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The role of Mass Media in combating HIV/AIDS in Uganda: A case study of Uganda Broadcasting Corporation

Babirye Winnie and Joel Isabirye

College of Humanities and Social Sciences Kampala International University

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the role of mass media in combating HIV/AIDS in Uganda, focusing on the case study of Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC). The study is situated within the global Africa East African, and Ugandan contexts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The statement of the problem emphasizes the real challenges faced in the effective use of mass media for HIV/AIDS awareness in Uganda. The purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of UBC's HIV/AIDS awareness programs, analyze perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in UBC's audience, and identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration and community involvement. The significance of the study lies in contributing valuable insights to the field of HIV/AIDS communication and media strategies. The research objectives delve into assessing UBC's programs, exploring audience perceptions, and identifying collaborative opportunities. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to capture the effectiveness of mass media in HIV/AIDS awareness. Survey questions assess respondents' agreement with statements related to mass media's impact on awareness, perceptions, and collaborative strategies. Findings reveal insights into the effectiveness of UBC's programs, audience perceptions, and collaborative opportunities. The study contributes to the literature on mass media's role in public health campaigns and offers recommendations for enhancing UBC's HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives. The research concludes with reflections on limitations and suggests avenues for future studies in this critical area.

Keywords: Mass media, HIV/AIDS, Uganda, Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), awareness programs.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, HIV/AIDS epidemic has witnessed profound impacts on public health, social dynamics, and economic stability [1-3]. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), approximately 38 million people worldwide were living with HIV by the end of 2019, with 1.7 million new infections reported that year [4]. While progress has been made in combating the virus, challenges persist, making it imperative to explore and strengthen strategies for prevention, treatment, and awareness on a global scale. Africa remains disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with Sub-Saharan Africa carrying the highest burden of the disease. The prevalence of HIV in this region is significantly higher than the global average, posing complex challenges to healthcare systems and societal well-being [5, 6]. The African continent has been at the forefront of international efforts to address the epidemic, with various countries implementing diverse strategies to curb the spread of the virus and improve access to treatment and support services [4]. Within the East African region, countries grapple with unique socio-cultural and economic factors that influence the dynamics of HIV/AIDS. East Africa has experienced both progress and setbacks in the fight against the epidemic, with variations in prevalence rates and response strategies among nations. Collaborative initiatives such as the East African Community (EAC) have aimed to foster regional cooperation in addressing common health challenges, including HIV/AIDS, recognizing the interconnectedness of issues across borders [7]. Uganda, has faced significant challenges in its battle against HIV/AIDS. Despite notable achievements in reducing prevalence rates over the years, the country continues to grapple with new infections and barriers to effective healthcare delivery. According to the Uganda Population-Based HIV Impact Assessment (UPHIA) 2016–2017, approximately 1.3 million Ugandans were living with HIV, highlighting the ongoing need for comprehensive strategies that encompass prevention, testing, treatment, and community engagement [8]. An examination of the role of mass media, exemplified by the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), becomes crucial to determine how it disseminates information, shaping perceptions, and mobilizing communities in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Understanding the broader global, African, East African, and national contexts provides a foundation for assessing the specific challenges and opportunities faced by UBC in contributing to the efforts against HIV/AIDS in Uganda.

Statement of the Problem

The fight against HIV/AIDS in Uganda has made significant strides, yet persistent challenges undermine the effectiveness of interventions, particularly in the realm of mass media. Despite extensive efforts by Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) and other media outlets, the real problem lies in the enduring barriers to comprehensive awareness, prevention, and treatment. Suboptimal public understanding of HIV/AIDS transmission modes, prevention strategies, and available healthcare resources remains a critical concern. Stigmatization and discrimination hinder the willingness of individuals to undergo testing and access necessary treatment [9]. Additionally, the evolving landscape of the epidemic necessitates continuous adaptation of communication strategies to address emerging challenges. This study seeks to delve into these pressing issues, aiming to identify the specific gaps and obstacles within the domain of mass media's role in combating HIV/AIDS in Uganda, with a focus on UBC's contributions and potential improvements.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to critically examine the efficacy of Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) as a mass media platform in combating HIV/AIDS, with the aim of identifying areas for improvement and enhancing its impact on awareness, prevention, and treatment efforts in Uganda.

Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To assess the effectiveness of UBC's HIV/AIDS awareness programs.
- ii. To analyze perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in UBC's audience.
- iii. To identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration and community involvement.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions in order to realize the set objectives:

1. How effective is UBC's HIV/AIDS awareness programs?
2. What are the perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in UBC's audience?
3. What are the opportunities for enhanced collaboration and community involvement?

Significance of the Study

The study was beneficial in the following ways:

- i. The study's findings provided valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of UBC's current HIV/AIDS communication strategies, enabling the development of targeted interventions to enhance the overall impact on public awareness and behavior change.
- ii. By identifying and addressing barriers such as stigma and misinformation, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges hindering successful HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts, thereby supporting the development of more effective, evidence-based approaches.
- iii. Policymakers, healthcare professionals, and media practitioners can utilize the study's results to inform decisions related to HIV/AIDS programming, policy development, and resource allocation, fostering a more coordinated and impactful response at both the national and local levels.
- iv. The research outcomes aim to empower communities with accurate information, reducing disparities in HIV/AIDS knowledge and access to services. By enhancing the role of UBC and other media outlets, the study contributes to a broader societal effort to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS and promote overall public health.

