of different people, tribes, preferences, occupation and social status. However, levels of poverty are also to a significant extent realized.

1.7. Selection of study participants.

Sampling method.

Population.

Random sampling method was used to chose 60 participants where obtained from households from the district area local councils. This was done due to the large population of the study area.

Purposive sampling strategy was used to choose 10 respondents each for every key informant and focus group discussion members. This was done purposively because the researcher believes that these people have sufficient knowledge of the situation facing the independent media by nature of their occupation.

A research guide and conceptual framework were developed with sufficient room for clarification and probing to avoid misconception, misunderstanding, disagreement and use of inappropriate language.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.

The late eighties saw some major changes taking place in the African political landscape and almost everywhere the younger generation began to voice their opinions on democracy and respect for human rights. The independent media especially newspapers and magazines have borne much of this expression but have struggled against great odds to maintain their democratic right to freedom of the press.

The general consensus among theorists, journalists and academicians writing on the subject of the African media is that a free press is a pre-requisite for the functioning democracy. Gitobu Imaryara, the editor of Nairobi Law monthly, seems to be one of the many who regard Africa as a continent which still demeans universal values and feels nothing for insulting those who have paid a price for their commitment to these values (Imaryara, 1992:2). The lost decade symbolizes much of the despair that characterized the previous decade where Africa suffered in the global economy and post colonial governments displayed incompetent, corrupt and inhuman forms of power. The mass media including newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and television all have vital role to play in increasing public participation in development. The media should be able to speak out against coercive state measures and inform people of their rights. Simultaneously they have the responsibility of news coverage of their own continent and do not have to rely on mottled international coverage. But as Martin says (1992:335), there is a long standing tradition of the media controlled by the state and various forms are still practiced today.

Controls of the media take many forms. They can control content and circulation through taxes. However let it be known that the independence of the media is a process and as such, it might not come out that we have completely independent media in Uganda.

2.1 History of the Ugandan media.

The print media in Uganda was set up at the start of the 19th century, while the electronic media was established in the 1950s. It has followed a troubled path ever since. The first law limiting press freedom came in 1910, there was no press freedom worth talking about from independence in 1962 to 1986. At independence in October 1962, the future of the media looked rosy. The leading daily- Argus, owned by Lonrho had a circulation of over 120,000 copies. People were richer and there was very good transport so papers reached the whole country. Between 1962 and 1966, a reasonable degree of press freedom existed until the Mengo crisis in 1966 when Obote, then executive prime minister toppled president Kabaka (king) Edward Mutesa II abrogated the 1962 constitution and declared Uganda a republic with himself as president. Obote's idea of the presidency was that the first citizen controlled everything. In 1967, Obote introduced the pigeon hole constitution which gave the president sweeping powers. Numerous deterrent detentions without trial ensued. The mood in the country was that if the kabaka could be deposed, the constitution changed and five ministers detained, who were you to talk against the mastermind of all this? Timidity set in and the Ugandan media started on a fast track down the sewers. Even journalists became party activists- operatives of the ruling Uganda People's Congress (UPC). There were no schools of journalism. One had to go to Britain or learn on the job- Learning by making mistakes. But many did not live long enough to make enough mistakes to learn sufficiently to make the grade. Idi Amin's take over in 1971 made a bad situation even worse. The Argus was nationalized in December 1972 after the expulsion of the Asians. It became the Voice of Uganda (VOU). In Amin's regime one could not say anything other than what the regime wanted to hear. Like every other dictatorship, Amin's government was built and built and revolved around himself for eight years- the longest eight years in the country's history- Uganda was in the hands of a megalomaniac whose word was the law and whose dreams, hallucinations and mood swings determined and shaped government policy. In early 1975, a typing error nearly cost the editor of the VOU his life: "Life president, VSO, CBE, VC etc. Idi Amin yesterday raped President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania," began the lead story. The editor Ilakut Ben Bella was arrested, tortured and released.

The situation of abuse against journalists continued to exist until 1986 when some semblance of civilized governance graced Uganda's state house.

