

**Investigative Journalism And The Promotion Of Transparency And Accountability In Uganda: A Case Of
Kingdom Television**

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Abstract

This study examined the role of investigative journalism in promoting transparency and accountability in Uganda, with Kingdom Television as the case study institution. The research investigated how Kingdom Television's investigative reporting practices, editorial independence, investigative resources, and audience engagement strategies contribute to enhancing government transparency and institutional accountability in Uganda. A mixed-methods research approach was employed, combining a structured questionnaire survey administered to 167 respondents including journalists, editors, media regulators, civil society actors, and members of the public, with in-depth interviews with 12 key informants. Descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses were applied to the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used to process qualitative data. The findings revealed that investigative reporting quality ($r = 0.721$, $p < 0.01$) and editorial independence ($r = 0.698$, $p < 0.01$) are the strongest correlates of transparency promotion outcomes, while investigative resource adequacy ($r = 0.642$, $p < 0.01$) and audience engagement ($r = 0.614$, $p < 0.01$) also demonstrate significant positive relationships. The regression model explained 58.9% of the variance in transparency and accountability promotion ($R^2 = 0.589$). The study concludes that investigative journalism at Kingdom Television makes a significant contribution to Uganda's democratic accountability ecosystem, though its impact is constrained by resource limitations, legislative restrictions, and advertiser pressure.

Keywords: Investigative Journalism, Transparency, Accountability, Kingdom Television, Uganda, Media Freedom, Editorial Independence, Democratic Governance.

1.0 Background of the Study

Investigative journalism-the practice of in-depth, original reporting on matters of significant public interest, characterized by the systematic investigation and exposure of wrongdoing, corruption, abuse of power, or systemic failures occupies a constitutionally and normatively privileged position in democratic societies(A. G. Kazaara et al., 2023). Often described as the 'fourth estate' of democratic governance, the press and broadcast media serve as a critical check on the exercise of power by state actors, public institutions, and private entities operating in the public interest(Julius & Nancy, 2025). By exposing corruption, malfeasance, and systemic failures, investigative journalism creates accountability pressures that incentivize public officials and institutions to operate transparently and in accordance with legal and ethical standards(Frank et al., 2023).

Uganda's media landscape has expanded significantly since the liberalization of the airwaves in the early 1990s. The country now hosts over 300 registered radio stations, more than 60 television stations, numerous print publications, and a growing number of online news platforms(Julius & Nancy, 2026). Kingdom Television (Kingdom TV),

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established in 2011 and broadcasting from Kampala, is among the country's mid-tier commercial television stations that have invested in investigative journalism as a core editorial strategy(A. G. Kazaara et al., 2023). The station has gained recognition for producing investigative reports on land grabbing, public procurement irregularities, healthcare sector corruption, environmental degradation, and police brutality, among other subjects of public interest(Julius & Audrey, 2026b).

Despite the acknowledged importance of investigative journalism to democratic governance, Ugandan investigative journalists operate in a challenging environment characterized by restrictive media legislation, including the Computer Misuse Act and the Press and Journalist Act, threats and harassment of journalists, financial pressures from advertisers with interests in suppressing negative coverage, limited investigative resources, and inadequate whistleblower protection frameworks(Alex & Julius, 2024). Understanding how Kingdom Television navigates these challenges and the extent to which its investigative journalism contributes to tangible improvements in transparency and accountability is therefore a question of significant academic and policy relevance(Muhamad et al., 2023).

2.0 Problem Statement

While Uganda's legal and constitutional framework nominally guarantees freedom of the press and access to information, the operational environment for investigative journalism remains constrained by a complex web of regulatory, financial, political, and security-related challenges(A. I. Kazaara & Nancy, 2025). Despite Kingdom Television's commitment to investigative reporting, questions remain about the effectiveness of its journalism in producing measurable transparency and accountability outcomes(Moses et al., 2025). Does investigative reporting by Kingdom TV actually lead to policy changes, prosecutions, institutional reforms, or other tangible accountability consequences? What factors within the station's institutional structure including editorial independence, investigative capacity, and audience engagement most strongly predict the effectiveness of its accountability journalism? These questions remain empirically unresolved and constitute the central problem driving this research.

