



## THE INFLUENCE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN UNSOCIAL WELFARE VIOLENCE AND RWANDA 1994 GENOCIDE OF TUTSIS: A CASE STUDY OF RADIO STATION

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### **Abstract:**

The researcher carried out the study of mass media in unsocial welfare violence in Rwanda genocide of Tutsis of 1994: A case study of Radio station. The research focused on the radio because the majority of the people both literate and illiterate use transistor radios as source of information especially in the period of war. The research was guided by the following objectives: To find out how media influences violence; To find out the factors causing violence in public; To identify the common types of violent behaviour displayed and effects of such violence in society. The Research design was a case study. This was because the researcher wanted to study in depth how the radio stations influenced unsocial welfare behaviour in Rwanda genocide of Tutsis of 1994. The researcher used purposive and random sampling technique when selecting the respondents. It was found out that radio stations used incivility and this incited peoples to violence which led to mass killing. The study also found that there was no direct law forbidding unethical radio presentations in Rwanda. The hypothesis is accepted and concludes that there was sufficient evidence at the 0.05 level of significance, that violent behaviour affects society at all angles. The study recommended that Information might be provided by people, who are experienced in dealing with civil disorders and always able to sort out fact from rumours to avoid confusion.

**Keywords:** mass media, unsocial welfare violence, radio station

### **1. Introduction**

This study viewed the influence of the mass media in unsocial welfare violence in Rwanda genocide of Tutsis of 1994. This study was based on the theory developed by different authors such as Peterson, & Schramm, (1956), media should promote ethnocentrism and stresses factual (especially investigative) reporting over

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commentary, the balancing of opposing viewpoints, it should be seen as an evolutionary process which is flexible and in which nations and organizations could adapt their choices to changing conditions in their operations and public. It is on the basis of this theory that the mass media influences unsocial welfare violence in society.

Before Germans and then Belgians colonialists settled in Rwanda, Rwandans had their own way of transmitting information called "traditional media" or "ancestors' media". They could transmit information through words or traditional instruments. It was easy for them to know how their country was ruled, and they could easily get and follow instructions and rules from the King. In case a King's death, the whole population was informed and in case of an outside attack, the whole population was called to defend the nation. This was all possible by using different drum sounding and the word of mouth (Kambanda and Ngarambe, 2007).

After independence, this period was characterized by contemporary media or more advanced media. By contemporary media (mass communication) we mean print media, radio and television stations (McCann, 2006). Misser and Yves, (2004), during the colonial era, there were newspapers but no radio until 1962, and television started in 1993.

According to Straus (2006), well-practiced media comes fourth after the legislative power, the executive power and the judicial. In this regard, it is admitted that when the media operates properly, it fosters sustainable development by informing the people about what takes place in their country and all over the world, hence giving them the opportunity to know what is beneficial and what is not. Besides, it enables them to contribute towards the country's development and promote their own welfare. Violence is a form of deviance, which can be used to gain unfair advantage (Lee Fujii, 2006). Violence is a dishonest and cowardly way of trying to win. One of the earliest psychological theories developed to explain violence is called the frustration-aggression hypothesis according to (Schudson, 2001). The losers for example are frustrated when successfully tackled by an opponent. Frustration increases the likelihood of aggressive behaviour. It is apparent that man's behaviour involves a large number of blockages responses to the rivals' goal where the loser is obviously frustrated by losing leading to aggressive behaviour which tends to be violent in nature. Ngarambe (2002) touched three elements in modern society which are closely related to violence and these are aggression, professionalism and personality. Radio is no doubt the measure that fuels them. This means that media plays a key role in promoting peace above all. In order to achieve all these objectives, radio needs well-structured guidelines; otherwise media would turn into a devastating weapon.

There would not be social welfare without peace, or when there is no security for the people. For instance the media that played a destructive role in the 1994 tutsis genocide in Rwanda. Of course, radio played an important role in the April-July 1994 genocide and years before, however; Rwanda was among countries that signed and committed themselves to implementing the International Human Rights Conventions in general and those promoting freedom of the press in particular.