2.2 History of the independent media in Uganda.

Emergence of the independent media in Uganda came up with the liberalization of the economy, the markets were opened up and private companies emerged to do big business. The media jumped into the band wagon.

From 1992-1993 onwards, the opening up of markets was conditionally by world bank and the IMF alongside structural adjustment programmes (SAP), Uganda picked a leaf from and as a result we witnessed Radio: Sanyu (1994), Capital (1994), newspapers, Daily Monitor, Financial times and the red pepper.

Independent media face a myriad of challenges during the course of their duty. For instance what will the editors of the daily Monitor pay about the First lady's allegation of grabbing land in Karamoja, Prime minister's case?, formal IGG Faith Mwendha against Daily Monitor publication over alleged defamation, "Ms Mwendha allegedly earned salary meant for judges because it was higher while at the same time taking allowances as IGG because it was higher than that of judges," And about the publication of nude pictures and the UPDF? It calls for extra ordinary zeal to work in an independent media.

2.3 Challenges of the independent media in Africa: Uganda.

The latest decade of the 21st century has promised a lot for the media in Africa. With the winds of political change blowing across the continent, African regimes exercised some tolerance to the critical independent media.

The analysis of media freedom in the last half of the 20th century was limited to its key variable: censorship was mostly limited to state owned or the ruling party. The journalists busied themselves with the news the state wanted to hear, not what the citizens wanted to hear. Whether they ran profitably or not was a no-issue.

It is interesting to note that the NRM rule pride itself for allowing media freedom which led to many publications. More Newspapers have folded up under their rule than in the past regimes.

2.4 Conceptual framework.

This study was conducted in Kampala district, on the challenges facing the media independent media, (case study of the Daily Monitor). The study will be conceived out ò the following assumptions:

There were numerous challenges that the independent media face with regard to the laws of Uganda, the public (consumers of media products) and the government of the day.

There are remedies that should be put in place by the concerned authority to help independent media perform its duties with the necessary ease, less tension and uncertainty plus a vibrant work atmosphere.

There is a relationship between the privately owned media (independent media) and the authorities since it was introduced in Uganda and then determines whether the kind ò relationship brings with it favourable or unfavourable changes to the media.

This study was conducted in Kampala district on the challenges facing the independent media: case study of the Daily Monitor newspaper.

2.5. Conclusion.

In conclusion the literature review paved the way forward for the study. This is in respect to the media's adequacy, coverage and information dissemination and impact on prevalence over issues challenging media freedom.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction.

This chapter shows the researcher carried out the research on the topic “Hindrances facing the privately owned (Independent media in Uganda in their effort to inform society: case study of Daily Monitor.

3.1 Research design.

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and carry out analysis of the information was employed by the researcher. Since one research methodology alone was not sufficiently produce an authentic and a more balanced scientific report.

3.2 Population sample

This study was conducted among residents of Kampala district. Kampala district is chosen purposely and specifically because of the relatively high level ò literacy, social status and employment. And a large number of people have the capability and capacity of buying newspapers and also easy access to newspapers unlike other areas like Gulu, Pader and Moroto.

Sixty (60) respondents were chosen to participate in the study using random sampling method.

Ten (10) key informants were also chosen by means of purposive sampling and who constituted a focus group discussion. Key informants included four journalists from the Daily Monitor publications.

Two members of the Uganda human rights commission, political science professional and two university students.

3.3 Area of study.

The areas of study were Makindye, Kawempe, Rubaga, Nakawa in Kampala district, central Uganda. The district is relatively dense in terms of population and comprises of a conglomeration of different people, tribes, preferences, occupation and social status. However levels of poverty were also to a significant extent realized.

3.4 Selection of study participants, sampling method and population

The researcher used random sampling to choose 60 participants who were obtained from households from the district's local councils. This was done because the researcher believes these people automatically by nature of their work have sufficient knowledge and experience about the challenges facing the independent media.

3.5 Data collection

Data collection process included both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Quantitative:

Questionnaires – structured questionnaires were used to collect information from respondents who are educated. The researcher also gave room for probing during interviews where necessary and to clarify on understanding. Comments were recorded at the margins.

