

**The influence of pearl magic prime on Uganda's film industry.**

**BY**

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A dissertation submitted to the department of Performing Arts and Film, School of Liberal and Performing Arts,  
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Bachelors of Arts in Drama and Film Degree of Makerere university.

December, 2022

**DECLARATION**

I, Linda Dinah, do hereby declare that this work is my original work and has not been submitted for any academic award in any university or institution.

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**Date**.....22...../.....12...../2022

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**SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL**

This is to certify that this dissertation presented by LINDA DINAH was written under my supervision and I recommend it for presentation to the Board of examiners in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Drama and Film of Makerere University.

Signature.....

Date ..04.01.23.....

**DR. CHARLES MULEKWA**

## **DEDICATION**

To those who will be in need of the knowledge in this dissertation, with hopes that this work may in some way contribute to their exploration of our Film Industry.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Completion of this research has been a result of both direct and indirect support of many people who I owe my acknowledgement. For having achieved success, I wholeheartedly acknowledge this support with gratitude.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Pearl Magic Prime (PMP) is a Ugandan Television channel which airs 24-hour General Entertainment that is dedicated to Ugandan content of Film and Arts. This dissertation aims to bring to light the influence of Pearl Magic Prime on Uganda's Film Industry. Additionally, the purpose of this study is to provide insight on how Ugandan Filmmakers are benefiting from the channel that is dedicated to airing Ugandan content of Film and Arts. The data for this project was collected through descriptive methods of data collection. Interviews were carried out on the management of PMP, Production company Heads that have gotten the opportunity to air their content on the channel, other filmmakers and the viewers of the content. These interviews meant to elicit information from the participants. Secondary data was collected from newspapers, Google search and interviews. While tracing the roots of the Ugandan Film industry, the research showed that Televisions have been the leading modes of distribution and marketing for Uganda's Film Content. It has overridden all the other television channels because it buys and sponsors content unlike the other channels where a producer has to pay to get airtime. Filmmakers are now assured on some returns on investment. When COVID-19 hit and a lot of people were stuck at home, the management saw an opportunity of giving the viewers more content to keep them engaged and that is why they made a call out to different filmmakers to submit their ideas and their shows became commissioned by MultiChoice Uganda. This study showed that thousands of people have benefited from its launch including: Producers, Directors, the Cinematographers, Actors, Audience amongst very many others as explained in this dissertation.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TV	–	Television
UBC	-	Uganda Broadcasting Cooperation
NTV	-	Nation Television
NBS	-	Next Broadcasting Services
OAU	-	Organization of African Unity
PMP	-	Pearl Magic Prime
BBS	-	Buganda Broadcasting Services
UTV	-	Uganda Television

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction to the Study.

Uganda's Film Industry is on a progressive growth though it is faced with various challenges such as: lack of funds, poor leadership, and suppressed storytelling among very many others. But for the already existing content and that which is being created, it faces a challenge of the increasing television stations. These channels lack a sense of financial balance, guidance and direction to promote local content, and they rather resort to promoting piracy by broadcasting pirated foreign content. "In Uganda, an episode bought from Telemundo can cost as little as \$300, whereas an episode bought from the local distributor of Sabiiti "MMC" Moses: *The Hostel* costs around \$770" (Skelton, 2013).

That therefore saw local production struggling to complete with the low cost of foreign soaps. MultiChoice Uganda has given Uganda's Film Industry an opportunity to expose the content of our films and arts through the establishment of two sister channels, which are: Pearl Magic and Pearl Magic Prime. Pearl Magic Prime is a Ugandan television channel owned by MultiChoice Uganda which was launched on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021. It airs 24 hours General Entertainment which is dedicated to Ugandan content of film and arts. And its sister channel, Pearl Magic was launched in October 2018. Pearl Magic also broadcasts authentic Ugandan Film and Arts content. The distinction between the two channels is majorly the quality of the content. They both broadcast via DSTV and GOTV with PMP being my main point of concern on how it is influencing Uganda's Film Industry.

With the coming of Pearl Magic Prime, capacity amongst the filmmakers to support local content development and professionalism is gradually being built. This has been better described through the words of Hassan Saleh, the Managing Director, MultiChoice Uganda when he said, "we have also gone ahead to recognize the talents that we have in our country by offering a platform for content to be showcased. Through strategic partnerships we have also been able to award outstanding film creations in Uganda (The Independent, 2021).

This was seen through the Uganda Film festival of 2021 and 2022 where MultiChoice Uganda as a platinum sponsor staked millions of cash prizes for the best creative films and offered sponsorship for film mentorship programs with M-NET studios for the best performers in 2021. And therefore, as filmmakers, we hope that the huge revenue that was being lost due to lack of proper film structures and marketing will be restored and somehow our Film Industry will start contributing more to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Uganda's Film industry has been on a gradual growth with quite promising developments that can be witnessed. More promising content has been and is being produced locally in Uganda and some of these films have won recognition outside Uganda. A notable example is Loukman Ali: *The Girl in The Yellow Jumper* which is a Ugandan film that follows the bizarre experience of a hitchhiker, Jim (Michael Wawuyo Jr), given a ride by a police rider, Patrick (Maurice Kirya), Jim is kidnapped and recounts his experiences to the officer on the long ride from the deserted road back to the city. *The Girl in The Yellow Jumper* is the first Ugandan film to feature on Netflix as of 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2021. It was written, produced and directed by Loukman Ali.

Other successful Ugandan films include: Nabwana Isaac Geoffrey Godfrey: *Who killed Captain Alex*, the first action film created in Uganda by Wakaliwood Productions (also known as Ramon Film Production), a Film Studio based in Wakaliga, a slum area found in Central Uganda. *Who killed Captain Alex* rotates around a violent and destructive war that erupts between two conflicting groups – the mafia and some soldiers.

Noteworthy in this section is the fact that Uganda has served as a location for a few major international films which include: Kevin Macdonald: *The Last King of Scotland* (2006), Mira Nair: *Queen of Katwe* (2016), Steve T. Ayney: *Kony Order from Above* (2019). Below is a brief information about those films:

*The Last King of Scotland* is from a screenplay by Peter Morgan and Jeremy Brock starring Forest Whitaker. It tells a story based on the events of the brutal Ugandan dictator Idi Amin Dada (Forest Whitaker) as seen by his personal physician, a Scottish Doctor Nicholas Garrigan (James McAvoy)

while he was on his medical mission to Uganda. The Doctor faces the fight of his life as he struggles to escape Amin's grasp in the 1970s. The Film was produced and directed by Kevin MacDonald.

*Queen of Katwe* starring Lupita Nyong'o was partly produced locally. Though it is a story based on a young girl from the streets of rural Uganda whose life rapidly changes after gaining great success in chess, it was barely produced in Uganda. The director Mira Nair, said she shot scenes in South Africa because of the department of trade and industry's generous tax rebates (news24, 2019). Uganda's Film Industry is on a slow growth due to such factors. Mira Nair shifted the production of *Queen of Katwe* to South Africa because the massive support the government there renders unto the filmmakers which includes the tax cuts. But in Uganda, the Film Industry has barely gotten any support from the government and the most it has is come up with suggestions and promises that it does not follow up.

*Kony: Order from Above* tells a story of two children (Otti and Aguti) who fall in love during the tumultuous Northern Uganda Lord's Resistance Army insurgency, but are separated when Otti is abducted at the age of 12. "It was the first Ugandan film to be submitted for the Academy Award for Best International Festival Film" (Musinguzi, 2022).

Back to the fundamentals of this study, content that has pulled the interest of the Ugandan audience and beyond is being produced everyday thanks to the influence of Pearl Magic Prime. Some of these include: Matthew and Eleanor Nabwiso: *Sanyu* series, a Ugandan drama television series that tells a story of an innocent, rural teenage that is forced to leave her home in pursuit for education on a cost of doing a maid's job for a wealthy family in Kampala, Uganda. Drama builds up as she falls in love with the youngest son of the family. It was premiered on Pearl Magic Prime TV on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 with a count of three seasons per now.

Nathan Magoola: *Prestige* series which is a serial drama following the ups and downs of rival and executives from the same family. Their lust for power is fueled by love, jealousy, grief and hatred. *Prestige* series is being produced under Ava Juliet Production Company that has seen it broadcast over 320 episodes.

Matthew and Eleanor Nabwiso: *Sanyu* and Nathan Magoola: *Prestige* are some of the projects that were commissioned and licensed to broadcast on Pearl Magic Prime when it was launched due to their quality visuals, sound and compelling storylines.

Another notable example is John Ssegawa: *The Honorables* a Ugandan political satire-drama that was premiered on NTV Uganda on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2017.

Television broadcast has been the major distribution method for Film content in Uganda. Most notable productions that have reached the biggest percentage of the population were as a result of being broadcast of television. That therefore means that Productions that have not made their way to television are barely known by the people.

## **1.2 Background of the Study.**

MultiChoice Uganda's main aim of creating the channels was to showcase the best of Ugandan content to the rest of Africa everyday unlike before, when Uganda's content was being broadcast once in a week on Maisha Magic East Channel.

Up until the late 1990s, Uganda had only one television station. Uganda Television, now known as Uganda Broadcasting Cooperation (UBC) Television was started on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1964. This was a couple of years after Uganda had gained its independence from the British. Uganda Television was/is under the control of the Ugandan government. As time went by, more Television channels came into existence. The first alternative television station in the 2000s was called Sanyu Television. But it did not last long.

It was Wavah Broadcasting Television (WBS) that provided a real alternative to UBC sometime in the early 2000s. It opened a way for other stations to join like Lighthouse Television, East Africa Television (EATV) and Top TV (Ugandan Info, 2019). With the growth, many more major channels have been set up. These include: Nation Television (NTV), Next Broadcasting Services (NBS TV), Bukedde TV, Record TV, Urban TV among many more.

An earlier broadcast of Ugandan Film and Arts content on Uganda Television (UTV) is seen in the late 1960's. To give the TV a local touch, locally produced programs were encouraged. This is

when local actors came to the scene. Byekwaso says that Elly Wamala was the first local producer on UTV charged with gathering content. He was responsible for getting groups to come up with local content (Daily Monitor, 2013). Uganda's content has been broadcast on various other channels. Some of these include: John Ssegawa: *The Honorables* on NTV.

An earlier history of screen dramas is seen when TV had been graced with including Philip Luswata: *The Campus* on NBS TV, a Ugandan drama television series that tells the story of Andrew (Steven Katusiime) a student who has lived a single life but after joining campus meets friends with different characters. The friends behold lives of a series of fun twists and turns, full of drama and reality, *Mawubbe* and *Kamoli* both on Buganda Broadcasting Services Television (BBS TV), and of course, NTV's addition of Irene Kulabako: *Yat Maddit* a drama series fundamentally for social change. It portrays a community recovering from the ravages of war that must rise to restore peace in North and North Eastern Uganda. And unforgettable Phad Mutumba: *Second Chance*.

Giving them their due, the television channels that existed before Pearl Magic Prime have been broadcasting Uganda's Film content though on a limited time space. The limited time dedicated to screen dramas is/was due to the tight lineup the channels had running on a daily basis. The lineup usually consists of News Reports, Advertisements, and Live Events among very many others. So screen dramas are/were squeezed in to grant the viewers a chance at entertainment.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem.**

In Uganda today and before, less value has been delivered to the local customers of Uganda's Film content yet Uganda and Africa at large have always shown great appetite for the indigenous African stories which has been revealed by the fast-growing Film Industry of Nigeria which laid interest in great African storytelling. And there has been need to develop local content with local interest because of the shared passion among people of Africa of getting entertained with matter close to their own way of living.

Local content has been squeezed by pirated foreign content that is being broadcast and which has rather made our filmmakers less passionate about creating more content that they will produce knowing that they will get less market. The medias in existence that broadcast the content, do so on a limited space and time period.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Study objectives define the specific aims of the study and should be clearly stated in the introduction of the research protocol (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2010). I hoped to accomplish the aim of carrying out this research by meeting the following intended outcomes:

##### **1.4.1 Main Objective**

To assess the impact of Pearl Magic Prime on Uganda's Film Industry.

##### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

- To find out if Uganda Filmmakers were benefiting from Pearl Magic Prime that is showcasing local content to the rest of Africa.
- To identify if Pearl Magic Prime was bringing additional value to Uganda's Film Industry.
- To determine whether all kinds of audience benefited from the content displayed.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

Research question is a question that a study or research project aims to answer. This question often addresses an issue or a problem, which, through analysis and interpretation of data, is answered in the study's conclusion (Bouchrika, 2021). I centered the research on the following questions:

##### **1.5.1 Main Research Questions**

- How is Pearl Magic Prime influencing Uganda's Film Industry?

##### **1.5.2 Specific Research Questions**

- Which type of content is pertinent to be aired on Pearl Magic Prime?



- What are the opportunities the channel has put up for our film Industry of Uganda?
- What are the terms and conditions a Filmmaker has to follow to be able to sell content to the Channel for it to be aired on Pearl Magic Prime?
- How are the local Filmmakers benefiting from the channel?
- Is Pearl Magic Prime adding value to Uganda's Film Content?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study.**

This research provided research-based information on the influence of Pearl Magic Prime on the Uganda's film industry. And the information stands to benefit the following individuals:

- Filmmakers. This study will shed light to the less passionate filmmakers who have fully produced films that have been kept in the darkness of their bedrooms with no light of market being shown.
- Lecturers of drama and film. The collected data will assist lecturers with dire knowledge that will supplement the academic knowledge they impart to the students. This study will also empower lecturers to help students clear their doubts through the acknowledgement of the role of exhibition and cultivation of opportunities by taking advantage of them with confidence. This has been portrayed by the various interviewees in this dissertation who utilized the opportunities that came along with the launching of Pearl Magic Prime. These people are notable examples that Lecturers can refer to.
- Students of filmmaking. This study will provide insight on how filmmakers are benefiting from the Pearl Magic Prime which will therefore empower the students to stride for the same or better opportunities.
- Other researchers. This study will add to the existing body of knowledge and to that which other researchers have been attempting to collect. Therefore, they can use the information as reference material to determine where gaps are for future studies on relevant topics.

### **1.6.1 Justification**

Channels and Medias that broadcast Uganda's film content have been restraining it to a limited time period and space. Giving them their due, the channels broadcast a variety of programs which therefore subjects film and art content to be bound to the tight schedule. MultiChoice Uganda has led the way of better opportunities for Ugandan films through the introduction of sister channels, Pearl Magic and Pearl Magic Prime which are dedicated to showing Uganda's film content all day long.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

### **1.7.1 Introduction to the Section**

In this section, I attempted to review studies, documents and other literal works that related to the influence of television channels on the Film Industry.

### **1.7.2 Television and the Film/Cinema Halls**

The cinematic tradition of the film consumers in Uganda has had a fast death. Reasons ranging from the economic instabilities, Corona Virus pandemic and also scarcity of cinema Halls. The mainstream cinema halls that are still in service are all found in Central Uganda. And these include: Cinemax Cinema Halls at Acacia Mall, MetroPlex Mall, Ham Towers, Garden City and Arena Mall. But the turn up is very limited even on Mondays and Thursdays when there is a 50% discount on the usual price of a ticket (ranging between 12,000 UgShs. – 15,000 UgShs). A consumer in Northern Uganda will lose interest in having a cinematic experience of Ugandan Film content because (s)he cannot get in reach to a regular servicing Cinema Hall in his area.

