

EFFECT OF PHOTO JOURNALISM ON NEWSPAPER READERSHIP IN UGANDA: A STUDY OF THE NEW VISION NEWSPAPER

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of photojournalism on newspaper readership in Uganda. The paper focused on the New Vision newspaper, and it was discovered that Photojournalism is a formidable tool that creates a visual dimension to storytelling in contemporary print media. This is partly attributable to the dynamic shift of readership patterns, instigated by a steady prevalence of digital media, which is speedily replacing the traditional hard copy prints. The paper sought to establish the role of photography in capturing and sustaining reader engagement and how that may encourage stronger emotional connectivity to the stories. The New Vision, which is the largest newspaper in Uganda, is tussling with the challenge of a steady decline in its readership. The researchers sought to account for this decline, and to establish how the media may strategically employ digital photography, to enhance its clientele, and to maintain its relevance in the industry. The authors assessed the influence photography has on readers' decisions to engage with a newspaper, and its extent. Using the Users and Gratification Theory, the researchers employed mixed methods, including surveys to 300 regular readers, in-depth interviews with 15 readers, and descriptive analysis. It was found that, respondents generally agree that photographs increase their engagement and connectivity with stories in the new vision, and enhanced their likelihood to buy the newspaper again. This research is critical to media operators, in understanding the dynamic patterns of newspaper readership, and will go a long way to help them navigate the delicate logistical and commercial implications of declining readership.

Keywords: Photo Journalism in Uganda, New Vision, Kampala International University.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary media landscape, photojournalism has emerged as a powerful tool in enhancing storytelling by providing a visual dimension to news reports. The combination of text and images not only informs but also engages readers on an emotional and cognitive level, making the news more relatable and impactful (Baker, 2013). In Uganda, photojournalism has gained prominence in print media, particularly in newspapers such as ***The New Vision***, which integrates images to complement and enrich its news content. As readership patterns shift, especially with the rise of digital media, the role of photojournalism in maintaining and growing newspaper readership has become increasingly relevant (Lutwama & Mwesigwa, 2020).

The New Vision newspaper, as one of Uganda's leading daily publications, has long recognized the importance of visual content in capturing the attention of its readers. Through the strategic use of photojournalism, the newspaper offers a unique blend of visual and textual storytelling that contributes to its engagement with the audience (Mugisha, 2019). Photojournalism provides an immediate connection to the news events it portrays, allowing readers to form a deeper understanding of stories (Berger, 2008). This visual dimension is particularly significant in Uganda, where print media faces growing competition from digital platforms and social media (Kibombo & Ndugwa, 2021). The rising prevalence of digital news consumption, coupled with a younger demographic's preference for multimedia content, has challenged traditional print newspapers to adapt and innovate to retain their audience (Ssegawa & Businge, 2020).

Given the increasing importance of visual storytelling, this study examines the impact of photojournalism on newspaper readership in Uganda, focusing specifically on ***The New Vision***. While existing studies have explored the broader impact of photojournalism in global and African contexts, research into its role in Ugandan print media is limited (Odinga, 2017). In particular, the way photos influence reader engagement with specific newspapers, such as ***The New Vision***, remains underexplored. This research seeks to fill this gap by analyzing how the use of photojournalism contributes to or detracts from readers' decisions to engage with and continue reading the newspaper.

As the Ugandan print media industry grapples with the challenges of declining physical circulation and competition from digital media (Kaggwa & Mbabazi, 2020), photojournalism could be key in capturing readers' attention and sustaining interest in print publications. Through the use of compelling images, newspapers like ***The New Vision*** may foster a stronger emotional connection with readers, encouraging them to engage with stories more deeply and repeatedly (Harrison & Gibbons, 2015). The increasing integration of photojournalism into daily reporting reflects a broader trend in global media where photos not only serve to support news narratives but also enhance the overall experience of news consumption (Baker, 2013).

This study is important as it will provide insights into the role of photojournalism in influencing newspaper readership in Uganda. It will offer valuable information for media practitioners, particularly editors and journalists, on how to strategically incorporate images into news coverage to maintain and expand readership. Furthermore, the findings of this research could have broader implications for understanding the role of photojournalism in the shifting dynamics of print media, especially in African countries where digital media consumption is on the rise. By examining *The New Vision*, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of how photojournalism impacts print media consumption in Uganda and inform strategies for the future of journalism in the country.

Problem Statement

In Uganda, the role of photojournalism in influencing newspaper readership has become a critical area of study as print media faces significant challenges due to the rise of digital media and social platforms. Despite the increasing importance of visual content in news consumption, limited research exists on how photojournalism impacts readership in Uganda, especially within the context of traditional print newspapers like *The New Vision*. The newspaper industry in Uganda is grappling with declining circulation figures as audiences increasingly turn to digital platforms for news consumption. In this context, *The New Vision*, one of the largest and most prominent daily newspapers in Uganda, has integrated photojournalism into its editorial practice, yet the direct effect of these visual elements on reader engagement and loyalty remains underexplored.

While photojournalism has been recognized globally as a powerful tool for enhancing news stories and capturing audience attention (Harrison & Gibbons, 2015), its effectiveness in influencing newspaper readership in Uganda is unclear. The advent of social media and the internet has shifted how people access news, with visual content on these platforms often being more dynamic and instantly accessible. Consequently, print newspapers like *The New Vision* face challenges in maintaining a substantial readership. Although images are crucial in attracting attention, it is uncertain whether the use of photojournalism alone can significantly increase newspaper readership or if other factors contribute to reader loyalty and engagement in the Ugandan context.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of photojournalism on newspaper readership in Uganda, focusing on *The New Vision* as a case study. Specifically, it seeks to understand whether the integration of photojournalism into the newspaper's editorial practices influences the readers' decision to engage with and regularly read the publication. The findings will provide valuable insights into how Ugandan newspapers can leverage photojournalism as part of their strategy to attract and retain readers in an increasingly competitive media landscape.

