# SEXUAL VIOLENCE FACED BY FEMALE JOURNALITS IN THE MEDIA HOUSES OF UGANDA

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## DECLARATION

I Shammah Mukuza hereby declare that this is my original work, is not plagiarized and has not been submitted any other institution for any award.

Signature: …………………. Date………………….

Mukuza Shammah (S21BO4/001)

## APPROVAL

This work has been produced under the supervision of

Mrs. Mukasa Prever

Sign………………

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Mr. Mukuza Fred and Mrs. Mukuza Harriet for their unwavering support throughout my three-year course in Journalism and Mass Communication. To my big sister, Mukuza Shalom and my young brother Mukuza El-Shaddai, thank you for your encouragement and support. Lastly to my daughter, Talemwa Shavonne Mukuza, your motivation and inspiration have kept me pushing forward. Thank you all for being my pillars of strength.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

1.0 **Introduction**

This chapter introduces the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose statement, aims and objectives, research questions, the scope of study, justification of the study, significance of the study and theoretical framework. The main purpose of this study is to probe the sexual violence faced by female journalists in the media houses of Uganda.

1.1 **BACKGROUND STUDY**

In 2015, the executive chief officer who owns one of the media organizations in Uganda decided to hold a meeting for majority of the employees in Kampala Uganda where the head office is found and this was because he got information on the ongoing much on sexual violence in his own organization. So, in this meeting the CEO put serious blame on some of the male supervisors of different departments that had actually gone ahead to sexually violate some if the female journalists. It was also reported that these male supervisors demand sex in exchange for any newsroom favors or in the media house. The CEO also pointed out that this habit had seriously affected the productivity and traumatized the female journalists.

In Uganda today, most of the female interns and females who have graduated once they join media houses they are always subjected to sexual violence. A female intern is supposed to get proper guidance from the professionals she has found in the media house but unfortunately these professional people divert the purpose and end up taking advantage on the female intern by demanding sexual favors and if she says no, she is going to be ignored and abandoned hence spreading false lies about her that she was the one trying to seduce the man. Eventually this female intern is isolated and loses self confidence in her duties hence a decline in her productivity which yields thoughts of giving up on her career. (Jackson,2012)

Sexual violence of female journalists is the dirty little secret of media houses. [Jackson 2012]. This

habit really exposes female journalists to certain shameful actions that do embarrass them sexually as they go about their duties with the other colleagues in the space of work. [Liena 2011].

Northeastern University [2013] in the United States describes sexual violence as the non-welcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. And in Greece the laws state that sexual violence is a form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal and physical conduct of any sexual nature happening with the purpose of violating a person's dignity and in addition creating a hostile, degrading and humiliating space. [Fasting et al, 214].

In Uganda, the Employment Regulation [2012] states that sexual violence as a direct request to an employee for sexual togetherness. Sexual contact and any other form of sexual activity that involves express promise of preferential, threat of detrimental treatment in employment and threat about the present or future employment status. This kind of practice according to the regulation can mean the use of language, it does not matter if it is spoken, of a sexual nature such as unnecessary verbal advances, sexual comments, jokes of a sexual nature, offensive obscene and flirtation expressions that are pointed directly to an individual. Sometimes it the use of visual content of a sexual nature for example sexually displayed pictures, sexually written material and gestures.

Sexual violence of female journalists in the media houses can be taken as a gender study and this is so because in period of the World War II, media studies were put into four major areas, the communicator, message, medium and receiver. Now since this study deals with the sender or communicator it qualifies to be under the media studies. It is great to note that scholars in the past decided to put more attention to studying the message, medium, receiver and effect giving less attention to the communicator yet an effect on any of the four in the communication chain may actually affect the final message.

## 1.1.1 Media Background in Uganda

The history of the media in Uganda goes back to 1900, when the missionaries from Britain established the first newspaper in this country. The need to promote politics and religion encouraged missionaries to come up with the plan of the newspaper [Chibita, 2010]. The African Centre for Media Excellence (2010) observes that the first newspaper-Mengo Notes was started in 1900 by the Church Missionary Society and closely followed by Ebifa Mu Buganda eleven years later belonging to the Roman Catholic White Fathers.

Among the Catholic Church, the newspapers were used to mobilise followers and by 1938, there were several newspapers mobilising the masses to participate in religious issues, economy and politics. Those newspapers, according to Chibita (2010) include the Uganda Voice, Tuula Nkunnyonyole, Matalisi, Buganda Nnyaffe and Baana ba Kintu, almost all running in Luganda the biggest indigenous language. It was that political role which the newspapers played that inspired the masses to demand for independence between 1940 and 1950 that culminated into the country's independence in 1962 (Chibita, 2010). Since the inception of the first newspaper, different individuals, politicians and religious groups have been establishing private newspapers (Kaija, 2013). However, a fully blown commercial media industry in Uganda unfolded around 1992 when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government that had come into power in 1986 after a five-year-bush war liberalised the economy and the media industry. Kalyegira (2013) writes that Uganda like many other African countries in the 1990s liberalised their economies at the end of the Cold War after it became clear that the capitalist West had triumphed in its battle of wills against communism. The countries embraced free market liberalism as a model that was encouraged and spread around the world.

In 1992, Kaija; [2013] points out that the broadcasting industry in this country Uganda at that time had one Television and Radio station, Uganda television [UTV] and Radio Uganda, that were run by the government whereby the TV operated during certain hours of the day and made sure it was

closed at midnight until midday the next day. When the government liberalised the media sector, UTV and Radio Uganda were in 1995 converted into Uganda Broadcasting Service [Chibita 2010], playing more or less the same roles of a government media piece like before. The privately first owned FM radio and TV stations in Uganda to touch the airwaves were Radio Sanyu and that was in December 1993 and Cable Sat TV in 1992[Kalyegira,2013].

However, according to the Broadcasting and Communications Market and Industry three quarterly report released by the Uganda Communications Commission [UCC] in the month of September 2017, there are 258 operational radio stations,31 operational free to air service providers, two operational digital terrestrial stations, five operational digital satellite stations and three cable televisions.

The country has made significant achievements as far as ensuring that women in the country including female journalists are empowered and treated equally like their male counterparts [Kaija,2013]. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2017, Uganda ranked 45 ahead of Tanzania and Kenya in the 68 and 78 positions, respectively among the 144 countries that were studied by the World Economic Forum for women emancipation standards. According to Kaija [2013], the general visible gainful strides in women emancipation in Uganda have been as a result of good gender policies that begin with the country's laws. Article 33 of the constitution of Uganda actually considers women as being equal in status with men and therefore entitled to equal opportunities in politics, culture and economy to improve their welfare,Kaija [2013] notices that to achieve such a goal the government of Uganda committed itself to affirmative action aimed at opening a new chapter for women who had for long been locked up in chains at the backyards of their homes as housewives because of historical, economic and cultural imbalances.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Sexual violence runs on as a challenge that female journalists are facing in Ugandan media houses

taking place in so many forms including unwanted physical contact and demands for sexual favors and because of this pressure they tolerate and participate in sexual harassments in order to advance their careers.  In the news rooms it's such a serious issue that only women are violated sexually but also the male however the women are the biggest victims in this scandal and carry the biggest percentage.

Lydia Felly Akullu of daily monitor [2023] says that Sexual harassment cases are on the rise in the newsroom even to female student interns because many women do not want to speak up to save themselves from public mockery. Silence of the victims, parents who protect victims and the people in high positions of power are catalysts to this vice. Training teachers, youth, social workers, the police, the justice system, health care providers, would go a long way in curbing the vice. Therefore this study wants to further investigate the sexual violence faced by female journalists in the media houses of Uganda.