Limitations of the Study

The study's focus on UBC limited the generalizability of findings to other media outlets, necessitating caution in extrapolating results beyond the specific context of UBC's initiatives. Potential challenges in accessing accurate audience data, including demographics and behavioral patterns, arose, impacting the comprehensiveness of the analysis. The reliance on self-reported data introduced response bias, influencing the accuracy of participants' perceptions and attitudes. The study's snapshot nature presented limitations in capturing the dynamic nature of media influences on HIV/AIDS awareness. Long-term trends and the evolving media landscape may not be fully addressed, affecting the ability to provide a comprehensive analysis of the media's sustained impact over time. Constraints in terms of time and resources limited the depth of the study, potentially influencing the extent of qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis, and the exploration of alternative media strategies. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the study's results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS Awareness Programs

The effectiveness of mass media in HIV/AIDS awareness programs has been a subject of extensive research and scholarly inquiry. Studies consistently emphasize the pivotal role of media in disseminating accurate information, shaping public perceptions, and fostering behavioral change related to HIV/AIDS. In their analysis of media campaigns, Wakefield and Loken [10] highlight the power of television and radio in reaching diverse audiences, enabling the delivery of targeted messages that contribute to increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention and

testing. Additionally, a meta-analysis conducted by Noar *et al.* [11] underscores the positive impact of mass media campaigns on improving condom use, reducing risky behaviors, and increasing voluntary HIV testing. However, challenges in measuring the direct impact of media campaigns on behavior change have been noted. Wakefield *et al.* [12] argues that while media can significantly contribute to knowledge dissemination, the translation of this knowledge into sustained behavior change requires multifaceted interventions beyond media alone. Studies also acknowledge the need for culturally sensitive and context-specific messaging to resonate with diverse audiences. For instance, Bertrand *et al.* [13] stress the importance of tailoring media messages to local beliefs, customs, and socio-economic factors to enhance the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS communication. Moreover, the evolving media landscape, including the rise of digital platforms and social media, introduces new dimensions to the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS awareness programs. Bull *et al.* [14] argue that incorporating interactive and participatory elements through online platforms can enhance engagement and information retention. However, concerns regarding the potential spread of misinformation on these platforms highlight the importance of careful content curation and fact-checking [15].

Perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences

Understanding the perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences is crucial for developing effective communication strategies that influence behavior change. Numerous studies have explored the complex interplay between media messaging and audience perceptions of HIV/AIDS. For instance, a study by Maibach *et al.* [16] delved into the framing of HIV/AIDS issues in media content and its impact on public perceptions. Findings suggested that the framing of messages can significantly shape how audiences perceive the severity, susceptibility, and controllability of HIV/AIDS, thereby influencing behavioral responses. Media narratives that emphasize personal stories of resilience and successful prevention strategies have been shown to positively impact audience attitudes and engagement with HIV/AIDS-related issues [16]. Cultural and contextual factors play a pivotal role in shaping audience perceptions of HIV/AIDS through media consumption. A study by Primack *et al.* [17] explored the influence of cultural norms and values portrayed in media content on individuals' attitudes toward HIV/AIDS prevention. The research highlighted the need for media messages to align with cultural contexts to effectively resonate with diverse audiences. This underscores the importance of cultural competence in media programming to address varying beliefs and attitudes surrounding HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the impact of media on reducing stigma associated with HIV/AIDS has been a focus of investigation. A study by Li *et al.* [18] assessed the role of media in destigmatizing HIV/AIDS through the portrayal of individuals living with the virus. The findings indicated that media representation has the potential to challenge stereotypes and reduce stigma, fostering a more supportive environment for those affected by HIV/AIDS. However, the study also emphasized the need for nuanced portrayals that avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes. In conclusion, the exploration of audience perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in the context of media consumption reveals the intricate dynamics at play. As UBC seeks to enhance its impact on audiences, an understanding of these dynamics is vital for tailoring messages that resonate with diverse cultural contexts and contribute to positive attitudes, reduced stigma, and improved engagement with HIV/AIDS-related issues.

Media and collaborative strategies in HIV/AIDS response

Collaborative strategies between media outlets and various stakeholders are integral to a comprehensive and effective HIV/AIDS response. Research has highlighted the significance of partnerships in leveraging media platforms for maximum impact. The work of Neuman *et al.* [19] emphasizes the role of media collaborations with governmental health agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in amplifying the reach and influence of HIV/AIDS campaigns. These partnerships facilitate the integration of accurate and culturally sensitive information into media content, ensuring that campaigns align with broader public health goals and priorities. Moreover, the importance of community-based collaborations in media-driven HIV/AIDS interventions cannot be overstated. A study by Parker *et al.* [20] investigated the impact of community involvement in media campaigns on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. The findings underscored the effectiveness of engaging local communities in the planning, execution, and evaluation of media initiatives. Collaborative efforts involving community leaders, grassroots organizations, and media outlets were shown to enhance the relevance of messages, increase community trust, and foster a sense of ownership, ultimately contributing to sustained behavior change. In addition to partnerships, the evolving role of digital media and social platforms in collaborative HIV/AIDS responses has been explored. A study by Young *et al.* [21] investigated the potential of social media as a tool for community engagement and advocacy in HIV/AIDS awareness. The research revealed that social media platforms provide opportunities for real-time interaction, information dissemination, and the formation of supportive online communities. Collaborative efforts between media organizations and digital platforms were found to enhance the accessibility of HIV/AIDS information, particularly among younger populations more accustomed to online communication.