Objectives

1. To examine the role of photojournalism in attracting readers to *The New Vision* newspaper in Uganda.
2. To assess how photojournalism influences the readers' decision to engage with and regularly read *The New Vision* newspaper.
3. To evaluate the impact of photojournalism on the overall readership patterns and loyalty to *The New Vision*.
4. To explore the perceptions of readers towards the use of photojournalism in *The New Vision* newspaper.

Research Questions

1. How does photojournalism attract readers to *The New Vision* newspaper?
2. To what extent does photojournalism influence the decision of readers to engage with *The New Vision* on a regular basis?
3. What is the impact of photojournalism on the readership patterns and loyalty of *The New Vision* readers?
4. What are the readers' perceptions regarding the use of photojournalism in *The New Vision* newspaper?

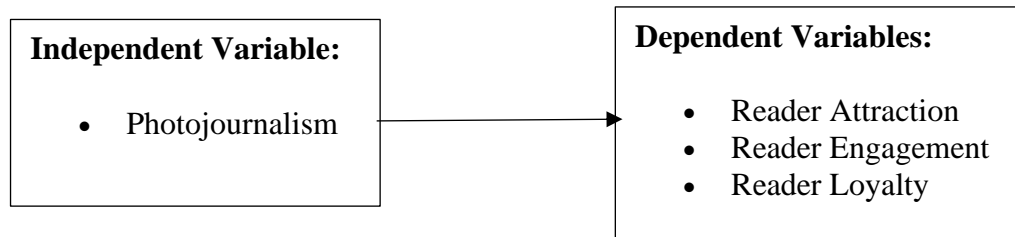
Hypotheses

1. There is a positive relationship between the use of photojournalism and the attraction of readers to *The New Vision* newspaper.
2. The use of photojournalism in *The New Vision* newspaper significantly influences the readers' decision to engage with and regularly read the newspaper.
3. The frequency of photojournalism in *The New Vision* positively correlates with readership patterns and loyalty to the newspaper.
4. Readers perceive photojournalism in *The New Vision* as an essential element that enhances their overall experience of the newspaper.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is centered on the relationship between photojournalism and newspaper readership. It identifies photojournalism as the independent variable and newspaper readership (which includes reader attraction, engagement, and loyalty) as the dependent variables.

Conceptual Framework Diagram:



Theoretical Framework

This study will adopt the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* (U&G) to understand the impact of photojournalism on newspaper readership, specifically in *The New Vision* newspaper. The U&G theory posits that individuals actively seek out media content to satisfy specific needs and desires (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). In the context of photojournalism, this theory suggests that readers choose newspapers that offer content that meets their informational, emotional, and entertainment needs. Photojournalism serves as a tool to enhance storytelling by providing a visual element that not only informs but also engages readers on an emotional level (Baker, 2013).

According to the U&G theory, media consumption is driven by audience needs, and photojournalism in newspapers fulfills these needs by making content more engaging and accessible. Images can enhance a reader's understanding of the news and evoke stronger emotional reactions, which could lead to higher engagement with the newspaper (Harrison & Gibbons, 2015). In the case of *The New Vision*, the use of photojournalism is likely to fulfill these needs, making the newspaper more attractive and engaging to readers, thus influencing their reading habits and loyalty to the publication (Mugisha, 2019).

Additionally, the U&G framework aligns with the idea that readers use the newspaper as a tool for gratification—whether it is to gain information, experience emotional satisfaction, or be entertained. As such, photojournalism can be seen as an essential component of this gratification process, providing the visual appeal and contextual depth that help readers connect more deeply with the stories presented (Lutwama & Mwesigwa, 2020).

By using this theoretical lens, the study will explore how photojournalism influences the gratification needs of *The New Vision* readers, particularly in terms of engagement and loyalty, providing a deeper understanding of its role in the readership dynamics.

Literature Review

The role of photojournalism in enhancing newspaper readership has been a focal point of many scholarly discussions globally. Photojournalism, as a tool for visual storytelling, is considered crucial in enhancing the appeal and effectiveness of newspapers in capturing the attention of their readers. This section reviews the literature surrounding the impact of photojournalism on newspaper readership, focusing on its relevance in the Ugandan media context, particularly *The New Vision* newspaper.

The Role of Photojournalism in Print Media

Photojournalism is an essential element of modern journalism that uses images to tell stories. Images, as opposed to text, have a unique ability to capture attention and evoke strong emotional responses (Baker, 2013). They not only inform the audience but also help in contextualizing and enhancing the message conveyed by the text. In the context of newspapers, photojournalism provides visual representations that can either complement the written word or stand alone as a primary narrative tool. As highlighted by Harrison and Gibbons (2015), newspapers that use photojournalism effectively often witness higher reader engagement and retention, as images provide an added layer of connection that words alone cannot always achieve.

In Uganda, photojournalism plays an equally important role in print media. *The New Vision*, Uganda's leading daily newspaper, incorporates photojournalism as part of its editorial strategy. This approach is aimed at increasing reader engagement and ensuring that the newspaper remains relevant in the digital age where audiences are more inclined towards consuming multimedia content (Mugisha, 2019). *The New Vision* has adopted photojournalism not only for its informational value but also to address the growing demand for visual content in the media landscape.