Although the current law governing the press grants extensive freedom of press, pressmen/women in Rwanda have not yet understood what this freedom means with some institutions still struggling to better understand such freedom. This being the reason why training sessions should be regularly organized to better explanation such freedom so as to adequately achieve freedom of press without being any interference, hindrance or reluctance. This requires more professional training sessions for Rwandan journalists, because it has been noticed that most of them are unprofessional, while others are jobless people who try their hand in journalism thus making the profession look like a refuge for unemployed people. Given such a situation, difficulties linked to lack of professionalism, ignorance of the right thing to be done reduces the value it should have in the country's life because the poor the quality, the poor the production.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Violence has greatly affected the public. The higher levels of violence such as killing, looting, destruction of public and private properties, adversely affected the progress of any society from all angles. Because of this, peaceful and weak people free chaos to seek refuge where society is more organized and peaceful. The ultimate effect of violence is unlawful arrests, detentions, torture, loss of life and the economic retardation. Despite measures taken to stop media incitements, it's evidenced that violence is still prevailing and increasing in the public. Therefore it attracted the researcher's attention to analyzing the influence of media in unsocial welfare violence.

## **3. Literature Review**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Media plays a vital role in every one's life. In today's modern society media has become a part and parcel of our life. Its duty is to inform, educate and entertain. It is considered as the 4th pillar of our society. The chapter presents the available literature on how radio influenced the violence, the common types of hostile behaviours displayed, effects of violence in society and related studies.

### **3.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study will be based on the Authoritarian theory developed by Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, (1956), upon which the press must instead assume social responsibility, be factual accuracy, promotion of open debate, representation of diverse views, and protection of individual rights by serving as a watchdog that guard against government abuses of power. Under this theory the author finds; the postmodern theory which insists on a journalism open to the widest range of narrative styles and perspectives, especially those emerging from the margins of society; normative theories of journalism necessary Hallin & Mancini, (2004) such as Four Theories of the Press Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm (1956), media should promote ethnocentrism and stresses factual

(especially investigative) reporting over commentary, the balancing of opposing viewpoints, and maintaining a neutral observer role for the journalist. Schudson (2001), it is on the basis of this theory(s) that the study proposes analyses the influence of media in unsocial welfare violence, a case of radio station.

Media has a constructive role to play for the society. Today News Channels and even some Newspapers are mouthpieces of some political parties. Their work then limits only to spread the ideology of the party rather than providing correct news. People have to judge on their own by looking different channels for the same news and then form a conclusion.

Today, social equality and liberal development are interdependent with recognition by media. In an informed democracy, public reasoning based opinion is a vital aide for transparent governance. It is an age of advancement in communication technology where Internet, push button publishing, news and views getting blogged up have an important role in making up mindsets.

However, some radio stations in Australia for instance seems to be suffering from, information corruption, manipulations of facts with a twisted approach to provoke chaos, confusion and democratic crisis. The federation of Australia that is dependent on peaceful co-existence, democracy and equality may be weakened by such unhealthy media approach.

Specifically on the front of terrorism, Australia media has generally failed to draw a clear line of understanding. Almost all talk shows start with anchors questioning the justification of war on terror. They have corrupted the mind of people by confusing this issue with anti-democratic propaganda. Besides, media anchors always invite right wing people and give them time to support their hate filled ideology.

Such similar hypocritical approach of media and media policies has made Afghanistan suffer an unbearable damage where Taliban's advancements to various cities and streets were ignored and masked under various conspiracy theories. Right-wingers in the media have always betrayed the people in offering them a kind of freedom and have only choked the information resources for their perverted interests in the name of religion.

On October 28, 2000, Al-Ahram, a popular Egyptian radio, presented a programme titled "A Jewish Matza Made from Arab Blood." The programme made the outrageous claim that Jews in Israel were killing Arab children so that their blood could be used to make unleavened bread for Passover. In the spring of 2002, a radio in Saudi Arabia devoted two issues to similar claims-this time that Jews murder Christian and Muslim children so that they can use their blood in preparing for the Jewish holidays of Purim and Passover. In the summer of 2002, the French charged the editor of the Egyptian radio and the radio itself with distributing materials that promote hatred and anti-Semitic violence-a serious crime in France (Barayagwiza, and Ngeze, 2008).

According to Ngarambe, (2002), in some cases, the influential personalities do not have any way without tolerating these broadcast discussions like it was in 2007 in

Kenyan election which was followed by violent ethnic crashes. In primitive society the total locality or society had been regulated by only a couple of families and the general people would hesitate to say anything. Good Governance is such a system which is practiced in economics, politics, and through the use of social resources. And it is such a work process in state management that civil society can express the opinion regarding the issues concerning interest, legal rights, and differences of opinion and can participate in every issue of state. In the existing good governing system, there are manifold opportunities for the participation of people.