Research gaps

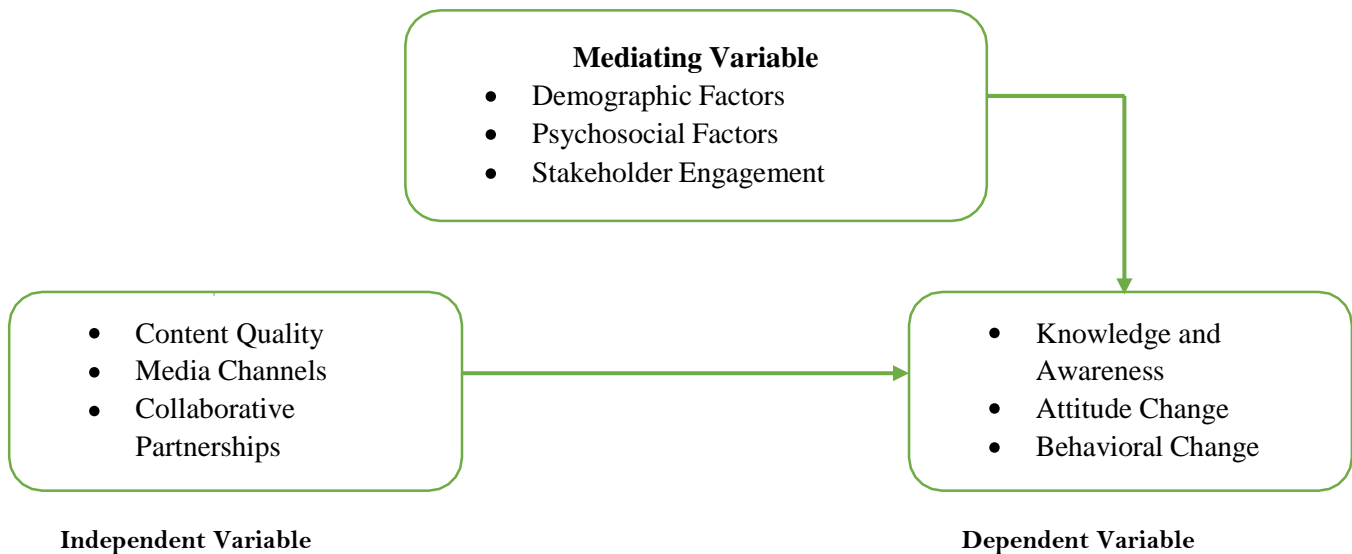
Despite the substantial body of research on the role of mass media in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, several

notable research gaps persist. One significant gap lies in the limited exploration of the long-term impact and sustainability of media interventions. While existing studies often assess the immediate effects of awareness campaigns, few delve into the persistence of behavioral change over time. Understanding the durability of media-driven impacts is crucial for designing interventions that have lasting effects on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment-seeking behaviors. Additionally, longitudinal studies could shed light on how evolving media landscapes, including the rise of digital platforms, influence the sustained effectiveness of HIV/AIDS communication efforts. Another research gap pertains to the nuanced examination of the differential impact of media campaigns on various population subgroups. While some studies acknowledge the importance of tailoring messages to diverse audiences, there is a need for more in-depth analyses of how media interventions resonate with specific demographics, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and cultural backgrounds. For instance, a study by Noar *et al.* [22] emphasizes the need for a better understanding of how media messages may affect different age groups, particularly given the changing landscape of media consumption. Such insights could inform more targeted and culturally sensitive communication strategies, addressing the unique needs and perceptions of diverse populations in the context of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, there is a gap in research regarding the role of media in addressing emerging challenges in the HIV/AIDS landscape, such as the intersectionality of HIV/AIDS with other health issues and the implications of evolving treatment and prevention technologies. Investigating how media can effectively communicate information about new developments in HIV/AIDS research, prevention methods, and treatment options is essential for ensuring that public awareness remains current and accurate. Closing these research gaps would contribute significantly to refining media strategies and advancing our understanding of the dynamic relationship between media interventions and the evolving landscape of HIV/AIDS.

The Conceptual Framework

The study will be guided by the following conceptual framework which shows the independent variables and dependent variable (Figure 2.1).

Figure 1: Conceptual frame work



Source: Adapted from: Pride et al. [23]

This conceptual framework seeks to understand the role of independent variables—content quality, media channels, and collaborative partnerships—in shaping the dependent variables of knowledge and awareness, attitude change, and behavioral change among the audience. Demographic and psychosocial factors act as intervening variables that may moderate or mediate the relationships between independent and dependent variables. The framework aims to provide insights into the multifaceted dynamics influencing the impact of UBC's mass media interventions on combating HIV/AIDS.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for investigating the role of Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) in combating HIV/AIDS through mass media interventions involves a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative methods, such as surveys and content analysis, was employed to quantifiably measure the reach and effectiveness of UBC's HIV/AIDS awareness programs, as well as audience knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This approach allows for statistical analysis to identify patterns, trends, and correlations in the data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the quantitative

aspects of the research questions. Simultaneously, qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, were utilized to explore the nuances of audience perceptions, the impact of UBC's programs on individual behavior change, and the dynamics of collaborative strategies between UBC and stakeholders. Qualitative data will provide valuable insights into the contextual and cultural factors influencing the effectiveness of media interventions. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods offered a holistic understanding of the research questions, ensuring a nuanced exploration of UBC's role in the context of Uganda's HIV/AIDS response

Target Population

The target population for this study comprised 70 key respondents within UBC, including top management, department heads, and employees directly involved in the planning and execution of HIV/AIDS awareness programs as shown in Table 1. This selection aimed to capture diverse perspectives and insights from individuals holding strategic roles within the organization. The inclusion of top management ensures a comprehensive understanding of UBC's overall approach to combating HIV/AIDS through mass media.

