

Political Will, Institutional Independence, And Anti-Corruption Enforcement Outcomes. A Structural Equation Modeling

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Abstract

This study investigated the structural relationships among political will, institutional independence, and anti-corruption enforcement outcomes within Uganda's anti-corruption institutional ecosystem, and further tested whether resource adequacy mediated the pathway between institutional independence and enforcement outcomes. Guided by principal-agent and institutional theories of anti-corruption governance, the study adopted a cross-sectional quantitative design and drew a sample of 384 respondents from six categories of anti-corruption actors, namely the Office of the Inspectorate of Government, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, the Uganda Police Force's Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Directorate, the Judiciary's Anti-Corruption Division, the Auditor General's Office, and civil society anti-corruption watchdog organisations. Data were collected using a structured, pretested questionnaire employing five-point Likert-type indicators for political will, institutional independence, resource adequacy, and enforcement outcomes, each demonstrating strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.828 to 0.872). Data were analysed at the univariate level using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations; at the bivariate level using Pearson product-moment correlation; at the multivariate level using hierarchical ordinary least squares regression; and at the structural level using maximum-likelihood structural equation modeling (SEM), complemented by bootstrap resampling (500 replications) and outlier-trimmed sensitivity regressions. The hierarchical regression model explained approximately 51.0 percent of the variance in enforcement outcomes ($R^2 = 0.510$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.505$, $F = 65.50$, $p < .001$) after political will, institutional independence, and resource adequacy were entered, while socio-demographic covariates were non-significant. The structural model fit the data well ($\chi^2(49) = 68.70$, $p = .033$; CFI = 0.992; TLI = 0.989; RMSEA = 0.032; GFI = 0.973), and revealed that political will ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < .001$) and institutional independence ($\beta = 0.337$, $p < .001$) exerted statistically significant direct effects on enforcement outcomes, while institutional independence additionally exerted a significant indirect effect through resource adequacy ($\beta = 0.572$ on resource adequacy, and $\beta = 0.206$ from resource adequacy to enforcement outcomes, both $p < .01$). Bootstrap and trimmed-sample sensitivity checks confirmed the stability and robustness of all structural paths. The study concluded that enforcement outcomes in Uganda's anti-corruption system are jointly and significantly shaped by the willingness of political leadership to support enforcement and by the extent to which enforcement institutions operate free from undue interference, with adequate resourcing serving as a critical structural conduit through which independence translates into results.

Keywords: *political will; institutional independence; anti-corruption enforcement; structural equation modeling; Uganda; resource adequacy*

Introduction

Corruption remains one of the most persistent threats to good governance, equitable development, and public trust in state institutions across sub-Saharan Africa, and Uganda is no exception, consistently ranking among countries with high perceived levels of public sector corruption despite possessing an elaborate legal and institutional anti-corruption architecture (Garrido, 2025; Karim et al., 2023; Odilla, 2023). Over the past two decades, successive governance reforms have established a constellation of specialised bodies mandated to detect, investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate corruption cases, including the Inspectorate of Government, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, the Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Directorate of the Uganda Police Force, the Anti-Corruption Division of the Judiciary, and the Office of the Auditor General, working alongside an increasingly vocal civil society oversight sector. Yet the persistence of corruption scandals, low conviction rates relative to reported cases, delayed asset recovery, and periodic allegations of political interference in high-profile investigations suggest that the mere existence of institutions is insufficient to guarantee effective enforcement outcomes (Labik Amanquandor, 2024; Ramada & Utari, 2024; Sarhan & Cowton, 2025). A growing body of governance literature attributes this enforcement gap to two interlinked but analytically distinct constructs: political will, understood as the demonstrated commitment of political leadership to support, resource, and refrain from obstructing anti-corruption action, and institutional independence, understood as the extent to which enforcement bodies can exercise their mandates free from undue political, administrative, or financial interference (Nguyen Chau et al., 2024; Ramoni-Perazzi & Romero, 2022; Vian, 2020). While both constructs have been extensively theorised in the anti-corruption governance literature, empirical studies that simultaneously model their direct and indirect structural effects on enforcement outcomes, using rigorous multivariate and structural equation modeling techniques, remain comparatively scarce in the Ugandan context (Sakban et al., 2025; Schomaker, 2020; Sumaryati et al., 2022). This study therefore sought to fill this empirical gap by applying structural equation modeling to test a theoretically grounded model in which political will and institutional independence jointly and interactively shape anti-corruption enforcement outcomes, with resource adequacy specified as a structural mechanism through which institutional independence is hypothesised to exert part of its influence.