Dupaquier, (2009), some radio reports are rumours that have no basis in fact which end up staging riot events. Given the fact that there is a riot, the overall statistical picture radio stations present are instances of gross flaws in presenting news of the riot. Some stations present “scare” headlines unsupported by the mild stories that followed. Secondly radio obtain much factual information about the scale of the disorders, property damaged, personal injury, and deaths, from people who often are inexperienced in dealing with civil disorders and not always able to sort out fact from rumours and confusion. According to Kambanda, (2005), some radio reported of property damage put the figure in excess. These uncritically accepted, and editors uncritically presented, the inflated figures, leaving an indelible impression of damage up to more than ten times greater than actually occurred. This report just catalyzes the riot to intensify than the reverse.

Before the Rwanda Patriotic Front rebels took power in Rwanda, there were always inaccuracies of fact, tone and mood while reporting on sensitive issues (ethnicity) that incited the public. This was due to the failure of reporters and editors to follow media ethics about official reports, and to apply the most rigorous standards possible in evaluating and presenting the news. Reporters and editors must be sure that descriptions and presentation of violence, and emotional or inflammatory sequences or articles, even though “true” in isolation, are really representative and do not convey an impression at odds with the overall reality of events. The radio too often does not achieve this level of sophisticated, skeptical, careful news judgment during sensitive reasons that result to violence but only influences riots (Chretien, 2006).

Radio presenters and those who preside over the popular “talk shows” kept a steady patten of information going over the air. In civil strife, this patten was both inform transistor-radio carrying young people where the actions were taking place and terrify their elders and much of the community. Given the fact that radio was such a constant background accompaniment it made it an important influence on people’s attitudes and perhaps on their actions once trouble developed. This is true for several reasons. News presented on local “rock” stations seldom constitutes much more than terse headline items which may startle or frighten but seldom inform. “Burn, baby, burn,” the slogan of the Watts riot, was inadvertently originated by a radio disc jockey (President’s National Advisory Panel, 2001).

Radio avail a discussion and debating platform among community members and the personnel of different administrations reviewing troubles. In reality there is no

channel for marginalized population to reach-out the leaders in the cantered democratic society, one kind of opportunity; politicians and local administration take the chance to deprive them of their legal rights. These marginalized and poor people may get an opportunity to discuss issues regarding these actual rights through radio. Side by side, the radio plays a role of mirror in the society and accelerates pro people endeavour of local administration and the politicians and arouses their responsibilities to the society. The discussion regarding local government or council or live telecast of meetings and conferences are the excellent strategies of radio (Kellow and Leslie, 2008).

In Rwanda for example there was also another element worthy of consideration. Media had monopoly of corporatism agreed with its ownership and this game of greed damaged its ability to play a positive role in consensus building. Media was lacking criteria of valued journalism and was only serving for marketing and advertising revenue. We want to sell and never rise up to sew our souls as a nation. Another fact is that if the war on terrorism was not marketed in a patriotic sense, it could not have led us to the hazards we are facing today.

#### **4. Causes of violence**

##### **4.1 Nature of the activity**

Sometimes, the nature of the activity itself is sufficient enough to provoke violent behaviour. Snyder and Ballentine, (2006) says that the degree of physical contact is a motivator of violent behaviour. Often this physical contact results in retaliation, and in some cases aggression escalates to the point of fighting as it was in parliament of Bosnia when opposing members of parliament fought following a hot debt that set the entire capital city violent in 2006. Where there is serious competition among rival camps where and the winning chance are so high. The situation will be tense and the camp members are always aggressive which sometimes escalates to the point of violence.

Taylor (2003) says that if people perceive that opponent's intent is to inflict harm, they are more likely to respond with aggression against the opponents than if perceived otherwise.

According to Bull (2008) one of the possible causes of aggression is the nature of the competition. One of the earliest psychological theories developed to express aggression is called frustration-aggression hypothesis which suggests that "frustration increases the likelihood of aggressive behaviour". Frustration in this case is defined as goal blocked response.

There is no doubt that one of the causes of serious violence/unrest in society is the reaction of the security operatives to suppress riots in African countries. Their aggressive presence in Benin infuriated public who saw them as agents of the government with little intelligence and no mind of their own and who are little better than "zombies". On the other hand, the police see demonstrators as over-indulged and pampered boys and girls who engage in excesses instead of facing the task for which they were primarily admitted into the universities, (Cornell, 1988).

## **4.2 The concept of fairness**

Morals and values in society have dramatically changed compared to the past. Misser and Yves, (2004), says that justice lies at the heart of every activity is fairness and common sense, yet the idea of common and fair play seem to be drifting further away from the common practice of modern society where capitalisation is the order this was the attitude exhibited in Hungary during a football match. A person who leaves with character has no heart of a fair play. Radios that abuse one's personality makes one or a group becomes aggressive thus being violent.