Table 1: Table showing population of the study

Department	Population Size
Top Management	3
Department Heads	15
Employees	18
Customers & shareholders	34
Total	70

Source: Primary Data 2024

Sample design and sample size

The study selected 60 participants from a targeted population of 70 individuals within UBC. Participants were chosen based on their roles, including 1 branch manager, 2 supervisors, 12 heads of department, and 45 customers and shareholders. This diverse sample aimed to represent various organizational perspectives, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of UBC's approach to combating HIV/AIDS through mass media. The Slovene's formula was used to come up with appropriate sample size to use in the study [24]. Slovene's Formula states that, given a population, the minimum sample size is given by:

$$n = N / 1 + N\alpha^2$$

Where;

n the sample size

N=total population of respondents, that is 78

α=the level of significance, that is 0.05

$$n = 70 / 1 + 70(0.05)^2$$

$$= 70 / 1.175$$

$$n = 59.574$$

$$n = 60$$

Table 2: Research respondents by category and sample

Department	Population	Sample Size	Sampling technique
Branch Manager	1	1	Purposive
Supervisors	4	2	Simple random
Department Heads	15	12	Simple random
Customers & Shareholders	50	45	Simple random
Total	70	60	

Source: Primary Data 2024

To guarantee that the interests of the population are reflected in the sample and allow for legitimate generalizations, the employees were selected at random to create the study's sample [25]. Top management, officers, supervisors, customers, and stockholders were among the many strata, and they were purposefully chosen based on availability. Simple random sampling was used to choose the remaining categories, ensuring that every member had an equal chance of participating and enabling generalization of the results. The human resource office provided a list of every employee, which served as the sample framework. After assigning a number to each participant and writing it on a small piece of paper, the container was shaken, and a second person was asked to select a paper without replacing the previous one until the sample size quota was reached.

Tools for Gathering Data

This study included both primary and secondary data sources since they complement one another [26]. The primary tool for gathering data was a survey questionnaire, so every member of the target population will receive one from the researcher. The questionnaire assisted the researcher in gathering information about respondents' attitudes, opinions, and level of expertise. The questionnaire was appropriate for this study since it is useful and can quickly and reasonably inexpensively gather data from a large number of participants. The researcher was able to address a few gaps for future improvements by conducting a pilot study with a small sample of the community to evaluate the carefully constructed questionnaire. This was carried out to improve the validity and correctness of the data that would be gathered for the research. The surveys were given out one-on-one by the researcher to specific responders from the community as well as UBC. In order to guarantee that every questionnaire given to respondents was received, the researcher took extra precautions and kept track of which questionnaires were mailed and which ones were picked up. A methodological triangulation approach employing an interview technique and a questionnaire survey was used to gather primary data. Departmental managers were given a structured questionnaire with closed questions created in accordance with the goals. We gathered secondary data on HIV/AIDS awareness-related mass media interventions from UBC Kampala's quarterly and annual reports. The estimated duration of the data was three years, from 2019 to 2021.

Analysis of the Data

In the data analysis phase, descriptive statistics was employed to provide a comprehensive summary of key features in the dataset, including measures of central tendency and variability. Frequencies and percentages were computed to offer a clear depiction of the distribution of categorical variables, facilitating an understanding of the prevalence and patterns within the data. This approach aimed to present a concise and informative overview of the study variables, contributing to a robust exploration of UBC's role in HIV/AIDS awareness with a focus on audience characteristics and responses.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent is a fundamental ethical requirement, necessitating that participants be fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks before voluntarily agreeing to participate. In the case of UBC's audience, ensuring consent involved transparent communication about data collection methods, the intended use of findings, and the protection of participants' privacy.

Given the sensitive nature of HIV/AIDS, participants' personal information, responses, and identities were anonymized to prevent the possibility of harm or unintended disclosure. Researchers established clear protocols for data storage and dissemination to mitigate any potential risks associated with the sensitive nature of the information gathered. By upholding these ethical considerations, researchers maintained the trust and dignity of participants and contributed ethically sound findings to the broader knowledge base.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The respondents' demographic characteristics included; age, sex, level of education and level of experience.

Gender of the respondents

The study sought to determine the gender of respondents and therefore requested the respondents to indicate their gender.

Table 3: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	22	36.7
Female	38	63.3
Total	60	100

Source: primary data, (2024)

The gender distribution of those surveyed is displayed in Table 3 above, with 22 (36.7%) male respondents and 38 (63.3%) female respondents. This suggests that women made up the bulk of those who responded. Gender equity, according to Acker [27], is an essential quality since it may be used to improve staff performance overall. He said that it not only fostered cooperation but also made working for a common goal and feeling of solidarity more important, with every person's effort—male or female—being essential to achieving the overall goals. Nonetheless, this demonstrated that participants of both sexes participated in the investigation, ensuring that the study's conclusions were free from gender prejudice. Age of the respondents

Respondents were asked questions related to their age and the results are shown in the table below

Table 4: Age distribution of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-30	7	11.7
31-40	18	30
41-50	26	43.3
51-Above	9	15
Total	60	100

Source: primary data, (2024)

In reference to table 4, (7)11.7% of the respondents were aged between 21-30 years, (18)30% were aged between 31-40 years of age, (26)43.3% were aged between 41-50 years of age, and (9)15% were 51 years of age and above. This implies that data was obtained from mature and eligible respondents at Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC).

Education level of respondents

Respondents were asked questions related to their level of education and their responses were shown in the table below.

Table 5: Gender of the Respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Certificate	8	13.3
Diploma	12	20.0
Bachelor's Degree	32	53.3
Master's Degree	07	11.7
PhD.	01	1.7
Total	60	100

Source: primary data, (2024)

The study requested that respondent indicate their highest level of education, from the findings it was established that majority of the respondents represented by 32(53.3%) were graduates with bachelor's degree, 12(20%) were diploma holders, 8(13.3%) were certificate holders and 8(13.3%) were post graduates thus masters and PhD holders. This implies that the researcher obtained valid and reliable data since the respondents were in position to read and translate the questionnaires. Therefore, data collected was valid and reliable. The high percentage of university level education is an indicator that the respondents were qualified and well educated and therefore understood the questions very well.