They have also fought a tough competition with the other forms of entertainment and those major forms that are in competition with cinema Hall are: mobile phones and televisions. Cinema Halls seem to be losing the tough competition because people now to prefer watching from the comfort of their homes and having the ability to have control over the remote. It has been always more likely to turn on your television than to head to a movie theatre.

*It used to be that catching your favorite program meant cancelling your social plans and staying at home with the TV guide to hand. Should it be a big news day, or should*

*an important sporting event run over, your program might get bumped from the schedule altogether and then who knew when you were going to find out what happened next on Buffy the Vampire Slayer? (Ward, 2021).*

And I can't agree more because that was the same thing here in Uganda. Well, here, it was *Deception* which was developed by Eris Mate Ssegawa and directed by George Kihumbah and NTV: *Second Chance*. George Kihumbah: *Deception* tells a story of Chris and Monica who lead a perfectly happy life until Chris' mother, Maama Nalweyiso moves in with them and demands for a grandchild which turns their life around. It was released in 2016 and aired on NTV. NTV: *Second Chance* is a remake of a Spanish Telenovela *El Cuerpo del Desco* that was broadcast on Telemundo. It explores issues of age, reincarnation, wealth and power. How everyone yearned for that hour in the night to catch an episode of the TV series. It starred: Fagil Mandy as Peter Byekwaso, Anita Fabiola as Angela, Stella Nantumbwe as Isabella Arroyo, Housen Mushema as Andre, Roger Mugisha as Saawa. And most of these actors and actresses have continued lighting their lamps and are still acting in now the best screen dramas in Uganda. A notable example is Housen Mushema and Stella Nantumbwe who act in *Sanyu* series.

Those two Screen Dramas saw most viewers fighting so hard to beat the traffic jam so that they could get back home and be able to catch the daily episode of the dramas. And on the other hand, children had to make sure that their homework and their home obligations were well done so that they would not have any disturbances while watching. Not forgetting the rib cracking Fast Track Productions: *Balikoowa in The City*. It is a Ugandan drama series that looks at the life of Balikoowa, a villager who heads to Kampala City on an errand to his aunt's daughter. Though television, we have witnessed how our film contents have gradually started gaining critical recognition at the highest level.

During my attempt to review other literal works on the internet I came across a gap in the claim that Ashraf Ssemwogerere's *Feelings Struggle* is the first film to be produced in Uganda and that has never been proven. But what I can assure is that successful attempts are seen fast backward to the 1960s when film begun to pick up with the *Lwaki Baavu* by Christopher Mukiibi and acted by Kayayu Film Players. To add strength to my argument, it was written that Lwaaki Baavu ran for

eight years from 1969 as stated in New Vision on March 08, 2007 by Emmanuel Ssejjengo. And thereafter in the 1970s, with the *Obwavu Musolo* and *Kyeswa* which were TV Dramas by The Late Wycliff Kiyinji and followed by *That's life*, *Mwattu* and *Bibaawo* series in the mid-1980s (Monitor, 2018). I am certain that if we went into the deeper details of the matter, we would disclose more films and screen dramas that were fully produced and broadcast before the sight of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **1.7.3 Television as a Platform to Uplift Film Content.**

With the increased consumption of Films and Arts content in Uganda, production companies have taken it upon themselves to use the opportunity to create compelling stories that can attract the viewers. Producers have gone ahead to create stories that the viewers can relate with. This was as well highlighted by a report that was given on *The Honorables* premiers on NTV, it was noted that it is a kind of show that tries to prey on both fame and people's acting ability to hook an audience that has in the past been harsh to some local productions (Kaggwa, 2017). With need to leave no stones unturned, the audience being harsh to some local productions was as a result of the bias held unto the poor quality and bad stories that were being produced many years ago.

Therefore, filmmakers have tried to use the television as a platform to uplift the image of our local films that were tainted to be bad content as a result of amateur camera work, poor editing, and exaggeration of moments and said to be having boring stories. The films have been mocked and ridiculed to be bad and that is why most television channels had resorted to piracy by broadcasting soap operas and telenovelas from famous TV channels like Telemundo (which is supposedly and even arguably better quality). But after hard-work and resilience (and learning – for the successful ones are using skilled artists), Ugandan filmmakers' enthusiasm is paying off as local content is now being appreciated and acknowledged.

The rise of televisions didn't mean the death of entertainment but just a migration to a smaller screen. Filmmakers realized that broadcasting their content on television was way better than letting it have a cinematic experience and of course, there was some returns on investment in screen dramas as noted earlier. The content to be aired on television follows distinct criteria because the audience for television is less limited by genre or status. A television set can be accessible by both

the young and old in a family. Filmmakers have to consider strict morality codes unlike films which are categorized according to genre and content.

Feature films are being done on a minimum base because television consider broadcasting episodically organized series because of the busy Programme lineup.

#### **1.7.4 Sneak Peek at the Growth of the Television Sector in Uganda.**

Noteworthy in this section is the growth of Television in Uganda. As earlier noted, the first television in Uganda which is UTV was established on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1964. Then, it was under Dr. Milton Obote as the Prime Minister of Uganda, the television broadcast content was in white and black. But when Idi Amin came to power in 1971. "Amin saw a colored TV in Zanzibar and asked why a small island could afford a colored TV and Uganda could not. He ordered to have Ugandan TV colored before the OAU summit," says Byekwaso (Monitor, 2013). The spare parts that could make the Ugandan TV colored were then imported from USA. Switching of television channels was unheard of as there was only one television channel until later when channels like Sanyu Television, WBS TV among others came into the picture. That, therefore, saw the gradual development of Televisions in Uganda.

As per now, hundreds of television channels have been licensed as Free-To-Air channels locally which is a service that allows any person in Uganda with an appropriate receiving equipment to receive signals without subscription. They as well air on different satellite mediums like DSTV, GOTV, Azam, Zuku among others. This has been as a result of the increase of households owning television sets that can be more affordably purchased unlike in the past whereby only one or two households owned a TV set in the whole village, so much so that having a TV set elevated your status in a community. According to Uganda National Household Survey, the number of households that own TV sets slightly increased to 19.2% in 2019/20 from 17.4% in 2016/17 after the survey interviewed only 13,732 households across the country (The Independent, 2021). The survey also found out that majority of people opted to own TV sets and mobile phones as sources of information than radio sets. Radio sets used to be the major source of information in Uganda, but it is slowly shifting balance.

On addition, with the spectacular changes from analog to digital plus the coming of the storm of Corona-virus pandemic, the highest percentage of people owned smart phones as they were confined in the boredom of the realms of their homes (due to lockdown). Television then became something for everyone and everywhere. “A new word was created - 'infotainment and the boxes have given way to flat screen televisions that left you with all sorts of options and technology innovation” (Hamya, 2017) Therefore they retreated to getting edutained from the comfort of their homes using the smart phones, as well as working from home. People could also watch television on their smart phones.

MultiChoice created a DSTV Application which enables people to stream live TV, catch up on their favorite TV movies and sport highlights. This was made spicier by the fact that a person can download to watch later offline. That therefore has become an easier way for people to watch Ugandan content that is being broadcast on the various television channels at their convenience. The increase in consumption of television content has seen Ugandan films and arts content get more recognition as people are watching, acknowledging and recommending their friends in and outside the country to watch.

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

Scope of the study refers to the elements that will be covered in a research project. It defines the boundaries of the research (Chetty, 2020). I will set time, geographical and content boundaries and will work in the parameters to build an in-depth dissertation.

### **1.8.1 Content Scope**

The influence of Pearl Magic Prime was the focus variable of this study. Therefore, the study aimed on assessing the impact of Pearl Magic Prime on Uganda's Film Industry.

### **1.8.2 Geographical Scope**

This study was conducted in Kampala and was open to filmmakers, television channels, audiences and other individuals that can provide information related to the study. The study was conducted in Kampala due to various reasons including: there is an interrelation between filmmaking and

urbanization plus industrialization in Uganda. Most filmmaking projects are being carried out in Kampala which is capital city of Uganda which therefore makes. And the televisions that majorly air Film content are located in Kampala too.

### **1.8.3 Time scope.**

The research considered history of film showcasing in Uganda up to now. To accomplish this research study, the re spent nearly six months including the period of proposal writing, approval to report submission.

## **1.9 Methodology**

### **1.9. 1 Introduction to the Section.**

Research methodology simply refers to the practical “how” of any given piece of research. More specifically, it’s about how a researcher systematically designs a study to ensure valid and reliable results that address the research aims and objectives (Jansen & Warren, 2020).

This section discussed the methodological approach that I used to carry out the study.

### **1.9.2 Research Approach.**

This study was built using the qualitative research approach. This approach enabled I to obtain rich meaning from what was said, noticed, and observed. Qualitative research draws from interpretivist and constructivist paradigm, seeking to deeply understand a research subject rather than predict outcomes, as in the positivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In this study, I sought to understand the influence of Pearl Magic Prime from in-depth and open-ended interviews, already existing written materials and direct observation.

### **1.9.4 Sampling Techniques**

Firstly, I employed purposive sampling. It is also known as the judgement sampling, involves the researcher using expertise to select a sample that is most useful to the purposes of the research (McCombes, 2022). I had in-depth interviews with the production teams that have gotten opportunity to air their content on the channel. I had an in-depth conversation with: Matthew Nabwiso who is the head of Nabwiso Films that is producing *Sanyu*, Nathan Magoola who is the

CEO of Ava Juliet Productions that is producing *Prestige* and Richard Mulindwa, the CEO of Limit Productions, the producing company of *What If* series. These people were pertinent for this study.

Secondly, I considered using non-probability and convenience sampling technique. It involved nonrandom selection based on convenience or other criteria, allowing you to easily collect data (McCombes, 2022). I contacted individuals and filmmakers, specifically the viewers of the film and arts content that air on Pearl Magic Prime, who happen to be most accessible. I gladly used voluntary response because it from that action that they felt secure to share their thoughts with me about this study. Instead of directly contacting and questioning the participants, I sought for their voluntarily responses first.

### **1.9.5 Research Tools**

Data collection tools refer to the devices/instruments used to collect data, such as a paper questionnaire or computer-assisted interviewing system (Formplus Blog, 2022). I used various Data collection tools to gather information about and related to the topic of Study including:

#### **1.9.5.1 Interviews**

Interviews are a method of data collection that involves two or more people exchanging information through a series of questions and answers. The questions are designed by a researcher to elicit information from interview participants on a specific topic or set of topics (DeCarlo, 2018). I interviewed some of the heads of the production companies as stated earlier that have gotten an opportunity to air their content on Pearl Magic Prime channel and the viewers of the channel. Noteworthy is the fact that I found my interviewees at production sets busy working but they still managed to create time to share their points of view about this study. Their responses have built the structure of this dissertation.

#### **1.9.5.2 Observation**

It is a method wherein an observer analyzes the activities and behaviors of individuals in a natural setting. In this process, you do not need to ask any questions or prompt the respondents to act in a



certain way (Amadebai, 2022). I observed the way viewers perceive the content that is being broadcast on Pearl Magic Prime. I also observed when viewers take time to tune in to Pearl Magic Prime and the time, they spend watching other channels that broadcast film and arts content.

### **1.9.5.3 Websites**

I also borrowed a leaf from the already existing literary work and articles on the internet. The articles and literary work had information that is related to the Study.

### **1.9.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics in research refers to a set of standards that can guide researchers on how they should interact with the researched participants and how research problems could be conceived and formulated (Chilisa and Preece, 2005:229). According to research ethics developed by British Sociological Association (BSA), researchers have the responsibility to "ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research" (BSA, 2002:2). Therefore, in consideration of the above:

- I sought informed consent of all participants before data collection is done.
- I alerted the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the interviews or from any form of data collection.
- Also, the respondents were assured of confidentiality for all the information they gave.

### **1.9.7 Limitation to the Study**

The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from my research.

*Study limitations are the constraints placed on the ability to generalize from the results, to further describe applications to practice, and/or related to the utility of findings that are the result of the ways in which you initially chose to design the study or the method used to establish internal and external validity or the result of unanticipated challenges that emerged during the study (James H & Murnan, 2004:66).*

The interviewees usually gave me about 30 minutes to carry out the interview. My research topic, being wide as it is, became quite challenging for the persons to exhaust all they could have said to

time constraints. Still on the same point and majorly due to busy schedules, there were many other filmmakers that I wanted to interview but I wasn't able to get hold of.

### **1.9.8 Conclusion of the Section.**

Initially, I had start off conversations with my interviewees over the phone after having quite a number of unsuccessful attempts on reaching them. Being the selfless people that they are, they scheduled an appointment with me and they delivered. I explained the purpose of this study and they were happy to be part of my journey. I carried out all interviews.

After I had collected the data, I transcribed the interviews from the recording equipment in the language that was being used in this dissertation which is English. I translated the Luganda answers to the research question that I was asking my interviewees. Use of different languages that I could understand was allowed because sometimes interviewees express themselves better in their indigenous languages.

As a viewer who prefers watching Pearl Magic Prime in my own safe space, due to this study, I was made to leave my comfort zone and started watching with my relatives to see their reactions whenever they got to watch the screen dramas. The outcomes of my data collection, are distributed evenly in this dissertation.

## **CHAPTER TWO: FROM TV AND FILM TO PEARL MAGIC PRIME**

### **2.1 Introduction of the Chapter.**

This chapter gives details of the context of the study including but not limited to historical, political, cultural, social and economic background. The details set the scene for this research.

### **2.2. Introduction to Mass Media in Uganda.**

This section stands to describe the forms of mass media that this dissertation stands on. Mass media is a form of media addressed for large audiences. It can be of any form, broadcast media such as television or radio, films, print media such as newspapers, magazines, pamphlets etc. Mass media is essential in passing information and incorporates a large audience. The means for communicating information have expanded greatly over the years. Our indigenous forms of communication in Uganda before the coming of colonialists were: drumming, use of smoke, village criers, storytellers, orators, etc. The use of the different means depended on the different cultures and social groups. For example, in Buganda, the drum announces joy and sorrow, the birth of twins, and mourning the dead (Buganda Kingdom, 2022). While in Northern Uganda, horns and emissaries are used for mass communication.

These forms of mass media are still utilized in some communities in Uganda especially amongst the rural people because of the way they are embedded in their cultural ideology. With the coming of colonialists, Newspapers made a first appearance before any other form of mass media in Uganda. The first newspaper to be produced was called Mengo Notes and it was printed by the Christian Missionaries Society (CMS). It centered majorly on missionaries and their works. Later, it was renamed as Uganda Notes. As time went by, radio and television broadcasters followed suit with film joining later on in the long run. This research bases on two forms of mass media. That is to say: film and television.

#### **2.2.1 A Brief History of the Evolution of the Broadcasting Sector in Uganda.**

A television is a system for transmitting visual images and sound that are reproduced on screens, chiefly used to broadcast programs for entertainment, information, and education. The television set became common place in many households, businesses, and institutions. It is a major vehicle

for advertising. Few inventions have had as much effect on contemporary many societies as television.