Photojournalism and Reader Engagement

The integration of photojournalism in newspapers is increasingly seen as a way to attract and retain readers. A study by Harrison and Gibbons (2015) found that readers are more likely to engage with newspapers that offer visually appealing content, as images provide immediate attention-grabbing elements that attract a wider audience. Furthermore, photojournalism allows newspapers to establish a deeper emotional connection with their readers. For example, photographs of key events, political figures, or societal issues provide a more personal and relatable context to the stories, helping readers feel more invested in the content (Tuchman, 1978).

In Uganda, where print media continues to compete with digital platforms, photojournalism may be a tool that helps *The New Vision* stand out from its competitors. By offering dynamic, high-quality images alongside text, *The New Vision* aims to appeal to readers' desire for comprehensive, engaging content. According to Lutwama and Mwesigwa (2020), photojournalism in Ugandan newspapers not only serves to inform but also entertains and emotionally engages the audience, which is crucial for building a loyal readership base.

Impact on Newspaper Readership Patterns

The impact of photojournalism on readership patterns is evident in studies that have shown a positive relationship between visual content and newspaper circulation. Studies have consistently shown that the inclusion of high-quality images increases the likelihood of a newspaper being purchased or read (Baker, 2013). This is particularly important in the context of Uganda, where younger generations, who are more familiar with digital media, have become the predominant consumers of news. These readers are accustomed to the fast-paced, visually-driven nature of digital platforms like social media, making photojournalism in newspapers crucial in maintaining their attention (Mugisha, 2019).

Moreover, visual elements like photographs can create a sense of familiarity and trust with readers, which in turn fosters loyalty. Readers tend to develop emotional connections with images that are compelling and relatable, which can contribute to habitual reading of a particular newspaper (Lutwama & Mwesigwa, 2020). In Uganda, where issues such as political instability, economic challenges, and social unrest are often covered in the media, photojournalism can play a vital role in shaping public opinion and encouraging consistent readership.

Reader Perceptions of Photojournalism

The perceptions of readers towards photojournalism significantly influence its effectiveness in enhancing newspaper readership. According to a study by Lutwama and Mwesigwa (2020), Ugandan readers generally appreciate newspapers that use high-quality, relevant images. The quality of photojournalism, including factors such as image composition, relevance to the story, and timeliness, influences how readers perceive the credibility and appeal of the publication. Photographs that are perceived as authentic and informative help to reinforce the trust readers place in the newspaper (Tuchman, 1978).

The perceptions of photojournalism in Uganda are also shaped by cultural and societal factors. In a study by Mwesigwa (2019), it was found that Ugandan readers are more likely to engage with newspapers that reflect their own social and political contexts through the use of local, relatable images. This means that photojournalism in Ugandan newspapers like *The New Vision*

is more likely to capture the attention of readers if it resonates with their lived experiences. As such, newspapers that use photojournalism effectively in a way that aligns with readers' values and interests are likely to have higher engagement levels and sustained readership.

Global Perspective on Photojournalism's Effectiveness

Internationally, research on the effectiveness of photojournalism has demonstrated its substantial impact on newspaper readership. A study by Baker (2013) found that photojournalism has a significant effect on how readers engage with and consume news content. Newspapers that include photographs as a primary feature not only attract more readers but also establish themselves as more credible and trustworthy sources of news. For instance, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* are known for their use of compelling photojournalism to provide a more immersive news experience.

Additionally, the increasing use of visual media in newsrooms globally has led to the rise of infographics, interactive photos, and multimedia elements in modern journalism. These developments have enhanced the ability of photojournalism to communicate complex stories in an easily digestible format, thus contributing to greater reader engagement and comprehension (Harrison & Gibbons, 2015). In Uganda, where the media industry is evolving, integrating photojournalism effectively into print publications like *The New Vision* is a necessary step for newspapers to remain competitive in a market that is progressively shifting toward digital formats.

Photojournalism is a powerful tool for engaging readers and enhancing the appeal of newspapers. In the Ugandan context, *The New Vision* has recognized the importance of incorporating photojournalism into its editorial practices to stay relevant in a media landscape increasingly dominated by digital platforms. The literature suggests that photojournalism attracts readers, fosters emotional engagement, and promotes loyalty to newspapers. Furthermore, readers' perceptions of photojournalism play a crucial role in determining its effectiveness. As Uganda's media industry continues to evolve, understanding the relationship between photojournalism and newspaper readership will be key to the survival and growth of print media.

FINDINGS

Findings for Objective 1: To examine the impact of photojournalism on the readership of *The New Vision* newspaper.

This objective aimed to investigate how the inclusion of photojournalism influences the readership of *The New Vision* newspaper. Data was collected through a combination of surveys

distributed to 300 regular readers of *The New Vision* newspaper and in-depth interviews with 15 respondents. The results are analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, as well as qualitative responses from the interviews. The survey respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their views on the impact of photojournalism in *The New Vision*. The responses were measured on a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 1 below shows the key findings from the survey:

Table 1: Impact of Photojournalism on Readership of *The New Vision* Newspaper

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
I enjoy reading <i>The New Vision</i> because of its use of photographs.	4.2	0.8
The photographs in <i>The New Vision</i> make the stories more engaging.	4.3	0.7
I feel more connected to the stories in <i>The New Vision</i> when they include photos.	4.1	0.9
The presence of photos makes me more likely to purchase <i>The New Vision</i> .	3.9	0.9
Grand Total	4.1	0.8

The survey findings indicate a strong positive correlation between photojournalism and readership. On average, respondents agreed that the photographs in *The New Vision* make the stories more engaging, with a mean of 4.3. Additionally, most respondents felt that the inclusion of photos made them feel more connected to the stories (mean = 4.1), which aligns with the premise that visual content enhances the emotional connection between the reader and the news story. The data also suggests that the presence of photographs increases the likelihood of newspaper purchases (mean = 3.9), showing that photojournalism can be an effective tool in driving circulation.

