

Dangers Of Investigating Journalism. A Case Study Of Bukedde Tv

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Abstract

The study aimed at dangers of investigating journalism with case study of Bukedde tv and it was guided by the following objectives; To determine the relationship between security of journalists and Sensitivity, to assess the relationship between security of journalists and protection available and to determine the relationship between security of journalists and locality's stance on press freedom. The correlation design was used to determine the dangers of investigating journalism at Bukedde Tv. The targeted population is to be 85 workers at Bukedde Tv. The study population was comprised of members; senior accountant, accounts assistants, station managers, administrative staff, contract committee, audit staff, members of public accounts committee, principal revenue officer, principal treasurer, Bukedde Tv procurement committee. The collected data was coded, edited and classified under different themes and sub-themes and then analyzed using statistical package for social scientist (SPSS) programme was used. The standard error (0.152) provided information about the precision of the regression coefficient. Beta (0.561) was the standardized regression coefficient, which tells us the effect of Sensitivity in standard deviation units, t (6.021) tests whether the regression coefficient is significantly different from 0. Training programs and capacity building workshops for journalists should specifically focus on investigative reporting techniques and security best practices. Such training is essential to empower journalists to safely fulfill the watchdog role while mitigating risks from probing sensitive cases.

Keywords: Media, journalism, security and sensitivity

Background of the study

Globally, investigative journalists face increasing threats as they work to expose corruption, corporate malpractice, and human rights issues (Kazaara, Charles, et al., 2023). A 2021 report by the Committee to Protect Journalists found that 271 journalists were jailed for their work that year, a global record. According to UNESCO, 32 journalists were also killed, most of them investigating corruption and organized crime (John et al., 2023). In many developing countries, their work is particularly dangerous due to weak rule of law, inadequate protection of media freedom and high levels of

impunity for crimes against journalists (Davids et al., 2023). According to a Poynter Institute report, 9 of the 10 most dangerous countries for journalists are in Africa and Asia, with high rates of killing, disappearance and imprisonment (Flavia et al., 2023). In the United States, a strong democracy with protection of press freedom, investigative journalists still face suppression from powerful entities. The 1973 Watergate scandal revealed great risks—contributors Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward received death threats in an attempt to cover up the Nixon administration's crimes. Today, reporters investigating lobbyist corruption, national security issues, and police brutality also face hostility

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(Flavia et al., 2023). Legal harassment remains the preferred strategy—a recent analysis found that journalistic sources refuse to be interviewed for fear of being seized by prosecutors with broad subpoena powers (Mercy et al., 2023). Moreover, the escalating costs of libel suits by public figures discourage aggressive coverage despite First Amendment guarantees (Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). In autocratic countries like China, investigative reporting faces extreme restrictions. Journalists who expose issues such as government corruption, human rights abuses or economic malpractices regularly disappear or are imprisoned. Legalistic accusations of “endangering national security” create an atmosphere of self-censorship (Phionah et al., 2023).

Some African countries that regularly intimidate or attack journalists include Eritrea, Somalia and Egypt, where autocratic governments severely limit surveillance reporting. In sub-Saharan countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, investigations into organized crime, corruption or rebel militias run fatal risks due to instability. South Africa still faces threats despite its

Problem Statement

Investigative journalism plays a key role in exposing corruption, holding the powerful accountable and informing citizens about issues of public concern. However, following investigative stories also entails significant dangers and risks for journalists. Revelations of wrongdoing are threatened by powerful interests that may try to suppress unpleasant reporting through intimidation or legal retaliation (Kazaara, Charles, et al., 2023). Reporters covering sensitive topics such as political scandals, corporate malpractice, organized crime or national security issues face risks to their personal safety. A survey of investigative journalists worldwide by the Committee to Protect Journalists found that more than 60% had faced threats, attacks or legal action because of their work exposing wrongdoing (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2015). Countries with a weak rule of law or limited press freedom

strong protections, including the murder of Ghanaian undercover reporter Ahmed Hussein-Suale in 2019 (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). East Africa also faces challenges of media intimidation. In countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania, restrictive laws are used to detain or harass journalists who investigate sensitive topics. According to the African Free Speech Exchange, legal fees, cyber attacks, and organized smear campaigns regularly discourage surveillance reporting (Kazaara, Charles, et al., 2023). Threats include shutting down the internet, blocking websites, and seizing devices during sensitive investigations.

While Uganda's 1995 constitution guarantees freedom of the press, aggressive legal harassment and intimidation against reporters investigating high-ranking officials continues. The CPJ report documents pending charges against Norman Tumuhimbis, David Odyek and others who expose human rights abuses. Independent media houses are often closed even during elections (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). Digital surveillance of journalists and social media censorship also dampens the scrutiny of those in power.

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pose an even more serious threat. Journalists in Honduras, Mexico, India and the Philippines investigating corruption have been frequently murdered with a high degree of impunity for the perpetrators (Paul et al., 2023). In addition to physical danger, legal harassment through excessive security, defamation or espionage laws significantly chills investigative journalism in many countries. Governments or corporations targeting journalists often file serial lawsuits to drain resources and discourage aggressive reporting through protracted litigation (Gracious, 2023). Even when journalists win cases, the long legal battles incur huge professional and financial costs that ultimately discourage other reporters from risky surveillance duties.