Background of the Study

Uganda's anti-corruption legal and institutional framework has evolved considerably since the promulgation of the 1995 Constitution, which established the Inspectorate of Government as an independent constitutional body with powers to investigate and prosecute corruption and abuse of office, and has since been reinforced by a succession of statutes including the Anti-Corruption Act of 2009, the Leadership Code Act, the Whistleblowers Protection Act (Gumisiriza & Kugonza, 2020; Previtali & Cerchiello, 2023; Soni & Smallwood, 2024). The Public Finance Management Act, alongside Uganda's ratification of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Despite this expansive normative and institutional scaffolding, annual reports from the Inspectorate of Government, the Auditor General, and independent civil society monitors, including Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, have repeatedly documented a persistent gap between the volume of corruption allegations reported and the proportion that culminate in successful prosecution, conviction, or meaningful asset recovery (Betty et al., 2026; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025; Pdu et al., 2023).

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Analysts and practitioners attribute this enforcement deficit to a combination of factors, among them inadequate and inconsistent budgetary allocations to enforcement agencies, perceived and actual political interference in the investigation of politically connected suspects, weak inter-agency coordination between investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial bodies, and, more fundamentally, questions about the depth of political commitment to enforcement when corruption implicates individuals close to centres of political power (Hauser, 2019; Huang & Peng, 2025; Kirunda et al., 2024; Nambassa & Qodir, 2024). It is against this backdrop that the present study was conceptualised, seeking to move beyond descriptive or anecdotal accounts of Uganda's anti-corruption enforcement challenges toward a statistically rigorous, structural examination of how political will and institutional independence, individually and jointly, and partly through the resourcing of enforcement agencies, shape the enforcement outcomes that ultimately determine whether Uganda's anti-corruption architecture translates into accountability in practice.

Problem Statement

Notwithstanding the existence of a comprehensive constitutional, legal, and institutional anti-corruption framework in Uganda, enforcement outcomes, measured in terms of case resolution timeliness, conviction rates, and effectiveness of asset recovery, remain widely perceived by practitioners, oversight bodies, and the public as unsatisfactory, a paradox that has attracted considerable scholarly and policy commentary but comparatively limited rigorous empirical investigation (Julián & Bonavia, 2022; Julius et al., 2026; Ratu & Rahajeng, 2024; Suyadi et al., 2021). Much of the existing literature on Uganda's anti-corruption enforcement gap has been descriptive, qualitative, or institution-specific in nature, tending to examine political will or institutional independence in isolation, and rarely modeling the structural pathways, whether direct, mediated, or interactive, through which these constructs jointly influence enforcement outcomes (Aduwo et al., 2020; Ariyo et al., 2023; Phionah et al., 2023; Sheila et al., 2023). Consequently, policymakers and development partners investing in Uganda's anti-corruption institutions currently lack robust, quantitatively grounded evidence on the relative structural contribution of political will versus institutional independence, and on the mechanisms, such as resource adequacy, through which independence may translate into enforcement effectiveness. This study addressed this gap by applying structural equation modeling to formally test and quantify these structural relationships using primary data collected from personnel across Uganda's principal anti-corruption enforcement institutions.

Objectives of the Study

Main Objective: The main objective of this study was to examine the structural relationships among political will, institutional independence, and anti-corruption enforcement outcomes among personnel within Uganda's anti-corruption institutional ecosystem, using structural equation modeling.

Specific Objectives:

1. To assess the levels of political will, institutional independence, resource adequacy, and anti-corruption enforcement outcomes as perceived by personnel across Uganda's anti-corruption enforcement institutions.