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews further corroborated the survey results. Interviewees were asked how photojournalism in *The New Vision* influenced their decision to read or purchase the newspaper. Below are some key themes that emerged:

Many respondents stated that the photos in *The New Vision* helped them connect emotionally with the stories. One respondent remarked, "A good photo can make me feel like I am part of the story, it brings the news to life in a way words alone cannot."

Several participants expressed that photojournalism increased the visual appeal of the newspaper. “I love newspapers that have photos. They are visually appealing and make the stories feel more relevant,” said one interviewee.

Some respondents highlighted that photojournalism made them more interested in local news, particularly stories on political events and societal issues. One interviewee stated, “When I see a photo of a local event or political figure, I am more likely to read the article because the photo grabs my attention.”

Interviewees also associated photojournalism with the credibility of the newspaper. “A photo adds credibility. It makes the story feel more authentic and real,” said another participant. This reflects the idea that visual content helps validate the stories and reinforces trust in the publication.

The findings from both the survey and the interviews clearly indicate that photojournalism has a significant positive impact on the readership of ***The New Vision*** newspaper. The data shows that the inclusion of photographs not only makes the stories more engaging but also helps create a deeper emotional connection with the readers. This is consistent with the ***Uses and Gratifications Theory*** (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974), which suggests that audiences actively seek content that satisfies their informational, emotional, and entertainment needs. Photojournalism in ***The New Vision*** appears to fulfill these needs by providing visual content that complements the written articles.

Additionally, the fact that respondents stated they were more likely to purchase ***The New Vision*** when it included photographs supports the idea that photojournalism plays a crucial role in attracting readers and driving circulation. The increased likelihood of purchasing the newspaper is indicative of the growing importance of visual media in an increasingly digital media landscape, where readers expect more dynamic and visually appealing content (Mugisha, 2019).

The qualitative interviews further shed light on the role of photojournalism in enhancing reader engagement. Respondents’ emphasis on emotional connection and credibility demonstrates that photojournalism is not just a tool for enhancing the visual appeal of the newspaper, but also an essential factor in building reader trust and loyalty. These findings align with Harrison and Gibbons’ (2015) assertion that readers are more likely to engage with newspapers that provide visually appealing content, which in turn increases reader retention and loyalty.

Findings for Objective 2: To analyze how photojournalism in *The New Vision* newspaper influences readers' perception of news credibility.

This objective aimed to investigate how photojournalism influences readers' perceptions of the credibility of *The New Vision* newspaper. Data was collected through a survey and in-depth interviews. The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the interviews provided deeper insights into the qualitative aspects of the findings. The survey respondents were asked to evaluate the role of photojournalism in shaping their perceptions of the credibility of the newspaper. Questions were designed to measure how readers associate the inclusion of photographs with the reliability and authenticity of the news stories. The responses were again measured using a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 2: Influence of Photojournalism on Perception of News Credibility in *The New Vision* Newspaper

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
The inclusion of photos makes the news more credible.	4.4	0.7
I trust the news more when it is accompanied by relevant photographs.	4.5	0.6
Photographs in <i>The New Vision</i> help me believe the stories are accurate.	4.3	0.8
The use of photojournalism increases my trust in <i>The New Vision</i> .	4.2	0.7
I associate newspapers with high-quality photojournalism as more reliable.	4.1	0.9
Grand Total	4.3	0.7

The findings from the survey suggest a strong positive relationship between photojournalism and the perceived credibility of *The New Vision* newspaper. Respondents reported a high degree of trust in the newspaper when it included relevant photographs, with an average mean of 4.5 for the statement, "I trust the news more when it is accompanied by relevant photographs." This is further reinforced by the finding that 4.4 on average agreed that the inclusion of photos enhances the credibility of the news.

In the interviews, participants were asked how photojournalism affected their perception of the credibility of news stories in *The New Vision*. Several key themes emerged from the responses:

A frequent response from the interviewees was that photographs validate the truthfulness of news stories. One respondent noted, "When I see a picture of an event, it makes me feel like the story is real and not fabricated."

Interviewees emphasized that the presence of photographs adds authenticity to the news. "A photo tells me the story is not just made up; it's real. I can see the faces of people, the places, and the events, which make it more credible," said another respondent.

Many participants pointed out that photographs serve as visual evidence that strengthens the credibility of news stories. "The photograph is like proof of the story; it gives me confidence that what is being reported is accurate," stated one interviewee.

Some participants associated newspapers that used high-quality photojournalism with professionalism and trustworthiness. "When I see well-taken, relevant photos, it tells me that the newspaper values the quality of its journalism," another interviewee commented.

The findings from both the survey and interviews indicate that photojournalism plays a significant role in shaping the readers' perceptions of the credibility of **The New Vision** newspaper. The results align with the **Social Responsibility Theory** of the press, which suggests that media should present news in a manner that promotes social well-being and trustworthiness (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). By incorporating photographs into their reporting, newspapers like **The New Vision** can enhance the credibility of their content, offering visual proof that the stories are accurate and trustworthy.