Level of Experience

The length of administration/working in an association decides the degree to which one knows about the issues being examined by the study. In the wake of innovative progressions and globalization, there are probably going to be many changes in the institutional and working condition that the respondents should know when reacting to the issues sought by the study. The study therefore required that respondents indicate their level of experience at work and the results are shown in table 6 below.

Table 6: Level of experience of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 - 2 years	30	50
3 - 4 years	20	33.3
5 years and above	10	16.7
Total	60	100

Source: primary data, (2024)

The study requested respondents to indicate the number of years they had worked at the bank. From the findings the study results portrayed in table 6 uncovered that 30(50%) of them had worked at the bank for a time between 1 - 2 years, 20(33.3%) of them had worked at the bank and had an experience of 3 - 4 years, 10(16.7%) of them had a working experience of over 5 years at the bank. This implies that majority of the respondents had served for a considerable period hence had vast knowledge which could be relied upon by this study.

Effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS Awareness Programs

The study sought to establish the extent to which mass media effected HIV/AIDS awareness programs. From the findings 80% indicated to a great extent, 20% of the respondents indicated to a very great extent whereas none of the respondents indicated to a moderate extent. This implies that mass media effected HIV/AIDS awareness programs to a great extent.

Table 7: Extent to which mass media effected HIV/AIDS awareness programs

	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	12	20
Great extent	48	80
Moderate extent	0	0
Total	60	100

Source: primary data, (2024)

Effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS Awareness Programs

The study sought to establish the level at which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements in the table below relating to how mass media effected HIV/AIDS awareness programs. When asked about the effectiveness of Mass Media in raising HIV/AIDS awareness, 52 respondents, accounting for 86.7% of the total participants, expressed agreement. This high level of agreement underscores the significant impact of Mass Media in effectively disseminating information and fostering awareness regarding HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population. The positive response suggests that Mass Media serves as a valuable and influential tool in addressing public health issues, contributing substantially to the promotion of awareness and knowledge surrounding HIV/AIDS in the community. Respondents' level of agreement regarding media interventions contributing to positive attitudes and behavior change revealed that 51 respondents, constituting 85% of the total participants, expressed agreement. This substantial agreement underscores the influential role of media interventions in fostering positive attitudes and driving behavioral change related to HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population. The findings suggest that media platforms effectively contribute to shaping perceptions and encouraging proactive responses to combat HIV/AIDS, emphasizing the significance of strategic communication in influencing positive societal attitudes and behaviors toward the disease. Responses towards the uncertainty of the effectiveness of mass media in HIV/AIDS awareness revealed that 50 respondents, accounting for 83.3% of the total participants, expressed agreement. This suggests a notable acknowledgment among the respondents regarding the ambiguity surrounding the impact of mass media in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS. The high level of agreement indicates a collective recognition among the surveyed individuals that the effectiveness of mass media interventions in HIV/AIDS awareness may be influenced by various factors or may not be universally perceived as certain. This insight highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of the role of mass media in public health communication, taking into account diverse perspectives and contextual considerations. Further, the study required respondents to express their agreement or disagreement regarding doubts about the high effectiveness of mass media in HIV/AIDS awareness. The findings revealed that 40 respondents, constituting 66.7% of the total participants, agreed with the statement, indicating a significant portion of respondents expressing skepticism about the overall effectiveness of mass media in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS. This suggests a level of uncertainty or concern among the surveyed individuals regarding the ability of mass media interventions to fully address the complexities of HIV/AIDS awareness. The study's results underscore the importance of considering varying perspectives and potential challenges in the effectiveness of mass media initiatives, prompting a deeper exploration of the factors influencing perceptions within the surveyed population. Finally, responses regarding the insufficiency of media alone for optimal HIV/AIDS awareness revealed that 48 respondents, comprising 80% of the total participants, expressed agreement. This suggests a prevailing consensus among the surveyed individuals that relying solely on media interventions may not be adequate for achieving optimal awareness about HIV/AIDS. The high level of agreement implies a recognition within the respondent group that a comprehensive and multifaceted approach, potentially involving additional strategies beyond media, is necessary to address the complexities of HIV/AIDS awareness effectively. These findings underscore the importance of considering diverse methods and collaborative efforts in public health campaigns to ensure a holistic approach that aligns with the nuanced nature of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

Table 8: The effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS Awareness Programs

No.	Effect of Mass Media	SD		D		NS		SA		A		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Mass media effectively raises HIV/AIDS awareness	2	3.3	3	5	3	5	40	66.7	12	20	60	100.0
2	Media interventions contribute to positive attitudes and behaviorchange	3	5	2	3.3	4	6.7	45	75	6	10	60	100.0
3	Effectiveness of mass media in HIV/AIDS awareness is uncertain	3	5	4	6.7	3	5	30	50	20	33.3	60	100.0
4	I doubt the high effectiveness of mass media in HIV/AIDS awareness	5	8.3	8	13.3	7	11.7	35	58.3	5	8.3	60	100.0
5	Media alone may not be sufficient for optimal HIV/AIDS awareness	3	5	4	6.7	5	8.3	42	70	6	10	60	100.0

Source: primary data, (2024)

Perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences

The purpose of the study was to determine how much media audiences understood and felt about HIV/AIDS. According to the results, 83.3% of the respondents said they felt this way, 15% said they felt this way, and 1.7% said they felt this way. This suggests that media audiences had strong opinions and perceptions about HIV/AIDS.