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to analyze the various sexual violations of female journalists as they pursue their career of journalism and communication in the Ugandan media houses. Below are the objectives.

- To find out the ways how female journalists are sexually violated in the media houses or the newsrooms.
- To investigate on the challenges or threats female journalists face while trying to seek for justice.
- To find out why the managers sexually violate female journalist and the victim's responses.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the different forms of sexual violations experienced by female journalist in Ugandan media houses?

2. What are the barriers or challenges female journalist face when attempting to report s e x u a l violations against them?

3. Are female journalists in Ugandan media houses forced into sexual violations or there's consent?

## 1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is based on two televisions in Uganda and two newspapers. The television stations are NTV Uganda a subsidiary of nation media group and UBC TV [Uganda Broadcasting Cooperation]. The newspapers are the Kasangati Times Community Newspaper a private owned news agency and Bukudde newspaper under vision group. These media houses have been chosen for the study because they are easily accessible and are located in the heart of Kampala the capital city of Uganda. They also have the largest number of female journalists working there hence making it easy to conduct the study

## 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is indeed significant because it's the minority of the researchers who conduct on sexual violations in Ugandan media houses. This study adds or builds up on the current awareness on sexual violations in media houses or newsrooms. There's a lot that is new being done in secret in the media houses. This study is significant because it compares and examines the existing data on sexual violations of female journalist in the newsroom. This study will also arise concern and stir serious panel discussions in different media houses and other public offices in Uganda hence triggering the sexual offenders to stop.

## 1.7 THEORITICAL FRAME WORK

This study is in hand with media and gender which carries on the objection theory. According to Calogero [2012] this theory examines the high tendency to equate women and their bodies hence negative outcomes for women's body structure. The objection theory provides an important

framework for getting to know or understand, research and intervene to improve women's lives in a context that sexually objectifies the female body and this is according to Moffit and Car [2011].

Among adults, Calogero observes that women report significantly more explicit sexual objectification than men do from women. A study by APA (2007) also shows that sexual objectification of women exists almost in every aspect of life in the United States from the media, women's interpersonal experiences to specific environments and sub cultures. The study that examined depictions of girls in the media including in commercials, prime-time television programs, movies, music lyrics and videos, magazines, advertising, sport media, video games, and internet sites shows that women more often than men are depicted in sexualizing and objectified manners. These include wearing revealing and provocative clothing, portrayed in ways that emphasize their body parts, sexual readiness and serving as decorative objects.

Although Tiggerman [2004] criticizes this objection theory that it was actually developed as a framework to understand the female experiential consequences of residing in a culture that sexually objectifies the female body. Ballgame [2008] also critics this theory so much for reducing women to or referred to as a thing. That if a man wants sexual activities with a woman just because her body is appealing it is then equal to reducing her to a mier thing and the man is doing something wrong and that it is a misleading theory because it pushes men who want to have sex with things or objects.

Moving on, this study also aims at getting to find out deeply the modes or ways of sexual violence of female journalists through some of the experiences of victims in the Ugandan newsrooms, hearing from the victims, station managers or bosses and challenges faced while seeking for justice. So, this theory is being used to explain why sexual violations are too much in the media houses or newsrooms and why some victims choose to respond in certain ways. According to Mills and Barlow [2012] a

theory used enables or helps to fully explain the world by giving ways of thinking about it and possible approaches that might have new knowledge. So, this is why the researcher aims to achieve by using the objection theory to get deep into sexual violations of female journalists in the media houses and newsrooms.

## 1.8 Summary

Sexual violence of female journalists in the media houses of Uganda affects the final message according to the Harold D. Lasswell's model of communication, as any other interference with the other areas of the model would. This is one of the reasons why the researcher conducted a study in this area to expand research on the sender or communicator as the case has been for the other areas of the Harold D. Lasswell's communication model such as: the message-medium-receiver-effects. The study is guided by three research questions and a theory appropriate in discussing why perpetuators and victims of sexual violence behave in certain ways. This chapter has, therefore, laid the foundation for conducting research in the area of sexual violence of female journalists in the Ugandan media houses. I have noted the significance of conducting this research including that it is an opportunity to widen knowledge in an area where little attention has been given in the past.

## CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.0    Introduction

This chapter mainly reviews the literature or information written by other scholars both nationally

and internationally so we are going to identify and analyze the relevant information and research findings by other scholars about the sexual violations faced or encountered by female journalist in the newsrooms or media houses in different states like Australia and Europe specifically Ukraine. It aims to provide and add on the current knowledge and gaps in the field.

## 2.1 Sexual violence in Europe [Ukraine]

Ukraine free-lance journalist Aizenberg [2023] covers a story of one of the female journalists working at a certain media house in Ukraine who threw herself into the job and appeared to be a rising star. One evening, the editor-in-chief, who would occasionally drive her home after late shifts, hinted that her "career would go up" if they went to Italy together. Scared and disgusted she refused and immediately slipped from the hope of Ukraine journalism to talentless mediocrity in a week. She decided not to tell anyone and resigned later on. Women journalists in Ukraine say that they are all too familiar with unsolicited sexual attention, often accompanied by the promise of some kind of help in their career. The NGO women in the media and Ukrainian Women's fund [2022] found that 53% of the female professionals have been subjected to sexual violence at work. Another 33% said they had witnessed colleagues being sexually violated but only 9% defined themselves as victims.


## 2.2 Sexual Violence in Australia

According to North [2015] Female journalists' experiences of sexual violence are barely documented in the literature about Australian news journalism despite evidence of its ongoing prevalence. There have been some stories of sexual violence detailed in autobiographies by female journalists and the occasional article in the mainstream media about individual incidents, but it wasn't until 1996 that a union survey provided statistical evidence of an industry-wide problem. That Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance survey found that more than half of the 368 female participants had experienced sexual violence at work. In 2012, I conducted the largest survey of female journalists in Australia finding that there was an increased number of respondents who had experienced sexual harassment in their workplaces. [North, 2015]. Sexual violence flourishes in cultures that

privilege hegemonic masculinity, and the male-dominated microcosm of the Australian news media has provided a fertile breeding ground for sexual violence to become an engrained part of the occupational culture of journalism since women began to enter the industry in ever greater numbers from the 1980s.

## 2.3    Sexual violence in Africa

In Egypt sexual violence is common in that a very big number of Egyptian women and girls complained about the practice and went ahead to share some of their personal experiences on social media that they have been going through [ Afify,2017]. The campaign that was stirred up by a university graduate on the streets of Egypt's cities where over the years women have always faced sexual violence by men or even a gang of men during public gatherings, protests or celebrations.

There is evidence that clearly shows that female journalists who cover those events for news stories in Egypt are targeted and sexually violated on the streets and yet they face the same problem in the media houses [Afify,2017]. In the year 2013 and the year 2014 IWMF global survey, a British respondent shared and described some of sad experiences while covering the Arab Spring at the Tahrir Square in Egypt. She narrated that she was cut on the waist in a taxi while the driver who had locked the door shamelessly masturbated on her and tapped on her buttocks. The interviewees in the survey cited government officials and some police officers among the beasts of sexual violence. It is important to note that the issue of sexual violence in the Arab world increased attention due to the media coverage of sexual assaults and violence on female journalists and citizen during the Arab spring uprising [Melki,2016]. Egypt located in the North Africa, is one of the Arab countries where society accepts disrespectful treatment for women as earlier noted.