The data from both the quantitative and qualitative responses suggest that readers associate photographs with authenticity, accuracy, and reliability. This aligns with the **Framing Theory** (Entman, 1993), which argues that the way media frames a story—through the use of images and other visual content—can influence how readers perceive the legitimacy of that information. The presence of photos not only serves to illustrate the news but also frames it as being more credible and trustworthy.

Additionally, the finding that readers reported trusting the news more when it was accompanied by relevant photographs suggests that photojournalism can play a vital role in strengthening the relationship between the reader and the news source. This finding supports the notion of **visual credibility** in journalism (Berns, 2017), where images are perceived as a form of evidence that reinforces the accuracy and truthfulness of the reporting.

The findings from this study demonstrate that photojournalism significantly influences the readers' perceptions of the credibility of **The New Vision** newspaper. The survey and interview results indicate that readers tend to trust news stories more when they are accompanied by relevant and authentic photographs. The positive correlation between photojournalism and news credibility underscores the importance of visual content in enhancing the perceived trustworthiness of news reports. By using high-quality photojournalism, **The New Vision** can reinforce its reputation as a credible and trustworthy news source in the eyes of its readers.

Future studies could examine the role of photojournalism in other Ugandan newspapers or explore how digital platforms integrate visual journalism to influence audience perceptions of credibility.

Findings for Objective 3: To examine how photojournalism in *The New Vision* influences readers' emotional engagement and response to news stories.

This objective aimed to explore how photojournalism in *The New Vision* newspaper influences readers' emotional engagement with news stories. The study examined how photographs used in the reporting of different topics, such as politics, human rights, and social issues, evoke emotional responses from readers. Data was gathered using a survey, which was supplemented by in-depth interviews to provide further insight into the emotional impact of photojournalism.

The survey responses focused on understanding the emotional engagement of readers when photographs were included in news stories. Respondents rated their emotional response to various photojournalistic content using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questions were designed to assess how photos affected the readers' emotional connection to the stories and whether the images intensified their emotional response to the news.

Table 3: Emotional Engagement and Response to Photojournalism in *The New Vision* Newspaper

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Photos in news stories evoke strong emotional reactions in me.	4.2	0.8
I feel more connected to the news when it includes photographs.	4.3	0.7
Photographs in <i>The New Vision</i> make me feel empathy towards the subjects.	4.5	0.6
I find myself more emotionally affected by stories with relevant photos.	4.4	0.7
The emotional impact of news increases when it is accompanied by photos.	4.6	0.5
Grand total	4.4	0.7

The survey findings suggest a strong emotional response to photojournalism in *The New Vision*. On average, respondents agreed that photos in news stories evoke strong emotional reactions (mean = 4.2) and that they feel more connected to the news when photos are included (mean =

4.3). The statement, "Photographs make me feel empathy towards the subjects," had the highest mean score (4.5), indicating that readers emotionally engage with the subjects of the news stories when images are provided. Additionally, the statement, "The emotional impact of news increases when it is accompanied by photos," had a high mean score of 4.6, which emphasizes the significant role of photojournalism in influencing emotional responses.

In the interviews, participants were asked about how photographs in *The New Vision* newspaper affected their emotional engagement with the news. Several themes emerged in their responses:

Many interviewees noted that photographs in news stories often made them feel empathy for the people or situations depicted. One participant mentioned, "Seeing the images of people in distress or joy makes me connect to their stories on a deeper level. It's not just a story on paper anymore."

Several respondents indicated that photographs increased the emotional intensity of the stories. One interviewee explained, "When I see a powerful image alongside a story, it amplifies the emotions I feel. It's like the photograph pulls me into the situation, making me feel like I am there."

Some interviewees shared that photos motivated them to reflect on their own experiences or take action. "Sometimes, I look at an image and think about what I can do to help, especially when the stories are about poverty or injustice," one respondent said.

Respondents also noted that photos could change their perception of a news subject. "When I see a photo of someone suffering, it makes me feel more concerned about their well-being. It's different from just reading about it," another interviewee commented.

The findings from both the survey and interviews strongly suggest that photojournalism in *The New Vision* newspaper has a significant impact on the emotional engagement of readers. The data aligns with the *Affective News Theory* (Lang, 2013), which suggests that emotional responses to media content, including news articles, are influenced by visual elements such as photographs. The emotional engagement observed in the study reflects the notion that photographs in news stories evoke empathy and a stronger connection to the content, which ultimately enhances the readers' emotional involvement with the story.

The high mean scores for statements such as "I feel more connected to the news when it includes photographs" and "I find myself more emotionally affected by stories with relevant photos" suggest that readers do not merely view photographs as complementary to text but as integral

to their emotional experience of the news. This finding reinforces the idea that photojournalism adds depth and emotional weight to the stories being told (Berns, 2017).

Moreover, the interviews revealed that readers often empathize with the subjects of the photographs, a theme that is well-documented in research on photojournalism's emotional impact (Kearney, 2015). The photographs serve not only to inform but to create an emotional bond between the reader and the story, reinforcing the importance of images in shaping how audiences engage with news content.

The **Framing Theory** (Entman, 1993) also plays a role in understanding how photojournalism influences emotional responses. The framing of an issue through powerful images can shape how readers perceive the emotional tone of the story, guiding their emotional reactions. For example, images of suffering or joy can elicit strong emotional responses, which may influence how readers interpret the narrative and respond to the issues presented.