Qualitative:

The researcher used focus group discussions to collect data and seek clarification from respondents. These results helped improve the quality of the final results.

3.6 Data Analysis.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Data collected was continually, transcribed and analyzed right from data collection to presentation stage. Qualitative data was presented by the use of statistical methods.

3.7 Limitations.

As anticipated the following were the shortcomings encountered during the data collection.

There were problems of non response whereby many respondents frankly say they have no time to read through and answer the questions due to their tight working schedules. This was especially in newsrooms of various publications' offices.

There was also be lack of adequate bonds to finance the entire research study and make up follow ups of non response, and provision of logistics were limited.

Unavailability of some respondents who are scheduled with the excuse of having commitments.

Load shedding currently was a major setback in the computation of the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation, interpretation and discussion of the field results. The objectives of the study were to find out the hindrances facing the privately owned (Independent) media in Uganda in their effort to inform society: A case study of Daily Monitor newspaper and to propose strategies that can help solve the hindrances the media faces in their efforts. The results are presented in tables and in form of frequency counts and percentages.

4.1 Characteristics of the samples.

The study was conducted in Kampala city council district. Four divisions in two sub counties were covered. Thirty people were reached through interviews that included local people and leaders. Then in the interest of time twenty people were selected and given questionnaires to fill in (these are journalists, university students and some few educated people like teachers.)

Two focused group discussions were held. Each group comprised of two journalists, one editor, a university student and a member of the Uganda human rights commission per group totaling to ten (10).

The overall total number of respondents in the sample was one hundred (100), which is 50 systematic interviews, 40 through questionnaires and 10 in the focus group discussion.

4.2 Social and Demographic characteristic of the respondents.

Table 4.2.1 Education levels of the respondents.

Education	Number	Percentage
Ordinary level	20	20
Advanced level	30	30
Tertiary level	50	50
Total	100	100

Source: Adopted from the field.

N/B Sample size (n) = 100 respondents, percentage 100% Source on the field by the researcher.

The table 4.3.1 illustrates the data collected were from a cross section of people in the district covered. Almost all the targeted groups of respondents of diverse educational levels were reached, implying that balanced views were instilled in the process of data collection.

The education levels of the respondents as indicated in the table 4.3.1 shows that 50% of the respondents reached Tertiary level (university and college) level. Those who graduated from advanced level contributed to 30% of the respondents while those who graduated from ordinary level were only 20%. This table therefore shows the intellectual capacities of the respondents and consequently their ability to coherently and reasonably respond to questions in the interview and the questionnaire.

Table 4.2.2 Occupation of the respondents.

Occupation	Number	Percentage.
Business	15	15
Media	30	30
Law	20	20
Civil services	25	25
Others	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Adopted from field.

Table 4.2.2 illustrates the occupation of the respondents who formed part of the sample particularly it emphasizes the professional levels of the respondents thus implying that the sample was drawn from a cross section of people who understood the dynamics of the study and were equally informed on the subject of research.

4.3 Challenges facing the independent media in Uganda- A case study of the Daily Monitor.

During the field work, the researcher tried to identify some of the challenges facing the independent media in Uganda. According to the researcher, methodologies like questionnaires, interviews and the application of focus group discussion were used to obtain the data. The researcher identified the following challenges and obstacles faced by the independent media with reference to the Daily Monitor. These challenges included; economic, constitutional/ legal and political.

4.4. Political challenges.

4.4.1 The use of laws, intimidation and harassment of the media by the state.

The level of intimidation by the state was realized first of all, by the fact that the government has always been edgy about certain issues published in a section of the press in this case, the Daily Monitor. From a focus group discussion, it emerged that the collapse of communism was a blessing to the independent media. Western attention on the third world turned to good governance with press freedom high on the agenda. The development finance therefore was made contingent on a free press and the NRM had to watch itself.