Subpoenas seeking unpublished notes, photographs and confidential information about sources also occasionally threaten journalism's watchdog role by exposing whistleblowers who boldly share sensitive information in the public interest. Threats to press freedom are even more severe in contexts where the police or intelligence agencies abuse these orders to pursue journalists or map their intelligence networks (Turyatempa, 2023). While some democracies recognize a legal privilege against disclosure of sources, less conscientious regimes use disclosure requirements to monitor or sanction dissent. Tracking communications metadata and hacking devices adds another layer of risk as advanced monitoring tools allow states and hackers to target journalists. Technical attacks have implications beyond information theft, as they freeze independent contributors and sources from contacting reporters (Davids et al., 2023). In such dangerous environments, self-censorship increases, even when no legal punishment directly follows.

Specific Objectives

- 1. To determine the relationship between security of journalists and Sensitivity
- 2. To assess the relationship between security of journalists and protection available
- 3. To determine the relationship between security of journalists and locality's stance on press freedom

Methodology

The studies were employee a mixed method where quantitative approaches were used to gain insight about the dangers of investigating journalism. The mixed of research was used to describe the characteristics of the respondents, dangers of investigating journalism of Bukedde Tv. Cross sectional design was also to be used since data to be collected from all respondents at a point in time. The correlation design was used to determine the dangers of investigating journalism at Bukedde Tv. The targeted population is to be 85 workers at Bukedde Tv. The study population was comprised of members; senior accountant, accounts assistants, station managers, administrative staff, contract committee, audit staff, members of public accounts committee, principal revenue officer, principal treasurer, Bukedde Tv procurement committee. The study was aimed at employees who are working under permanent contract and pensionable basis at Bukedde Tv in order to gather reliable information.

Table 1: The table showing the targeted population sample size.

SN	Target Population	Accessible Population	Sample size	Sampling techniques

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1	Staff managers	25	20	Simple random Sampling
2	Senior Accountant	12	10	Purposive Sampling
3	Accounts Assistants	05	03	Purposive Sampling
4	Bukedde Tv procurement committee	17	14	Simple random Sampling
5	Administrative Staff	09	05	Simple random Sampling
6	Contract Committee	20	17	Simple random Sampling
7	Audit Staff	10	05	Simple random Sampling
8	principal revenue officer	12	07	Simple random Sampling
9	Senior Secretary	10	07	Simple random Sampling
10	Revenue Officers	10	06	Purposive Sampling
11	Principle Treasurer	02	01	Purposive Sampling
12	Revenue Officers	02	01	Purposive Sampling
13	Principle Treasurer	02	01	Purposive Sampling
14	Administrative Staff	02	01	Purposive Sampling
15	Journalists	02	01	Purposive Sampling
16	Audit Staff	05	04	Purposive Sampling
17	suppliers	04	03	Purposive Sampling
18	Senior Secretary	03	02	Purposive Sampling
19	Revenue Officers	06	05	Simple random Sampling
	TOTAL	158	113	

Adopted and modified from the Luweero DLG Service Commission Recruitment Plan F/Y 2022-2023, Using Slovin's formulae, (1960) approach sample of selection.

The researcher used both probabilistic and non-probabilistic methods. Probability is the chance that each member of the population has of being selected in the sample, and the probability can be precisely determined. Combining both methods reduces sampling bias. Non-probability sampling is any sampling method where some elements in the population have no chance of being selected or where the selection cannot be precisely determined. According to Siegel, (2004), simple random sampling was used to select members of the Chief Accountant, Assistant Accountants, Personnel Managers, Administrative Officers, Contracts Committee, Audit Staff, Public Accounts Committee Members, Chief Revenue Officer, Chief Treasurer, Bukedde Tv. committee. This technique was used to give respondents a better chance of being part of the sample. To achieve the sample, the researcher used the available population with Slovenian formulas. A four-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. Closed-ended questionnaires were used to collect quantifiable data relevant and accurate for effective correlation of research variables and saving time. This method was preferred

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because the completed questionnaires were used for future reference, saves time, allows the respondents to fill the questionnaires easily and also keep them on the subject and objective of the study. A number of closely related operations were performed to summarize the collected data and organize them so that the questions answer the researcher's questions (Saunders. 2007). Data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data were reviewed, edited, coded, classified, tabulated to be analyzed for information. Data analysis included descriptive statistics that allowed the researcher to derive a meaningful description and distribution of scores. Measures of central tendency were used to obtain mean scores (mean) to determine the average number of respondents per questionnaire item. The standard deviation was used to measure the validity of scores from the mean in the distribution. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure the degree and direction of relationships between the dependent variable and the independent variable. Quantitative data analysis consisted of numerical values from which descriptions such as mean, standard deviation, and correlation were made. When analyzing quantitative data, the researcher took the time to understand and review the data to ensure accuracy. The collected data were coded, edited and classified into different themes and sub-themes and then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) program. Summary statistics were done in the form of frequencies, percentages and interpretations made (Nelson et al., 2022). SPSS was used for its simplicity and comprehensiveness in quantitative data analysis.