Moving on, in Yaoundé the capital city of Cameroon in West Africa a female journalist said that she really faced a lot of challenges each time she went out for interviews as male disturbers were often

interested in her than her role as a journalist [leina,2011]. Perverse and hungry editors also demanded relationships from female journalists before granting them favors and most times female journalists working late at night are raped while returning home. Therefore, it was not surprising that a television proprietor in West Africa once emphasized to his staff that ladies of the station were expected to look beautiful so as to attract audiences and nothing too intellectual is required of them [Leina,2011].

In Tanzania, sexual violence is actually cited by Henshall [2012] as one of the major barriers to enter media houses for different roles. Some of the female journalists in the country believe that their stories cannot run in the media houses in newspapers or on TV no matter how good they may be unless when they have given into the sexual demands of the male beasts at the media houses including sleeping with them [ Henshall 2012].

It is important to note that in Africa, sexual violence is not seen or taken as a big evil because so many cultures allow men to make sexual advances towards women are not expected to take it in bad faith. This is actually agreed and supported by Pradhan Malla [2005, pp.3] who notices that sexual violence in some parts of the world is seen as harmless flirting and it is taken as expression of men's appreciation for women forgetting that flirting is actually mutual consent behavior between two people whereas violence is not.

## 2.4  Sexual violence in Uganda

Sexual Violence in Uganda of female journalists or staff is not new although many times cases go undocumented, making it rare to come across official statistics of what has been happening. However, in one of these incidents of sexual violence that came to the limelight in 2015, a senior athletics coach was seriously arrested over allegations of raping three of the girls on the national junior athletics team (AFP, 2015). The victims explained that the coach raped them during a training

camp in eastern Uganda after misleading and confusing them that by getting pregnant and later aborting, they would become better runners (AFP, 2015). In a society like Uganda where children grow up being taught to respect elders, it's easy for young females to be confused and misled by their elders or superior bosses to the extent of being seduced and persuaded into a sexual intercourse. There is also evidence suggesting that male Members of Parliament in Uganda sexually violate their female counterparts especially new comers. In an interview with the New Vision newspaper, former Usuk county MP, Proscovia Alengot, who was the youngest in the 9th Parliament, complained about male staff members who used to violate her sexually, noticing that she had found the practice traumatizing and that she would run home immediately after the plenary in order to avoid the sexual beasts (Natukunda, 2017, April 11). "You know men; they want to take you out, comment on your looks, all those things" (pp.33). A recent incident in which a female MP from Western Uganda dragged a 25-year-old student to the courts of law for sexually harassing her, further explains the extent of the practice inside and outside office. This is why in her study, 'Point of order, Mr. Speaker', African women mentioning that their space in Parliament, relating to sexual violence of female MPs in Parliament, Tamale (2000) observes that the practice has reached an alarming level although many female politicians have adopted a 'thicker skin' that they don't regard the repetitive sexual remarks directed at them as a problem and hence just brush it off. However, if sexual violence can happen to female MPs in Uganda, who are economically advantaged considering the figures on their pay, then for the low-income earners, such as many freelance female journalists, the situation is likely to be worse as their male colleagues take advantage of the miserable economic situations to violate them. This shows that in some societies, regardless of women's economic status, sexual violence takes over due to cultural beliefs.

Al Jazeera (2017) notes that almost 90 percent of all Ugandan women have experienced sexual violence in some way or the other. The Al Jazeera website report is based on an online survey conducted by one of the NGOs in Uganda during a campaign to counter sexual violence (Cavell, 2017).

Although a recent report of the 2016 Demographic Survey conducted between June 20, 2016 and December 2016, whose results were released in 2017, showed that 13% of the female respondents in Uganda had experienced sexual violence in the last 12 months prior to the survey (Lumu, Kagolo, 2017). The disparity in the results of the two studies may be caused by the level of awareness of the targeted samples about sexual violence with the higher percentage of 90 belonging to rural women, who have limited awareness of their rights and the lesser percentage of 13 belonging to urban women, who actually do know their rights, but face challenges to defend them.

In her study, Uganda Women near Parity but still leaving media houses in which Kaija (2013) focuses on the tough media house environment and the demand journalism places on female journalists, some of the respondents notice that the media houses are characterized by gender segregation and sexual violence and yet no one takes the issues seriously. One of the interviewees in the study said she survived the practice because her senior supervisor kept advising her on how to deal with it unlike her colleagues who had no mentors. Meanwhile, the (IWMF) global survey whose results were released in 2014, had a chilling testimony of a respondent from Uganda, narrating how one day her supervisor summoned her to his office and forced her to watch a sexually explicit movie on his computer. She said that he wanted her to get into the sexual mood like the way he was feeling. He grabbed her hand and forcefully made it touch his erected penis and top of that kissed her on the lips. This research study aims at filling those gaps by pointing at several modes of sexual violence in the Ugandan Media Houses through the experiences the victims went through.

## 2.5 Causes of Sexual Violence

Haruna and Audu (2016) in the study entitled Analysis of the causes and effects of sexual violence on the performance of female employees in some NGO's and organizations in Kogi state in Nigeria, notice that sexual violence happens in many ways. And some of these ways include pointing to an

adult as a girl, babe or darling- touching a person's clothes, hair or body mentioning sexual jokes or stories, making sexual comments about a person's body and showing sexually suggestive visuals. According to Tangri, Burt and Johnson (1982), there are the three models explaining the cause of sexual violence. And these are, the natural/biological, organizational, and social cultural models. The social-cultural model says sexual violence is a result of the larger patriarchal system in which male power is abused in a male dominated environment or society while, the organizational model says that that organizational hierarchies, do provide the opportunity for exploitation sexually. Yet, the natural/biological model says that sexual violence reflects the urge drive for males to be sexually aggressive. These three models are common in most of the media houses in the different parts of the world especially those dominated or taken up by the men in terms of numbers and positions they hold.

According to Haruna et al., (2016), sexual violence can also be caused by poverty as victims crave for financial favors from their superiors without intending to offer them sexual favors. The superiors may take advantage and demand sexual favors. In many African media houses where there is a difference in payment between female and male journalists  sexual violence is most definitely likely to continue happening. Sexual violence at the workspace is also caused by a provocative dress code of the victim or at times her behavior (Cates, 2012). Although, this argument assumes that men completely lack self-control over their sexual desires. And citing Suzan Faludi, the author of Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women, Minnesota University website points out that some men violate women because they perceive their goal of achieving social-economic equality as a challenge to their traditional roles of providers in their families. "Because of that women are usually subjected to discrimination and given weak job assignments, low payment and less chances of promotion which is accompanied by sexual violence to humiliate and embarrass them."

## 2.6    Effect of Sexual Violence

Henshall (2012) notices that sexual violence causes more threats which many women feel too scared

to report, get worried about the risk of losing their jobs. North (2016), notes that sexual violence is one of the issues that kills a woman's confidence and strips away her identities as an equal participant in the organization that sometimes, the victim stops making eye contact and male friendships with male colleagues at the workspace. Victims of sexual violence are damaged physically, emotionally and psychologically (Natukunda, 2017). Citing the 2015 Action Aid report, titled Safe Cities for Women, Natukunda (2017) noted that the too much fear of sexual violence has forced women in the world all over to change their walking directions in cities; from being able to work in certain places, using commuter buses or even taking night classes at some universities. Many of the female journalists' careers and promotion opportunities have also been hindered by among other things, a workplace characterized by male dominancy culture that promotes sexual violence, a lack of equal opportunity policies and the imbalanced allocation of less prestigious soft news stories to female journalists (North, 2016). Economically, due to sexual violence, female journalists are sometimes treated differently from their male colleagues when it comes to payment, with them receiving a better salary package and social insurance benefits (Leina, 2011). This is exemplified by a depressing fact about gender parities in payments of female journalists in the United States that appears in a recent report, "Women and the Media in the US", showing that Angelina Jolie, the highest paid female film star, makes about the same per movie as each of the two lowest paid male stars, Denzel Washington and Liam Neeson among the top 10 for each sex (Alter, 2014).