There has also been deliberate attempt by the government officials to deny journalist access to information on the pretext that it is classified or has national security implications. This applies even when one is investigating abuse of public office. The constitution stipulates freedom of access to information but this is subject to an act of parliament to determine the modalities

In lieu of these damning facts the NRM still claims and contends that under its regime the media has leaped in bounds in terms of independence. However it emerged from a focus group discussion that the NRM claims to guarantee press freedom and independence yet it goes ahead to prosecute journalists for publishing articles critical of aspects of the movement's policies and can not therefore claim such magnanimity.

4.5 Constitutional / legal challenges.

The constitution of the republic of Uganda comes along with various challenges to the independent media as it emerged from the proceedings of a focus group discussion: there is a wrong notion about the situation of the media in Uganda, although there are a number of privately owned publications out there, there are also a number of constraints faced during their operation.

When scrutinized in terms of practice, what comes out is that the independent medium is actually tethered by a lurid of laws which curtail almost every freedom they enjoy in the constitution.

Respondents argued that these laws were specifically designed to check on the media. This implies that the government was very jittery about the independent media.

The media plays a vital role of being the watchdog of government.

The constitution of the republic of Uganda has what was basically referred to as technical contradictions by a respondent. Although there are provisions of media independence, protection and freedom, there are also contradictions to these provisions.

The problem is therefore following the 1995 constitutional provisions; one article grants the media freedom while other articles in the same constitution tend to curtail it posing serious legal challenges to the independent media.

Article 29 (1) provides for freedom of speech: "Every person shall have the right to freedom,

- (a) Freedom of speech and expression which shall include freedom of the press and other media.

Article 43 (1) provides for a general limitation on the enjoyment of rights and freedoms contained in the chapter on the bill of rights.

While the law of sedition is a dead horse, not worth flogging anymore, it still have deadly impact on the freedom of the media in Uganda.

The penal code also contains other clauses that are directed to the media in contradiction to the provisions in the constitution and are tools to suppress independent media as well as opposition politicians. A number of chapters and sections are restrictive and include section 37-40 on importation of any publication, section 49 (A) on boycotts, section 50

on publication of “false news” section 50 on defamation of foreign dignitaries and chapter IX on unlawful assemblies of societies.

The above sentiment and presentation reflect the extent to which a lot of inconsistencies and contradictions in the constitution pose real tough challenges to the independent media since several interpretations and alluding meanings put the media at a fix and basically they do not want to rub the government in the wrong way since it is assumed that if you are right and the government is wrong then that is a very dangerous stand.

4.6. Economic challenges.

Table 4.6.1 Economic challenges.

Salary scale in Ug.Shilling	Frequency	Buy newspaper daily	Buy newspaper occasionally.
200,000-300,000	15	No	Yes.
301,000-400,000	25	No	Yes.
401,000-500,000	17	No	Yes.
501,000-600,000	13	No	Yes.
601,000-700,000	5	No	Yes.
701,000-800,000	10	No	Yes.
801,000-Above	15	No	Yes.
Total	100	-	

Source: Adopted by the researcher from the field.

The above table shows the relationship between income of an individual and his/her capability of buying a newspaper throughout the week. The fact that 90% of the sample buys newspaper occasionally and only 10% by them on a daily basis, it clearly shows that there is a direct relationship between high pay and daily purchase of newspapers and vice versa which has implications on the financial health of that particular publication due to reduced readership.

Economically, independent media have borne much of economic hardships through economic blockades imposed by the government albeit through enacting of acts of parliament or straight bans.

Like any other enterprise, the media requires money for investment as well as to meet all other overhead costs. One of the major sources of revenue is advertisement. In Uganda, most if not all of the lucrative advertisements traditionally comes form government and government departments. One of the tools employed by the government against the media which it deems to be acting contrary to its interests is to deny them lucrative advertisement deals and thus the revenue which accrues from advertising.

Through the government, the judiciary is always influenced to punish the press and its journalists for example Andrew Mwenda when he was working for the Daily Monitor, Daniel Kalinaki the managing editor have heavily been bailed.

Such magnitude of economic blockade plus the existing and increasing harsh economic environment which continue to swindle newspaper readership is quite a hard blow on the financial strength of publication. As portrayed few people in Uganda can afford to buy newspapers.