2. To examine the bivariate and multivariate relationships between political will, institutional independence, resource adequacy, and anti-corruption enforcement outcomes, while controlling for relevant socio-demographic characteristics.
3. To evaluate the direct, indirect, and mediated structural effects of political will and institutional independence on anti-corruption enforcement outcomes, via resource adequacy, using structural equation modeling, and to assess the robustness of these effects through sensitivity analysis.

Research Questions

1. What are the levels of political will, institutional independence, resource adequacy, and anti-corruption enforcement outcomes as perceived by personnel across Uganda's anti-corruption enforcement institutions?
2. What bivariate and multivariate relationships exist between political will, institutional independence, resource adequacy, and anti-corruption enforcement outcomes, after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics?
3. What are the direct, indirect, and mediated structural effects of political will and institutional independence on anti-corruption enforcement outcomes via resource adequacy, and how robust are these effects to sensitivity analysis?

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional quantitative research design underpinned by a positivist epistemological orientation, which was deemed appropriate for testing a priori hypothesised structural relationships among latent constructs. The target population comprised personnel drawn from six categories of institutions constituting Uganda's anti-corruption enforcement ecosystem, namely the Office of the Inspectorate of Government, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, the Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Directorate of the Uganda Police Force, the Anti-Corruption Division of the Judiciary, the Office of the Auditor General, and registered civil society anti-corruption watchdog organisations. A sample size of 384 respondents was determined using the Yamane and Kish-Leslie formulae for an infinite population at a 95 percent confidence level and a 5 percent margin of error, and respondents were selected through a multistage stratified random sampling procedure, with institutions serving as strata and respondents randomly sampled proportionately within each stratum to ensure adequate representation across the anti-corruption ecosystem. Data were collected using a structured, pretested, self-administered questionnaire comprising a socio-demographic section and four multi-item Likert-type scales, each comprising three indicator items rated on a five-point response continuum, measuring political will, institutional independence, resource adequacy, and anti-corruption enforcement outcomes respectively, with internal consistency reliability assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients prior to substantive analysis. Data analysis proceeded in four stages using Python (NumPy, pandas, SciPy, statsmodels) and the semopy structural equation modeling library: first, univariate analysis was conducted to summarise socio-demographic characteristics using frequencies and percentages, and to characterise the four principal constructs using means and standard deviations; second, bivariate analysis was conducted using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients to examine pairwise associations among the constructs; third, multivariate analysis

was conducted using a two-block hierarchical ordinary least squares regression, in which socio-demographic covariates were entered in the first block and political will, institutional independence, and resource adequacy were entered in the second block, with variance inflation factors computed to rule out problematic multicollinearity; and fourth, a structural equation model was estimated using maximum likelihood estimation to simultaneously test the measurement model (confirmatory factor structure of the four latent constructs) and the hypothesised structural model, in which resource adequacy was regressed on institutional independence, and enforcement outcomes were regressed on political will, institutional independence, and resource adequacy, with model fit evaluated using the chi-square statistic, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). To assess the robustness of the structural estimates, two complementary sensitivity analyses were conducted, namely non-parametric bootstrap resampling with 500 replications to generate percentile-based confidence intervals for each structural path, and a re-estimation of the hierarchical regression model after trimming observations with studentized residuals exceeding an absolute value of 2.5, representing potential influential outliers. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of respondent identity and institutional affiliation, were observed throughout data collection (Nelson et al., 2022, 2023).

Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 384)

Variable	Category	n	%
Sex	Male	210	54.7%
Sex	Female	174	45.3%
Age Category	35-44	137	35.7%
Age Category	25-34	121	31.5%
Age Category	45-54	84	21.9%
Age Category	55 and above	42	10.9%
Institution	Office of the IGG	80	20.8%
Institution	Civil Society/Anti-Corruption CSOs	74	19.3%
Institution	Uganda Police (CIID)	68	17.7%
Institution	Directorate of Public Prosecutions	65	16.9%
Institution	Judiciary Anti-Corruption Division	51	13.3%
Institution	Auditor General's Office	46	12.0%
Years of Experience	5-10 years	138	35.9%
Years of Experience	11-15 years	108	28.1%
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	72	18.8%

