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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Media and Communications

**TOWARDS A NEWS INDUSTRY FRAMEWORK FOR TACKLING THE
VICE OF BROWN ENVELOPE JOURNALISM: PERCEPTIONS OF
JOURNALISTS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS IN UGANDA**

By

Sandra Lamwaka
553285

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in Digital Journalism

Nairobi, Kenya

11/02/2022
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APPROVAL PAGE

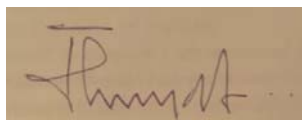
The Aga Khan University
Graduate School of Media and Communications

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in Digital Journalism

Members of the Thesis Evaluation Committee appointed to examine the thesis of
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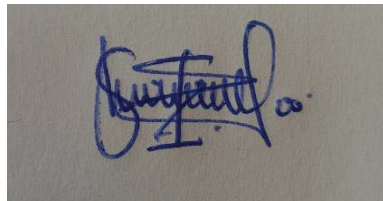
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DECLARATION

TOWARDS A NEWS INDUSTRY FRAMEWORK FOR TACKLING THE VICE OF BROWN ENVELOPE JOURNALISM: PERCEPTIONS OF JOURNALISTS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS IN UGANDA

I, **SANDRA LAMWAKA-553285**, declare that this proposal does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. The editorial assistance provided to me has in no way added to the substance of my proposal, which is the product of my research endeavours.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Sandra Lamwaka'.

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my Mother Miss Acan Diana for her resilience and strength.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Erneo Nyakundi and Dr. James Oranga whose scholarly advice and encouragement has enabled me to complete my thesis. My sincere gratitude goes out to the staff, faculty members and my fellow students for their invaluable input and for being a great source of support to me throughout this process. And finally, special thanks to my Mother Ms. Acan Diana, my sister Mrs. Aber Harriet Lajul, for their continued support and push.

ABSTRACT

Journalism, just like any other institution in society has been tainted with acts of corruption and bribery or what is scholarly known as Brown Envelope Journalism (BEJ). The practice takes shape in form of cash, gifts/ freebies, and incentives, given to a journalist to influence the reportage of news. This has affected the quality of news and undermined fundamental journalistic principles. Anchored on McQuail's theory of Media and Society and the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press, this study sought to examine journalists and PR practitioners' perceptions of BEJ and what the industry can employ to address the vice. The researcher used the mixed-method approach and administered two questionnaires to 180 respondents made up of 94 journalists and 86 PR practitioners working in Kampala and registered to the Uganda Journalists Association and the Public Relations Association of Uganda while 6 PR and journalism experts were interviewed as key informants. The study found that although journalists and PR practitioners perceive the BEJ as unethical, they are complaisant with the practice. It also found money to be the dominant form of BEJ in Uganda with poor pay and the lack of facilitation as the dominating factors that have caused the prevalence of vice in the country. The study concluded that the eradication of BEJ from the Ugandan media landscape is viable but will rely solely on a combined effort by media houses, media associations and the government to deal with it. The study recommends an improvement in the welfare of journalists and the formation of a functional regulatory framework and body to oversee the practice of journalism. It suggests that future investigations consider examining the phenomena using the ethnography approach to ensure a complete understanding of the phenomena and the ways to stop it from the respondents' lived experiences.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AKU-GSMC:	Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications
BBC:	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEJ:	Brown Envelope Journalism
ISO:	Internal Security Organisation
M-PESA:	Mobile phone-based money transfer service
MTN:	Mobile Telephone Network
NWSC:	National Water and Sewerage Cooperation
PRAU:	Public Relations Association of Uganda
REC:	Research Ethics Committee
IBM/SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Scientist
UCU:	Uganda Christian University
UGX:	Ugandan Shillings
UJA:	Uganda Journalists Association
UJA:	Uganda Journalists Association
UNCST:	Uganda National Council of Science and Technology
USD:	United States Dollar