4.7 Magnitude of the challenges presented above in form of percentages.

Table 4.7.1 Table showing magnitude of the challenges presented above in form of percentages.

Form of challenge	Respondents vote	Percentage %
Economic	20	20
Political	50	50
Constitutional	30	30
Total	100	100

NB: N=sample size=60 M= vote tally.

Vote percentage =50%.

Source: from field.

According to respondents sentiments, the independent media faces mostly political challenges and lastly economic. It showed that political challenge is the most dominant followed by constitutional.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction.

In this chapter, the summary, conclusions and the recommendations made are presented. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis.

5.1 Summary of the findings.

This study was conducted in Kampala district, central Uganda, on the challenges facing the independent media (a case study of the Daily Monitor). The research was guided by certain objectives and these were:

To examine what challenges the independent media face with regard to the laws of Uganda, the public (consumers of the media products) and the government of the day.

To discover and bring out the plight of independent media in terms of the problems and challenges they face, whether these challenges are justified, what remedies should be put in place by the concerned authority to help independent media perform its duties with the necessary ease, less tension and uncertainty plus a vibrant work atmosphere.

To discover what kind of relationship exists between the privately owned media (independent media) and the authorities since it was introduced in Uganda and then determine whether the kind of relationship brings with it favorable or unfavorable changes to the media.

A total sample size of 100 respondents was chosen for the quantitative study. This was done by the use of random sampling technique.

A total sample of key informants were interviewed, they were mostly journalists, lawyers, editors and lecturers who directly felt the effects of these challenges and were quite important in giving relevant data through interviews. Data collection was done by use of office-door step delivered questionnaires to the respondents and in-depth

interviews to both key informants and respondents who have an obligation and thorough knowledge of these challenges facing the independent media.

This study was generalized in themes. According to the study findings, the key informants revealed that the challenges facing the independent media were economical, political and constitutional.

Economically it emerged that although the Daily monitor continued to operate, it was in dire need of economic props. These were occasioned by the famous three year economic blockade between 1993 and 1996 when government departments were banned from advertising in the Daily Monitor. This was due to the fact that the NRM regime was not contented with the way it was operating basically due to the fact that it was seen as being too frank and accurate for its time. The government's aim was to kill the paper in its infancy. However this did not happen because dramatically, its circulation increased and thus it was kept afloat despite these turbulent economic times.

The study also revealed that through such economic blockades, newspapers were forced to increase cover charges as well as advertising fees to enable them cover their overhead costs. This situation was further worsened by the restrictions and keen check on whether the independent media paid their taxes which were considered to be exorbitant. They were threatened with closure incase they delayed in paying taxes. Through thick and thin they had to continue operating though on tight economic strands.

Independent medium also faced another form of economic challenge in form of hefty fines and exorbitant bail amounts that either kept them out of business or left them financially limping with minimal chances of ever recovering.

Further findings reveal that insurmountable economic challenges due to the existing harsh economic times led to low sales of daily newspapers as many people chose between lunch and buying the daily paper. Also many Ugandans preferred buying the Sunday Monitor thus making it the best selling paper.

Politically it emerged that the independent newspapers faced a lot of challenges from the government and political regime in form of harassments, intimidation and the government's use of the law to muzzle the media.

Politically independent media also earned what was referred to as official rage at stories which the regime considered false, alarmist and insensitive to the needs of the society. Thus the government went ahead and hardened its attitude towards publications which were not towing the official line of the government. It came out clearly from a focus discussion that this hardened attitude and official rage from the government was as a result of intolerance to opposing views and the need for the regime to cover up its failures in performance-corruption and the inverted foreign policy and general lack of physical and social infrastructure.

Constitutionally it emerged that a lot of provisions to media democracy, independence and freedom are enshrined in the 1995 constitution of the republic of Uganda. The same constitution has other articles that tend to curtail the enjoyment of these rights and freedom of the independent media and the press in general.

It was revealed that despite the existence of various publications on the streets of Uganda, the notion that media independence in Uganda is a living reality is in fact true to itself exists only superficially. Specifically, article 43(1) of the constitution provides for a general limitation of the rights contained in the bill of rights. Further draconian laws presented greatest danger to the independent media and was considered as the greatest social, economic and political insecurity nationally and international.