"Television also refers also to the particular structure of commercial television, a governmentregulated industry dominated by powerful networks that broadcast programs to attract viewers and then charge advertisers for the privilege of addressing those viewers with commercials" (Film Reference,1). This is duly shown in Uganda where UCC which was established by the Communications Act of Uganda in 2013. This is the government body that controls the functioning of televisions in Uganda. It provides Quality of Service Standard Guidelines and series of general principles that televisions have to follow including: all programs broadcast between 6am and 10pm must be suitable for family audiences. That guideline has been duly followed by Producers that have their content airing on Pearl Magic Prime because it is among the criteria followed for shows to be fit to be aired on PMP. Below is the historical background of Televisions in Uganda.

#### **2.2.1.1 Broadcasting in Colonial and Post-Colonial Times in Uganda.**

Broadcasting was introduced in Uganda by the British colonial administration in 1954 with the establishment of the Uganda Broadcasting Service. The primary objective in setting up the service was to support the imperial agenda of the government, which needed a communication system to execute and promote its colonial policies and programs. The radio service mainly aired rebroadcasts of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news and other programs. The British also used it to counteract the anti-colonial and pro-independence voices that used the indigenous language press as a powerful outlet for political mobilization. The post-independence governments retained control over the national broadcaster (Open Society, 2010). It is also notable that Radio Uganda began by rebroadcasting content from BBC Radio.

In Uganda, Uganda Television (the current Uganda Broadcasting Corporation) was born in 1964 as mentioned earlier. Its main aim of the introduction of the electronic communication was to broadcast through both mediums to the whole country as the national broadcaster (Ministry of ICT,

2022). Even though UTV was in existence, a few households had a box set that they could watch from. In a community, you would find that only one family owned a TV set or even not. Borrowing an idea from the United States of America: In 1948, only 1 percent of America's households had a TV set: by 1953 more than 50 percent had one: and since the early 1960's, more than 90 percent of all homes have a television set (Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2012).

It was rare to see a colored television set in the late 1960's. When television was introduced in Uganda, it was using black and white transmitters. In the mid-1960s, as the rest of Africa was catching up with modernity, Uganda embarked on a journey to introduce colored Television (Lubega, 2016). When we acquired a color TV set, there was a bit of daily excitement in the house as we would often place bets on which shirt, tie or coat color Bbale Francis would wear for the news broadcast that night (Beewol, 2015). A colored TV was regarded as a prize possession. According to the National Survey of 1966, it is stated that although the population was over 6.8 million, in 1966 licensed television sets numbered only 5,300.

As in the 1960s and 1970s, but less so into and beyond the 1980s, members of the Commonwealth of Nations operated a "quota" system, by which a percentage of all cinema releases and television programs sold and purchased had to be products from other Commonwealth countries. The BBC therefore had an obligation under this quota system to sell *Doctor Who* to other Commonwealth nations (BroadWcast, 2007). Being a commonwealth nation, Uganda was the fourth country in Africa and the thirteenth in the whole world to start airing episodes of *Doctor Who* on Uganda Television.

The post-independence governments retained control over the national broadcaster. Both Radio Uganda and Uganda Television were directly under the Ministry of Information, which employed broadcasters as civil servants. Although the stations ran commercial advertisements from the start, a big part of their budgets were met by the central government. The two broadcasters remained government mouthpieces rather than being independent channels of information. They carried mostly official news that focused uncritically on the activities and pronouncements of government leaders.

Radio Uganda and Uganda Television were merged in 2005 with the passage of the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Act, which purportedly created a ‘public broadcaster’. The two stations are now referred to as UBC Radio and UBC TV (Open Society, 2010).

The concept of public service broadcasting proved difficult to work in Uganda because broadcasters were not protected by law and they were not independent of official interference and, in some cases, coercion.

#### **2.2.1.2 Launching of other Television Stations.**

Change came in the gradual liberalization of the sector with the starting of Sanyu TV in 1993 (Babirukamu, 2019). And what a delight it was when Sanyu TV launched as the second television in Uganda! It was the first private owned television channel in Uganda. It broadcasted a lot of entertainment content that saw it gain a lot of viewership than UBC that was already in existence. Lighthouse TV Uganda (LTVU) also followed suit when it was launched in 1997. It is a sister channel to Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). LTVU is owned by Calvary Cathedral International in Fort Worth, Texas that is pastored by Bob Nichols. and broadcasts content that is affiliated with TBN. I believe that saw a balance in the interest of the few viewers at the time depending on the fact that there were very few people who owned television sets at the moment. UBC was basically focusing on matters of the nation, Sanyu TV offering entertainment and LTVU offering the spiritual content even though it was only favoring the Christians yet Uganda had a variety of religions.

Next in line was Wavamuno Broadcasting Services (WBS TV) channel which was incorporated in Uganda in 1997 even though it was started broadcasting in 1999. It was owned by Gordon Wavamuno. WBS TV ceased operations in December, 2016 due to a heavy tax debt of supposedly Shs Seven Billion. It is noteworthy that before the downfall, WBS had caught a lot of attention for its soap operas and entertainment news that it was offering. It bred the now successful TV show hosts like MC Kats, Sheila Gashumba who were then working on the kids and teens’ shows but now both on NBS TV as per now on the After 5 Show. WBS TV was in a competition with UBC TV as they were the hit channels of the days.

Proceeding, from mechanical television to electronic television, there continued to be a shift in how televisions are viewed today. Now, Ugandans enjoy a variety of local channels that include National Television (NTV) which was started in 2006. NTV overshadowed UBC and WBS with its compelling package of news bulletin and the hooking soap operas. Everyone was hooked onto NTV. Next Broadcasting Services (NBS TV) also started in 2007 though it was not as strong until there was change in ownership in 2009. It hooked the viewers' attention mostly to the afternoon movies and later started taking NTV's glory of a well packaged news bulletin.

2009 also saw the starting of Bukedde TV, a television station dedicated to the Buganda Kingdom mannerisms. Luganda is the major language used on Bukedde TV. Private ownership of television stations saw the starting of other television stations like: Urban TV, a channel that belongs to Vision Group was started in 2011.

Kingdoms also started their own channels that are dedicated to broadcasting their cultural content. These include: BBS TV, the official broadcasting television of the Buganda Kingdom was launched and started broadcasting in 2016, BABA TV which is the official Busoga Kingdom Television station, BUNYORO TV that is affiliated to Bunyoro Kingdom and many others.

A new wave that hit the country was the launching of the religious televisions. There are over twenty stations of the kind. Some of these include: Salt TV owned by House of Prayer Ministries International led by Pastor Aloysius Bugingo, Channel 44 owned by Kayanja Ministries among very many others. It is notable that from December 1996 to March 2007, for example, the number of FM licenses shot up from 14 to 158 and that of private TV stations from four to 32, according to UCC data. In 2017/18, 41.3% of individuals said they watched TV, according to the National Information. • Half (52.1%) of urban respondents said they watched TV compared to only a third (33.9%) of rural respondents (Media Action, 2019).

### **2.2.1.3 Television and Evolution of Technology.**

Even more exciting is that television has now become part of 'the internet of things' - a phrase that describes the interconnectivity of all devices to the internet, for example, the DSTV Now app with live streaming of DSTV channels like M-Net Movies and SuperSport and more so that customers can watch their favorite TV entertainment anytime, anywhere and on any device they prefer. It's innovations like these that keep the video entertainment segment alive - especially when it responds to the new trend of 'cord-cutters' - those who prefer to watch their TV entertainment on mobile devices. Life has changed dramatically over the past century, and a major reason for this is the progression of media technology.

Today consumers enjoy an exciting range of riveting television content that is packaged into various genres. Pay TV-service providers are going far and beyond to ensure that their viewers stay entertained. Apart from carefully selecting suitably-attractive programming that resonates with customers, service providers like MultiChoice have also introduced various convenient payment methods as a way of making the services easily accessible and affordable.

The television sector has become a highly competitive environment. There is an influx of new stations whilst others have gone. On-air presenters continue to switch loyalties depending on the packages being offered borrowing an idea from NTV Uganda. NTV Uganda has experienced a mass exodus of some of their crème de la crème presenters and other employees who have left the station for greener pastures at NBS TV or other ventures or have been fired in the past couple of months. The list grows longer by the day for some reasons known to management and their staff (Big Eye, 2016). There's no denying that television is now an integral part of people's daily lives and as TV-viewing trends keep advancing, so will the technology and innovation that enhances the viewer's experience.

### **2.2.3 Background of Film as an Industry in Uganda.**

The film industry, also known as the motion picture industry, consists of the technological and commercial institutions involved in the filmmaking. These institutions in filmmaking include production companies, studios, screenwriting, actors, crews, and film directors (Sawe, 2017).



Though the expense involved in making film almost immediately led film production to concentrate under the auspices of standing production companies, advances in affordable filmmaking equipment, as well as an expansion of opportunities to acquire investment capital from outside the film industry itself, have allowed independent film production to evolve.

### **2.2.3.1 Influence of Colonial Rule on Uganda's Film Industry.**

To understand why film-making took so long to flourish in Uganda, we have to go all the way back to Uganda's colonial period. The area occupied by present-day Uganda was made up of a number of sovereign kingdoms and chiefdoms at war with each other in the heart of Africa's Great Lake's region. But following the partition of Africa, the area was declared a British protectorate in 1894. The British imperialists, and other foreign missionaries and explorers, were not met with much resistance — and the kings and chiefs brokered deals that ensured the status quo of their cultural institutions would remain firmly intact.

Uganda's status as protectorate ensured the sovereignty of the native rulers, but also limited Uganda's integration into the British Empire. Because of this, Ugandan arts did not benefit from cultural exchange in the same ways as other colonies like Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana (Niwamanya, 2018).

Uganda was considered as a good location for film production by the colonialists. An earlier production was witnessed in early 1950s when John Huston: *The African Queen* was primarily filmed in the Belgian Congo, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the Congo where the crew members and the cast often stayed in the bush and jungle. In Uganda, scenes were filmed near Murchison Falls Park and Lake Albert in the then port of Butiaba. It is the uncomplicated tale of two companions with mismatched, "opposites attract" personalities who develop an implausible love affair as they travel together downriver in Africa around the start of World War I. This quixotic film by director John Huston, based on the 1935 novel of the same name by C. S. Forester, is one of the classics of Hollywood adventure filmmaking, with comedy and romance besides. It was the first color film for the two leads and for director Huston (Filmsite.org,1).

### **2.2.3.2 Government and Organizations' Involvement in the Film Industry.**

The industry experienced a great imbalance to the detriment of filmmakers who often saw their work underpaid despite being well received by local audiences. Likewise, film professionals used to find it difficult to access filming locations and were forced to pay numerous taxes that increased the production costs. To change this situation, the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, in partnership with UNESCO and the European Union, launched the project "Creation of tax incentives to support local development and professionalization of the film sector in Uganda". This project addresses the problem of the high costs of film production through tax incentives for the sector. (UNESCO, 2022). According to the same report, Uganda also continues to lose huge revenues due to lack of proper film structures—notably lack of a rebate system as foreign productions of local stories have been moved to other countries.

Many institutions and organizations have come taken successful attempts of working closely with Filmmaking companies and organizations to promote our film content. Notable companies include MTN UGANDA which launched a channel on YOTV called Kibanda Xpress. Kibanda Xpress is a Video on Demand channel dedicated to local Uganda content especially Ugandan Films. Kibanda is an indigenous name to the buildings or halls where people confined themselves to watch films, soccer games among other forms of visuals. Kibanda Xpress is a developed form of the indigenous Kibanda.

Kibanda Xpress service is provided in partnership with the Association of Core Film Producers Uganda Limited (trading as PEARLWOOD) as content creator and Albayan Media Limited the platform provider through the YOTV mobile app. The channel launches with a promotion subscription offer of Ugx1,000 per movie valid for a period of 24hours: it has over 150 premium local movies already available and every month there will be at least 4 new movies. MTN Uganda has thrown its weight behind the local movie industry with the launch of a Video on Demand (VOD) channel offering a premium mix of local Ugandan movies.

*Our dream as local Film content creators, is to build a sustainable industry in which content creators not only earn consistently from their content, but one in which they also thrive and gain the global visibility deserved. Without doubt, going digital is the right move for the*

*industry: it will reduce on the copy rights infringement, increase footprint of the Uganda movies, expose our artists globally among others: we are therefore very excited and appreciate both our partners MTN and Albayan media for making this possible,” said Mzee Bwanika, Speaker – Pearlwood Board of Directors.*

Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) which is under the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance is in charge of regulating the works of the film industry. One of the regulations applied by UCC is to all first time applicants for licenses of film distribution and film exhibition services, a provisional license will be issued for a period of one year to allow the operator time to align with the UCC licensing conditions. After that one year with proven compliance, a five-year license will be issued and shall be renewable annually.

### **2.2.3.3 Festivals in Uganda's Film Industry.**

The Uganda Film Festival, established in 2013 by UCC, is the country’s major film festival. It spotlights local filmmakers and conducts training, workshops, exhibitions and outreach. The festival showcases local content in the film industry but also focuses on other facets of promoting the industry e.g. trainings. The aim is to generate interest in the Ugandan film industry both locally and internationally, professionalism, bring all the industry players together in a more focused and promising environment (UCC, 2022).

Other local festivals include the Pearl International Film Festival (PIFF) which is described as another big film event in Uganda. It is a no governmental organization established in 2011 to develop and promote film and other cultural industries as catalyst for the regional social and economic growth. It usually happens in November at the National Theatre. PIFF is open to African and international submission (PIFF,1). Euro Uganda Film Festival is another film festival held in Uganda in conjunction with European Countries. It celebrates diversity of cultural expressions through film and lastly the Amakula International Film Festival, which was founded in 2004 and is Uganda’s oldest film festival. The major aim is to stimulate the film industry so as to enable it achieve its full potential as a source of employment, revenue creation, and preserve culture through local content.

Informal Associations have been seen rise and fall in our Film Industry due to unprofessionalism and inadequate funding to support the implementation of their objectives. Notable is The Association of Audio and Visual Distributors Limited (AAVD) which is one of the bodies which assists filmmakers to sell and market their work. AAVD is registered under the Pearlwood Film Trademark.

#### **2.2.3.4 Education and Training in Uganda's Film Industry.**

Founded in 2005 by acclaimed Indian filmmaker Mira Nair, Maisha Film Lab is the oldest film training institution in Uganda. It was the year 2005 when celebrated Hollywood film maker Mira Nair, who had made her home in Kampala, started the Maisha Film Lab. It was established to train film makers from the region (Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Zanzibar) in the finer arts of film. Since then it has produced more than 550 graduates (including the Oscar-winner Lupita Nyong'o), who have gone on to make more than 50 short films that have been shown at various international film festivals (Kabuye, 2020).

Makerere University's Department of Performing Arts and Film (PAF) is another formal film training school. It offers an undergraduate Programme that prepares students to be professional filmmakers. The course takes a period of three years. Therein, the culture of film and conventions, myths and tales of cinema are discovered. Examples of Course units offered in the course of Bachelor of Arts in Drama and Film include but not limited to: Scriptwriting, Acting Skills, Directing, and Production for film and TV among very many others.

Other formal film training institutions include: Kampala Film School and Proline Academy.