## **4.3 Influence of radio**

Whereas Muhabura Radio was sensitizing people to join the rebels of Rwanda Patriotic Front in the struggle to liberate the country, media stations such as Radio Television Libre de Mille Colline( RTLM) were busy sowing hatred and division among Rwandans. Most of those media stations were politically motivated by individual interests of their owners. Some journalists were influenced by individuals from the Office of the President and leaders of the MRND unique ruling party of that time (Kunpente, 2004).

Eron (2000), there are mainly three mechanisms in which media encouraged violence. These are desensitization (listening to hostile acts like murder, rapes hardens a viewer to others suffering), role modelling (technique of non-violence must be learnt regardless of whether there is any innate tendency to violent), apparent approval (violence is a frequent and acceptable means of interaction).

Bakana, (2002), believed that radio programmes like "live talk shows" could cause violence among listeners by shoving, abusing, insulting and intimidating each other and this would lead to violent behaviour such as destroying the place of convergence. They even take their violent behaviour to the extent of destroying properties of innocent citizens. Some people use this as an avenue of looting. Ingham et al., (2003) also wrote that violence is evidenced in many ways such as threats, insults, destruction, and intimidation directed to the opposing officials.

Some violent behaviour is non-combatant but can affect humans psychologically. For instance threats and intimidation can lead to factions of a group to become violent. In 2009 in elections of Zimbabwe Tshivangirai received death threats for his candidature against President Mugabe to either withdraw the candidature or else his life was in danger. This caused chaos give the fact that it happened during campaigning period. Death threats are illegal, crime and prosecution of the culprits is taken in courts of law (Barayagwiza, and Ngeze, 2008).

## **4.4 General Objective**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the influence of media in unsocial welfare violence.

#### **4.5 Specific Objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- 1) To find out how media influences violence.
- 2) To find out the factors causing violence in public.
- 3) To identify the common types of violent behaviour displayed and effects of such violence in society.

### **5. Methodology**

#### **5.1 Research design**

The research was descriptive survey in order to describe and analyse the influence of media in unsocial welfare violence.

#### **5.2 Target population**

The target population included ordinary people, radio presenters, radio managers, law enforcement officers.

#### **5.3 Sampling size**

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a sample size of 100 respondents was selected. This sample was chosen because the researcher thought that it might bring out meaning and essential patterns to the study.

#### **5.4 Instruments for data collection**

- Questionnaires containing questions to which ordinary people, radio presenters, and law enforcement officers were replied by filling them.
- Interviews were also used as direct method since it is more flexible and easy to get information needed to accomplish the study from radio managers.

### **6. Results**

The study findings were presented thematically following objectives;

- 1) To find out how media influences violence.
- 2) To find out the factors causing violence in public.
- 3) To identify the common types of violent behaviour displayed and effects of such violence in society.

#### **6.1 Media influences violence in society**

One of the objectives of the study was to explore whether media influence violence. The findings are summarized in figure 1 below;



**Table 1:** Whether radio influence violence in society

Statements	SD	D	N/S	A	SA
Radio station influence peoples' action during violence	6 (15%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)	17 (42.5%)	7 (17.5%)
Marginalized population can only complain through a radio station	10 (25%)	6 (15%)	7 (17.5%)	14 (35%)	3 (7.5%)
News present headlines which alarm or frighten the audience	12 (30%)	13 (32.5%)	3 (7.5%)	7 (17.5%)	5 (12.5%)
Today News Channels and even some Newspapers are mouthpiece of some political parties	10 (25%)	15 (37.5%)	3 (7.5%)	10 (25%)	2 (5%)
Radios obtain information from people, who are inexperienced in dealing with civil disorders and not always able to sort out fact from rumour in the confusion	2 (5%)	16 (40%)	10 (2.5%)	8 (20%)	4 (10%)
Radio can corrupt the mind of people by confusing public issues with anti-democratic propaganda	9 (22.5%)	15 (37.5%)	8 (20%)	5 (12.5%)	3 (7.5%)
Radio report are rumours that have no basis in fact which end up staging riot events	11 (27.5%)	12 (30%)	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	5 (12.5%)
Radio influence on people's attitudes and perhaps on their actions once trouble developed	6 (15%)	14 (35%)	10 (25%)	5 (12.5%)	5 (12.5%)
Radios play a key role in promoting peace	5 (12.5%)	10 (25%)	5 (12.5%)	13 (32.5%)	7 (17.5%)
Media has lost the principle focus to public	10 (25%)	24 (60%)	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)

**Source:** Primary Data

When respondents were asked whether radio station influence peoples' action during violence, 60% answered in the affirmative compared to 35% who indicated that radio station does not influence peoples' action during violence and 5% were not sure.