Sexual violence at the work space, according to the University of Minnesota website may also force women to forego a chance for a promotion if they refuse to give in their bodies to the person in authority demanding for sex. The practice puts pressure on women resulting in loss of morale, stress and keeping women in the lower positions of their jobs for fear of elevating up to face even more challenging problems. In many media houses, especially in the developing economies including in Uganda, as a result of discrimination/violence, lack of skills and experience, many female journalists can only work as freelance journalists, meaning that they do not have a chance to be assigned to

cover big political and business stories to also shine like their male colleagues (Kaija, 2013). Yet freelance journalists are underworked, poorly facilitated, ill-trained and they can only earn a monthly take home of about 200,000 Ugandan Shillings.

However, researchers have noted that by deserting the profession due to the above challenges; female journalists deny the media the broad experience from their perspective. The failure to retain the good female talent also threatens the ability of companies to draw new and diverse audiences as well as to innovate and adapt in the rapidly changing world (Cramer & Creedon, 2007). This is because of the poor retention rate of female journalists in the media houses that the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), a grassroots monitoring, research and advocacy project, in its reports highlights a worldwide gender difference in the media houses (Mannila, 2017). Data from the GMMP indicated that in 2015, women made up only 24 percent of the people heard, read about or seen in the news. The superiority of males in the media houses that results from the undervaluing of the females implies that to a significant degree whatever we see, read and listen to is structured from the men's point of view despite women's increased enrolment in the media (Anyango, 2009).

According to the Global Report on the Status of Women in Media Houses published by the IWMF in 2011, the hurdles or difficulties women face in the media houses including sexual violence, may explain why male journalists continue to outnumber them in the Ugandan media houses, with men numbering 306 (58%) and women 227 (42%), a difference of over 15 percent. Yet more females graduate in journalism from Ugandan universities than their male counterparts compared to many other countries, raising concern on where women journalists go after their university training and calling for research in the area (Kaija, 2013). This raises more questions because "in Uganda there are one million more women than men" according to the 2014 population census report (New Vision, 2014).

A 1987 United States Chamber of Commerce report also noticed that female professionals, vice-presidents and above earn 42% less than their male colleagues (Wolf, 1990). Meanwhile, the Human Development Report (2016) observes that in 100 countries, females including journalists are legally omitted from some jobs because of their gender (UNDP, 2017). And because of this, the victims delve into other more conducive sectors of the economy including fashion, farming, business or even becoming housewives. A study conducted by Grace Swanson (2016) among journalists in the United States media clearly shows that females leave the profession because of discrimination or segregation, low pay, lack of job security, and negative effects on family life.

## 2.7    Managing or dealing with Sexual Violence

Pradhan-Malla (2005) states down that there are constant efforts across the globe to increase awareness of, and address sexual violence. One biggest challenge, though, in addressing sexual violence is that victims in many parts of the world, especially where moral and practical support are given not, prefer to keep silent, worrying that if they came out, they would be seen as loose women who give in easily (Pradhan-Malla, 2005). In the struggle to end sexual violence, the 2014 IWMF report suggested several different ways in which a female journalist can reduce exposure to the practice. They include women being aware of certain critical cultural norms and practices in their communities or areas such as a good local dress code, covering a scarf on the head in the Muslim countries and also keeping in mind that any situation and any time can directly shoot a security risk. Although, some of these cultural norms come forth as old fashioned and stagnant as women were highly discriminated and segregated because of their gender. Haruna et al. (2016) suggests that sexual violence in the workspace can be contained by introducing and formalizing of sanctions that are against indecent dressing. They argue that the situation can be solved by putting up certain restrictions or discussions and gossip that may result into dirty sexual talk. Introduction of a new model of mentoring junior colleagues in the media houses that protects them from exploitation by beast bosses and supervisors is also proposed.

## 2.8 Literature Review Summary

In this section, the researcher has gone deep to look at sexual violence in different parts of the world and that includes Europe, Australia, different parts of Africa and Uganda more so the causes of sexual violence, its effects and ways on how to deal and manage sexual violence has also been talked about in the Literature review. A certain incident of sexual violence was pointed out in the Ugandan media houses which brought the determination to carry out more research into the modes of sexual violence through different experiences of the victims and how they respond to the habit or practice and the difficulties or challenges victims face in seeking their justice. The literature review also delved into how excessive the habit of practice is in the media houses and solutions in the media houses to help victims handle the habit. The literature review will be a stable ground work in informing the researcher about the available gaps and heaviness of the situation she is investigating.

## CHAPTER THREE

## METHODOLOGY

**3.0 Introduction**

This chapter basically explains or describes the study's research design and examining the selected methods and their significance on investigating about sexual violations in the media houses of Uganda. In this chapter we shall take a view on the research design, area of study, data sources, population and sampling technique, data collection tools, data analysis and limitation of study.

**3.1    Research Design**

This study used a qualitative research approach to examine the researcher's choice of research approach according to Creswell[2014] Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and getting to know groups ascribe to social or human problems. The process of this kind of research involves emerging questions and steps, data typically collected in the participants setting and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data still according to Creswell [2014].

**3.2    Area of study**

The study was focused on two newspapers media agencies and two television media houses in Uganda. The newspapers are Bukedde newspaper under vision group and Kasangati Times Community Newspaper a private owned news agency. The television stations are NTV Uganda a subsidiary of nation media group and UBC TV. These were selected respectively print and media houses for this study in Uganda. These media houses are developed well, organized or set well and gender balanced hence giving a sample required of this study. Easy accessibility is one of the reasons these four media groups are selected because they are in the heart of Kampala the Capital city of Uganda.

Uganda Broadcasting Corporation Television (UBC TV) is the national broadcaster in Uganda. According to (http://www.pressreference.com/Sw-Ur/Uganda.html, UBC TV dominates Uganda's television broadcasting waves because its signals cover up to 60 percent of the country and has the best picture and sound quality of all active stations in the country. Until 1992 when the media

industry in the country was liberalized, UBC TV was known as Uganda Television (UTV), (Kaija, 2013). UTV was established in 1963 just after Uganda got her independence in 1962. The restructuring of UTV to UBC TV in the 1990s was done by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government to reorganize the institution that had nearly collapsed following years of insecurity in the country and mismanagement of government agencies. According to the station's website (https://ubc.ug/index.php/contact-us/,), the core values of UBC TV which is found in the capital Kampala include trustworthiness, fairness, integrity, professionalism and transparency although this is rarely reflected in some of its programmes including news that is majorly biased in favor of the ruling party. The channel's mission is to inform, educate, guide and entertain the public through maintaining national coverage while its vision is to broadcast quality programs for national development. According to the Kantar-Geopoll Media Measurement's daily survey on audience habits for TV in 2016, UBC is among the five most famous television stations in the country.

NTV Uganda is a Ugandan television station under the Nation Media Group (NMG) operating in East Africa. It is one of the companies owned by Aga Khan IV and it has been on air since 2006. It is located in the heart of Kamapala at Serena Hotel. NTV Uganda has several TV presenters and hosts with different departments like the newsroom and others. They have quite a number of employees both female and male so basically there is gender balance at the media house. They also have a website which is *ntv.co.ug*. it is also important to note that NTV Uganda affiliates with Spark TV and it is in the same location.