Due to the high cost of film training, most of Uganda's filmmakers are self-taught. Practitioners estimate that some 200 students graduate from film courses in Uganda every year, most of these from private institutions which offer short training and courses.

## **2.2.4 Films as a Medium of Mass Communication.**

### **2.2.4.1 Introduction of the Section.**

A film also called a movie, motion picture, moving picture, picture or photoplay. This is a work of visual art that simulates experiences and otherwise communicates ideas, stories, perceptions, feelings, beauty, or atmosphere through the use of moving images.

These images are generally accompanied by sound and, more rarely, other sensory stimulations.

The word "cinema", short for cinematography, is often used to refer to filmmaking and the film industry.

History shows that the motion pictures started in the 19th century with the experimentation of picture movements and continue through the silent eras of films, sound and digital film/movie making. In film production, it is believed that the heart of every magic show is cleverness. This is synonymous with the film/movies activities based on the persistence of vision of the actors/actresses. In 1800 research shows that there were some popular toy makers who use their understanding of vision to create an optical illusion. The toys such as simple book still pictures could be skimmed through to create the illusion of movement. Sixty years after the invention of toys by the toys makers, which is around 1860s, the “peep show” came up with what was said to be the amusement popular boxes containing moving rods of still pictures. As you move the rods, different pictures are revealed for one to see, Rodman. (2006:151).

### **2.2.4.2 Uganda as a Good Film Location and Source of Ideas.**

Some of the notable international films about Uganda, which have been shot in partly in Uganda and in other countries, include Sharad Patal: *Rise and Fall of Idi Amin*, a biographical drama that the flow of events when Dictator Idi Amin Dada (Joseph Olita) rules Uganda with a mad and murderous zeal from 1971 until his overthrow and forced exile in 1979. It was directed by Sharad Patal. When it was being shot here in Uganda, it could have created employment opportunities for some of the filmmakers by then to help in the crew and being part of the cast even though it was not for the lead roles.

Secondly is Mira Nair: *Mississippi Masala*. Joseph Olita, who acted as Idi Amin in Rise and Fall of Idi Amin Dada took the same role in *Mississippi Masala*. After Mina's (Sarita Choudhury) Indian family is ousted from their home in Uganda by Dictator Idi Amin, they relocate to Mississippi to start a new life. Mina falls for Demetrius (Denzel Washington), a young carpet cleaner, despite the protestations of their families over their racial difference. The families and their surrounding communities begin to feud, putting even more pressure on the couple's romance. Having to choose between family and love, Mina and Demetrius run away together (Rotten Tomatoes, 1).

It was directed by Mira Nair, the founder of Maisha Club. It was distributed by Metro-GoldwynMayer, The Samuel Goldwyn Company and Cinecom. It starred Ugandan actor Michael Wawuyo Sr and Kenya's Joseph Olita. Even though my mind cannot trace back to any moments in the film, it has been one of the most talked about productions, remembered by most of the established filmmakers in Uganda. This could be due to the impact it left unto them

Thirdly, another film of Ugandan origin is Jean van de Velde: *The Silent Army* (2008). Dutch chef Eduard Zuiderwijk runs the only good restaurant in a Central African state (Uganda?) in the grip of military dictatorship and civil war. Since the death of his wife, he rather neglected their beloved pre-teen son Thomas, who thus bonded unusually closely with a staff family, especially their son Abu, his age, but not in school. When the rebel general Michel Obeke's troops snap up Abu as child soldier recruit, to be brainwashed, Thomas tirelessly pushes dad to get his buddy back. They embark on a perilous quest, cynically aided by Flemish reporter François Lama and a refugee camp aid worker (IDMb, 1).

It stars Uganda's: Abby Mukiibi, Andrew Kintu, and Sam Okello. From the starring, we are now seeing more Ugandans coming up and being selected to take on roles in the international productions. That is where hope for a better industry could have found a firm foundation. I suppose by then; Ugandan filmmakers were beginning to a leaf on how to better their industry too. Proceeding is Marc Foster: *Machine Gun Preacher* (2011) which is also another international project filmed in Uganda. It is based on the true story of Sam Childers, who became a Christian soon after getting out of prison, and went on to pastor a church. He later went on a mission trip to

Uganda, and heard about the Lord's Resistance army and how they were abducting children. He then felt called by God to both build an orphanage to feed hungry children affected by the war, and also to fight against the LRA in Southern Sudan in order to protect these children. It was directed by Marc Foster and distributed by Lionsgate Family.

Mira Nair: *Queen of Katwe* (2016) is the inspiring true story of a girl from the slums of Uganda who becomes a chess champion. It has strong themes of empathy, humility, integrity, perseverance, and teamwork. But there are also many hard scenes that little kids might not understand -- or could be upset by - making it best for tweens and up. A boy who's run over by a motorcycle gets stitches without painkillers, another child is almost swept away in a flash flood, and a teen girl is lured from her family by an untrustworthy man who promises her a better life. The central family is homeless and must sleep on the street, and some scenes include background drinking and smoking. But in the end this is a beautifully told, entertaining drama about a strong, smart, loyal girl that will give families a lot to talk about (Condes, 2022).

The film starred many both young and old Ugandan Actors and Actresses starting with the lead Actress, Madina Nalwanga. This film employed a lot of Ugandan filmmakers which included Adnan Ssenkumba who was working as a sound recordist for the project. He said that when the production was shifted to South Africa, many Ugandans were torn down but luckily for him, he had a workshop to attend in Germany.

Next is José Padilha: *Seven Days in Entebbe* which tells a story of n July 1976, when four terrorists hijack an Air France flight from Tel-Aviv to Paris and force the flight crew to land in Entebbe, Uganda. There, the Jewish passengers are held hostage, with their safety contingent on the release of dozens of terrorists jailed in Israel, Germany and Sweden. After considerable debate, the Israeli government employs the Israeli Defense Forces to execute a daring rescue (Rotten Tomatoes, 1).

#### **2.2.4.3 Notable Personalities in the Evolution of Film in Uganda.**

People like Princess Elizabeth Bagaya from Tooro who is now almost 87 years old have transcended both mixing art, culture modelling and film. Bagaya eventually went on to act in a

number of films, including the female lead in “Bullfrog in the Sun” based on Chinua Achebe’s two books: *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*. Bagaya, however, is perhaps best remembered for her role in *Sheena: Queen of the Jungle*, a 1984 Columbia Pictures film shot on location in Kenya. It was far from a box office hit (Bagaya herself thought little of the script and says that it was badly written). “But for me, *Sheena* expressed a certain truth, a certain reality, namely, that an indigenous culture, a way of life of a people, had suffered an assault at the hands of an alien one,” Bagaya says in her autobiography. “The role of the Shaman, the defender of the indigenous culture in *Sheena*, had parallels with my own life and what had come to pass for Africa and our people.” (New African, 2011).

Miriam Ndagire traces her humble beginnings and how she stood out in a male-dominated industry from the 1990s after having gotten basic skills and polished her talents at Makerere University where she pursued a Diploma in Music, Dance and Drama at the reknown School of Performing Arts and Film (PAF). Mariam Ndagire’s story may be the most inspiring case of dedication and audaciousness for a woman in the Ugandan entertainment industry. On top of her longevity in a career that spans nearly three decades, her multitasking has propelled her into a trendsetter, powerbroker and entrepreneur, all of which make Ndagire her own boss. Currently the proud owner of Mariam Ndagire Film and Performing Centre, she has a class of 45 budding actors and actresses and among her prominent students is Sarah Kisawuzi of the NTV: *Deception* TV series fame (Zziwa, 2015). Mariam Ndagire is known for her films: *Strength of a Stranger* (2008), *Where We Belong* (2010), *My Husband's Wife* (2021).

To add on that, PAF has born quite a number of notable personalities who have played key roles in the development of Film in Uganda including: Philip Luswata Kafulumu who is now a lecturer at the school handling course units related to filmmaking such as Basic Skills of Editing, Production for Film and Television, Acting Skills and Scriptwriting. He has taught a number of people that have stood out to be counted in our Film Industry. He has acted in a number of TV dramas including: PMP’s *What If* and *The Honorables*. He is also known for having directed *The Campus* that was airing on NBS TV.



In the same lane, Abbey Mukiibi, a graduate from PAF and a multi-award winning actor is another notable personality. His brilliant execution of roles in various screen dramas and feature films is worth a note. He acts as Mr. Kirunda in *Sanyu*. He has acted in the *Last King of Scotland* as well. He has built himself a career in acting and directing.

Another notable personality is the internationally acclaimed director Mira Nair and an Indian-born wife of Makerere University lecturer Mahood Mamdani has a huge influence on the Ugandan film industry. According to *Screendaily* in 2002, Mira Nair was said to have been planning to create a 'film lab' in Uganda, inspired by the Sundance Institute's training initiative, to offer four East African and four Indian students six weeks of tuition. Speaking during her Cinema Militants Lecture at this year's Netherlands Film Festival in Utrecht, Nair explained that the venture was intended 'to democratize cinematic expression and to open that door. In the West, there are so many opportunities, but not where I come from'. It was the year 2005 when the celebrated Hollywood film maker, made her home in Kampala, started the Maisha Film Lab. It was established to train film makers from the region (Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Zanzibar) in the finer arts of film. Before Nair came to Uganda, most of the 'films' were actually made for TV, with local series the main focus of Ugandan film makers.

Other key names in the early years of Kinna-Uganda are Cindy Magara, Donald Mugisha, and Matthew Bishanga (also known as Matt Bish). Cindy Magara is believed to be the first woman to direct a film in Uganda, which she did as a student at the prestigious Makerere University. Her film, *Fate*, which premiered in 2006, has since slipped into obscurity. Donald Mugisha, who started out as a music video director, released his first film *Divizionz* in 2007. The film starred popular musician and self-proclaimed "ghetto president" turned politician and activist Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu more famously known as Bobi Wine. He is also an alumnus of PAF where he pursued his Diploma in Music, Dance and Drama. Notable actors and actresses that have won awards for their compelling acting skills include: Joel Okuyo Prynce, Nana Kagga, Edward Katuguzi, Abbey Mukiibi, Michael Wawuyo among very many others.

Noteworthy is Loukman Ali, the first Ugandan Director to have his film, *The Girl in The Yellow*

Jumper featuring on Netflix and Morris Mugisha, whose film, *Tembele* got a nomination in The Oscar Film Academy Awards in the category of Best International Feature. *Tembele* zooms into the very soul of a man working the garbage truck 12 hours a day in the chaotic city battling a mental set back when he loses a son. It is directed by Morris Mugisha and it stars Patrick Nkakalukanyi, who won the best actor in Feature Film of 2021 in the Uganda Film Festival 2021. Morris Mugisha: *Tembele* scooped many more awards from the last held UFF Awards of which include: Best Feature Film and Best Supporting Actor and caused a stir at the function, demanding "we want more" from UCC.

The 'first couple' of Ugandan film, the two met while on the set of the TV series *The Hostel*, one of the more successful Ugandan series. Mathew, who started acting in the 1990s while at Namasagali College, is still the only winner at the AMVCAs. A graduate of the Maisha Film Lab, he has appeared in most major films produced in Uganda. Eleanor Nabwiso (née Nansibo) came to the public eye as Hope in *The Hostel*, and has gone on to win several awards locally.

Notable is Nathan Magoola who said that his interests in film started way back while he was at campus. He owned a video retail shop at the moment. Even though he went into advertisement as rime moved on, he did not stay away from making attempts at filmmaking. He is therefore seen in an earlier image of filmmaking in *Felistas Fable*. When the chance for commissioning shows knocked, he grabbed it by its neck. And two years later, he has given us the content that we deserve.

#### **2.2.4.4 Distribution and Exhibition of Ugandan Films.**

And in October 2018, DSTV launched Pearl Magic, a channel dedicated to solely Ugandan content. Ugandan filmmakers had a venue to showcase what they can do, and no longer complain that Nigerian content was dominating Africa's largest satellite network. What was more, MultiChoice would pay the going rate for content, and life had definitely never been this good for our struggling industry (Kabuye, 2020).

Filmmakers need to understand that an exhibitor is incurring a cost to showcase their films, so if

people don't come to watch the film that makes it bad for business," Satish Guna, the Century Cinemax Manager, relayed while speaking at a Film Workshop held at the Uganda Communications Commission offices in Bugolobi on Thursday (Junior, 2018).

According to Timothy Okwaro, the M-Net East Africa Director, filmmakers today have more platforms to showcase their work than there has been in the past, thanks to digital migration. He says the switch from analog to digital has led to the birth of many TV channels all which need the content from filmmakers. "If DSTV does not screen your film, there are now many other channels that will show it. You should utilize them," he noted (Junior, 2018).

In more developed film industries like the US, filmmakers produce films primarily for consumption at the cinema. However, the reality is very different for the Uganda film industry. While many Ugandan filmmakers would also want to open their movies at the box office like their contemporaries in the developed world, it does not make business sense because local films apparently fail to pull significant crowds to the cinema and cinema halls charge a fortune. The few local productions that have premiered at the cinema are usually backed by corporate sponsors.

### **2.3. Relationship between Film and Television**

We think of film and television as rival media, but their histories are so deeply intertwined that thinking of them separately is often a hindrance to understanding how the film and television industries operate.

Starting in the late 1950s, Hollywood studios began to produce substantially more hours of film for television (in the form of TV series) than for movie theaters, and that pattern holds to this day. Since the early 1960s, it has been apparent that feature films are merely passing through movie theaters route to their ultimate destination on home television screens.

As physical artifacts, films may reside in studio vaults, but they remain alive in the culture due almost entirely to the existence of television. Whether films survive on cable channels or on DVD, they rarely appear on any screens other than television screens once they have completed their initial theatrical release (Film Reference,1).

Giving televisions their due, they have been the major distribution outlet of films produced locally here. Films that have been fully produced and released for public consumption and have not made their way to being broadcast on television are barely known by the audience. There are hundreds of fully produced films and series that have not reached even 5% of our country's population. That is total contrast of the curiosity we held to catch an episode of the Deception that was airing on NTV.

People all over Uganda usually watch content from our film Industry on television. On an estimation of 10 people that you find in a video shop, it is to a greater probability that none of them is buying a film that is locally produced here. And to look deeper into the matter, if a stranger was asked about how many Uganda films or series they have watched, they will refer to those that they have watched on television channels. Other people now prefer binge watching their favorite Netflix series, Hollywood Films and sometimes sitcoms and Comedy Shows which is cheaper than paying 89,000 Ugandan Shillings to have a bouquet that contains Pearl Magic Prime.

Television Channels have programs that align with our film Industry. One of these include NBS TV's Cinema Blitz, an entertainment Programme that looks into film productions, provides reviews and recommendations. It is hosted by Kwezi Patrick. From his experience of getting to review various films, Kwezi Patrick believes that the Ugandan Film Industry can skyrocket if at all the government continues to inject in money (Kisembo, 2020). Such review programs help to summarize the films which in return helps the consumers to have more information with which to gauge their interests in the film. And the end of the day, they build consumer interest in the Film content usually due to the trailers are broadcast and that creates curiosity and urge to watch them. Marketing for film premieres is done on televisions.