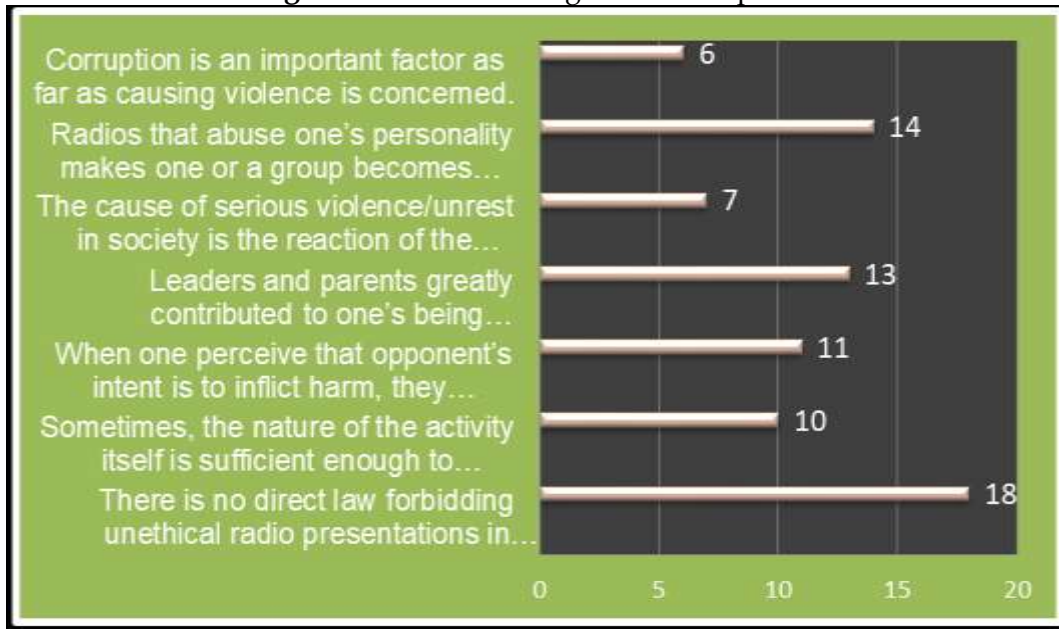
About 42.5% believed that marginalized population can only complain through a radio station compared to only 40% who felt otherwise. About 62.5% of the respondents felt that news present headlines which alarm or frighten the audience while 62.5% felt that today news channels and even some newspapers are mouthpiece of some political parties. Almost 45% of the respondents felt that radios obtain information from people, who are experienced in dealing with civil disorders. Furthermore 60% of the respondents felt that radio cannot corrupt the mind of people by confusing public issues with anti-democratic propaganda. Further analysis also reveals that about 57.5% felt that radio report are not rumours that have no basis in fact which end up staging riot events. Half (50%) of the respondents felt that radio does not influence on people's attitudes and perhaps on their actions once trouble developed while another 50% felt that radio play a key role in promoting peace and about 85% felt that media has not lost the principle focus to public.

Analysis of results in the above table generally suggests that most of the items received a low rating implying that there are still gaps and weaknesses in the objective setting in media houses like radio.

## 6.2 Factors causing violence in public

Respondents gave various views on the factors causing unsocial welfare violence in public. These views are summarized in figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: Factors causing violence in public**



Source: Primary Data

According to Figure 1, most respondents (18) pointed out that there is no direct law forbidding unethical radio presentations in Rwanda. Also respondents noted that radios that abuse one's personality makes one or a group becomes aggressive thus being violent were (14). Further still, leaders and parents greatly contributed to one's being aggressive and violent in society were (13). The figure also revealed that when one perceives that opponent's intent is to inflict harm, they respond with aggression against the opponents. (11), sometimes, the nature of the activity itself is sufficient enough to provoke violent behaviour scored (10), The cause of serious violence/unrest in society is the reaction of the security operatives to suppress riots were (7) and corruption is an important factor as far as causing violence is concerned were (6). According to the figure above, most respondents noted that radio stations that abuse one's personality make one or a group becomes aggressive and violent.