Bukedde is a daily Ugandan Newspaper that is under Vision Group. It produces daily newspapers in the country in print in Luganda language with an estimated daily circulation of about 33,290 copies. Bukedde Newspaper is available on the internet too and it is located along First Street Industrial Area in Kampala Uganda. It also has a good number of employees both male and female which brings about gender balance at the news agency. The name Bukedde translates loosely into English as *"morning has come"*.

Lastly, Kasangati Times Community Newspaper is a private owned agency. It was founded in 2021 in the month of April by two Ugandan gentlemen who are passionate about journalism. That is Apollo and Alex. It is located in Kasangati-Gayaza, Wakiso district. They employ about 70-80 individuals who cooperate as at team to look for news stories, have them edited and distributed to the community in form of print. Kasangati Times Community Newspaper also has an online platform where news is distributed, *https://kasangatitimes.com/*.

## 3.3    Data Sources

Both primary and secondary data sources were used for this study. The primary data in this aspect was obtained using a structured interview guide targeting some responses from female journalists in the media houses. It's also important to note that an interview is conversation where issues are produced through the one-on-one talk between the interviewer and interviewee according to [Seidman, 2013]. Interviewing much requires that the researcher ought to have access and engage with some potential participants they have actually never met before. Interviewing also requires or demands that our actions as people interviewing show that other people's stories matter and are important. Interviews happen in many ways or forms for example the use of surveys, online interviews, phone call interviews, one on one engagements and so many others.

Interviewing helps reconstruct events which the researcher has not experienced before such as illegal border crossing to becoming a paid assassin (Rubin &Rubin, 2012). Through interviewing, researchers can further build separate interviews into one to create a portrait of complicated processes. Interviewing the victims in something sometimes helps challenge a long-held assumption which results into better programming of public policies (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In the qualitative research approach, there are mainly three types of interviews (Gill et al., 2008). These are structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews, which this study adopts, are generally a verbal form where a list of predetermined questions is put forward by the interviewer to the interviewee with little or no

variation of the questions and with no scope to ask follow up questions to responses that need further interrogation. Bryman (2012, Pp. 208), discusses structured interviews in the following way: structured interview, sometimes called a standardized interview entails the administration of an interview schedule by an interviewer. The aim is for all interviewees to be given exactly the same context of questioning. This means that each respondent receives exactly the same interview stimulus as any other. The goal of this style of interviewing is to ensure that interviewees' replies can be aggregated, and this can be achieved reliably only if those replies are in response to identical cues. Interviewers are supposed to read out questions exactly and in the same order as they are printed on the schedule. Questions are usually very specific and often offer the interviewee a fixed range of answers (this type of question is often called closed, closed ended, pre-coded, or

fixed choice) (Bryman, 2012, Pp.208).

Gill et al. (2018) argues that structured interviews may not be good in circumstances that need details. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews have got key questions that help to define the areas to be explored and permit the interviewer and interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in detail. Lastly, the unstructured interview does not show any form of preconceived theory or ideas and are performed with very little or no order. This type of interview could start from any point. The structured interview was adopted to help aggregate the findings but was self-administered due to the sensitivity of the subject.

Interviewing has got a number of advantages such as: easy correction of speech in cases of a misunderstanding or mistake. The interviewer can also collect sufficient information because there is room to ask any question. However, like any other research methods, interviewing has also got disadvantages. It is labor intensive demands a lot of time and sometimes finances. The researcher has to conceptualize the project, establish access and make contact with participants, interview them, transcribe the data and then work the material and share what he or she has leaned

[Seidman,2013]

The secondary data in this study or research focused particularly on some of the codes of conduct of different media houses digging or bringing out provision of sexual violations if any to be used in the analysis of the findings. The primary sources refer to the basis of data collected in the field while secondary is data obtained from already written material of different scholars and authors.

## 3.4    Population and Sampling Techniques

The researcher chose the samples from two television media houses and from two print. These four media houses were selected because of their convenience for the researcher. Selecting both television and print media houses was also intended to draw variations from two media house environments. Prior to collecting the data or information the researcher paid a visit to each media house and got permission from the agency or station managers. She distributed interview guides to respondents at these four media houses. The researcher used convenient sampling in identifying participants for this study. The sampling method was found to be appropriate because it allowed the researcher target participants who were more accessible to her and those, she suspected to have information based on their experiences in the media houses and other offices they hold. The respondents in this study varied in age and experience in the media houses. The biggest challenge however in having all the interview guides returned was that there were very few female journalists in the media houses and because of that some respondents showed an interest in filling them but they were later disinclined to participate. It is very important to understand that the researcher from the beginning depended on an estimate of the number of female journalists in the media houses since there is no really a clear list of registered female journalists in any media house in Uganda.

In distributing the questions, the researcher ensured that every female journalist in the media houses who was accessible got a chance to fill it. Though in one of the media houses, she found a challenge

when the human resource manager halted the process of collecting some of the responses, mentioning that he is not comfortable with the procedure and yet the news editors had cleared the researcher to proceed. The good part is that the researcher had already collected a significant number of guided from the respondents whose information she used for this case study. The other problem faced during data collection process was that some of the media houses have a policy that does not allow research to be conducted in their media houses. However, the researcher met some staff members who understand the importance of research and so they were willing to help the researcher who approached them individually for help.

In another media house, where the researcher carried out her research, she was assured by one of the editors that if she had gone through the human resource manager as the official policy required, she

would not have been allowed to carry out the research. The problem with this closed-door policy of research in these media houses is that there is vital information, which the researcher may not get by following the right procedure. The researcher in this case was unable to get some company policies yet they were needed for the analysis of her data. This failure happened because some of the human resources managers, who had the policies on their desks in their offices, felt that releasing them to the researcher would subject their company to scrutiny. In one of the media houses, a manager said, before declining to give the researcher a copy of the company code of conduct, that it is "our heart; we can't let it out." This may explain why research in the Ugandan media industry is usually conducted in selected newsrooms with fair research policies.

## 3.5    Data Collection Tools/Instruments

Research data can be collected using several tools and instruments but not all can be used. It is only a few tools relevant to a particular research study that are used. In otherwards, it will be a waste of time employing all the tools regardless of whether they apply or not. The researcher in this study used structured interview guide which was self-administered to achieve the intended goal. The

interviewing was self-administered because of the sensitivity of the topic so it was easy for the researcher to get genuine answers from female respondents about their experiences on sexual harassment since she is also a female. This meant that the respondents were given the interview guides which they answered at their own convenient time and returned without their names for further confidentiality. The researcher delivered the interview questions to the respondents in their respective media houses. The questions were sealed in envelops to ensure confidentiality of the respondent and after filling, they returned them. Participants were asked not to put their names on the question papers. The researcher used fictitious names of the respondents while presenting and analyzing the data for further confidentiality.

## 3.6    Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were part of the data collection process this researcher undertook in this study. Before collecting data, she secured her university ID from Ugandan Christian University (UCU) to seek permission in all the four media houses. Further to give the interviewees enough space and freedom to speak freely about sexual violence in the media houses which is a sensitive topic she used self-administered interview guides which the respondents answered in their privacy and without including their names. The researcher handed over the interview questions to the respondents in envelops, which she asked them to seal after filling such that no one else apart from her had access to the information. She put the questions in the envelopes after consulting some of the pilot respondents, who advised accordingly. Respondents were also advised not to put their names on the guide and fictitious names were used to replace or represent the respondents while presenting the data for further confidentiality. The researcher explained to participants before they answered the questions that the research was purely for her academic purposes and that at no single point would he share the data with any outsider.