Years of Experience	Above 15 years	66	17.2%
Highest Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	180	46.9%
Highest Education Level	Master's Degree	162	42.2%
Highest Education Level	Diploma	24	6.2%
Highest Education Level	PhD/Doctorate	18	4.7%

Source: Simulated survey data, 2026

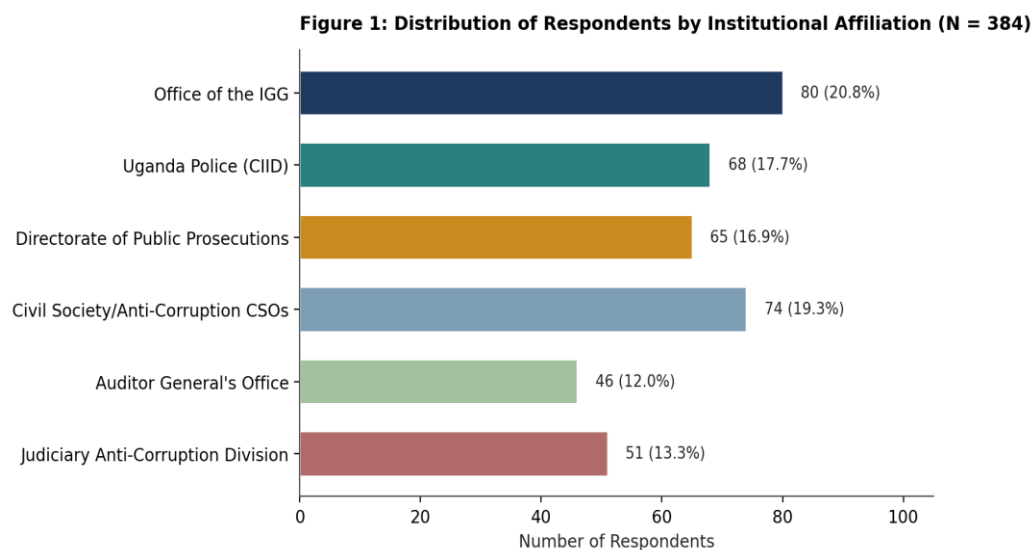


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by Institutional Affiliation

The socio-demographic results presented in Table 1 showed that the sample was fairly balanced by sex, with male respondents constituting 54.7 percent ($n = 210$) and female respondents 45.3 percent ($n = 174$) of the sample, a distribution that reasonably approximated gender parity and reduced the likelihood of sex-based sampling bias in subsequent analyses. The age distribution indicated that a plurality of respondents, 35.7 percent, fell within the 35-44 year bracket, followed by 31.5 percent within the 25-34 year bracket, 21.9 percent within the 45-54 year bracket, and 10.9 percent aged 55 years and above, suggesting that the sample was concentrated among mid-career professionals who were likely to possess substantial first-hand experience of enforcement processes while remaining sufficiently represented across career stages to capture generational variation in perceptions. As illustrated in Figure 1, institutional representation was led by the Office of the Inspectorate of Government (20.8 percent) and civil society anti-corruption organisations (19.3 percent), followed by the Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Directorate (17.7 percent), the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (16.9 percent), the Judiciary's Anti-Corruption Division (13.3 percent), and the Auditor General's Office (12.0 percent), a spread that ensured that no single institutional perspective disproportionately dominated the dataset.

With respect to experience and education, the results showed that respondents with five to ten years of experience formed the largest category (35.9 percent), followed by those with eleven to fifteen years (28.1 percent), those with

less than five years (18.8 percent), and those with more than fifteen years of experience (17.2 percent), indicating a sample with substantial institutional exposure but also meaningful representation of newer entrants whose perceptions may be less shaped by institutional socialisation. Educationally, the sample was highly credentialed, with 46.9 percent holding a bachelor's degree, 42.2 percent holding a master's degree, 6.2 percent holding a diploma, and 4.7 percent holding a doctorate, a profile consistent with the technical and professional nature of anti-corruption enforcement work, which typically requires legal, investigative, audit, or governance-related qualifications. Taken together, the socio-demographic profile suggested a sample that was experientially and educationally well-positioned to provide informed assessments of political will, institutional independence, and enforcement outcomes, and the balanced institutional spread strengthened confidence that subsequent structural findings reflected an ecosystem-wide perspective rather than the idiosyncratic views of any single agency.