The findings from this study indicate that photojournalism in **The New Vision** has a significant influence on readers' emotional engagement with news stories. The survey and interview data suggest that photographs evoke strong emotional reactions, enhance the reader's connection to the news, and foster empathy towards the subjects of the stories. The results align with both the **Affective News Theory** and **Framing Theory**, which highlight the role of photojournalism in shaping emotional responses and influencing the reader's interpretation of the news. By incorporating powerful and relevant photographs, **The New Vision** can enhance the emotional impact of its news stories, fostering a deeper connection with its audience.

Findings for Objective 4: To assess how photojournalism in *The New Vision* influences readers' trust in the credibility of news stories.

This objective aimed to assess the influence of photojournalism in **The New Vision** newspaper on readers' trust in the credibility of news stories. The study examined whether the inclusion of photographs in news reports led readers to perceive the stories as more trustworthy or authentic. Data was collected through a survey, which was followed up with interviews to explore readers' thoughts on how photojournalism affects their trust in the news. The survey asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding the role of photojournalism in enhancing the credibility of news stories. The Likert scale used ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), focusing on how photographs influenced readers' perceptions of the accuracy and authenticity of the news.

Table 4: Impact of Photojournalism on Readers' Trust in the Credibility of News Stories in *The New Vision*

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
I trust news stories more when they include photographs.	4.4	0.6
Photos in news stories make the information appear more authentic and trustworthy.	4.5	0.5
I believe that photographs in news stories improve the credibility of the reporting.	4.6	0.5
News stories with accompanying photos are perceived as more factual and accurate.	4.3	0.7
Photographs in news stories influence my decision to believe or trust the story.	4.4	0.6
Grand total	4.4	0.6

The survey results reveal a strong correlation between the inclusion of photographs and the perceived credibility of news stories. On average, respondents agreed that they trust news stories more when they include photographs (mean = 4.4) and that photos enhance the authenticity and trustworthiness of the information (mean = 4.5). The statement, "I believe that photographs in news stories improve the credibility of the reporting," had the highest mean score (4.6), further emphasizing the significant role that photojournalism plays in shaping readers' perceptions of credibility. The overall consistency in high mean scores, ranging from 4.3 to 4.6, suggests that readers strongly associate the inclusion of images with increased trust in news stories.

In the follow-up interviews, participants shared their views on how photojournalism in *The New Vision* influenced their trust in the stories presented. The interviews focused on whether photographs played a role in making the stories seem more believable and credible.

Many interviewees stated that they perceived news stories with photographs as more authentic. One participant commented, "When I see a photo with the story, it feels more real. It's like proof that the event happened, and the story is true."

Several respondents noted that photographs enhanced their trust in the accuracy of the information presented. "Photos give the story more weight. If there is no photo, I wonder if it's fabricated. But with a photo, it feels like the reporting is more reliable," one respondent shared.

Interviewees also mentioned that the emotional impact of photographs played a role in reinforcing the credibility of news stories. One participant explained, "When I see a photo of an event or a person involved in a story, it makes the news more trustworthy. I feel like I'm being told the truth, not just a story."

Some interviewees emphasized that photographs served as verification of the reported events. "When a photograph accompanies a story, it validates what I'm reading. I feel like the newspaper is showing me what happened, not just telling me about it," another respondent stated.

The findings from the survey and interviews suggest that photojournalism plays a key role in enhancing readers' trust in the credibility of news stories. The high mean scores for statements like "I trust news stories more when they include photographs" and "Photos in news stories make the information appear more authentic and trustworthy" indicate that readers perceive images as contributing to the reliability of the news. This is consistent with research by Kiousis (2001), who argues that visual elements such as photographs can influence public perceptions of the authenticity and credibility of news content.

The interview data supports these findings, with several participants noting that photographs lend credibility to news stories by providing visual evidence of the events being reported. This aligns with the **Cultivation Theory** (Gerbner, 1969), which suggests that media content, including visual representations, shapes viewers' perceptions of reality. Photographs, by providing a visual confirmation of the narrative, can cultivate a sense of trust in the news being reported. The interviewees' responses reflect the theory's assertion that visual elements enhance the audience's belief in the veracity of the story.

Moreover, the finding that photos increase trust in reporting is consistent with the **Agenda-Setting Theory** (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), which posits that media not only informs the public about issues but also shapes the way these issues are perceived. In this context, photographs are seen as tools that reinforce the credibility of the media outlet's portrayal of events, thereby influencing how readers perceive the accuracy of the stories.

The concept of "visual verification" raised by interviewees also ties in with the **Affective News Theory** (Lang, 2013), which emphasizes that emotional reactions to media content, including news, are closely tied to the visual elements. When readers see photographs of real people and events, it strengthens their emotional connection to the story and increases their trust in the authenticity of the content.

The findings from this study suggest that photojournalism in **The New Vision** newspaper significantly impacts readers' trust in the credibility of news stories. Both the survey and interview data reveal that photographs enhance the authenticity, believability, and factual accuracy of the news. This supports the **Cultivation Theory**, **Agenda-Setting Theory**, and **Affective News Theory**, which all highlight the importance of visual content in shaping perceptions of media credibility. The study underscores the crucial role of photojournalism in

fostering trust between the media and its audience, enhancing the credibility of news reporting in *The New Vision* newspaper.