Table 9: Extent to which media audiences held perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS

	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	09	15
Great extent	50	83.3
Moderate extent	1	1.7
Total	60	100

Source: primary data, (2024)

Perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences

The study sought to establish the level at which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements in the table below relating to how media audiences held perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS. When respondents were asked to rate the extent to which media strongly shaped perceptions of HIV/AIDS, 52 individuals, constituting 86.7% of the participants, expressed agreement. This suggests a prevalent acknowledgment among the respondents that media plays a significant role in influencing and shaping perceptions related to HIV/AIDS. The high agreement percentage implies a widespread recognition of the substantial impact that media has on the formation and dissemination of attitudes and understandings regarding HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population. On being asked whether media influenced attitudes about HIV/AIDS, 51 respondents, making up 85% of the participants, expressed agreement. This implies a substantial consensus among the respondents that media plays a significant role in shaping and influencing attitudes toward HIV/AIDS. The high agreement percentage suggests a widespread acknowledgment that media interventions have a considerable impact on shaping societal attitudes and perspectives related to HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population. Respondents further agreed that individual experiences impact HIV/AIDS perspectives, with 50 participants, accounting for 83.3% of the total respondents. This implies a prevailing consensus among the surveyed individuals that personal experiences play a significant role in shaping how individuals perceive and understand issues related to HIV/AIDS. The high agreement percentages suggests a collective recognition that individual backgrounds, encounters, and perspectives contribute substantially to the formation of nuanced perspectives on HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population. When asked whether personal factors had a greater influence on attitudes, 48 respondents, constituting 80% of the participants, expressed agreement. This indicates a significant consensus among the surveyed individuals that individual factors hold a considerable sway over attitudes, emphasizing personal experiences, beliefs, and values in shaping perspectives related to HIV/AIDS. The high agreement percentage implies a shared recognition within the respondent group that individual characteristics play a pivotal role in influencing attitudes toward HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population. Finally, responses regarding media having a limited impact on shaping attitudes revealed that 50 respondents, comprising 83.3% of the participants, expressed agreement. This implies a significant consensus within the surveyed individuals that, to some extent, media interventions have limitations in shaping attitudes toward HIV/AIDS. The high agreement percentage suggests a shared recognition that while media plays a role, it may not be the sole or predominant factor influencing attitudes, highlighting the need to consider other influential factors in understanding and addressing attitudes related to HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population.

Table 10: The Perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in Media Audiences

No.	Perceptions and Attitudes	SD		D		NS		SA		A		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Media strongly shapes perceptions of HIV/AIDS	2	3.3	3	5	3	5	37	61.7	15	25	60	100.0
2	Media influences attitudes about HIV/AIDS	3	5	2	3.3	4	6.7	45	75	6	10	60	100.0
3	Individual experiences impact HIV/AIDS perspectives	3	5	4	6.7	3	5	30	50	20	33.3	60	100.0
4	Personal factors have a greater influence on attitudes	4	6.7	3	5	5	8.3	36	60	12	20	60	100.0
5	Media has limited impact on shaping attitudes	3	5	4	6.7	3	5	38	63.3	12	20	60	100.0

Source: primary data, (2024)

Media and collaborative strategies in HIV/AIDS response

The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of media and collaborative strategies in responding to HIV/AIDS. From the findings 80% indicated to a great extent, 15% of the respondents indicated to a very great extent whereas 4.6% of the respondents indicated to a moderate extent. This implies an examination of the combined impact and efficacy of media and collaborative approaches in addressing HIV/AIDS was to a great extent.

Table 11: The effectiveness of media and collaborative strategies in responding to HIV/AIDS

	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	5	8.3
Great extent	52	86.7
Moderate extent	3	5
Total	60	100

Source: primary data, (2024)

Media and collaborative strategies in HIV/AIDS response

The study sought to establish the level at which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements in the table below relating to effectiveness of media and collaborative strategies in responding to HIV/AIDS. When respondents were asked to assess the importance of media collaborations for effective HIV/AIDS responses, 54 individuals, representing 90% of the participants, expressed agreement. This implies a widespread acknowledgment among the surveyed individuals about the crucial role that collaborations involving media play in achieving effective responses to HIV/AIDS. The high agreement percentage suggests a strong consensus within the respondent group that collaborative efforts, particularly those involving media, are essential for addressing the complexities of HIV/AIDS effectively within the surveyed population. Responses indicating agreement regarding media and collaborations enhancing HIV/AIDS awareness revealed that 52 respondents, constituting 86.7% of the participants, expressed alignment with this notion. This implies a significant consensus within the surveyed individuals that collaborative efforts involving media play a substantial role in augmenting awareness about HIV/AIDS. The high agreement percentage suggests a shared recognition that collaborative strategies, particularly those incorporating media interventions, contribute effectively to enhancing public understanding and knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population. Responses affirming the necessity of holistic approaches involving various stakeholders revealed that 47 respondents, making up 78.3% of the participants, expressed agreement. This implies a prevalent consensus within the surveyed individuals regarding the importance of comprehensive strategies that engage diverse stakeholders in addressing HIV/AIDS. The high agreement percentage suggests a shared recognition that effective responses to HIV/AIDS require a holistic and inclusive approach, involving collaboration and engagement from various stakeholders within the surveyed population. Furthermore, when respondents were asked to evaluate whether collaborative strategies extended beyond media involvement, the majority, 40 individuals (66.7%), expressed agreement. This implies a noteworthy consensus within the surveyed individuals that collaborative efforts should encompass a broader scope beyond solely relying on media interventions. The agreement percentage suggests a shared understanding that effective responses to HIV/AIDS demand diversified strategies and engagement beyond the realm of media within the surveyed population. Finally, the agreement from 45 respondents, representing 75% of the participants, suggests a prevailing sentiment that other interventions should take precedence in HIV/AIDS strategies. This implies a collective recognition within the surveyed individuals that, despite the importance of media and collaborative efforts, there is a preference for prioritizing alternative and possibly more impactful interventions in addressing the complexities of HIV/AIDS within the surveyed population.

