

# Investigating the Influence of Professional Code of Conduct on Journalist Performance among Women in Uganda. A Case Study of Uganda Broadcasting Cooperation (UBC) Uganda

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**Abstract:** *The goal of the study was to determine how the university's ethical standards affected the work of UBC's female journalists. It looked at how well-informed and conscientious female journalists are about respecting the professional code of conduct while executing their jobs, as well as the difficulties they experience in doing so. Self-administered questionnaires and textual analysis were the two main strategies employed in this study, which combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In order to give people, the confidence to request safety nets, the poll asked the respondents if they were familiar with some of the key statements. The statement that "Journalists should really not take risks in pursuing a story if they feel they would likely be exposed" was known by just over half of the participants. The assertion that "A reporter can refuse a hazardous employment" was, nevertheless, recognized to less than half (49.6%) of participants. The report urges Ugandan media organizations to train staff members on appropriate professional behavior and place a high priority on upholding it while at work, among other recommendations. The second argument is that media firms should consider other options for resolving the difficulties that their personnel encounter in team to perform and competency.*

**Keywords:** professional code of conduct and journalist performance

## Background to the study

In order to advance the imperial goal of the state, Uganda's British colonial ruler developed the media industry there in 1954. Uganda was still a British protectorate when the Ugandan media first emerged, during the colonial era. To counter the mainly pro- and top player views of pan Africanists, the government Uganda Broadcast Cooperative (UBC), which simulcast BBC and other local programs, was established. Even during the colonial era, press freedom was restricted because black Pan Africanists used it to oppose the colonial masters. The imperialist masters' answer to this was to jail, imprison, and closed down the journals of African writers who expressed criticism (Lugalambi, 2010:13). When Uganda eventually won independence on October 9, 1962, the post-independence Ugandan government took control of the UBC and continued its animosity toward the media. According to reports, "Ssekanyolya" journals were outlawed following the 1966 Uganda crisis. According to reports, Obote's government jailed and imprisoned politicians and journalists who were critical of the government (ibid). At this period, two media organizations in Uganda, according to Lugalambi, were still under the control of the Statement Issued and employed government workers. Its upkeep and administration were paid for with public money (2010:20). The UBC has historically served as a security official with little editorial freedom. The concept of public broadcasting lost any relevance because there were no laws safeguarding media practitioners in their area of work.

## Statement of the problem

There are professional norms of conduct for reporters in Uganda, however certain media professionals, particularly women, are suspected of not abiding by them. Their productivity as well as the reputation of the media sector as a whole could be negatively impacted by this quasi. Thus, it is necessary to look into how professional codes of conduct impact the work of female journalists in Uganda, concentrating on the UBC case. This study is intended to boost ongoing efforts by the media sector to uphold professional standards and support investigative journalism, which will subsequently improve the work of reporters in generally and women journalists in specifically. As a result, research is now necessary to determine how occupational codes of conduct affect female journalists at work.

## Specific objectives

To examine the state of journalists' knowledge and adherence to the professional code of conduct while at work.

1. To find out the challenges female journalists practically face in the process of performing their work and practicing their professions in Uganda.
2. To examine the limitations of professional code of conduct among female journalists in Uganda.

## Research Questions

1. What is the state of journalists' knowledge and adherence to the professional code of conduct while at work?
2. What are the challenges female journalists practically face in the process of performing their work and practicing their professions in Uganda?
3. What are the limitations of professional code of conduct among female journalists in Uganda?

## Methodology

### Research design

The study design for this one was a survey method. In order to determine the frequency, distribution, and correlations between both psychological and sociological aspects at the time the census was done, surveys allow the examination of a random sample of a population. The survey is crucial to this study since it addresses individuals, their fundamental characteristics, and their ideas, views, attitudes, intentions, and activities.

### Sampling design or technique

For selecting the appropriate sample for this research, the experts' comments were carefully considered. In this investigation, sampling took place using random sample. Several techniques were employed by the researcher to raise the probability of selecting any sample element. So, the researcher randomly selected respondents from the broader public to comprise the random sample.

### Population sample

The participants in this study were all female journalists employed by UBC, regardless of their department. However, the demographics for this study were female journalists from the administrative department, broadcasters, reporters, administrators, investigative reporters, and sport experts in order to manage the sampling and minimize guesswork. There are fifty members of this prestigious community.