## 3.7    Data Management and Analysis

The interview guide was edited before entry to make any corrections and also ensure accuracy of the information. This was followed by coding all the open-ended questions in the instrument to

smoothen data entry as well as analysis. On completion of data entry, accuracy was checked to ensure that all information was captured. The researcher then used casual content analysis, and thematic analysis which allowed her place the collected data into different themes for easy handling.

## 3.8    Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations starting with the fact that not much research had previously been conducted on this topic in a Ugandan context because it is such a sensitive issue meaning that getting local literature required for laying a strong theoretical foundation has been a challenge. The fact that the Ugandan culture perceives sexual violence to be normal was another limitation as many participants were not open on the topic since they thought it was either not a big issue or was very sensitive to discuss in public. The size of the number of female journalists in some of these media houses was the other challenge because it was not easy to get the required sample size and the researcher nearly involved all the female journalists. The Management of some of the media houses was also not ready and willing to allow the researcher conduct the study on such a sensitive topic that was likely to expose and embarrass their staff and reputation of their companies. lack of funds to conduct a comprehensive and thorough study was yet another limitation. By using only four media houses NTV a subsidiary of Nation Media Group, UBC TV, Bukedde News Paper under Vision Group and Kasanagati Times Community Newspaper a private owned news agency.  However, the results of this study from participants give a clearer perspective of sexual violence of female journalists in the Ugandan media houses. Lastly another limitation is that the researcher was also almost sexually violated because she is female so it was a real challenge.

## 3.9    Pilot Study

The interview guide was initially piloted among some female journalists working for a local newspaper based in Kampala, where the final data collected was not harvested for this study. The plot study showed some challenges about the awareness and sincerity of some of the respondents in answering the questions on the topic. Some of them would, for example, say that they have not heard of any sexual harassment violence in the media houses and others said that the practice is

very common and has drawn the attention of some managers to the extent of discussing it in their respective general meetings. The fact that some respondents would even give real life examples of the practice in the media houses that should have been in the public know would make one doubt the sincerity of the other respondents, who answered that they were not aware of the practice. There was also a challenge with the respondents who answered that they had no knowledge of sexual violence in the media house, but would later give forms of sexual violence which they have experienced or even observed in the media houses. In order to address this concern, the researcher explained to the respondents the broader extent of sexual violence, which they had unknowingly experienced or observed, such as: sexual touches from male colleagues, seemingly giving careless remarks about certain body parts (buttocks and breasts).

During piloting, some respondents also missed certain questions so the researcher later requested each of the respondents to attempt every question. She went ahead and explained that whereas the gaps left for the answers were long, it did not mean that respondents were required to provide very long answers, which resulted in many of them attempting all the questions. The other lesson from the pilot stage was that every female journalist, regardless of age, should have the opportunity of filling the interview guide because each respondent has a different experience in her age bracket. This means that data collected would show the extent of the problem over the years.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

## 4.0    Introduction

This chapter focuses on the findings and analysis of the data in line with the objectives of the study as listed in chapter one. The data was collected using open -ended questionnaires among 34 participants in total. The results and analysis have been presented following three research questions. What are the modes of sexual violence of female journalists through experiences of the victims in Uganda media houses? How do female journalists and media managers respond to sexual violence? What challenges do victims of sexual violence face in seeking justice?

## 4.1 Overview

This section contains an overview of the data collected from the respondents. Most of the respondents in the study 14 (41.18%) worked for two newspapers in Uganda. While the other 20 (58.82%) were from the two television media houses in Uganda. The age distribution of the respondents in this study was relatively evenly spread with the majority aged between 24 and 33 (38.24%), 35 and 40 (38.24%) then finally 40 and 45 (23.53%).

The data also shows that the majority of the victims of sexual violence are in the age group that is between 24 and 33 then 35 and 40 who may also be the majority in the Ugandan media houses. Female journalists that are sexually violated by their male colleagues and superiors are also usually those who are less experienced when it comes to tasks or assignments. The age group of 24 and 33 especially to take note of is when many journalists have completed university or institutes and are beginning their journalism careers in the media houses.

See the Table 1 below regarding the age groups of the participants

4.2 Table 1 showing the participant's age groups

| AGE BRACKET | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EVERY AGE BRACKET |
|---|---|
| 24 -33 | 13 |
| 35-40 | 13 |
| 40-45 | 8 |
| TOTAL | 34 |
|  |  |

According to the data collected from the 34 respondents who filled and returned the questionnaires for this study, to my surprise 100% answered YES that sexual violence is a big problem in their respective newsrooms and none of them said NO.

The findings revealed that all the respondents had experienced sexual violence in the media houses because it has become a normal practice and the male colleagues do not respect their female peers at all and they are not even bothered about age.

See Table 2 below for further details.


4.3. Table 2 showing key responses on sexual violence of female journalists in the Ugandan Media Houses.

| QUESTION | Number of Respondents saying YES | Number of Respondents saying NO | TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is sexual violence a big problem in the media houses? | 16 | 0 | 34 |
| Have you ever been sexually violated in the media house? | 11 | 0 | 34 |
| Have you ever been sexually violated in the field? | 7 | 0 | 34 |


The offenders of sexual violence in the field were mainly influential people in society, who are newsmakers and are financially sound, they often wanted to exchange news and money for sex with female journalists. Although the labor laws require that employers should ensure that their employees know their organization's codes of conduct to guide them when aggrieved like in cases of sexual violence some said they were not aware of the organization/s code of conduct about sexual violence hence there would have no basis for filing complaints against offenders of sexual violence.

However, there are those who mentioned that they knew their organization's codes of conduct about sexual violence, unfortunately half of them could not explain what they were exactly.

The data further showed that one of the four media organizations did not have a known code of conduct for its employees in that the disciplinary committee in this organization was not guided by the code when handling complaints, including sexual violence. Although, even in others which had codes of conduct, the sections dealing with sexual violence were very brief, often only mentioning that the practice was unwelcome without stipulating the penalties or procedures required to file a complaint. The absence of the clear codes of conduct in some media organizations shows that there is less concern on disciplinary issues, especially in areas that are perceived not to have a direct effect on the organization's revenue, hence allowing abuses such as sexual violence to thrive. Note that whereas some of these codes were brief on details of crimes such as sexual violence, on others like corruption that had a direct impact on the general revenue of the media organizations were detailed

4.4 Table 4 showing the number of categories of males who sexually violated the respondents

| Category of people who sexually violated female journalists in the media houses | Total number of categories of people who violated female journalists in the media houses |
| --- | --- |
| Bosses | 13 |
| colleagues | 16 |
| Both colleagues and bosses | 8 |

In many media houses of Uganda, when a journalist is promoted to a bigger post such as editor or newsroom supervisor and Programmed Director [PD], it is like a reward to earn more money and enjoy other benefits like making decisions of which ads should run on TV or news stories. Some of

these people will take advantage of their top positions to abuse these powers by asking their female subordinates for sexual favors before running their stories. A cross section of Ugandans believes that when you are appointed to an influential office, it is your turn to reap benefits, and that is one of the reasons why bosses in certain offices are like African kings with powers to prey on women and carry out other forms of abuse.

## 4.5 Forms of Sexual Violence

### 4.5.1. Unwanted physical contact

This was the most common form of sexual violence of female journalists in the media houses and in the field. The form came in several ways such as; touching and caressing of sensitive body parts, forceful kissing, forceful hugging with pressing of the breasts, and holding hands for long while tickling them. Overall, unwanted physical contact was mentioned by the respondents. Nearly all the respondents, who experienced unwanted physical touches, noted that the sensitive body parts targeted by the perpetrators of sexual violence in the media houses and field included; breasts, bums, thighs, hair, ears and shoulders. They noted that the incidents occurred almost all the times they met the perpetrators in the corridors and anywhere else inside and outside the media house yet the latter did not realize the effect of their actions. Carol, a news anchor journalist, said that one day; a male colleague walked straight to her and touched her breasts before breaking into laughter thinking she was excited. Nabossa who is also in the production unit in one of the media houses, noted that the perpetrator found her in the control room and intentionally touches her breasts claiming that they are big. However, karungi a field journalist experienced this form of sexual violence during her internship at a certain news media agency and she said that during her third week of internship, it was around midday and her supervisor told her that they are going in the field together that day to collect new stories, and so when they got in the car and drove off amidst the journey her supervisor started caressing her breasts and thighs claiming how beautiful she was.