Table 12: Media and collaborative strategies in HIV/AIDS Response

No.	Media and collaborative strategies	SD		D		NS		SA		A		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Media collaborations are crucial for effective HIV/AIDS responses	0	0	3	5	3	5	49	81.7	5	8.3	60	100.0
2	Media and collaborations enhance HIV/AIDS awareness	2	3.3	2	3.3	4	6.7	46	76.7	6	10	60	100.0
3	Holistic approaches involving various stakeholders are necessary	3	5	4	6.7	6	10	37	61.7	10	16.7	60	100.0
4	Collaborative strategies should extend beyond media involvement	5	8.3	8	13.3	7	11.7	36	60	4	6.7	60	100.0
5	Other interventions should take precedence in HIV/AIDS strategies	3	5	4	6.7	8	13.3	41	68.3	4	6.7	60	100.0

Source: primary data, (2024)

DISCUSSION

Findings on assessing the effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS Awareness Programs

The first objective sought to assess the effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS Awareness Programs. The study found a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS awareness programs. Notably, 86.7% of participants expressed agreement that Mass Media plays a crucial role in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the influential role of media in disseminating information and shaping public perceptions related to health issues, including HIV/AIDS [28]. The research revealed that 85% of respondents agreed that media interventions contribute to positive attitudes and behavior change related to HIV/AIDS. This underscores the positive perception of the audience regarding the impact of media in fostering behavioral changes. Previous studies support this, highlighting the potential of media campaigns to influence attitudes and encourage desired health-related behaviors [12]. Findings also indicated a degree of uncertainty among respondents, with 83.3% agreeing that the effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS awareness is uncertain. This nuanced perspective suggests a recognition among the audience that the impact of media interventions may vary or be influenced by additional factors. Such findings highlight the need for targeted and context-specific media strategies in HIV/AIDS communication [11]. A significant proportion of respondents, 66.7%, agreed that they doubted the high effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS awareness. Moreover, 80% expressed agreement that media alone is not sufficient for optimal HIV/AIDS awareness, indicating a level of skepticism and a preference for holistic approaches. This underscores the importance of considering diverse communication channels and collaborative strategies to complement the role of Mass Media in addressing HIV/AIDS [13].

Findings on analyzing perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences

The second specific objective was to analyze perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences. The study revealed a strong consensus among respondents, with 86.7% agreeing that media strongly shapes perceptions of HIV/AIDS. This finding supports the notion that media plays a pivotal role in influencing public attitudes and perceptions related to health issues, particularly HIV/AIDS [12]. The impact of media in shaping these perceptions underscores the importance of strategic and responsible communication in addressing the complexities associated with HIV/AIDS. The research findings indicated that 85% of respondents agreed that media influences attitudes about HIV/AIDS. This suggests a widespread acknowledgment among the audience regarding the role of media in

shaping societal attitudes towards the disease. This aligns with the cultivation theory, emphasizing the cumulative impact of media exposure on shaping perceptions and attitudes over time [29]. The study uncovered that 83.3% of respondents agreed that individual experiences impact HIV/AIDS perspectives. This indicates a nuanced understanding among the audience that personal experiences contribute significantly to shaping individual perspectives on HIV/AIDS. This finding aligns with research emphasizing the importance of recognizing individual differences and experiences in health communication campaigns [30]. Interestingly, 83.3% of respondents agreed that media has a limited impact on shaping attitudes. This suggests a level of skepticism among the audience about the sole influence of media on attitudes towards HIV/AIDS. It underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that considers various factors beyond media in addressing the multifaceted nature of public perceptions and attitudes related to HIV/AIDS.

Findings on identifying media and collaborative strategies in HIV/AIDS response

The third objective was to identify media and collaborative strategies in HIV/AIDS response. The study found a significant consensus among respondents, with 90% agreeing that media collaborations are crucial for effective HIV/AIDS responses. This underscores the widespread recognition of the importance of collaborative efforts involving media in addressing the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. Previous research supports this, highlighting the effectiveness of collaborative approaches, especially those incorporating media, in promoting public health initiatives [31]. Research findings indicated that 86.7% of respondents agreed that media and collaborations enhance HIV/AIDS awareness. This suggests a positive perception within the audience regarding the combined impact of media and collaborative strategies in augmenting awareness about HIV/AIDS. Collaborative efforts, particularly those involving media, are seen as effective tools for disseminating information and fostering public understanding of the disease [32]. The study revealed that 78.3% of respondents agreed on the necessity of holistic approaches involving various stakeholders in HIV/AIDS responses. This indicates a prevailing recognition among the audience that effective responses to HIV/AIDS require comprehensive strategies that engage diverse stakeholders. Holistic approaches are deemed essential for addressing the multifaceted nature of the disease and its impact on communities [33]. Furthermore, the research found that 66.7% of respondents agreed that collaborative strategies should extend beyond media involvement. This implies a nuanced understanding within the audience that effective responses to HIV/AIDS demand diversified strategies beyond relying solely on media interventions. The acknowledgment of the need for broader collaborative efforts aligns with the evolving landscape of public health interventions [34].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the perceptions and attitudes of media audiences regarding HIV/AIDS, the effectiveness of mass media interventions, and the role of collaborative strategies. The high levels of agreement on the influential role of mass media in shaping awareness, coupled with a nuanced acknowledgment of its limitations, highlight the complexity of media's impact. Additionally, the strong endorsement of collaborative strategies and the recognition of the need for holistic approaches underscore the importance of multifaceted efforts in HIV/AIDS responses. The study's findings emphasize the significance of tailoring communication strategies to diverse audiences, considering individual experiences, and integrating various stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to addressing HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. These conclusions provide valuable insights for policymakers, health communication practitioners, and researchers working in the field of public health communication.