That is an efficient way of marketing because the percentage of households that opt to have televisions and mobile phones as the sources of information. Producers and Directors nowadays make media rounds to advertise for their film premieres on entertainment television shows. Televisions also host filmmakers to discuss about their film projects. NTV hosted Loukman Ali on Morning@NTV during lockdown to discuss on how he managed to produce his story film, *16*

*Rounds* amidst the coronavirus pandemic. This enlightens the audience about the growth of our film Industry and they start following up on the new developments therein.

## CHAPTER THREE: COMMISSIONED TO ENTERTAIN THE PEARL

### 3.1 Introduction to the Chapter.

The findings discussed in this chapter are related to the objectives of this study. This study intended to find out the influence of Pearl Magic Prime on Uganda's film industry. The findings and interpretations are presented in this chapter in three subsections:

### 3.2 Content on Pearl Magic Prime.

#### 3.2.1 Commissioning and Licensing.

Initially, when Pearl Magic Prime started, all the shows were licensed to be broadcast. This case, licensing meant that producers were given a formal authorization to have their content broadcast on the channel. Not only were they given the formal authorization but producers were also paid to have their content aired. Richard Mulindwa, the Producer of *What If* series said that content would be bought in episodes. *What If* series, *Sanyu* series, and *Mama and Me* were the first series to be licensed at Pearl Magic Prime.

"When COVID-19 hit and a lot of people were stuck at home, we saw an opportunity of giving them more content to keep them engaged and that is why we made a call out to different filmmakers to submit their ideas and among those selected was *Sanyu* series by Nabwiso," a Joan Semanda, the communications manager of MultiChoice Uganda said (Jjingo, 2021).

MultiChoice strategically started working to keep the viewer base intact by commissioning Television shows and series that are bound to entertain the viewers because they expect a daily dose of their appointment content. In this case, commissioning meant that PMP would fund projects and those projects would belong to PMP. It set out to look out for content and people that would take the mantle of producing the content and that MultiChoice would be the executive sponsors to cater for the funds needed. The management of PMP described this as interest of prolonging the longevity of the Uganda business, as well as ensuring that they positively impact the lives of creative professionals in the entertainment industry.

### **3.2.2 The Criteria Followed for Eligible Commissioning and Licensing.**

The following are the elements of the paperwork that is supposed to be handed in by a Filmmaker who has content that ought to be licensed or commissioned by Pearl Magic Prime:

1. Professional movie Script which clearly defines the following: characters, want and need, plot structure, conflict and resolution. Characters have to be believable and authentic for them to be well rounded by the audience. It is from the characters that the viewers identify and root them. For the need and want, the object of the hero's or protagonist is the story is what they want but what they need is that, which is a solution to the flaw or the problem in the story. The plot structure is the storyline or the chronological flow of events in the story and when they occur. Conflict is the tension built from two opposing parties, that is usually the protagonist and the antagonist and the resolution is how the tension is solved.
2. The filmmaker needs to have a detailed character Bible. A character bible is an outline filled with everything there is to know about the character: their history, personality, motivations, and desires (Reedsy, 2019). A character bible gives the potential sponsors an overview of the characters and it is usually important in auditioning and casting of talents.
3. A treatment/Approach has to be handed amongst the paperwork. A treatment is the outline of the basic plot points and themes in the story. A treatment is given to the funders an idea of what the story evolves. It is usually five to ten pages.
4. The paperwork must contain the preliminary Budget which is the first budget given to the funders onto which the main budget is adopted. The preliminary budget gives the potential sponsor the impression of how much money needs to be invested in the project.
5. The filmmaker needs to add in the screener/demo of previous work done so that which is usually termed as the piece that is dressed to impress. The demo shows the filmmaker's personal style of filmmaking, have the talent to work and that they are fit to be invested into. The demos should be full of itself.
6. The filmmaker needs to add in the Contractual Information- i.e. Full names of Company, Directors & Partners, Company Registration Certificate, VAT Registration Certificate and full physical address.

Once the filmmaker's proposal has been sent, receipt of proposals have to be acknowledged by email notification. The proposal then gets evaluated by a panel of Judges selected by Director of Channels/Head of Channel and a shortlist of successful proposals achieved.

Technical and editorial standards required by M-Net are then set out in the production agreement once the proposal is selected. M-Net then gives the final editorial and creative control over all aspects of the Commissioned Programming.

The primary target audience is for ages between 20 to 49 years. The films to be submitted must be created in either English and/or Luganda (subtitles should be provided for the parts acted in Luganda). Authenticity is also a major box to tick and the film should have an engaging and exciting storyline to engage the target audience of people as mentioned above.

### **3.2.3 Type of Content Aired on Pearl Magic Prime.**

A high octane fast paced relationship drama built on a web of lies, money, insecurity, infidelity and societal pressures, where both parties push each other to breaking point. This is best shown in the series that are airing on Pearl Magic Prime whereby: An innocent, rural teenage girl has to leave her family & education behind to do a maid's job with a complex, wealthy urban family where her life evolves and which doesn't leave the lives of the house members the same as seen in *Sanyu*, the riveting drama in *Prestige* which follows the tumultuous lives of rival ad executives who happen to be family. It's a story about the quest for power that is fueled by: love, jealousy, grief, and hatred among many others. Producers have to make sure that they should give the viewers what they want. These are emotionally sweeping and engaging family dramas capturing the typical family struggles as sparked by economic pressures, finances, children, extended family and infidelity and or family secrets.

Pearl Magic Prime also looks at concepts that are over-arching and not stand-alone episodes with a definitive ending. The tone should be edgy, gripping and entertaining. The story-lines and pace must have nail-biting tension that will keep the audience glued to the TV screen.

Pearl Magic Prime primarily broadcasts content that revolves around families. This is as a result of the fact that television is a mass medium with more of a family audience watching it together. And the timing per which new episodes of the television dramas are aired on the channel, is between 8PM to 10PM. That is the time when parents have retired from their daily vocations, the



children are back from school. The family is all together and probably sharing a meal together. No parent wants their children to see highly striking pictures or mature content or even hear offensive language and that reminded I of the watershed time that used to be 9PM. The watershed time is the time that was assumed that the children have gone to sleep, then the adults could get to watch uncensored content.

Since PMP has programs running all day and night, that subjects Ugandan Filmmakers to create content with "but what about the children" question in their minds. They are tasked to produce content that is fit for child viewing. Magoola as a producer he is faced with a similar situation and he stretched the fact that his 8-year-old is greatly involved in the viewership of the dramas. "I have an 8-year-old girl at home and as we are sitting at 8pm to catch up with an episode of *Prestige*, it is such a relief to be certain that the content you created is fit for her," he narrated.

The content on Pearl Magic Prime has to be relatable to the people. The series on PMP have made their place with the audience by trying to bring in twists and turns in the shows which are usually done to spice up the entertainment. However, the turns and the twists are unexpected, the content has not meandered the shows off the route of being relatable at the same time. A case in scenario is *Sanyu* where the twist of having a twin Alex left the viewers perplexed and entertained at the same time. *Sanyu* is now into its third season that turn was not expected by the viewers. It has built the story, created more entertainment and hooked more people by applauding the editing skills displayed in the scenes. The television shows have loyal audience and the content that is aired is having familiar and relatable characters and conflicts.

Content aired on PMP is that which matches up with the viewers evolving mind and it also emphasizes that original concepts should be reflective of our audience's daily lives and experiences while taking an exciting new angle with well plotted storylines and rounded characters.

### **3.2.4 Shows that Have Been Licensed and Commissioned on PMP.**

#### **1. Nabwiso Films: *Sanyu* series**

It is a television drama that portrays the life of an innocent, rural teenage girl who has to leave her family and education behind to do a maid's job with a wealthy urban family where she falls for the young son of the house. *Sanyu* is produced by Nabwiso films which is headed by Matthew and

Eleanor Nabwiso, a couple in Uganda. It is amongst the first two shows to be commissioned at Pearl Magic Prime and it was originally released in January 2020. It has aired for three years now making it into three seasons with the first season having 100 episodes, 260 episodes for the second season and they are now working on other 260 episodes for season three as told by Producer Matthew Nabwiso.

It stars over 30 actors and actresses who include: Catherine Namugenyi as Sanyu, Allan Kutos Katongole as Oscar Gume, Racheal Nduhukire as Melissa, Marion Asilo Dorothy as Linda Mutesi Kirunda, Abby Mukiibi Nkaaga as Mr Kirunda, Housen Mushema as Patrick Nkemba, Eleanor Nabwiso as Lucy Nkemba, Mutumba Jenkins as Ddembe, Allen Musumba as Nakakande among very many others. *Sanyu* series has been nominated in various festivals and these include: best TV series and Tracy Kababiito was nominated for Best Actress in a Drama series at the 8th Uganda Film Festival Awards.

## 2. Ava Juliet Productions: *Prestige* series

This is a serial drama following the ups and downs of rivals and executives from the same family. Their lust for power is fueled by love, jealousy, grief and hatred. It is produced under Ava Juliet productions and premiered on February 8, 2021, on Pearl Magic Prime channel at the launch of the channel. Ava Juliet Productions is headed by Nathan Magoola, a Ugandan Film producer and writer.

*Prestige* series stars Elizabeth Bwamimpeke as Jasmine, Cleopatra Koheirwe as Eunice Kintu, Raymond Rushabiro as Milton, Evelyn Sandra Kironde as Chelsea Kintu, Karolyn Kash as Arianna Winsted, Symon Base Kalema as Jeje, Martin "Yoyo" Nkoyoyo as Benefits, among very many other. *Prestige* now has a total count of 360 episodes. It has also gotten nominations in UFF awards and had 3 wins for best TV Show 2022, Best Actress 2021 which was scooped by Nana Kagga.

## 3. Dilman Dila: *Mama and Me*

It is a thrilling dramedy about a university lecturer and her three daughters as they journey through dark struggles, in this epic story served up with humor and young romance. This epic dramedy centers around a middle-aged teacher, whose husband steals her money to give to his mistresses. After his accidental death, she is accused of murder and must use her wits to stay out of jail, and

to fight off in-laws who want to take her property. It is produced by Dilman Dila and it was launched on PMP on 3 January 2022 at 8.30pm and every Monday to Wednesday thereafter. It stars Debbie Bakuseka, Nambozo Gloria Catherine and Suubi Nalwanga who has recently graduated from PAF.

#### 4. Limit Film Production: *What If* series

It is an investigative series that tells the story of Martha an investigative journalist who sets out on a quest to find the untold truth of the death of two girls. William a married man has an affair with an intern at his Firm. When his wife, Miria finds out and she burns the hotels where the internee had spent a night with William. Nsubuga who is married to a businesswoman, veronica also gets into an affair with a young girl who is as well killed by Veronica. Martha sets out on a quest of finding out the truth. *What If* stars actors like Philip Luswata, Joel Okuyo Prynce and others.

#### 5. Fun Factory: *Mizigo Express*

It is comedy series that portrays what goes on between the land lord Kabogozza and his tenants especially a one Sam who becomes his side kick. It is produced by Hannington Bujinjo who is as well a comedian Actor. Mizigo Express has actors and actresses that are celebrated like comedians Dickson Zizinga, Anne Kansiiime and Akite Agnes. These talented individuals have their own audiences and crowds who they attract to watch and enjoy the show, *Mizigo Express* has slowly grown to become a household favorite for most Ugandan family's country-wide.

#### 6. Reach A Hand: *Kyaddala*

It is a serial drama following the lives of a high school old friends who are reunited after admission to the university. *Kyaddala* series is produced by Reach a Hand Organization that is led by Humphrey Nabimanya. It stars actors and actresses including: Harmony Kyomugisha Muhwezi as Shamim, Anita Fabiola as Ms. Tina, Allan Toniks, and Martha Kay among very many others. *Kyaddala* series is written by over 10 writers amongst which includes: Louis Muhereza, Rehema Nanfuka, Josephine Kabahuma, Ivan Tusabe, Allan Manzi, Meddy Sserwada among others. *Kyaddala* series was originally released in 2019 and it was being aired on NBS TV. It made its way to Pearl Magic Prime in 2022 for its season Two.

### 7. Dilman Dila: *Kojja* series

It tells a story of a 35-year-old man running from his debtors. With the overarching theme of the rivalry between traditional and modern methods of relationship counselling, *The Kojja* is set in a fictional firm whose business model is rooted on the Ugandan marriage counselling culture of Kojja (uncle) and Ssenga (auntie).

*The Kojja* is the work of producer, writer, filmmaker and author Dilman Dila who has been shortlisted for numerous prizes as a writer and won major awards as a filmmaker for his work on *Felistas Fable* (Agaba, 2022). *Kojja* series premiered on PMP on 30th April, 2022.

### 8. Rhonnie Nkalubo: *Chapterz*

*Chapterz* premiered on PMP in August, 2021. According to the show's producer Rhonnie Nkalubo Abraham, *Chapterz* is an adaptation of *Ekiryatabaala*, a local play by Bakayimbira Dramactors. The drama series seeks to unravel family secrets of society's upper echelon. The inspiration of this story dates back from 2001 when a play called "Ekiryatabaala" by the Bakayimbira Dramactors took Ugandan theatre by a storm, including Nkalubo the *Chapterz* director. "*Chapterz* is about a perfect family and a perfect mess, this family is so good to be so bad, and within every *Chapter* there are hidden verses" he said as he hinted on the synopsis of the show (Kampala Sun, 2021).

### 9. *Taxi 24*.

The exciting new dramedy, *Taxi 24*, came to Pearl Magic Prime on 2 January 2022. It Stars Ndugga Ahammed Salim as the taxi driver Patu, Kenisha Mars, dancehall star Coco Finger, Christine Sendi,

Anita Sseruwagi, Don Delo and singer Allen Kakooza, amongst others, *Taxi 24* is about a taxi's journey to its final destination, a border town. Along the way, the passengers and conductor clash but also find themselves forced to work together or having to spend the night in the middle of a dangerous forest.

The dramatic serving is directed and produced by the pioneering Gerald Sserunjogi, whose previous works include one of Uganda's first English-language films, *Fatal Destiny*, the movies *Mom's Dress* and *Mother's Agony*, and the series *Girls Room* (Katende, 2021).

Pearl Magic Prime airs other entertainment shows. And these are: The Salvador Show which is Uganda's premier comedy talk show hosted by MC Patrick 'Salvado' Idringi that includes celebrity guest interviews and stand-up sets from the hottest comedians of the day, *My Perfect Wedding* which follow soon-to-be married couples through the journey to their big day. The ups, the downs, the tears, the joy as they aim to make their day forever memorable. It is hosted by Judithiana and lastly, *Date My Family* where Ugandan singles look for love in a unique twist to the traditional dating show, a young lover meets three families hoping to meet the partner of their dreams. All the shows on PMP round off to one main goal of edutainment.

### **3.2.5 Brief History on how various shows got to be on Pearl Magic Prime.**

For Nathan Magoola, *Prestige* started after he quit his advertising job at Fenon Records “to follow his passion of making films.” Magoola says he had been trying to quit his job for over five years but couldn’t find the courage and once he did, he “never looked back as he got interested in MultiChoice Uganda. The firm has been financing his series that have become one of the biggest shows on television in Uganda today. “At the beginning of last year, after I had gotten investors for my company, I decided this was it: I am done! So, on January 6, 2020, I quit Fenon Records and started developing what would become the *Prestige* show,” Nathan Magoola said. “Luckily, during the lockdown, MultiChoice put out a call for TV shows around April—and I submitted *Prestige*,” he disclosed. However, when he submitted the project proposal, it was met with skepticism as Magoola had no demonstrated experience working on TV dramas.