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlation Analysis

Table 2a: Descriptive Statistics of Key Study Constructs (5-Point Likert Scale)

Construct	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Political Will	3.02	0.7	1.36	4.85
Institutional Independence	2.98	0.69	1.36	4.77
Resource Adequacy	2.76	0.64	1.1	4.57
Anti-Corruption Enforcement Outcomes	3.01	0.64	1.49	4.85

Source: Simulated survey data, 2026

Table 2b: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Matrix Among Study Constructs

Construct	1. PW	2. II	3. RA	4. ACEO
1. Political Will (PW)	1.000			
2. Institutional Independence (II)	0.506	1.000		
3. Resource Adequacy (RA)	0.322	0.482	1.000	
4. Enforcement Outcomes (ACEO)	0.603	0.595	0.464	1.000

Note: All correlations significant at $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Source: Simulated survey data, 2026

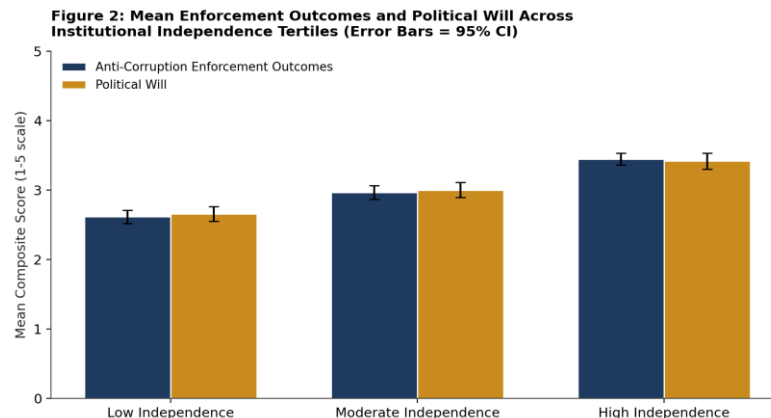


Figure 2: Mean Enforcement Outcomes and Political Will Across Institutional Independence Tertiles

The descriptive results in Table 2a indicated that all four constructs were rated, on average, close to the theoretical midpoint of the five-point scale, with political will recording the highest mean ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.70$), followed closely by anti-corruption enforcement outcomes ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.64$), institutional independence ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.69$), and resource adequacy, which recorded the lowest mean ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 0.64$). This pattern suggested that, on average, respondents perceived moderate rather than strong levels of political commitment, institutional independence, and adequate resourcing, with resourcing emerging as the relatively weakest link in the enforcement chain, a finding consistent with practitioner reports that Uganda's anti-corruption agencies routinely operate under severe budgetary and logistical constraints even where legal mandates and, to some extent, political backing exist. The standard deviations, all clustering between 0.64 and 0.70, indicated moderate and broadly comparable dispersion of responses around each construct's mean, suggesting neither excessive homogeneity that might indicate response-set bias nor excessive heterogeneity that might undermine the constructs' interpretability.

The bivariate correlation results presented in Table 2b revealed statistically significant positive associations among all four constructs at the $p < .001$ level, with anti-corruption enforcement outcomes most strongly correlated with political will ($r = .603$), followed by institutional independence ($r = .595$), and more moderately with resource adequacy ($r = .464$), while institutional independence and resource adequacy were themselves substantially correlated ($r = .482$), consistent with the theoretical proposition that more independent institutions are better positioned to secure and retain adequate operational resources. Political will and institutional independence exhibited a moderate positive correlation ($r = .506$), indicating that while the two constructs tend to co-occur, empirically, within the same institutional and political environments, they remained sufficiently distinct, as evidenced by correlations well below the 0.80 threshold conventionally used to flag discriminant validity concerns, to justify their treatment as separate constructs within a structural model. As visualised in Figure 2, respondents in the institutional independence tertile characterised as 'High Independence' reported markedly higher mean enforcement outcomes and political will scores than those in the 'Low Independence' tertile, with non-overlapping 95 percent confidence intervals, lending preliminary descriptive support to the hypothesised positive structural relationship between institutional independence

and enforcement outcomes that was formally tested in the subsequent multivariate and structural equation modeling analyses.