Limitations of the study

While conducting the study on role of Mass Media in combating HIV/AIDS in Uganda, with specific reference to Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), there were a few limitations to acknowledge:

Sampling bias: The study's reliance on a specific sample introduced potential sampling bias, as respondents may not have fully represented the diversity of the population. This limitation may have impacted the generalizability of the findings to broader demographic groups.

Self-reported data: The study heavily depended on self-reported data, which was susceptible to social desirability bias and recall bias. Respondents might have provided answers perceived as socially acceptable, and there could have been challenges in accurately recalling information, affecting the reliability of the gathered data.

Cross-sectional design: The cross-sectional nature of the study limited the ability to establish causation and observe changes over time. Longitudinal studies would have offered a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences.

Regional specificity: The study's focus on a specific region or demographic may have limited the generalizability of findings to other cultural contexts or geographic locations. Variations in cultural norms and media consumption habits may have impacted the applicability of the results beyond the study area.

Response biases: Potential response biases, such as acquiescence bias or response set bias, might have influenced participants' answers. Individuals may have provided responses that aligned with perceived social norms or researcher expectations, potentially impacting the accuracy of the reported attitudes.

Limited exploration of contextual factors: The study might not have comprehensively explored contextual factors influencing perceptions and attitudes. Factors such as socio-economic status, educational background, or exposure to alternative health information may not have been adequately addressed in the study design. Further research incorporating these factors could provide a more nuanced understanding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study on the role of mass media in combating HIV/AIDS in Uganda, the following recommendations can be made:

1. **Assessing the effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS Awareness Programs Diversify media**

platforms and content: To enhance the effectiveness of Mass Media in HIV/AIDS awareness programs, it is recommended to diversify the range of media platforms and content. Utilize a mix of traditional and digital media channels to reach diverse audiences. Tailor content to the specific characteristics and preferences of the target population, considering cultural nuances, language diversity, and the varying levels of media consumption habits.

Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms: Establish comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to continually assess the impact of Mass Media interventions. Regularly track audience engagement, awareness levels, and behavioral changes related to HIV/AIDS. This includes incorporating feedback loops, surveys, and audience analytics to gather real-time data and inform adaptive strategies for improving the relevance and effectiveness of media campaigns.

Collaborate with stakeholders and community organizations: Foster collaborative efforts with community organizations, healthcare providers, and local influencers to amplify the reach and impact of Mass Media initiatives. Engage in community-based participatory approaches to ensure that media content is culturally sensitive, resonates with local values, and addresses specific community needs. Collaborate with stakeholders to co-create content, disseminate information, and facilitate community dialogues, fostering a sense of ownership and increasing the program's overall effectiveness.

2. **Analyzing perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences**

Conduct in-depth audience research: To gain a nuanced understanding of perceptions and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS in media audiences, it is crucial to conduct in-depth audience research. Employ qualitative research methods, such as focus group discussions and interviews, to explore the underlying beliefs, cultural influences, and personal experiences shaping individual perspectives. This approach will provide valuable insights for tailoring communication strategies that resonate with the diverse and nuanced attitudes within the target audience.

Implement ongoing audience engagement strategies: Establish ongoing audience engagement strategies to maintain a dynamic understanding of evolving perceptions. Utilize social media platforms, surveys, and community forums to encourage continuous dialogue with the audience. This two-way communication approach not only allows for real-time feedback but also fosters a sense of community involvement, ensuring that media messages remain relevant and responsive to the changing landscape of attitudes toward HIV/AIDS.

Collaborate with community leaders and influencers: Collaborate with community leaders, influencers, and local organizations to enhance the credibility and cultural relevance of media messages. Engage these stakeholders in co-creating content, disseminating information, and promoting positive attitudes toward HIV/AIDS within their respective communities. By leveraging existing community networks and trusted voices, media campaigns can have a more significant impact on shifting perceptions and fostering open discussions surrounding HIV/AIDS.

3. **Findings on identifying media and collaborative strategies in HIV/AIDS response Strengthen multi-**

sectoral collaborations: To enhance the effectiveness of media and collaborative strategies in HIV/AIDS response, there is a need to strengthen multi-sectoral collaborations. Encourage partnerships between media outlets, healthcare organizations, government agencies, and community-based organizations. Such collaborations can leverage diverse expertise, resources, and communication channels to ensure a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, and support programs.

Adopt innovative media technologies: Embrace innovative media technologies to reach wider audiences and increase engagement. Explore the use of virtual reality, interactive web platforms, and mobile applications to deliver targeted and compelling HIV/AIDS messages. These technologies can enhance the accessibility of information, facilitate interactive learning experiences, and cater to diverse preferences in media consumption, especially among younger demographics.

Facilitate community-led initiatives: Empower and support community-led initiatives that utilize media and collaborative strategies. Foster local ownership by involving community leaders, influencers, and organizations in the design and implementation of HIV/AIDS response programs. This grassroots approach ensures that interventions are culturally sensitive, aligned with community needs, and capable of overcoming barriers to awareness and prevention. Encourage the creation of community-driven media content that reflects the

diversity of voices and experiences within the population.

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