Thus, he was asked to make a pilot preview for the show. According to him, limited financial resources got him hesitant to shoot the pilot preview without any solid commitments from the Pay TV Company but was encouraged by his friend, Mathew Nabwiso, who is a producer and director. “During lockdown, I used to spend a lot of time with Matthew Nabwiso. One day- while he was over at my place, I tell him about this project and he told me to go ahead because even if they didn’t take it, I’d have something to show in the future,” he narrated. Mathew went an extra mile to offer him some equipment like cameras for shooting the pilot preview. At this point, he reached out to Nana Kagga, a renowned Ugandan actress and filmmaker “whom he felt was the perfect fit for the lead role on the show. ’With Nana on board, they had one month to shoot the pilot video and submit for consideration by the MultiChoice team.

For *Sanyu*, Matthew Nabwiso was called upon to adopt the Indian Story of Sanyu. He adopted and they started working on the script development and pre-production process. When all was done, he says he moved through almost all the houses in Kampala and Entebbe but could not find the perfect location and since time to begin the work was running out, they had to start by filming scenes that did not require a house. "By the time we got this location, we had to start filming immediately even before it was renovated, because MultiChoice was expecting us to start delivering some episodes: so, we started filming from the garage," Nabwiso says (Jjingo,2021).

Sanyu started off as a licensed project but when the call for commissioning was let out by MultiChoice Uganda, Nabwiso handed in his project and according to Joan Semanda, the communications manager of MultiChoice Uganda, they commissioned the production of Sanyu because of its script which tells the story of families and what happens in our day-to-day homes.

Richard Mulindwa narrated that he was among the first producers that started off Pearl Magic with the show *Mistakes Girls Do* that ran for one year on Pearl Magic. And when a call for licensing shows at Pearl Magic Prime came in a year later, it looked at producers with ready content. "That was me, *Mizigo express* and Mariam Ndagire's *Sisters*, who had ready content. Because I gave them a show that pulled people's interest, I was asked by the management that if I had another project that I was working on, that is how I got airtime for *What If*," he added.

*What If* was later cancelled after airing for one year and two months. Mulindwa said that the cancellation of *What If* was a deliberate action he took as a Producer.

*"I cancelled it because I got a challenge with the actors. The actors maybe felt that they had become stars and they asked for more money. According to the money that Pearl Magic Prime was giving me, I wasn't able to pay them as they desired. And there were other shows that were being commissioned, more money was being given to the commissioned shows than ours that are licensed by the channel. I got a lot of challenges with the actors," he added.*

Even though he canceled his show, the management did not ban him. He actually said that he creating another show for the channel titled Choices. That therefore shows that the management of PMP is understanding and considerate as stated above.

### **3.3 Influence of Pearl Magic Prime.**

Pearl Magic Prime channel with its aim of providing viewers with thought provoking as well as entertaining content which capture cultural nuances of the Ugandan audience, living up to its tagline of delivering more value to the customer like never before has impacted various filmmakers differently. MultiChoice Uganda, through the MultiChoice Talent Factory gave Ugandan Filmmakers another opportunity to develop future local producers, cast, crew and individuals who are in turn filtering into the local community. PMP stands to give artists room to create content never seen before, local content on another level with premium Ugandan entertainment. “The coming of pearl magic was a turning point,” says Mulindwa. But Nabwiso preferred to call it “a blessing” as explained below:

#### **3.3.1 On the Producers**

“It has also come with a lot of growth for producers. It has been an eye opener in very many ways, in terms of filmmaking. We have to do a lot of work under a lot of pressure and yet being able to deliver quality work in a very short span of time, “says Nabwiso. Before the coming of Pearl Magic Prime, we barely knew who Nathan Magoola and many other filmmakers. But yet now, their projects have won multiple awards, gotten recognition outside Uganda and so on, PMP has exposed such Ugandans Filmmakers to vast knowledge and Magoola says that every single day, he learns a new filmmaking technique.

With the commissioning and licensing of content, producers have been able to get funds and airtime for their television dramas. Filmmaking is such an expensive business that requires a lot of funds that are going to see you right from conceptual development to final delivery. For a producer, that has nowhere to broadcast. “In 2016, no fewer than 50 productions – films, series and soaps – were produced for Maisha Magic East in Uganda. These productions commissioned by M-Net were worth US\$536 000 to Ugawood’s booming production companies, to directors, writers, editors, actors, lighting and sound and support personnel” (MultiChoice, 2021).

Before PMP, many filmmakers were jumping off the boat. People were seeing no future. People were making films and had nowhere to sell them, even the existing broadcasting companies wanted producers to pay them for airtime which was very expensive. If you are looking at airtime at a local

broadcaster, half an hour of broadcast is very expensive. “For a producer who has hustled from scripting to pre-production to production then to post production, again going to buy airtime would be ridiculous and overwhelming,” says Nabwiso. The channel came in handy not only to support the pre-production, production and post-production stages of filmmaking but also to provide airtime to the produced content.

When a producer's work is awarded a commission or license at Pearl Magic Prime, that project is offered free publicity. And publicity helps to legitimize his or her work. Publicity is key to the creative artist's relevance as a filmmaker, as well as the relevance of his or her project. It's what will create a buzz for the person and their film, which means that audiences will be looking for ways to experience what the artist has created. As Nabwiso narrated, “Sanyu series is one of the biggest shows that I have done. I had very many other feature films, produced and directed hashtag family. Many but they were mini-series of about 7 to 30 minutes. Sanyu is the biggest because of the length of the season, Season 1 had 100 episodes, season 2 had 260 episodes and we are doing another 260 episodes for season 3.”

Thus the doors PMP has opened for producers and their series have allowed them to grow their film and television industry network. Every film festival director, judge panel member, and festival sponsor is now a festival circuit connection they can utilize for the current and future projects. And a lot of young and amateur filmmakers want to start working under these producers.

### **3.3.2 On the Actors**

Actors and actresses have gained great recognition for their great talents they exhibit while acting. The actors have earned endorsement to great opportunities such as advertisements, marketing, amongst others. The latest endorsement is that of the Kirunda Family of *Sanyu* and the Prestige family from *Prestige* where they acted in the advert for GOTV as in ventured into showing the world cup. Mulindwa also told I that filmmakers and other people in Kenya and other countries have now seen good work Ugandan filmmakers have been able to come up with. They call for collaborations and actors are being called to act in projects in other countries.

The actors are now well off. If someone asks where they work, they can now gladly tell you the project or the production house they are affiliated to. They used to work on passion and faith. “We



even never used to pay actors”, says Mulindwa. During an informal conversation with one of cast member of *Prestige*, he highlighted the fact of how shocked they would get when they heard that Abbey Mukiibi had been paid 300,000 Ug Shs. That is because they were usually not paid. So being given that sum of money was by luck. But as per now, actors got to know their worth and branded themselves to a given amount per episode. Once requested to take up a particular role and they are not paid as agreed they terminate their contracts. This would in return affect the producer and the story.

The long running projects have taught Ugandan Actors patience and consistency. It is a challenge doing series like this where we have to shoot more than 100 episodes unlike when you do a feature film where you can even shoot for two or three months and you are done, but here we can even shoot for four years which is quite a long time. But what matters is commitment. Personally, I never have time, I just create time. I already have a busy schedule but I plan out my days well because this is a post I have committed myself to and willing to give it my all,” Mukiibi said. Now that acting is looked at as a profession, they have learnt to be professional actors and balance their lifestyles to best fit their professions.

Actors and actresses have learnt to brand themselves. “It is with regret to announce that they were unable to reach an arrangement that deemed favorable for both parties. PMP remains committed to bringing the best in local programming to viewers and maintaining a great content offering,” MultiChoice Uganda wrote in a statement on 21st June 2021 when Tracy Kababiito who was starring as Sanyu in *Sanyu* and Nana Kagga for *Prestige* left the projects because of unfavorable terms.

But that came as an advantage to other people to take up the roles. “The Channel is also excited to give more actors and young talent an opportunity through the appointment of Catherine Namugenyi who will take on the leading role of Sanyu,” the statement added.

### **3.3.3 On the Writers**

The compulsive storytellers have gotten a chance to showcase more of their writing talents. The chances offered by MultiChoice Uganda to create dramatic content have offered many people who appreciate the habit of writing a place to offer some of the best storytelling there is to build the

dramas. The TV shows have numerous episodes that are developed and written by different writers borrowing an idea from *Prestige* that have over 10 writers. These writers gather on specific days to brainstorm on how to build the story, divide the episodes amongst themselves and start writing and editing their given episodes. For the fact that two brains or more are better than one brain, this has helped story development because the writing is not suppressed to the ideas of one or two persons.

"In the past, a person used to wake up, write something up unprofessionally and goes ahead to direct and produce it. But that is not the case anymore. producers are now looking for professional writers because they are now knowing that a compelling story is your foundation to greater opportunities," says Mulindwa. I also came to a conclusion that storytellers can also easily bring their ideas to life. That conclusion is built from Magoola's experience: as a writer, he pitched a compelling story to MultiChoice Uganda and he was tasked to shoot a pilot that would visualize his story. He managed and he is now into the third season of the idea that he just had on paper.

The concepts are now progressive in nature and the producers are constantly displaying their power to influence their viewers, either consciously through portraying controversial social topics like women headed companies as portrayed in *Prestige* series where a family business is actively being controlled by the mother with her elder daughter vying for the same position no matter what it takes. We have also seen the evolution of a maid to a fashion company owner as portrayed in *Sanyu*.

### **3.3.4 On the Cinematography**

There has been a massive growth in terms of visualization and sound quality for television shows. Shorter shots such as editing, frame rates, projection, and scene and narrative structure have been employed to replace the long scenes and stereotypical frames that were being used in the past. All this is being done to meet the quality of the visuals and sound as required by MultiChoice Uganda. The short shot duration that is being employed right now enhances the pace of storytelling because long shot durations make the series boring to keep up with.

Filmmakers have gone ahead to purchase their own quality production equipment. Partly, this is because MultiChoice does not provide the equipment but rather provide funds to the producers

with commissioned projects so that they can be able to purchase the equipment that will bring out the desired effect. Another reason as to why the producers are purchasing their own equipment is because it allows them flexibility and they can use the equipment whenever, however and wherever. And also, different projects require different equipment. This can better be explained in a scenario where the renter may not have the equipment a producer desires to use and in the end the latter would need to settle for less and also then, when a producer is renting equipment, they are subjected to move per the renter's availability.

Most of the producers own Film production companies. They can buy the equipment and it is used for other projects instead of relying on rented equipment. Technology and the movie industry has always been working hand in hand in many different aspects of film production and postproduction. New cameras, filming techniques, visual effects are being employed. This was witnessed when I went to have a conversation with Nathan Magoola. It was fascinating to find his office full of new cameras that were being arranged for use. He said that he prefers to buy the equipment because he will then know that he is at self-will to use them as pleasure sees fit.

During an informal conversation with Mr. Adnan Ssenkumba, the Head of the Sound Department at *Sanyu*, he told I that as sound recordists and sound designers, they have gone ahead to explore and employed other editing software such as Dolby Atmos, ProTools, Nuendo which they are using specifically used to edit sound so that the viewer listens to clean and clear sound. The sound Department at *Sanyu* consists of six people. Amongst these there are sound recordists, sound editors and designers who work closely with each other to bring out quality sound that will eventually meet the standards of Hollywood.

“In two years, people are going to be professional filmmakers. People have seen light. They are studying about other departments of filmmaking. In two years, we will be having professional sound engineers, makeup artists among very many others,” says Mulindwa. To supplement on this fact, that has been done through the training that was done through their academy and masterclasses which gave Ugandans the opportunity to enrich lives in their country. This Masterclass opportunity produced different personnels. Some alumni of the academy like Ugandans Daisy Masembe and Isiko Abubaker. The latter is a Ugandan Filmmaker specializing in Sound recording and boom operation who started his journey into Filmmaking while at PAF.

The alumni have gone on to win impressive deals with the New York Film Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (NYFA), and Jasco Broadcast Solutions respectively.

Producers have gotten permanent places where most of the shooting happens from. *Sanyu* is known for its mansion that is located in Mutungo. The management of *Sanyu* rented it for as long as they can be able to finish up the project. This does not only minimize expenditures on locations but also enables the filmmakers to establish themselves in one place without the continuous movement of equipment, *Prestige* has its base in Kansanga where most of the production and post production happens. The producers get other locations once in a while to establish the different sets for the series. That also provides income to the owners of the houses that are being used.

Besides the story, producers and directors have put emphasis on motion and action in the television series which help keep the audience's attention. Unlike the past television series where emphasis was put on dialogue, the evolution that is greatly influenced by the content desired by Pearl Magic Prime has attributed the use of action and motion which affect the viewers' physiological response to motion within a shot.

### **3.3.5 On Other Filmmakers and Uganda's Film Industry**

The coming of Pearl Magic Prime has encouraged many filmmakers to get back into production because they have seen returns on investment. For the licensed Projects, Pearl Magic Prime does not only give producers airtime but also pays them for having their content aired on their channel. For the commissioned projects, the channel covers the budget for all the stages and therein lies the salaries for all the people that are employed in the projects. "Film is a business. We might say filmmaking is about passion. Yes, passion comes first but again it is a business. Passion without business is dead and vice versa." says Nabwiso.

With the coming of PMP that is helping Ugandan Filmmakers, many people have gotten employment in the fully funded projects. These people fall under different department of filmmaking. These include: Directors, Actors, Sound Department, lighting department, unlike in the past where one person had to act as the director, producer and editor because they felt like they had the power (not the ability) to do so, matters have evolved drastically. For the fact that the producers have to produce a lot of good work in a short span of time, there was need for producers

to step out of their comfortable zones and bring in professional people to best fit the department positions so that there is no one getting overwhelmed. *Sanyu* employs 85 permanent filmmakers and 200 extras according to Matthew Nabwiso. The party is just getting started.

### **3.3.6 On the Audience**

The TV shows on Pearl Magic Prime have better content that is unmatched to what has been shown on other televisions channels. This is due to the high quality productions, unexpected twists and unique characters exhibited by the shows. Even though Pearl Magic Prime is on a DSTV package that is quite unaffordable by everyone, people are working hard to make sure that they stay connected do that they do not lose track of the content being shown on PMP.

There is an increased convenience whereby the viewers can now choose to binge watch the TV shows on showmax without necessarily paying for the packages on DSTV. A viewer is able to watch their favorite show on their smartphone as well almost everywhere. And they also get to be notified about the premiere of new episodes and then schedule the watching according to their desired time. Since the viewers of today's time have choices and with the growing technology, MultiChoice has provided the viewer with multiple options.

The TV shows have a long time run which helped build the story in a timely and relatable manner that enables the viewers to keep track and follow the story as it builds up. *Sanyu* is not into its third season with the first season having 100 episodes, the second season 260 episodes and they are hoping to produce other 260 for the current season as well as *Prestige. What if* aired for one year and two months until its producer cancelled it as noted earlier.