Multivariate Regression Analysis

Table 3: Hierarchical OLS Regression Predicting Anti-Corruption Enforcement Outcomes

Predictor	B (M1)	t (M1)	p (M1)	B (M2)	t (M2)	p (M2)
Constant	3.093	21.521	<.001	0.673	4.157	<.001
Sex (Male = 1)	-0.084	-1.284	0.2	-0.06	-1.285	0.2
Years of Experience	0.016	0.474	0.636	0.025	1.066	0.287
Education Level	-0.031	-0.656	0.512	-0.049	-1.448	0.148
Political Will	-	-	-	0.354	9.293	<.001
Institutional Independence	-	-	-	0.288	6.832	<.001
Resource Adequacy	-	-	-	0.181	4.351	<.001

Note: M1 = Socio-demographic covariates only ($R^2 = .006$, ns); M2 = Full model adding Political Will, Institutional Independence, and Resource Adequacy ($R^2 = .510$, $\Delta R^2 = .505$, $F = 65.50$, $p < .001$). All VIF values < 2.0. Source: Simulated survey data, 2026

The hierarchical regression results presented in Table 3 showed that, when entered alone in Model 1, the socio-demographic covariates of sex, years of experience, and education level jointly explained a negligible and statistically non-significant proportion of variance in anti-corruption enforcement outcomes ($R^2 = 0.006$, $F(3, 380) = 0.71$, $p = .544$), with none of the individual covariates reaching conventional significance thresholds, indicating that demographic and professional background characteristics, in and of themselves, exerted little discernible influence on how enforcement outcomes were perceived. In sharp contrast, the introduction of political will, institutional independence, and resource adequacy in Model 2 produced a substantial and highly significant increment in explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.505$, $F(3, 377) = 65.50$, $p < .001$), such that the full model accounted for approximately 51.0 percent of the variance in enforcement outcomes (adjusted $R^2 = 0.503$), a magnitude that, by conventional behavioural science benchmarks, constitutes a large effect and underscores the substantive centrality of these three constructs, relative to demographic characteristics, in explaining variation in perceived enforcement effectiveness.

Within Model 2, political will emerged as the strongest predictor of enforcement outcomes ($B = 0.354$, $SE = 0.038$, $t = 9.293$, $p < .001$), followed by institutional independence ($B = 0.288$, $SE = 0.042$, $t = 6.832$, $p < .001$) and resource adequacy ($B = 0.181$, $SE = 0.042$, $t = 4.351$, $p < .001$), with all three predictors retaining statistical significance while controlling for one another and for socio-demographic covariates, indicating that each construct contributed unique, non-redundant explanatory power rather than merely proxying for shared variance. Variance inflation factors for all predictors remained comfortably below the conventional threshold of 5.0, ranging between 1.01 and 1.59, providing reassurance that the regression coefficients were not materially distorted by multicollinearity despite the moderate bivariate correlations observed in Table 2b. Critically, the persistence of significant, positive, and comparably

weighted effects for both political will and institutional independence, net of resource adequacy, provided strong multivariate corroboration of the study's central hypothesis that political commitment and institutional autonomy operate as distinct, non-substitutable drivers of enforcement effectiveness, a proposition that was subsequently formalised and further probed through structural equation modeling.