## 6.3 The common types of violent behaviour displayed and effects of violence in society

One of the central objectives of the study was to explore the common types of violent behaviour displayed and their effects in society. Respondents gave various views and are summarized in table 2 below:

**Table 2:** Coefficients for types of violent behaviour displayed and their effects in society

		Types of violent behaviour	Effects of violence in society
Types of violent behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.719
	N	79	79
Effects of violence in society	Pearson Correlation	.003	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.719	.
	N	79	79

Source: Primary Data.

From table 2, it is clear that there is significant relationship between types of violent behaviour displayed and their effects in society ( $R=0.003$ ;  $p \text{ value} > 0.05$ ). The hypothesis is accepted and concludes that there is sufficient evidence at the 0.05 level of significance, that violent behaviour affects society at all aspects. The results indicate that violent behaviour does have significant effect on society in any way, whether positive or negative.

## 7. Summary

This study documented the following findings;

### 7.1 Media influences violence

It was found out that radio station influence peoples' action during violence. It was documented that marginalized population can only complain through a radio station. According to findings that today news channels and even some newspapers are mouthpiece of some political parties. It is indicated that radios obtain information from people, who are experienced in dealing with civil disorders. The research revealed that radio cannot corrupt the mind of people by confusing public issues with anti-democratic propaganda. Those radio reports are not rumours that have no basis in fact which end up staging riot events. It was documented that radios play a key role in promoting peace. This report found out that media has lost the principle focus to public.

These findings are in agreement with Schudson (2001), who noted that first of all, the media has to inform the people about what goes on inside and outside the country in order to give them a chance to stay informed wherever they are and without interrupting their activities. By doing this, the radio educates people and provides them with knowledge in a short time. So, involving the people in media is very crucial.

### 7.2 Factors that lead to hostile behaviours in society

The study found out that there was no direct law forbidding unethical radio presentations in Rwanda, radios that abuse one's personality makes one or a group becomes aggressive thus being violent, leaders and parents greatly contributed to one's being aggressive and violent in society, when one perceives that opponent's intent is to

inflict harm, they respond with aggression against the opponents, sometimes, the nature of the activity itself is sufficient enough to provoke violent behaviour, The cause of serious violence/unrest in society is the reaction of the security operatives to suppress riots and corruption is an important factor as far as causing violence is concerned. The above findings do not concur with Ngarambe, (2002), who out that touched three elements in modern society which are closely related to violence and these are aggression, professionalism and personality. Radio is no doubt the measure that fuels them. However it should be noted, that in many African countries where most of the governments are military in nature. Any house that reports objectively is blackmailed.

### **7.3 Types of hostile behaviours displayed and effects of violence in society.**

This research found out that violent behaviour does have significant effect on society in any way, whether positive or negative. The hypothesis is accepted and concludes that there is sufficient evidence at the 0.05 level of significance, that violent behaviour affects society at all aspects.

## **8. Conclusion**

Radio stations do not influence peoples' action during violence, marginalized population can only complain through a radio station, today news channels and even some newspapers are mouthpiece of some political parties, radios obtain information from people, who are experienced in dealing with civil disorders, radio cannot corrupt the mind of people by confusing public issues with anti-democratic propaganda, radio reports are not rumours that have no basis in fact which end up staging riot events, radios play a key role in promoting peace and media has lost the principle focus to public.

There is no direct law forbidding unethical radio presentations in Rwanda, radios that abuse one's personality makes one or a group becomes aggressive thus being violent, leaders and parents greatly contributed to one's being aggressive and violent in society, when one perceives that opponent's intent is to inflict harm, they respond with aggression against the opponents, sometimes, the nature of the activity itself is sufficient enough to provoke violent behaviour, The cause of serious violence/unrest in society is the reaction of the security operatives to suppress riots and corruption is an important factor as far as causing violence is concerned.

Violent behaviour does have significant effect on society in any way, whether positive or negative.

### **8.1 Recommendations**

- 1) Radios report should be more factual which won't stage riot events.
- 2) Information might be got from people, who are experienced in dealing with civil disorders and always able to sort out fact from rumours in the confusion.

- 3) Radio stations should not abuse one's personality/group with intention to induce opponents to the aggression and violence.
- 4) Leaders and parents should lead a violent free life not cause aggression and violence in society.
- 5) Low ranked people in the society should be freed from frustration through employment and other income generating activities.
- 6) Adequate measures should be put in place to discourage disadvantaged people especially the youth from drug abuse which mostly lead to deviant acts.

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