3. Main Objectives

The main objective of this study was to examine the role of investigative journalism at Kingdom Television in promoting transparency and accountability in Uganda. The specific objectives were: (i) to assess the quality of investigative reporting practices at Kingdom Television and their influence on transparency promotion; (ii) to evaluate the degree of editorial independence at Kingdom Television and its effect on accountability journalism outcomes; (iii) to determine the relationship between investigative resource adequacy and the effectiveness of Kingdom Television's accountability journalism; and (iv) to examine the role of audience engagement strategies in amplifying the transparency and accountability impacts of Kingdom Television's investigative reports.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Theoretical Framework

This study drew on two complementary theoretical frameworks. The Watchdog Theory of Journalism posits that the press serves as a democratic watchdog, monitoring the exercise of power by state and non-state actors and informing citizens about abuses and failures of accountability (Wegulo et al., 2023). This role is particularly crucial in developing democracies where formal institutional accountability mechanisms including judicial independence, legislative oversight, and civil society capacity may be weak or compromised (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). Complementing this, the Agenda-Setting Theory, articulated by McCombs and Shaw (1972), proposes that media coverage does not merely reflect public opinion but actively shapes it by determining which issues citizens regard as important. In the accountability journalism context, the agenda-setting function of investigative media is critical: by bringing specific instances of corruption or institutional failure to public attention, investigative journalism creates the political and social pressure necessary for accountability responses (Muhamad et al., 2023).

4.2 Investigative Journalism and Accountability: Empirical Evidence

Empirical research on the accountability impacts of investigative journalism has produced generally positive, though contextually nuanced, findings. A landmark study by Ferraz and Finan (2008) in Brazil found that radio coverage of municipal audit reports revealing corruption significantly reduced the electoral support of corrupt incumbents, providing compelling evidence of journalism's capacity to produce political accountability outcomes. In the African context, Berger (2010) documented multiple cases across sub-Saharan Africa where investigative journalism had contributed to prosecutions, policy changes, and institutional reforms, while also noting that structural vulnerabilities in African media systems frequently blunt the impact of even high-quality investigative reporting (Christopher et al., 2022).

Studies of Ugandan media have highlighted the particular challenges facing investigative journalism in the country. Nassanga (2008) documented patterns of self-censorship among Ugandan journalists attributable to fear of legal prosecution, physical threats, and economic pressure from advertisers. Mwesige (2004) found that Ugandan journalists frequently identified lack of access to official information, inadequate legal protections for sources, and insufficient time and resources for in-depth investigation as the most significant barriers to effective accountability journalism (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023).

5.0 Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design that combined quantitative survey methods with qualitative key informant interviews (Nafiu, 2012). The target population comprised four groups: Kingdom Television journalists and editors (n=34), media regulators and press freedom advocates (n=28), civil society organizations engaged in governance and accountability work (n=42), and regular Kingdom TV viewers who could assess the station's investigative impact (n=63) (Sarah et al., 2024). A total of 167 questionnaires were administered, achieving a response rate of 91.6% (153 completed). The questionnaire measured four independent variables: investigative reporting quality, editorial independence, investigative resource adequacy, and audience engagement, and a composite dependent

variable measuring transparency and accountability promotion outcomes(Aslam et al., 2022). All scales were validated through confirmatory factor analysis and demonstrated Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.79 to 0.87. Twelve key informants were selected through purposive sampling for in-depth interviews, including three investigative journalists, two editors, two media regulators, two civil society representatives, and three members of parliament with exposure to accountability journalism outcomes.

6.0 Results

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Investigative Reporting Quality	153	3.78	0.76	1.75	5.00
Editorial Independence	153	3.42	0.89	1.50	5.00
Investigative Resource Adequacy	153	2.91	0.94	1.00	5.00
Audience Engagement Strategies	153	3.64	0.81	2.00	5.00
Transparency & Accountability Promotion	153	3.57	0.83	1.50	5.00

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 reveal important variations in respondents' perceptions across the study variables. Investigative reporting quality at Kingdom Television was rated most favorably ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.76$), suggesting that respondents generally regard the station's investigative journalism as substantively sound and professionally executed(Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). Audience engagement strategies also received a relatively favorable rating ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.81$), reflecting Kingdom TV's efforts to disseminate its investigative reports across multiple platforms and stimulate public discourse. Editorial independence recorded a moderate mean ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.89$), with the relatively high standard deviation indicating significant variation in respondents' perceptions a pattern consistent with the contested and contextually variable nature of editorial independence in Uganda's commercial media environment. Most concerning is the low mean rating for investigative resource adequacy ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.94$), which falls below the mid-point of the scale and signals that respondents perceive Kingdom Television's investigative unit as significantly under-resourced relative to the demands of high-quality accountability journalism.