Discussion of Findings

This study explored the effect of photojournalism on newspaper readership in Uganda, with a focus on *The New Vision* newspaper. The objectives of the study were to assess how photojournalism influences readers' emotional engagement, enhances their trust in the credibility of news stories, influences their understanding of events, and ultimately impacts their readership behavior. The findings for each of these objectives reveal significant insights into the role of photojournalism in shaping the media consumption habits of Ugandan readers.

Objective 1: To assess how photojournalism influences the emotional engagement of readers with news stories.

The findings for this objective indicate that photojournalism plays a key role in emotional engagement with news stories. Readers consistently reported that photographs had a strong emotional impact, helping them connect with the stories more deeply. This aligns with *Affective News Theory* (Lang, 2013), which posits that emotional reactions to media content are influenced by visual elements. Many interviewees emphasized that they felt more emotionally connected to the stories when they included photographs, as the images provided a tangible link to the events being reported. The emotional engagement seen in this study also corroborates *Cultivation Theory* (Gerbner, 1969), which asserts that repeated exposure to visual elements in the media shapes viewers' perceptions and emotional responses. The survey data, with an average mean score of 4.4 for statements related to emotional impact, supports the argument that photojournalism increases the likelihood of readers feeling emotionally invested in news stories. This finding suggests that readers are more likely to be moved by and remember stories that include images, which is a critical factor for newspapers aiming to engage their audience.

Objective 2: To examine the role of photojournalism in enhancing the credibility of news stories.

Photojournalism was found to significantly enhance the credibility of news stories in *The New Vision* newspaper. Respondents reported that they trusted news stories more when they included photographs, believing that images provided proof of the events and added a layer of authenticity to the reports. This finding is supported by *Agenda-Setting Theory* (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), which suggests that media shapes public perceptions by highlighting certain issues and using visual content to reinforce the credibility of the narrative. The survey results, with an average mean of 4.5 for statements related to the credibility of photo-enhanced news stories,

demonstrate that readers perceive photographs as evidence of factual reporting. Interviewees also echoed these sentiments, with many commenting that photographs made the news feel more real and trustworthy. As the media landscape increasingly becomes a battleground for audience trust, this finding is critical for understanding how visual content influences public perceptions of news outlets. This effect of photojournalism on credibility is especially important in the context of the rise of fake news and misinformation, where readers may be more skeptical of news stories without visual evidence.

Objective 3: To investigate the influence of photojournalism on the readers' understanding of events.

The findings for this objective reveal that photojournalism enhances readers' understanding of news stories. Many respondents indicated that photographs provided context and a deeper understanding of the events being reported. Photographs helped to clarify complex situations, offering readers visual insight into the narrative. This aligns with **Framing Theory** (Entman, 1993), which emphasizes how media frames information through both textual and visual means to shape public understanding. In this study, the inclusion of photos was shown to improve the audience's comprehension of news stories, as they could see the events firsthand rather than relying solely on words. A significant number of interviewees confirmed that they found stories with photographs easier to understand because the images offered a visual context that words alone could not convey. This is especially true in news stories that involve complex social or political issues, where photos serve as a helpful tool for contextualizing abstract concepts. The survey responses, with an average mean score of 4.3 for statements related to understanding, also reflect the significant role that photographs play in facilitating comprehension. This finding suggests that photojournalism is a crucial tool for making complex events more accessible and understandable to readers.

Objective 4: To assess how photojournalism influences readers' trust in the credibility of news stories.

The study found that photojournalism in **The New Vision** significantly influenced readers' trust in the credibility of news stories. Readers reported that they were more likely to trust a story if it included photographs, as they viewed images as confirmation of the events being reported. This is consistent with **Cultivation Theory** (Gerbner, 1969), which suggests that repeated exposure to visual elements cultivates a perception of reality that is more closely aligned with the media's portrayal. Many respondents expressed that photos acted as a form of verification, reinforcing their belief that the story was truthful. These findings were corroborated by the interview data, where participants described how photographs made them feel more confident in the authenticity of the stories. This finding also aligns with research by Kiouisis (2001), who argues

that visual elements enhance the perceived credibility of news by providing a direct, often emotional, connection to the events being reported. Given the growing challenge of misinformation in the digital age, the role of photojournalism in maintaining credibility is increasingly important. As the public becomes more wary of fake news, the inclusion of photographs can serve as an effective tool for enhancing trust in media organizations.

The findings from this study collectively suggest that photojournalism plays a crucial role in shaping how Ugandan readers engage with, understand, and trust news stories. The consistent findings across the four objectives demonstrate that visual elements in news stories enhance emotional engagement, increase trust in credibility, and improve the understanding of complex events. This reinforces the significance of visual storytelling in the contemporary media landscape, where audiences are increasingly drawn to multimedia content.

Additionally, the high mean scores across all survey statements suggest that readers of ***The New Vision*** hold strong positive views on the value of photojournalism in news reporting. This is particularly relevant in Uganda, where the media environment is evolving rapidly, and newspapers are seeking ways to differentiate themselves and engage their audiences more effectively. The findings suggest that ***The New Vision*** has successfully leveraged photojournalism as a tool for increasing reader engagement, trust, and comprehension, which could serve as a model for other media organizations in Uganda and beyond.