### Sample size determination

The target population of this study consisted of 50 people. In this situation, a sample size of respondents was used in the research interviews to accurately reflect the study's overall population. Due to the requirement to be expense and cut down on the time and money the study would have required if the sample were much larger, the researcher selects this size. The Slovene formula was used to determine this sample size.

### Instruments for Data collection

One of the tools the investigator used to collect data for this study was an interview method. Other equipment included pencils, notebooks, and document reviews. The interview guide assisted the investigators in documenting the which was before preparation steps and also outlines the order in which the respondents' questions should be asked.

### Data Analysis

Many techniques were subjected to statistical analysis. Before entering the completed surveys into a CSpro data input screen, cleaning them up, and exporting them for use in SPSS and Ms. Excel analysis, the consultant and statistician checked them for consistency and quality of data. Given that the study is essentially descriptive, the major methods for presentation and analysis are bandwidth dispersion tables, graphs, and bridge.

**RESULTS**

**Respondents' employment status**

At UBC, the majority of the employees are contract employees; some are paid monthly, while the majority are paid when a story is televised or published. It is a fact that the majority of the people in the world are living in a post-industrial society. Employers are released from a number of duties when hiring freelancers, including paying for the writer's medical insurance, the Social Security Fund (NSSF), and any additional perks. It also means that the reporter who is compensated for each story that is broadcast or published must take part in the process of gathering data.

The table 1 below summarizes the respondents' employment status

Employment status of respondents		
Employment Status	Frequency	Percentages
Freelance	51	44
Full time staff	66	56
Total	117	100

**Respondents' position in the media outlet**

The vast majority (84%) of respondents held a position as a reporter or contributor within the media company they worked for; only one person held a production position. When the study evaluated the different positions by kind of media outlet, encompassing print, radio, TV, and online, there was no statistically significant (P-value > 0.05) discovered. But, as we had already noted, the majority of those who responded (journos) worked for radio media.

The table 2 below shows the distribution of the frequency of the respondents' positions at their media houses

Respondents' position in the media organization by type					
Position in the media outlet	Type of media outlet				
	Print	Radio	TV	Online	Total
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
Reporter/ Correspondent	30 (90.9)	39 (58.2)	11 (100.0)	4 (80.0)	84 (72.4)
Editor	1 (3.0)	9 (13.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (20.0)	11 (9.48)
Producer	0 (0.0)	1 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.9)
Senior Management	0 (0.0)	3 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (2.6)
Other (Specify)	2 (6.1)	15 (22.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (14.7)

Total	33 (100.0)	67 (100.0)	11 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	116 (100.0)
Pearson Chi (12) 18.467 P-Value = 0.102					

Others include; Bureau chief, Investigative reporter, Marketing, News reader, Presenter and

**Journalists engagement with and adherence to the professional code of ethics and principles**

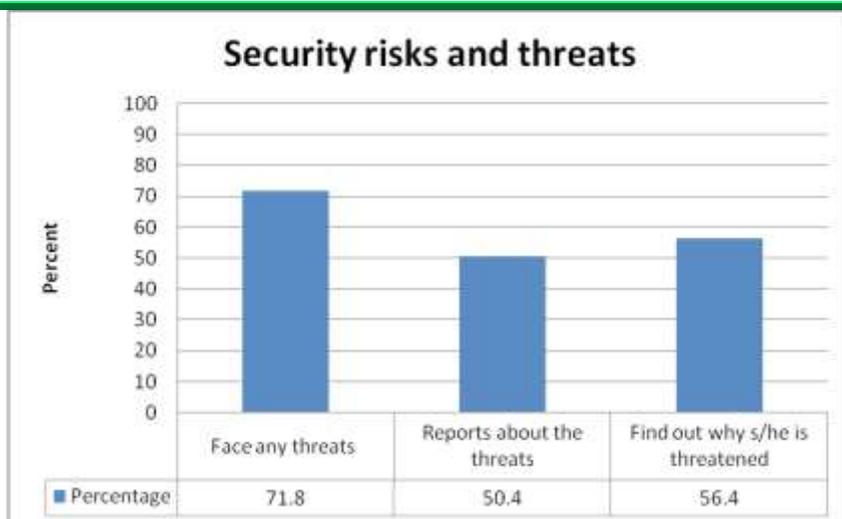
The table 3 below shows the distribution of the frequency the respondents make reference to their professional code of ethics

How often respondents engage with/make reference to their professional code of ethics			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
How often and under what circumstances you refer to it	Daily	4	7.7
	Once a week	6	11.5
	Several times a month	8	15.4
	At least once a month	4	7.7
	Whenever I feel like	30	57.7
	Total	52	100.0

Another male KI from Kampala opines that adherence to the code is low due to the fact that many of those who join journalism do not do it out of passion for the profession, but rather as a source of income. Another KI from Mpigi suggested that some journalists get compromised on their ethics due to their needy financial situations.