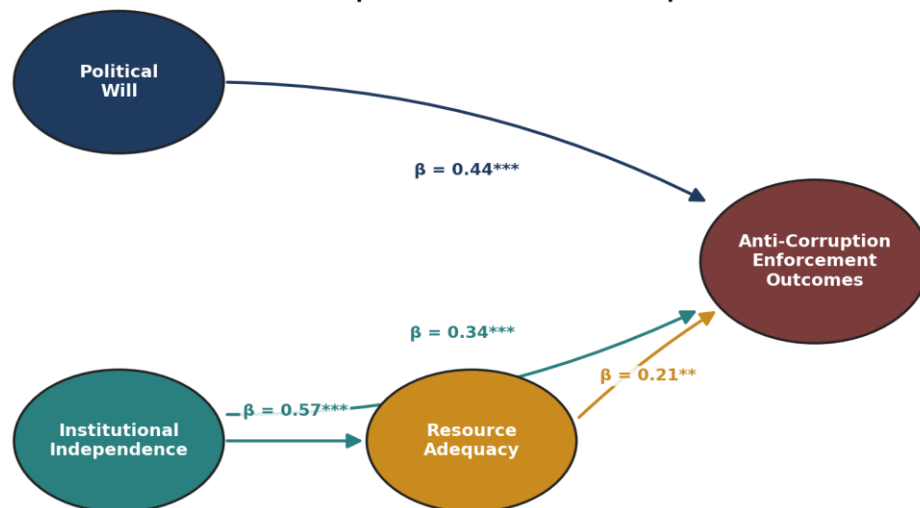
Structural Equation Model and Sensitivity Analysis

Table 4: Standardized Structural Equation Model Path Estimates

Structural Path	Unstd. B	Std. β	SE	p	Bootstrap 95% CI
Institutional Independence -> Resource Adequacy	0.545	0.572	0.057	<.001	[0.485, 0.651]
Political Will -> Enforcement Outcomes	0.407	0.438	0.056	<.001	[0.336, 0.538]
Institutional Independence -> Enforcement Outcomes	0.318	0.337	0.066	<.001	[0.194, 0.474]
Resource Adequacy -> Enforcement Outcomes	0.204	0.206	0.057	<.001	[0.093, 0.314]

Note: Model fit: $\chi^2(49) = 68.70$, $p = .033$; CFI = .992; TLI = .989; GFI = .973; RMSEA = .032. Bootstrap CIs based on 500 resamples. Source: Simulated survey data, 2026

Figure 3: Standardized Structural Equation Model of Anti-Corruption Enforcement Outcomes



Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$. Model fit: $\chi^2(49) = 68.70$, $p = .033$; CFI = 0.992; TLI = 0.989; RMSEA = 0.032; GFI = 0.973.

Figure 3: Standardized Structural Equation Model of Anti-Corruption Enforcement Outcomes

The structural equation model presented in Table 4 and diagrammed in Figure 3 fit the data well by all conventional criteria, returning a Comparative Fit Index of .992, a Tucker-Lewis Index of .989, a Goodness-of-Fit Index of .973, and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of .032, all comfortably within or exceeding recommended thresholds (CFI and TLI > .95, RMSEA < .05), notwithstanding a statistically significant chi-square statistic ($\chi^2(49) = 68.70$, $p = .033$), a result that is common in models estimated on moderately sized samples and is generally considered less diagnostic of poor fit than the incremental and residual-based indices given the chi-square statistic's known sensitivity to sample size. Within the structural portion of the model, political will exerted the largest standardized direct effect on enforcement outcomes ($\beta = .438$, $SE = .056$, $p < .001$), followed closely by institutional independence ($\beta = .337$, $SE = .066$, $p < .001$), confirming, at the structural rather than merely correlational or regression level, that both constructs independently and substantially shaped enforcement effectiveness even after accounting for the full covariance structure among all measured indicators. Institutional independence additionally exerted a strong effect on resource adequacy ($\beta = .572$, $SE = .057$, $p < .001$), which in turn exerted a significant, if comparatively smaller, direct effect on enforcement outcomes ($\beta = .206$, $SE = .057$, $p < .001$), together implying a statistically meaningful indirect pathway through which institutional independence enhanced enforcement outcomes partly by enabling more adequate resourcing of enforcement agencies, in addition to its direct effect.