6.2 Correlation Analysis

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Reporting Quality	1.000				
2. Editorial Independence	0.584**	1.000			
3. Resource Adequacy	0.512**	0.541**	1.000		
4. Audience Engagement	0.563**	0.498**	0.487**	1.000	

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5. Transparency Promotion	0.721**	0.698**	0.642**	0.614**	1.000
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** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The correlation matrix presented in Table 2 demonstrates that all four investigative journalism dimensions are significantly and positively correlated with transparency and accountability promotion outcomes at the 0.01 significance level (Julius & Audrey, 2026a). Investigative reporting quality exhibits the strongest bivariate relationship with transparency promotion ($r = 0.721$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that the substantive quality, depth, and accuracy of investigative reports is the most critical factor in producing accountability outcomes (Moses et al., 2025). Editorial independence follows closely ($r = 0.698$, $p < 0.01$), a finding that resonates powerfully with the broader literature on media accountability: journalism that is free from political and commercial interference is substantially more likely to produce the kind of fearless, comprehensive reporting that generates meaningful accountability consequences. Investigative resource adequacy ($r = 0.642$, $p < 0.01$) and audience engagement ($r = 0.614$, $p < 0.01$) also show strong correlations, underscoring the systemic and multi-dimensional nature of effective accountability journalism.

6.3 Regression Analysis

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.521	0.318		1.638	0.104
Investigative Reporting Quality	0.341	0.071	0.354	4.803	0.000
Editorial Independence	0.287	0.064	0.298	4.484	0.000
Investigative Resource Adequacy	0.201	0.059	0.214	3.407	0.001
Audience Engagement Strategies	0.178	0.063	0.191	2.825	0.005

$R = 0.782$, $R^2 = 0.612$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.589$, $F = 56.274$, $p < 0.000$

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The regression analysis results presented in Table 3 confirm that all four investigative journalism dimensions make statistically significant independent contributions to the prediction of transparency and accountability promotion outcomes (Nelson et al., 2023). The model demonstrates excellent overall fit ($F = 56.274$, $p < 0.000$), with the four predictors collectively explaining 61.2% of the variance in transparency promotion ($R^2 = 0.612$) and an adjusted R^2 of 0.589. Investigative reporting quality is the strongest individual predictor ($Beta = 0.354$, $t = 4.803$, $p < 0.000$), confirming the paramount importance of substantive journalistic quality in driving accountability outcomes. Editorial independence follows ($Beta = 0.298$, $t = 4.484$, $p < 0.000$), with investigative resource adequacy ($Beta = 0.214$, $t = 3.407$, $p = 0.001$) and audience engagement ($Beta = 0.191$, $t = 2.825$, $p = 0.005$) also making significant contributions.

7.0 Discussion of Results

The primacy of investigative reporting quality as the strongest predictor of transparency and accountability outcomes validates the journalistic profession's intrinsic emphasis on accuracy, comprehensiveness, and evidence-based reporting. High-quality investigative reports those that present compelling, well-documented evidence of wrongdoing,

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identify specific actors and their responsibilities, and provide robust contextual analysis are substantially more likely to stimulate public outrage, political attention, and institutional responses than superficial or poorly evidenced reports. Kingdom Television's investment in building a core team of trained investigative journalists appears to be yielding returns in terms of reporting quality, though resource constraints continue to limit the volume and ambition of investigative output.

The significant effect of editorial independence on accountability outcomes carries important implications for the ownership and commercial structures of Ugandan media. Kingdom Television's mixed revenue model combining advertising revenue, subscription income, and event sponsorship creates potential conflicts of interest between its accountability journalism mandate and its commercial imperatives. Qualitative interview data revealed that advertisers have on at least three occasions pressured Kingdom TV management to suppress or modify investigative reports that reflected negatively on their organizations or business interests. The station's editorial leadership has generally resisted these pressures, but the threat of advertiser withdrawal represents a structural constraint on editorial independence that cannot be resolved through editorial policy alone.

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has demonstrated that investigative journalism at Kingdom Television makes a statistically significant and practically meaningful contribution to the promotion of transparency and accountability in Uganda. Reporting quality and editorial independence are the most powerful drivers of accountability outcomes, while resource adequacy and audience engagement also play important supporting roles. The study recommends that: (i) Kingdom Television establish a dedicated investigative journalism fund, supported by development aid grants and public interest foundations, to reduce financial dependence on commercial advertisers and enhance investigative capacity; (ii) the Uganda Communications Commission and Parliament review existing media legislation to strengthen whistleblower protections and journalist safety guarantees; (iii) Kingdom Television invest in multi-platform investigative journalism distribution strategies that leverage social media, podcasting, and digital engagement tools to maximize the reach and impact of investigative reports; and (iv) civil society organizations collaborate more systematically with Kingdom Television's investigative unit to provide technical expertise, legal support, and policy advocacy follow-through on published investigations.

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