The TV series at PMP are great at challenging the viewers by exposing them to new ideas and exposing them to unpopular perspectives. The viewers during the series of the 30 minutes or after watching the episodes they start discussing on what they would have done if it were them in the actor's shoes. That therefore sees the viewers connecting with the characters. Noteworthy is the fact that the series is still aimed at relaxing our psyche in order to distract us from work and the viewers are given something new to talk about after every episode.

Although the Downtown and Uptown feud was already in existence, PMP distinctively separated our industry in the same manner. This is seen through the difference in content on Pearl Magic and Pearl Magic Prime.

### **3.3.7 Difference in Content between PMP and Pearl Magic.**

Pearl Magic Prime is exclusive to DSTV Compact, DSTV Compact Plus and DSTV Premium customers. However, DSTV Access and DSTV Family active subscribers were able to view Pearl Magic Prime for a limited time only during the Step-Up campaign in February till 31st March 2021, whereby subscribers got upgraded to a second higher package when paying for a package higher than their last active subscription. i.e. If a DSTV Access subscriber upgraded to DSTV Family, they were boosted to DSTV Compact between February end of March 2021, where they enjoyed all the excitement that the new channel has to offer. The Step-Up offer was their way of thanking their valued DSTV customers for their continuous support, and reassured them of our commitment to deliver the best video entertainment experience.

The cheapest package of DSTV that consists of Pearl Magic Prime goes for 89,000 Ug Shs per month. That is not affordable by every Ugandan maybe for the middle class and upper-class families.

The population that could not afford paying the money also has a chance to catchup with other Ugandan shows made by Ugandan filmmakers at Pearl Magic.

The high budget TV shows are aired on Pearl Magic Prime which therefore makes it the uptown class because everything there is about quality. Ranging from the story, to the cinematography, to the sound and so on. Whereas the content on Pearl Magic Prime is not catchy or even of good quality which therefore makes it the down town class.

Content on PMP is relatable to the middle and upper class families. A charcoal seller cannot relate to it but can actually relate with the content on Pearl Magic. These contents are a joke and more of comedy than storytelling. Content of Pearl Magic is more about the story and not the quality of the cinematography. Before PMP came in, Pearl Magic Prime was already in existence and the stereotype around Ugandan films in that if someone says they're watching a Ugandan film, they're not taken very seriously was still on. This is the area of the industry whose productions should set

the standards that upcoming Ugandan filmmakers can follow to paint a better picture for the industry.

For a period of time, Uganda has had good productions that broke through to massive audiences such as *The Hostel* drama series but these over the years have faded and the Downtown productions with local language films have taken the scene. The difference with Uptown films is in the way they are made. They handled very professionally with a mix of English and the local language for most of them. They always get to have standardized premieres organized and these are attended by very few people who are mostly filmmakers supporting one another, a few friends and family. The raise of shows such as *Sanyu* (Nabwiso Films and MultiChoice, 2021) has set the bar for a standard Ugandan television series from the story line to its production elements.

### **3.3.8 Challenges Faced in the Relationship of Filmmakers and Pearl Magic Prime.**

The lockdown, which was as a result of Coronavirus Pandemic that had hit the whole world was a great challenge unto the producers. As Nabwiso narrated, "someone tipped the police off that there was a bar operating illegally: so, they showed up, grabbed me and our cameras and threw me on a pick-up truck and took me away. Even though I had a police letter from the IGP allowing me to film from the place, they did not want to look at it: so, I ended up at a police post in Naalya, but I explained to them and they released us," he said.

Nabwiso also adds that curfew time has also been a big challenge to their filming since there are some scenes which need to be shot during the night and many times this might go on into the wee hours of the morning, which means that most crew members had to reside at location.

Magoola added that during the lockdown, that is when he was subjected to do a pilot. He had nowhere to buy the equipment or hire as most of the places had been closed down. Hadn't it been for Matthew Nabwiso who came to his help through the great counsel and the equipment he offered, it would have been very hard for him.

Another challenge, as highlighted by Mulindwa that Pearl Magic Prime managers think for Ugandan Filmmakers. "They think that we are not worth the money. They can buy an episode at 500 dollars yet you used 800 dollars for its production." The support difference is way too big. Yet

we use the same actors, locations etc. A commissioned project gets about \$5000 whereas a licensed project gets about \$500. Even a layman can tell that one is commissioned and the other licensed depending on the quality." For the difference in the support system of the licensed and commissioned shows, licensed shows then try as hard as they can do to make sure that they create quality work with their tight budgets which gets complicated sometimes. That is why Mulindwa had to cancel *What If* series because the actors wanted more money than he could afford. There were less or no returns for him as a producer.

The paperwork is another challenge faced by many Ugandan Filmmakers. Many filmmakers do not know to pitch or even how to present a proposal. And in the criteria as highlighted above consists of major paperwork that works as pieces that are dressed to impress a potential funder. Producers with credible concepts and stories have missed out chances of having their content licensed or commissioned on PMP due to unclear paperwork. MultiChoice is a professional space that takes no respects of person until you prove your worth.

The Film industry has a big challenge of distribution and exhibition. All the producers are looking at PMP and Pearl Magic. We are thousands of producers but the channels need at least four producers every year. All filmmakers are knowing working to get an airtime chance at PMP yet Pearl Magic Prime looks at choosing at least four projects every year. But looking at the content that has been airing since it was launched, *Sanyu* has been renewed for the third season, *Prestige* for its second season. And the others show is just in their first seasons. This creates less hope and redundancy amongst all the filmmakers who are shooting pilots with hopes of getting airtime at PMP.

And noteworthy is the fact that TV shows, even though they are beneficial and have much returns at the moment in Uganda, they limit the filmmaker's creativity due to the terms and conditions that have been laid out on how a good TV shows ought to look like due to the vast audience and viewership that contains of children, young adults and the elderly. The vast audience limits on certain shots like fights, bloodsheds, erotica amongst others. And the producers are venturing away from feature films because there are no returns.



During an informal conversation with Drama and film students at Makerere University, there came a complaint that producers call for auditions and yet they go ahead to cast established actors so that it is easy for them to boost their sales, which makes everything monotonous. The students gave an example of Kyomugisha Harmony who acts as Shamim in *Kyaddala*, as in *Sanyu* series.

Producers also complain of locations. It is very hard to secure a location in Uganda.

After collecting all my data, I've realized that actually Ugandans in particular are very aware of all the three existent industries although they get to make a choice of what they can afford. They say that Downtown films are easy for them to get to since they are sold in libraries, same as local language films which they watch on YouTube and on Television. For uptown films, they can only be watched on PMP which is on a package that is not affordable.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The objectives of the study were to find out the influence of Pearl Magic Prime on Uganda's Film Industry. It is imperative to note that in the previous chapter, I presented the findings about the topic and in this chapter the summary, conclusion and recommendations are to be drawn.

### 4.2 Summary of the Findings.

Pearl Magic Prime channel with its aim of providing viewers with thought provoking as well as entertaining content which capture cultural nuances of the Ugandan audience, living up to its tagline of "delivering more value to the customer like never before" has impacted various filmmakers differently as stated above. It has given airtime for over 10 productions from the time it was launched. This does not now only benefit Ugandan Filmmakers but the country as well. This is because the content is made by Ugandans, with Ugandans and for Ugandans. It is pertinent to this cause to note that MultiChoice gains from the monthly subscriptions that are done by the thousands of viewers every month.

Ugandans are too biased about Ugandan Film Content. From my observation and informal conversations, many people do not know that a channel, Pearl Magic Prime exists. It is hard to find a Ugandan who believes in a Ugandan as Mulindwa stated. Besides *Sanyu* that is an adopted story, all the others are original stories. Ugandans want producers to make films that look like those of Hollywood yet the industry is starting to grow. Eventually Uganda's filmmaking will be top notch.

PMP follows a distinct criterion for filmmakers to be able to get airtime. This therefore strengthens the fact that MultiChoice does not accept mediocre work. A panel of experienced filmmakers vet for the right content to be aired on the channel. And I came to a conclusion that what is being aired on PMP at the moment is better than all the projects that had been sent in as applications. That therefore tells us that we need to cultivate our indigenous stories. They have fertile stories that have not been tested rather than maintain the monotonous forms of storytelling that are being used in Ugandan Film Industry. Producers need to invest into story telling as it is the core of any project.

The impact has spread vast beyond Uganda. This is due to the technological standards whereby Pearl Magic Prime can be found on Showmax if it is affordable to the person and it is at the tip of a person's fingers through the mobile phones.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

To summarize, I have tried to gather the information about the Uganda Film Industry in various places to see what good PMP has added onto our industry, what should be corrected, what is missing and what is really inspiring. I have talked to producers, filmmakers and media personalities about Ugandan films and also found a few sources on the Internet. People interested in the subject can find enough information to get a picture of the Uganda film industry over the years.

Generally, the image of Ugandan films is being well represented more through PMP, but it could still be improved. There are many Ugandan series that the audiences could be interested in but it is not possible to see them because all Filmmakers are targeting to have their content on PMP yet it only takes up at least four projects annually. Therefore, there is a need to create more distribution links like PMP where Filmmakers can show their content. This way, scholars writing about the industry could see the classics that should give them direction.

The study supplements that fact that the Uganda film industry exists under two divisions which are representatives of what our industry is and what the ideal industry should be like as portrayed. That is showed in the two sectors which are termed as Downtown Films as portrayed on Pearl Magic and Uptown Films as portrayed on Pearl Magic Prime. There have been several errors and stereotypes around what the industry has to offer to the viewers. In short, the industry is unpopular. The following are my recommendations for a better Ugandan film industry:

- i. There is an existent stereotype about how Ugandan films are to most of the masses that have been blind to the uptown industry. For example, some good actors might fear to say “nzanya bina Uganda” in the local language because there is that perception they want to escape. My recommendation on this would be sensitizing people about the better film industry in various ways that I discuss in my next recommendations.

ii. Filmmakers need to learn how to brand themselves by creating compelling demos that are dressed to impress a funder. They need to learn how to write and present paperwork because that is where the potential funder gets the first impression.

iii. Also, my recommendation to media houses would be for them to recognize and include good films, actors and filmmakers in their programming and entertainment shows. There are TV stations that broadcast films that continue to misrepresent the image of the true Ugandan film industry. Only the media can make or break brands and what they sell out to people sometimes is what people take, their influence would easily help transform the Uganda film industry to better perception and thus influence the perception and audience reach. iv. An existent and operative Uganda film policy would help the industry maneuver the unprofessionalism into which the industry is subdued. It's only in Uganda where one can wake up and become a filmmaker and do everything wrongly and no one can hold them in wrong. Only the government can professionalize the industry by recognizing them with a film council that can license qualified filmmakers.

v. Filmmakers should also take it upon themselves to improve on several of the mistakes and errors they are making. They should train themselves through film schools, workshops and recognize their mistakes and try to be better.

vi. The UCC (Uganda Communications Commission) should as well urge filmmakers to create content that honors the cultures of Uganda instead of leaving children to grow up watching the cultures of other countries and think that African cultures are eradicated. That's why most people end up appreciating Western films instead of their very own. With UCC being a stakeholder in the film industry through the Uganda Film Festival (which actually recognizes the types of TV series and films that the masses should see to appreciate the Uganda film industry better), they can set an agenda for all media houses to include the unbalanced or equally non-existent film coverage in their entertainment news and shows. This would expose people to a breed of Ugandan film content that they would eventually appreciate.

#### **4.4 Suggestions for Further Study**

Through the findings of the study, I suggest that the following research areas should also be further studied.

1. The role of the Ugandan government in development the Ugandan film industry.
2. The relevance of culture and heritage in Entertainment.
3. Marketing and distribution of Ugandan films. A case study of the local buyer.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1:**

#### **TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS**

DATE: 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2022.

NAME: RICHARD MULINDWA - RM



POSITION: CEO LIMIT PRODUCTION COMPANY

FORMAT: PHONE RECORDING

<b>TRANSCRIPTION</b>	<b>THEME</b>
<p>LD: Can I get to know more about Richard Mulindwa?</p> <p>RM: My name is Richard Mulindwa, a multi award winning Producer and Director. I am as well a CEO of Limit Production Company, a film production company that is located in Lungujja. I have produced and directed a lot of film projects including; Mistakes Girls Do that was broadcast on Pearl Magic, 94 Terror that was about the 1994 Rwanda Genocide and the latest What If Series that was aired on Pearl Magic Prime.</p>	Career Biography
<p>LD: Enlighten me on your journey of getting to work with Pearl Magic Prime.</p> <p>RM: To start with, local producers reached a moment whereby we were suffering. We made our complaints to Uganda Communication Commission because we had nowhere to broadcast our content. All TV channels were</p>	Background in relation to Pearl Magic Prime

<p>showing foreign movies that didn't have copyrights.</p> <p>As producers, we put pressure on UCC to get an affordable way on how we could showcase our content. UCC tried its best that after 10 years we saw Pearl Magic Prime coming up.</p> <p>They called the notable content producers and announced the coming up of a channel dedicated to showcasing Ugandan content. We gathered at Serena Hotels and came up with the name Pearl Magic.</p> <p>I am among the first producers that started off Pearl Magic with the show Mistakes Girls Do that ran for one year on Pearl Magic. A year later Pearl Magic Prime started and I got airtime for What If Series too.</p>	
<p>LD: Could you explain to me the criteria that you followed for your series, What If to get airtime on Pearl Magic Prime.</p> <p>RM: Pearl magic looked at producers with ready content. That was me, Mizigo express and Mariam Ndagire's sisters who had ready content. Because I gave them a show that pulled people's interest, when Pearl Magic Prime started, I was asked if I had another show and I gave in What if series that ran for one year and 2 months.</p>	<p>Standards for selection.</p>

<p>LD: What if Series was cancelled from pearl magic prime. Was that a move by the management of pearl magic prime or yours?</p> <p>RM: I cancelled What If series as its Producer because I got a challenge with the actors. The actors maybe felt that they had become stars and they asked for more money. According to the money that Pearl Magic Prime was giving me, I wasn't able to pay them as they desired. And there were other shows that were being commissioned, more money was being given to the commissioned shows than ours that are licensed by the channel. I got a lot of challenges with the actors. And they were many actors.</p>	<p>Cancellation of What If Series</p>
<p>LD: When you cancelled What If Series, didn't that create commotion between you and the managers of PMP?</p> <p>RM:I am creating another show called Choices that is going to replace What If Series.</p>	
<p>LD: Let us talk about the influence of pearl magic prime. How has it affected our film industry?</p> <p>RM: The coming of pearl magic was a turning point. The producers and actors are now well off. If someone asks where you work, you'd gladly tell them the production house. We used to work on passion. We never used to pay</p>	<p>Influence of Pearl Magic Prime</p>