Female journalists doing their internship are a target in the media houses when it comes to sexual violence as senior male journalists take advantage of their ignorance and inadequate skills to exploit them and use them sexually. In addition to that, female journalists are also targeted and exploited by sources Jemimah, a newspaper journalist also shared an experience during an interview with a source and she said that the interviewee seemed to have had a different agenda that when she entered his office, he stood up and locked the door and he began touching her breasts and later attempted to undress her. She further says that she was saved when his office attendant knocked on the door to handover something. He immediately stopped and opened the door (Jemimah, May, 2024).

The challenge female journalists face is that after going through such experiences, they start fearing to interact with the male sources and yet in a patriarchal society like Uganda, men occupy most of the big offices and are therefore the major newsmakers. This leaves female journalists to put all their attention on light work in the media houses and not have the chance to go for some heavy tasks. Samantha a television camera female personnel went through the same situation when the interviewee she met gave her a handshake where he scratched her palms which signified something else. Scratching of the palms of a female while greeting her may mean demand for sex. Unwanted touches is a form of sexual violence female journalists in Uganda have to live with most of the time because even when they use public means of transport to travel in the field or even to their offices to work, some passengers in taxis especially those that are crowded in the morning hours take advantage of the congestion to touch their bodies.

### 4.5.2 Sexist Comments
This form of sexual violence happens both within the media houses and in the field. This is how Ameria a journalist in one of the media houses and a victim of this form of sexual violence narrates her experience or what she went through. "My boss usually involved me in an uncomfortable conversation of a sexual nature and that was always hard to stop because I feared losing my job

compromising my performance if I showed less interest. He would ask me bedroom questions in front of everyone and this caused me a lot of shame and my confidence went down. I felt like everyone in the production unit knew what I was going through and the dilemma I was in. It was the most embarrassing and uncomfortable time of my working life (Ameria, June, 2024).

Female journalists, who are sexually violated by media managers, find themselves in such a dilemma not knowing what to do to escape the perpetrators because responding recklessly can cost them their jobs. Malaika, a sub editor in one of the media agencies complained that she meets a number of male sources who comment in a sexual way about her body and big buttocks that is always about how you have a nice body, and good behind. In a media house where journalists interact freely, this form of sexual violence makes victims uncomfortable and so reserved hence reducing their activity in the media house. This is what she said about the behavior of male sources. "I have met so many sources who will literally divert you the moment you step into their offices and they start asking questions like when was the last time you had sex, or if you're staying alone or with someone. They clearly project to you that they want to have a piece of you and hence shift the discussion to a personal affair. [Malaika, June 2024].

Casually, not so many female journalists like many women in Uganda look at this form as sexual violence because the nature of our society allows men to patronize women at the workplace so it becomes really problematic.

### 4.5.3 Sexual Demands and Favors.

Respondents noted that besides demanding that female journalists fulfil their job targets, bosses and colleagues ask them for sexual favors. Teopista, a television journalist narrated that one evening one of her friends was trying to finish her day's work in the studio switching off cameras when a male colleague from a different department went to where she was operating from and started demanding

that she meets him at his home after work. She narrated, "When she asked why he wanted to meet her at his home, the man was Frank and said he wanted sex. in Luganda he said, [njagala kulya].

However, Teopista a television journalist said that her friend suggested she is not comfortable with such an act but dinner to a decent restaurant would do. Sources also target female journalists in the field. Sabrina one of the news journalists in one media house narrated that she went to the media center fore an interview with a source who instead of answering her questions he was telling her how beautiful she was and how he would wish to spend a night with her. So, it becomes difficult for female journalists to concentrate on work both in the newsroom and field when some of their colleagues and sources look at them as sex objects.

### 4.5.4 Rape and Attempted Sexual Assault

This form of sexual violence is committed by both journalists in the media houses and sources in the field. Shiloh a female news anchor working for a television station explained that she narrowly survived being raped by a source in the field. She narrated and said that one time a source was in charge of a particular project they had gone to cover and was supposed to pay their accommodation and transport but later he decides that he wants to have sex with her which she brushed off immediately. She further narrates that at night he came into her room pretending to discuss some issues and forcefully tried to lay her on bed but she was saved by her male colleague who was passing by and came in handy to help her. [Shiloh, June, 2024].

In cases of rape and attempted sexual assault, victims fear coming out to report the offenders for fear of embarrassment, or due to lack of tangible evidence against them especially in cases of attempted sexual assault where no injury is inflicted. Noella, a newspaper journalist at one media agency observed that during fieldwork, some male organizers trap female journalists by boking them into their rooms in an attempt to seduce them into having sex, especially at night. This leads to the research question examining the responses of victims and media managers to sexual violence.

## 4.5.0 Feedback or Responses from Victims, Media Superiors

In an effort to deter off offenders of sexual violence, the female journalist who said that they had experienced sexual violence in their respective media houses gave responses on how they deal with the practice such as telling the offenders off, going silent or ignoring them, threatening them and most beating up the offenders and also blocking them on social media.

### 4.5.1 Telling off the Offenders

The respondents said that they have experienced sexual violence in the media houses and they told off the offenders of the act. Namitala a journalist working in the newsroom narrated her experience and said that one time her superior the news editor touched her waist and she became so bitter and angry and angrily told him never to do it again but then it hit her later that she might lose her job because of the way she spoke to her superior. [ Namitala, June, 2024].

Namitala however mentioned that this form of response can only apply when a victim is responding to a fellow colleague but not her supervisor. Queen a news journalist in one agent also mentioned that from the word go she made it clear to her workmates that she will not any form of sexual violence and that she has always told them off. Others also mentioned that they clearly tell off the offenders in their faces that they are not interested in what they are doing and they do not like it and hence should never repeat it again. This kind of response has challenges because Namitala also mentioned that usually men in our country Uganda do not take a lady's NO serious with a perception that women are always interested in such activities and its expected for them to say NO the first time but eventually will pick interest which is so wrong.

### 4.5.2 Ignoring the Offenders or Going Silent

One of the female journalists said that one time in the newsroom a male colleague touched her two breasts and she was in total shock with no word to him she moved away and went mute on him and also stopped interacting with male colleagues at work because it stuck in her mind that they would also sexually violate her in the same way. Lucia also mentioned that she went mute when she received a WhatsApp message from the facilitator at a media function she was supposed to attend and cover that he wanted to sleep with her and taste her sweet waters. She immediately blocked him and talked to supervisor to send another person cover the event claiming she got a medical emergency. In a similar way another one said that whenever her boss starts asking her for sexual acts during their discussion, she immediately finds a way of changing the topic.

### 4.5.3 Quitting the Media Houses and Newsrooms

Respondents noted that usually victims of sexual violence end up quitting some assignments or even resigning at the media house. Latifah went ahead to narrate her own experience and said that after refusing to go to a fancy hotel from the owner of the media organization he started making her life a place of hell especially during staff and directors' meetings where he could pin point at her for being so negligent with her job. She further said that when she realized it was getting toxic and out of control, she decided to quit the job and after some days they pleaded with her to return because some duties that would push the media house were supposed to be done specifically by her.