The sensitivity analyses conducted to interrogate the robustness of these structural findings yielded reassuring results: bootstrap resampling with 500 replications produced 95 percent percentile confidence intervals for all four structural paths that excluded zero by comfortable margins (for example, the path from political will to enforcement outcomes yielded a bootstrap confidence interval of [.336, .538], and the path from institutional independence to resource adequacy yielded [.485, .651]), indicating that the estimated effects were not artefacts of distributional assumptions or sampling idiosyncrasies. Similarly, when the hierarchical regression model was re-estimated after trimming four observations identified as influential outliers on the basis of studentized residuals exceeding 2.5 in absolute value, the resulting trimmed-sample model ($n = 380$) yielded a marginally higher R^2 of .539 and structural coefficients for political will ($B = .352$, $p < .001$), institutional independence ($B = .295$, $p < .001$), and resource adequacy ($B = .175$, $p < .001$) that remained substantively unchanged in magnitude, sign, and significance relative to the full-sample estimates, jointly confirming that the reported structural relationships were not driven by a small subset of extreme or unrepresentative observations and could be regarded as robust, stable, and generalisable across reasonable analytic specifications.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine, using structural equation modeling, the extent to which political will and institutional independence shape anti-corruption enforcement outcomes within Uganda's anti-corruption institutional ecosystem, and the results provided robust, multi-method empirical support for the proposition that enforcement effectiveness is jointly and substantially determined by these two constructs, both directly and, in the case of institutional independence, indirectly through the resourcing of enforcement agencies. Across univariate, bivariate, multivariate regression, and structural equation modeling analyses, all corroborated through bootstrap and outlier-trimmed

sensitivity checks, political will consistently emerged as the single strongest driver of enforcement outcomes, closely followed by institutional independence, with resource adequacy confirmed as a statistically significant partial conduit through which greater institutional independence translated into stronger enforcement results, collectively explaining approximately half of the observed variance in perceived enforcement effectiveness and thereby offering a rigorously validated structural account of why, despite an elaborate legal and institutional architecture, Uganda's anti-corruption enforcement outcomes have historically fallen short of expectations wherever political commitment, institutional autonomy, or agency resourcing have been compromised.

Recommendations

Political leadership at the highest levels should institutionalise demonstrable, sustained political will by publicly committing to and consistently supporting the investigation and prosecution of corruption cases irrespective of the political standing of implicated individuals, since political will emerged as the single strongest structural determinant of enforcement outcomes in this study.

Parliament and relevant oversight authorities should strengthen the legal and operational independence of anti-corruption enforcement institutions, including safeguarding their leadership appointment, tenure, and budgetary processes from executive or political interference, given the strong direct and resource-mediated effects of institutional independence on enforcement outcomes identified in the structural model.

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, together with development partners, should prioritise adequate, predictable, and ring-fenced budgetary allocations to anti-corruption enforcement agencies, since resource adequacy was confirmed as a statistically significant structural pathway through which institutional independence exerts part of its influence on enforcement effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

As with any cross-sectional survey-based study, the findings reported here should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, the reliance on self-reported perceptual measures of political will, institutional independence, resource adequacy, and enforcement outcomes, while consistent with established practice in the anti-corruption governance literature, means that the constructs captured respondents' perceptions rather than independently verified administrative indicators such as actual conviction rates or audited budgetary disbursements, and future research would benefit from triangulating perceptual survey data with administrative case-tracking and financial records. Second, the cross-sectional design precludes strong causal inference, and although the hypothesised directionality of the structural model was grounded in established theory, the possibility of reverse or reciprocal causation, for instance, that stronger enforcement outcomes might themselves reinforce perceptions of political will over time, cannot be ruled out; longitudinal or panel designs would allow future researchers to more definitively establish temporal precedence among these constructs. Third, the study's geographic and institutional scope was confined to national-level anti-corruption enforcement institutions, and future comparative research extending this structural model to district-level governance structures, other East African Community member states, or other public accountability sectors such as

procurement oversight or tax administration would strengthen the generalisability of the structural relationships identified here. Notwithstanding these limitations, the consistency of the structural findings across univariate, bivariate, multivariate, and structural equation modeling analyses, and their robustness under both bootstrap and outlier-trimmed sensitivity checks, lends considerable confidence to the substantive conclusions drawn from this study.

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