<p>actors. As producers we used to suffer. You get money and create content but you have nowhere to show them. Many producers never won any awards that would sustain the, they barely maintained their production houses.</p> <p>In two years, people are going to be professional filmmakers. People have seen light. They are studying about other departments of filmmaking. In two years, we will be having professional sound engineers, makeup artists among very many others.</p> <p>Producers now know that they have to invest in other departments of film too.</p>	
<p>LD: What is the difference between the content being aired on Pearl Magic prime and Pearl magic?</p> <p>RM: We have middle, upper and lower classes in Uganda. The management looked at the package of pearl magic prime, many people can barely pay 89,000 Ugandan shillings to keep up with Pearl Magic Prime. Pearl magic being on both Gotv and DStv is much more affordable. The difference in pricings affects the content. Pearl magic looks at content that is local. Pearl magic prime looks at offering content to the middle class and upper class that suits their pay.</p>	<p>Difference in content on Pearl Magic Prime and Pearl Magic channels.</p>

<p>LD: What are the opportunities Pearl Magic Prime has created for our Film Industry?</p> <p>RM: The first opportunity is the exhibition channel which has exposed out producers to greater opportunities.</p> <p>And by the way, most of the opportunities have come out of the positive competition that has been created by PMP. A young filmmaker is now inspired to work as good as the series we have now.</p> <p>People in Kenya and other countries have now seen that we can do good work. They call for collaborations. Actors are being called to act in projects in other countries.</p>	<p>Opportunities created.</p>
<p>LD: What are the terms and conditions s filmmaker has to follow for content to be fit to be aired at PMP?</p> <p>RM: Starting with the technical part of it. Your sound has to be good, your visual picture quality then sometimes they do not mind about the actors. They mind about the storyline. Your content has to be entertaining.</p> <p>You do not have to talk about God, you have to limit on the kissing scenes, blood scenes and other scenes in the same line.</p>	<p>Terms and conditions of Pearl Magic Prime</p>

<p>LD: Have you met any challenges working with PMP?</p> <p>RM: Pearl Magic Prime managers think for us. They think that we are not worth the money. They can buy an episode at 500 dollars yet you used 800 dollars for its production.</p> <p>Even the format of commissioning and licensing is, the support difference is way too big. Yet we use the same actors, locations etc. A commissioned project gets about \$5000 whereas a licensed project gets about \$500. Even a layman can tell that one is commissioned and the other licensed depending on the quality.</p> <p>LD: Besides those challenges, what more have seen as a challenge for a film Industry?</p> <p>RM: The film industry has a big challenge of distribution and exhibition. All the producers are looking at PMP and Pearl Magic. We are thousands of producers but the channels need at least 4 producers every year.</p> <p>And also locations are also very hard to find.</p>	<p>Challenges met working with PMP.</p>

<p>LD: Filmmakers believe that for you take a pilot and you do not know anyone amongst the Directors of PMP, it is hard to get selected. How true is that?</p> <p>MultiChoice management is so professional. They are not corrupt. Your work is your signature.</p> <p>We started pearl magic but I have contacts from the highest person to the last but I do not have content there. It is not about who you know but how good your work is. It good to have a contact but not that the contact is going to get a contract.</p>	<p>Selection Process.</p>
<p>LD: There are various complaints about the monotonous form of storytelling in our Films. What is your say on that?</p> <p>RM: Ugandans are too biased. It is hard to find a Ugandan who believes in a Ugandan. Besides Sanyu that is an adopted story, all the others are original stories. Ugandans want us to make films that look like those of Hollywood. So people have bias and say as they wish. I have not seen a series that is a copy.</p> <p>And to make a story that is retable is hard. In my film 94 Terror, I was talking about the genocide in Rwanda. Talking about the Tutsi where about 2075 of them were killed and thrown in River Katanga. Most Ugandans do</p>	<p>Monotonous Storytelling</p>

<p>not know that. The genocide affected both Uganda and Rwanda. But the criteria you have to follow to do such a tale is harder than life itself. Our government barely knows that film is a tool for communication.</p>	
<p>LD: Do you find Television shows limiting than it would have been for a feature film?</p> <p>RM: Yes, it gets limiting to a filmmaker's creation. Tv limits you a lot. That is because of the diverse audience. But we don't have what to do. Our industry was not streamlined well. A producer leaves home to look for money so they work in line with whatever is going to bring money. We only have Tv channels that buy. Cinemas do not buy films. Pirates show English films.</p> <p>Even feature films are done because of the film festivals that have continued to come up.</p>	<p>Limitation of creativity</p>



<p>LD: What do we need to center on for our film industry to grow faster?</p> <p>RM: We need to work on writers. We have very few professional writers or storytellers. And our biggest challenge is in storytelling. Our industry is man-made. Every person wakes up writes a script, directs it and produces it. People have no experience in writing.</p>	<p>Growth of our Film Industry</p>
<p>If you look at Sanyu series, no Ugandan has written such a story. Indians have maturity to write.</p> <p>We also need to work on directors and writers. Other people that have good stories, they do not have a capacity to produce it.</p> <p>And Ugandans have not gotten time to watch and appreciate our content. Like 94 Terror has only 1million views yet the total population of Uganda is 45 million.</p> <p>Giving an example of What if series. It was a detective film but people didn't like it because it is not a usual family show. We need to see what people want look at what people want and work in that lane.</p>	

<p>LD: Do you have any last words to Filmmakers?</p> <p>RM: Filmmakers have to be patient. They have to learn from mistakes that older producers have done. They need to take care of storytelling. Pearl magic does not want boring content. They cancel your contract there and then.</p>	<p>Conclusion</p>
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DATE:30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2022

NAME: MATTHEW NABWISO-MN

POSITION: CEO NABWISO FILMS

FORMAT: PHONE AUDIO RECORDING

TRANSCRIPTION	THEMES
<p>LD: Who is Mr. Matthew Nabwiso?</p> <p>MN: Matthew Nabwiso is a Ugandan Film Producer, Director and Actor. I am one of the proprietors of Nabwiso Films, a Ugandan Film Production Company that is behind the making of Sanyu Series and many other projects</p>	<p>Introduction</p>

<p>LD: what was considered for Sanyu Series to get airtime at Pearl Magic Prime?</p> <p>NM: Pearl magic prime licensed content at the beginning. Anyone that had content, be it series or film; it had starting good picture, sound, story and good actors. Anyone who had a show like that and pitched it for licensing actually did get on PMP. Those that didn't, failed because of those things. They either had issues with sound or pictures. PMP takes its customers very seriously. Quality of production has to be at a certain level.</p>	<p>Selection process</p>
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<p>LD: How did Sanyu Series get to be commissioned at PMP? And the terms you followed.</p> <p>MN: Time came and a call was made for people to pitch shows for commissioning so I am one of those people that pitched for commissioning and that is how Sanyu came to be on PMP.</p> <p>And the terms! It is all about quality. Quality sound, image and story. It is quality all the way. You do mediocre stuff; it doesn't go there.</p>	<p>Commissioning Process</p>
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<p>LD: How has the commissioning of Sanyu Series on PMP impacted you as a producer and director?</p> <p>MN: It is one of the biggest shows that I have done. I had very many other feature films, produced and directed hashtag family. Many but they were mini-series of about 7 to 30 minutes. Sanyu is the biggest because of the length of the season, Season 1 had 100 episodes, season 2 had 260 episodes and we are doing another 260 episodes for season 3.</p> <p>It has also come with a lot of growth for me. It has been an eye opener in very many ways, in terms of filmmaking. Doing a lot of work under a lot of pressure and yet being able to</p>	<p>Impact to the producer.</p>
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<p>deliver quality work in a very short span of time.</p> <p>As well as managing a big team of people. As per now I have 75 permanent people on the project and maybe another 200 extras.</p> <p>It is a project that I have grown with.</p>	
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<p>LD: And has PMP created additional value to our film industry?</p> <p>MN: PMP has brought a lot of value. Before PMP, many filmmakers were jumping off the boat. People were seeing no future. People were making films and had nowhere to sell them, even the existing broadcasting companies wanted producers to pay them for airtime which was very expensive. If you are looking at airtime at a local broadcaster, half an hour of broadcast is very expensive. For a producer who has hustled from scripting to pre-production to production then to post production, again going to buy airtime would be ridiculous and overwhelming.</p>	<p>Additional Value.</p>
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<p>LD: Talking about the impact of PMP, what is your perspective on that?</p> <p>MN: Thru coming of PMP was a great blessing to the industry. For the first time filmmakers are seeing where they will broadcast their content and not just to broadcast but being paid to broadcast.</p> <p>It has encouraged many filmmakers to get back into production because there is a return on investment. Film is a business. We might say filmmaking is about passion. Yes, passion comes first but again it is a business. Passion without business is dead and vice versa.</p> <p>Film is now a business.</p> <p>PMP holds a number one place in the growth of our film industry. It has provided a platform.</p> <p>It is paying producers. Producers are now able to pay actors</p>	<p>Influence of Pearl Magic Prime</p>
<p>LD: And lastly, have you met any challenges working with PMP?</p> <p>MN: They are particular about quality. and also the kind of content because it is a family channel. You cannot take nudity there. It is an accommodating space. Any show can be watched by a family.</p>	<p>Challenges met.</p>

<p>Maybe technical challenges that we have managed to overcome.</p> <p>And the yes, the paperwork. Many filmmakers do not know to pitch or even how to present a proposal. That is crucial at PMP.</p>	
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DATE: 22 NOVEMBER, 2022

NAME: NATHAN MAGOOLA- NM

POSITION: CEO – AVA JULIET PRODUCTIONS

FORMAT: PHONE RECORDING

<b>TRANSCRIPTION</b>	<b>THEME</b>
<p>LD: I am pleased to meet you Mr. Magoola. Can I know more about you?</p> <p>NM: My name is Nathan Magoola, a Ugandan Filmmaker. I am glad to have you here.</p>	Introduction
<p>LD: How did Prestige get airtime on PMP?</p> <p>NM: Sometime in 2020, that's when we were under lockdown. PMP put out a call for submissions for ideas of Tv series. They were asking for proposals but also links to previous work. And yet I was venturing into advertisement by then. I had done lots of commercials, a feature film and some shorts. When I submitted they were like, we liked your proposal but in your links there were no TV dramas. I was like I can do it. They asked me to do a pilot. And we were under lockdown, and they needed the pilot in two weeks. I hadn't cast, I had no locations. They gave me some more time. I produced the</p>	Prestige on PMP



<p>pilot, sent it in and they liked it. They commissioned the show.</p>	
<p>LD: Was it made for PMP or Pearl Magic initially?</p> <p>NM: They made it for Pearl Magic but before they put it on air, they opened Pearl Magic Prime and rather chose to broadcast it there. But in December, it will be on Pearl Magic too.</p>	
<p><b>LD:</b> What causes the difference in quality content between PMP and Pearl Magic?</p> <p>NM: The thing is that Pearl Magic is mass market channel but PMP is premium. That is the distinction.</p>	
<p>LD: please take me through the Impact of PMP on you as a producer.</p> <p>NM: I have always wanted to make a living in filmmaking, I used to work in commercials and TV on the side. Btu now I am in the position to sustain myself just doing this.</p>	
<p>LD: what kind of content is fit to be aired on PMP?</p> <p>NM: It doesn't have to be content that makes people angry or portraying issues in a bad way. They need content that is clean for the family to watch.</p>	<p>Type of content</p>

<p>LD: Does that makes TV series limiting?</p> <p>NM: It doesn't get limiting. When I am home and I have an eight-year-old daughter. So I need to be in a position whereby all that we are watching and the content is not bad for her.</p> <p>Even feature films need classification, so we go through the same processes.</p>	<p>Limitation of TV Series</p>
<p>LD: Many Filmmakers are now working hard to get airtime on PMP. Is that a negative move?</p> <p>NM: You could be wanting to sell bread but people are buying pancakes. You do not have to keep making bread. You have to do what the people want.</p>	<p>Market Status Quo</p>
<p>LD: What would you determine as the major Impact of PMP on our Film Industry?</p> <p>NM: There were a bunch of people who were jobless but they are now employed in the film industry.</p> <p>It has created jobs at a time when people were jobless and industry can't survive when there are no people working in it.</p> <p>And there is diversification on the actors.</p> <p>There was need for new talent. We got people</p>	<p>Impact of PMP on our Film Industry</p>

<p>who have never been actors before, never been on the crew. They are now big stars</p> <p>It has helped in the increase of production quality and levels. People have raised their production values</p>	
<p>LD: Have you met any challenges working with PMP?</p> <p>NM: The challenges are usually from my end. There is not a lot of equipment to rent so I end up buying equipment. And the actors and crew people are few.</p> <p>And it hard work. You have to do whatever it takes to create the TV show. We only have on resting day. And we have to work to tight schedules</p>	<p>Challenges met</p>
<p>LD: Thank you for this opportunity. Do you have any last words to upcoming filmmakers?</p> <p>NM: They should just create good work. They should come up with very good stories and hope for the best.</p>	<p>Last Remarks</p>

## OBSERVATION METHOD

### Key Findings

- Most viewers tune in to Pearl Magic Prime at Prime in the evening. This is because episodes of Sanyu and Prestige series air from 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM respectively.

- Most viewers of Pearl Magic Prime do not know any other programs that run on the channel besides the film content.
- Viewers with explore decoders prefer recording episodes of Sanyu and Prestige series and binge watch them over the weekend.

## **OTHER INTERVIEWS**

Name: Mark Bitingarisa

Position: Practicing Sound Recordist

Format: Text messaging

LD: As a passionate filmmaker, what is your perspective on the influence of Pearl Magic Prime on Our Film Industry?

MB: Before the coming of Pearl Magic prime, it was so hard to sale our good content anywhere, the only people that were buying the content, were these local channels i.e. Bukedde, NTV and NBS. They could give less money and they could not buy all the time.

Now here comes Pearl Magic, that changed the entire game. It buys content at a relatively good money since it shows only Ugandan content, the demand is so high hence making 50% of the Ugandan film makers busy from January to December.

It also comes up with commissions which has helped the film makers that have no capital to shoot a film but are passionate and knowledge about film.

The film industry separated between downtown and uptown, where the filmmakers that are giving their films to Pearl Magic, are the up Town, since Pearl Magic has standards it follows before it airs any content. Those that kept giving the local renown Luganda based channel, and rely on compact disks are the down town since they have no quality control.

NAME: JOHN O.

POSITION: DRAMA AND FILM GRADUATE

FORMAT: TEXT MESSAGING

LD: As a Filmmaker who wants to specialize in Directing, how does the concept of Pearl Magic Prime affect our film Industry?

JO: This topic is too wide but let me break it shot according to what I think. first and foremost, the influence of pearl magic prime on the Ugandan film industry is evidenced on how most of the Ugandan local film producers have got finances from MultiChoice in order to produce content for their television and this has boosted on the energy levels on how Ugandan films are being broadcasted. In other words, in has created employment opportunities to film producers where good and bad quality films are being bought and aired to their subscribers on different packages in return of their money they invest, this gives me a feeling that maybe it's even the reason as to why they introduced another channel from pearl magic to pearl magic prime, of course if you to watch you clearly identify the difference on the content they broadcast on either sides.

However, all had been done but still the unestablished film producers complain on why pearls magic always tend to use the same content created over years and not giving them a chance to at least create a new feel in the films that are being broadcasted. They also tend to tell these un established producers to cast established actors in order to buy their films so as for them boost their sales, which makes everything monotonous and vice versa.... it's a big debate but for now Thats my point of view.