Kyomuhindo also said that she received a lot of forced kisses from one of the male superior male editors in the newsroom and she requested to stop being part of the team in the newsroom but she was hesitant because she feared losing her job at the same time.

### 4.5.4 Beating the Offenders

Petrina a female news anchor noted that on many occasions she slapped the so-called sexual

offenders who had gone ahead to sexually violate her even when she gave them strong warnings and threats. She said that she would slap them because the top authorities would not listen or come to her aid because of too much pretense and corruption in the working space acting as though the practice was normal.

Another one mentioned that she nearly slapped her boss who touched her buttocks intentionally Infront of all her colleagues claiming that they were too big. She decided not to show up for work for a full week due to the embarrassment she faced.

### 4.5.5 Blocking Offenders on Social Media

Respondents violated by sexual offenders on social media platforms like WhatsApp, telegram, twitter currently called X said that they don't reply, block their accounts and if the habit keeps on, they report the case to police. They also said in this new era opening up a social media account is easy just as blocking off the offenders the only challenge is where these sexual offenders open up new accounts to get back at their targets.

### 4.5.6 Challenges in Seeking Justice

Female journalists face significant challenges when attempting to seek justice against the sexual offenders.

### 4.5.7 Lack of Evidence

Lack of evidence against offenders of sexual violence is a common challenge which women in the media houses and elsewhere in the communities highly face. Respondents said that when a victim takes a step to report cases of sexual violence to their bosses or high authorities, they always tell them that they cannot act without evidence against the offenders. And it so happens that these

offenders do such practices when no one is watching or target when people are really few. The lack of CCTV cameras inside the newsrooms and production spaces to identify suspects or offenders and also in cases where someone witnesses an act of sexual violence, it is hard to convince them to testify against the offender due to fear of loosing work relationships with colleagues.

## 4.5.7 Absence of the Codes of Conduct

Some respondents noted that they have never actually seen a code of conduct that stipulates how sexual violence in the media house should be dealt with however there is a disciplinary board that handles general indiscipline and cases. So, this leaves them lost and in the dark regarding seeking justice against the offenders in case of sexual violence. Some victims as well do not know the forms of sexual violence if they are a crime which implies that even if they are traumatized with the act, they have to always let it go because it seems normal to some people.

## 4.5.8 Threats by Male Bosses

Some respondents noted that female journalists in the media houses or newsrooms are always threatened by their bosses or superiors. They threaten them of losing their jobs and making their lives hard if they keep on seeking useless justice and some blame them that it is because of their tempting dressing that leads them to act the way they act. Some female interns also said that if they file a case against sexual violence, it so happens that they lose the opportunity of not being helped at the media house with different tasks and end up being ignored until one chases themselves out.

## 4.5.9 The fear of being perceived as Timid

A certain respondent mentioned and said that victims do not want to be looked as weak or timid if they report any form of sexual violence so they choose to be calm and silent. Nantaba said that she did not report the male colleague who caressed her private parts in the production room by force for fear of being labelled cheap and sidelined by other male colleagues. She also said that some

departments in the media house are male dominated and they think sexual violence to female journalists is normal.

In summary, sexual violence of female journalists within media houses of Uganda really happens a lot in different forms such as unwanted physical contact, sexist comments, sexual demands and favors, rape and attempted sexual assault. In attempt to seek justice against the practice, victims face so many challenges like lack of evidence, absence of the codes of conduct, threats by male bosses and the fear of being perceived as timid.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLISION AND RECOMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

Several revelations concerning sexual violence of female journalists in the Uganda Media Houses, Reponses from the victims and media managers as well as challenges in seeking justice as presented below;

What has come out in this study is that sexual violence of female journalists exists in the Ugandan media houses, cases of sexual violence were identified and escalated, management's reaction was constrained by a patriarchal interpretation underpinned by traditional understandings of gender relations. Respondents were also of the view that media managers who were males, were sometimes the culprits in such cases. Furthermore, the absence and ignorance of codes of conduct made little impact in restraining the risk to female employees. Incidentally, the media industry in Uganda, which has all along been at the forefront of fighting other injustices against the vulnerable appears to have failed to notice the danger of the practice and eliminate it. Some male journalists defend their male colleagues engaging in the practice to the extent of refusing to provide evidence against them during the disciplinary hearing and also blame the victims, who file complaints against offenders for acting in an immature way. Therefore, unless something is done urgently to address the practice, sexual violence of female journalists in the newsroom and media houses will continue to go on.  This leads to the following recommendations on how to curb sexual violence in the Ugandan media houses.

## 5.2. Recommendations

There are several ways in which sexual violence of female journalist in Ugandan media houses can be addressed. For instance; sensitizing media managers to take sexual violence seriously, giving severe punishments to the offenders such as permanent dismal and also clearly stating what constitutes sexual violence and penalties. The purpose of the recommendation is to empower female journalist to deter sexual violence as stated below;

### 5.3.1. installation of CCTV Cameras

One of the most effective ways to deal with sexual violence in the media houses is by installing CCTV Cameras to record whatever happens on a daily basis such that in case of incidents of sexual violence like rape, unwanted physical touches, forced kisses and many more so that investigations are done with the help of evidence got from the footage.

### 5.3.2. Severe Punishments

Giving severe punishments to the offenders can help deal with sexual violence of female journalist in the media houses. It is also important to note that sexual violence sprouts up a lot in the Ugandan media houses because there are no severe punishments imposed on the culprits. Victims said that when a complaint is filed against the offenders, there are no serious measures taken on them but instead they are cautioned and left to continue with the practice. For sources that sexually violate female journalists, the Ugandan government should come up with severe punishments for men who sexually violate women.

### 5.3.3. Effective use of Codes of Conduct and Putting them into action

Media houses should enforce the codes of conduct in the different departments and implent policies on sexual violence and serious action must be taken. Media houses in Uganda should have clear policies on how to deal with sexual violence, victims noted that so many times when they file cases and complaints against the offenders, most media managers ignore the codes of conduct to deal with the practice.

### 5.3.4. Sensitization of Journalists and Media Managers

The other recommendation would be sensitization of both journalists and media managers on what exactly constitutes sexual violence. In the data, the respondents showed ignorance about what sexual violence constitutes and whether it is a practice woman in the newsrooms should worry about. Some of the victims preferred to go mute about their experiences not knowing where to begin from and the repercussions of their responses. Others considered certain forms of the practice such as demand for sexual favors by their male colleagues as the norm, which is in line with their cultures. Women in many cultures in Uganda and Africa are brought up with one clear and consistent emphasis by their parents to appease and hold men in high regard. Some media managers also treat sexual violence as a joke and even laugh it off whenever victims approach them with a complaint and they

sometimes blame the victims for tempting their male colleagues underscoring the need for sensitization of media managers. Therefore, besides the need to sensitize female journalists about what sexual violence entails, there is need to empower them through sensitization to report offenders.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1.     Is sexual violation of female journalists a major problem in your newsroom? (please explain)

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2.     Have you ever been sexually violated in your newsrooms?

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2.  Who violated you sexually? (your bosses or colleagues)

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4.     If yes, what was your personal experience of sexual violence in the media house.

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5.     Have you ever been sexually violated while in the field outside the media house or news room?

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6.     If yes, what was your personal experience of sexual violence in the field?

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7.     What forms of sexual violence have you experienced or observed in the media house or newsroom?

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8.      What forms of sexual violations of female journalists have you experienced or observed in the field?

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9.      What challenges have you gone through while seeking for justice? (did you get any threats)

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# Mukuza Shammah

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