The journalists statute, it emerged provides an interalia for the supervision of and control of the media through media council that it established and which was basically an ammunition by the NRM to impinge on the activities and rights of independent media.

5.2 Conclusion

The researcher used different methods in collecting the data and these included questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion. Primary and secondary data were also used to compile this research report.

These methods proved beyond reasonable doubt that there are indeed challenges facing the independent media and which require immediate need to counter if not to do away with.

It has been evident that the government's crackdown on the media has succeeded to an extent; the independent media in Uganda today is less bold, less vibrant and less vociferous than it was in the early days of the NRM. It has become frustrated. The media practices unwarranted self restraint which amounts to self censorship. They have therefore avoided anything that may invite the wrath of the government.

Also notable is the fact that the NRM government has created a hostile environment towards the media and has in the final analysis become an enemy of the press thereby turning into a vicious snake ready to pounce on its suspecting prey. It thus follows, that the government should open up and learn to tolerate, if not encourage the media to do its work without interference since the media is a critical partner in the development of the country. Parliament on the other hand should revisit the constitutional provisions curtailing the freedom of the press and media repeal them so as to avoid the contradictions and inconsistencies that are accompanied by such limitations.

The media on the other hand must strive to not only be an informer but an aptitude watchdog on the government, let the populace be aware of the government's normative role and generally keep the government on its toes.

5.3 Recommendations.

This research has tried to show hindrances facing the privately owned (independent) media in Uganda in their effort to inform society: A case study of the Daily Monitor. And in line with this the researcher recommends the following:

The government should leave journalism business to the journalists and their professional organization to handle.

The journalist's statute requires a major legal surgery in order to align itself with the current government political aspirations for achieving a democratic and constitutional system of the government in Uganda.

The media council and its disciplinary committee should cease to be an appendage of government. It should be independent of any direct government influence. It should have clear procedures and guidelines within the ambit of the rule of law for the exercise of their functions.

There should be an independent national press council (NPC) to act as a bridge or link between the government and the society or public.

The right to information access and news gathering by journalists should be become a statutory provision in Uganda as a legal guarantee to press freedom in the country.

The criminal nature of defamation offence should be abolished and its civil counterpart revisited because it (civil law aspect) is one of the most hazardous press laws in Uganda.

The government should stop its heavy handedness against the media and the body politics in general and realize that a free, vibrant and vigilant press is a good partner in the development of the country.

The press being a bonafide development partner should be granted a tax holiday to enable them get on their feet financially

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLECTION OF DATA

Dear Respondent,

I am a student of Kampala International University, faculty of Arts and Humanities and perusing a bachelor degree of Mass Communication. This is kindly to request you to spare sometime for your highly required contribution on the ongoing study about the hindrances facing the privately owned (independent) media in Uganda in their effort to inform society: A case study of the Daily Monitor.

Your participation will be of great academic importance. All information will be treated with confidentiality.

Thank you.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Basic information

1. Education level (Ordinary, Advanced, Tartary/ college/ university).

.....
.....

2. Occupation (Business, Civil, Media, Law, others).

.....
.....

3. Salary Scale in Ugandan shillings.

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4. Is the independent media in Uganda really independent? If not why?

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5. What are some of the challenges facing the Daily Monitor as an independent publication?

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6. What constitutional /legal challenges does the Daily Monitor face?

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7. What economic challenges does Daily Monitor face?

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8. What are the causes of the above economic obstacles?

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9. What challenges does the regime pose to the independent publications like the Daily Monitor?

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10. What is the relationship between the government and the media?

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11. What are the major impacts of these challenges to the independent media?

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12. What do you suggest should be done to put a stop or check on these obstacles and challenges?

.....
.....

13. Do you buy newspapers daily or occasionally? Why?

.....
.....

Thank you.

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH SCHEDULE

Activity	Time in Months			
	1	2	3	4
Proposal writing				
Data collection				
Data analysis				
Submission				