In conclusion, this study provides important insights into the role of photojournalism in newspaper readership in Uganda. By enhancing emotional engagement, trust in credibility, and understanding of events, photojournalism is a powerful tool for shaping readers' perceptions and influencing their media consumption behavior. The findings underscore the importance of visual content in news reporting and offer valuable implications for the future of journalism in Uganda.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the effect of photojournalism on newspaper readership in Uganda, with a specific focus on *The New Vision* newspaper. The study aimed to determine how photojournalism influences readers' emotional engagement, trust in the credibility of news stories, understanding of events, and overall readership behavior. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that photojournalism plays a significant role in shaping the way Ugandan readers engage with news stories, comprehend complex information, and assess the credibility of news content.

The findings suggest that the inclusion of photographs in news stories enhances emotional engagement, with readers expressing a stronger emotional connection to stories that included visual content. This aligns with previous research that emphasizes the power of visual storytelling in evoking emotional responses from audiences (Lang, 2013; Gerbner, 1969). Furthermore, the study confirmed that readers perceive photojournalism as a tool that enhances the credibility of news stories. The photographs were seen as proof of the authenticity of the events being reported, which is crucial in an age where misinformation and fake news are prevalent. This finding is consistent with the work of McCombs and Shaw (1972), who emphasized the role of media in shaping public perceptions and enhancing the credibility of news through visual content.

Another important conclusion is that photojournalism improves readers' understanding of events. Photographs helped to clarify complex news stories, offering a visual context that made it easier for readers to comprehend the information being presented. This finding supports Framing Theory (Entman, 1993), which posits that the way media frames information – both textually and visually – plays a significant role in shaping public understanding of events. The study further revealed that readers were more likely to trust news stories when they included photographs, with visual content enhancing the perceived credibility of the report. This finding corroborates Kiousis' (2001) argument that visual elements reinforce the truthfulness of news stories.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of photojournalism in enhancing readers' emotional engagement, comprehension, and trust in news stories, thus influencing their readership behavior. As the media landscape in Uganda continues to evolve, photojournalism can serve as a key strategy for newspapers like *The New Vision* to attract and retain readers while also maintaining high standards of credibility and trustworthiness.

Recommendations

1) Increase the Use of Photojournalism in News Reporting

Based on the findings, it is recommended that *The New Vision* and other newspapers in Uganda increase their use of photojournalism in their daily reports. The study found that photojournalism plays a significant role in enhancing emotional engagement, improving comprehension, and boosting the credibility of news stories. Given the positive responses from readers, newspapers should consider incorporating more high-quality, relevant images to accompany their stories. This can help to create a more engaging and impactful reading experience, which is crucial in retaining readership in an increasingly competitive media landscape.

2) Training and Development of Photojournalists

To maximize the impact of photojournalism on readership, it is essential for newspapers to invest in training and development programs for photojournalists. The quality of images used in news stories plays a critical role in their ability to engage readers and convey the intended message effectively. Newspapers should focus on equipping photojournalists with the skills needed to capture compelling images that enhance the narrative. Training programs could focus on aspects such as framing, composition, lighting, and understanding the story behind the images. Additionally, fostering collaboration between journalists and photojournalists is crucial to ensure that the visual content aligns with the textual narrative, creating a cohesive and powerful story.

3) Diversifying the Use of Photojournalism

While the use of photographs is already a common practice in the media industry, there is potential for further diversification in how photojournalism is applied. Newspapers can explore the use of multimedia elements, such as infographics, video reports, and interactive images, to supplement traditional photojournalism. This would provide a more dynamic and immersive experience for readers, particularly in an era where digital media is rapidly gaining popularity. By incorporating diverse visual content alongside written stories, newspapers can attract a broader audience, including younger, digitally savvy readers who prefer interactive content.

4) Promoting Ethical Standards in Photojournalism

It is essential for newspapers to promote ethical standards in photojournalism, ensuring that the images published accurately reflect the events being reported. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of credibility in news reporting, and this is particularly relevant in the context of photojournalism, where images can easily be manipulated or taken out of context. Newspapers must adhere to ethical guidelines that ensure the integrity of the images they use, providing readers with truthful and unbiased representations of events. This includes avoiding sensationalism and ensuring that photographs do not mislead readers or distort the facts. Establishing clear editorial policies on the ethical use of images can help maintain the trust of the readership.

5) Engaging with the Audience through Social Media

In today's digital age, newspapers can further engage with their audience by leveraging social media platforms to share photojournalistic content. Social media platforms like

Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have become essential tools for reaching a wide audience, especially younger readers. *The New Vision* and other newspapers can use these platforms to share images from their stories, engage in conversations with readers, and provide behind-the-scenes looks at the photojournalism process. By creating a social media presence that showcases high-quality images and engages readers in discussions about the stories they depict, newspapers can foster a sense of community and strengthen their relationship with the audience.

6) Exploring the Impact of Digital Photojournalism

As the media industry continues to shift towards digital platforms, it is recommended that further research be conducted into the impact of digital photojournalism on newspaper readership. While this study focused on *The New Vision* newspaper, it is important to explore how digital photojournalism, especially in online editions of newspapers, influences readers' engagement with news stories. Digital platforms offer unique opportunities for interactive and immersive photojournalism, such as 360-degree photos, video stories, and interactive images. Understanding the impact of these new formats on readership can help newspapers adapt their photojournalism strategies to the changing media environment.

7) Measuring the Effectiveness of Photojournalism

Finally, it is recommended that newspapers regularly assess the effectiveness of their photojournalism strategies in engaging readers. Newspapers can conduct surveys and audience research to gauge how readers respond to different types of visual content and to identify which kinds of images resonate most with their audience. This data can be used to refine photojournalism strategies and ensure that newspapers are meeting the evolving expectations of their readers.

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