**Journalists face personal safety, risks and security threats in the course of doing their work**

The figure 2 below shows percentages of respondents who reported facing threats and risks, those who reported about the threats and those who found out why they were threatened.



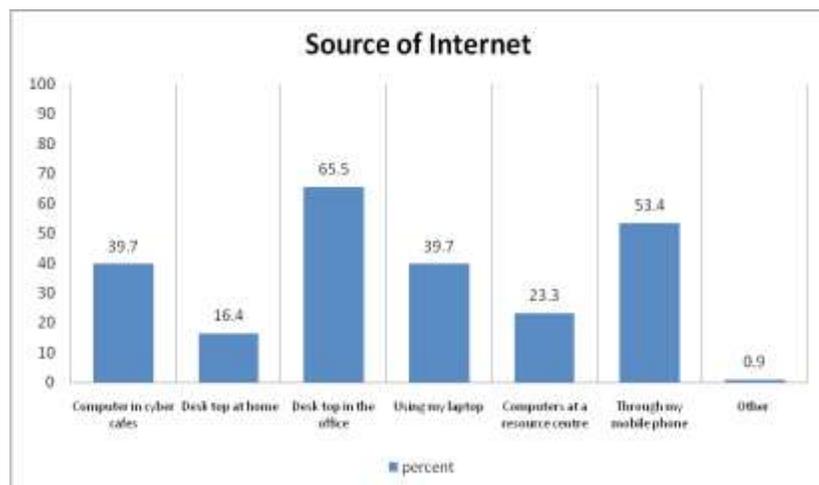
When asked if they had tried to warn others—including the police—about the risks and dangers they were facing, only 50% of those surveyed responded in the affirmative. 70% of responders who claimed they had recommended to someone else also said they had spoken with HRNJ-Uganda in addition to their managers and editors. The police (15%), other critics, local officials, and the Ugandan Human Rights Council were among the other organizations or people cited. Sadly, only 56% of them actually put out the effort to determine the motivation behind the threat or assault. The inability of these journalists to pinpoint the source or rationale for the threat or attack puts them at risk for more assaults.

**Journalists must embrace digital security and online safety**

Because of the crucial role that the internet and electronic communications play as well as the vulnerabilities and hazards that go along with them, the survey asked the participants how they utilize internet services. While 65.5% of respondents claimed to access the internet at work using laptops and desktop computers, 53.4% claimed to do so using mobile devices.

A little over 40% of respondents utilized cybercafés and library computers to connect to the internet. Given the risks associated with utilizing shared computers, it takes tools and knowledge to maintain your online privacy. The majority of the participants, sadly, didn't seem to have the resources or the necessary knowledge to use a company laptop anonymous online to browse the internet when compelled further.

**The figure 3 below summarizes the distribution of the frequency respondents’ source of internet**



### Conclusions

The information described above can be utilized to draw a number of conclusions, one of which is that reporters regularly encounter hazards, assaults, and attacks while carrying out their duties, regardless of the caliber of their professional work.

There are still issues which need to be resolved despite the significant steps taken to enhance the performing ethics, safety, and safety of the media in Uganda.

Many individuals are unaware of these concepts and of their obligations and rights in the role as information and news custodians. There are still a lot of infractions and internal editing guidelines are still not recognized or followed to a high enough standard.

### Recommendations

Journalists need to get ongoing training and teaching in the fundamentals of reporting, such as impartiality, accuracy, justice, balancing, and the use of alternative sources. This can be done by providing structured training for staff members, regular schedule workout sessions on certain subjects, coaching, and mentoring. You may help media outlets create the moral framework for journalists by helping them create internal editorial criteria that management must obey. Promote the creation of a peer-review mechanism where media problems like competence and conformance to the journalism norms are reviewed in order to encourage personality. Encourage media owners and management to create and support initiatives that aid in the professional development of reporters, such as courses offered and peer instruction.

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