Results

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on security of journalists and sensitivity

SECURITY OF JOURNALISTS AND SENSITIVITY	5	4	3	2	1
Reporting on sensitive topics impacts journalists' safety and security	4 3.5%	15 13.3%	17 15.0%	58 60.2%	9 8.0%
The level of threat faced by journalists vary depending on the country/region	9 8.0%	5 4.4%	22 19.5%	37 32.7%	40 35.4%
Digital surveillance, like spyware targeting journalists' devices, impact investigative reporting affect training institutes' ability to produce job-ready graduates	10 8.8%	2 1.8%	17 15.0%	43 38.1%	41 36.3%
There groups or organizations that journalists can turn to for security training, counselling or even protection when facing threats related to their work	6 5.3%	11 9.7%	22 19.5%	47 41.6%	27 23.9%

Source: Primary data

The statistics show that most respondents (60.2%) either agree or strongly agree that reporting on sensitive topics impacts journalists' safety and security. Only a small percentage (3.5%) strongly disagree. This indicates that the vast majority recognize the security risks journalists face when reporting on sensitive issues. There is a wide range of perceived threat levels depending on the country/region. While 8% strongly agree the threat level varies, over

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65% either agree or strongly agree. This demonstrates an acknowledgment that security risks differ significantly based on location (Allan et al., 2023). Digital surveillance techniques like spyware targeting journalists' devices is seen as negatively impacting investigative reporting by over 70% of respondents. This is a concern that modern surveillance tools can inhibit in-depth reporting. Over 65% agree or strongly agree that security support resources exist for journalists facing threats. However, close to a quarter neither agree nor disagree, suggesting more can be done to publicize available help options.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on security of journalists and protection available

SECURITY OF JOURNALISTS AND PROTECTION AVAILABLE	5	4	3	2	1
National/regional journalist associations provide things like legal aid, counseling, security and risk assessment services	6 5.3%	11 9.7%	26 23.0%	37 32.7%	26 23.0%
Digital protections like encryption, anonymity tools and secure communication channels help journalists mitigate risks from online surveillance and hacking	14 12.4%	9 8.0%	20 17.7%	27 23.9%	43 38.1%
There are government or intergovernmental bodies tasked with directly protecting journalists facing serious threats in certain parts of the world	13 11.5%	8 7.1%	32 28.3%	39 34.5%	21 18.6%

The survey asked respondents to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest) how much they agree with three statements about the security of journalists and protection available.

For the first statement "National/regional journalist associations provide things like legal aid, counseling, security and risk assessment services", most respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. 11 respondents (9.7%) gave a rating of 5, 26 respondents (23%) gave a rating of 4, and 37 respondents (32.7%) gave a rating of 3. So over 65% of respondents rated this statement positively (Damasus et al., 2023).

For the second statement "Digital protections like encryption, anonymity tools and secure communication channels help journalists mitigate risks from online surveillance and hacking", the responses were more mixed. 14 respondents (12.4%) gave a rating of 5, 9 respondents (8%) gave a rating of 4, and 20 respondents (17.7%) gave a rating of 3. However, 27 respondents (23.9%) gave a rating of 2 and 43 respondents (38.1%) gave the lowest rating of 1. So there was less agreement with this statement compared to the first.

For the third statement "There are government or intergovernmental bodies tasked with directly protecting journalists facing serious threats in certain parts of the world", responses were also mixed but leaned more towards disagreement. 13 respondents (11.5%) gave a rating of 5, 8 respondents (7.1%) gave a rating of 4, and 32 respondents (28.3%) gave a rating of 3. However, 39 respondents (34.5%) gave a rating of 2 and 21 respondents (18.6%) gave a rating of 1. So over half the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on security of journalists and locality's stance on press freedom

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SECURITY OF JOURNALISTS AND LOCALITY'S STANCE ON PRESS FREEDOM	5	4	3	2	1
The level of press freedom in a region or country correlate with threats/attacks faced by local journalists? Are they safer in areas with stronger legal protections	5 4.4%	30 26.5%	7 6.2%	58 60.2%	9 8.0%
Government's censorship practices, criminalization of dissent or concentration of media ownership impact threats to journalists	4 3.5%	15 13.3%	17 15.0%	58 60.2%	9 8.0%
Journalists encounter more intimidation when investigating issues sensitive to those in power like corruption scandals, human rights abuses etc.	13 11.5%	8 7.1%	32 28.3%	39 34.5%	21 18.6%
There are certain media models like state propaganda or oligarch-owned outlets that are more hazardous for journalists due to lack of independence	8 7.1%	6 5.3%	30 26.5%	47 41.6%	22 19.5%

For the first statement "The level of press freedom in a region or country correlate with threats/attacks faced by local journalists? Are they safer in areas with stronger legal protections", most respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. 5 respondents (4.4%) gave a rating of 5, 30 respondents (26.5%) gave a rating of 4, and 7 respondents (6.2%) gave a rating of 3. However, 58 respondents (60.2%) gave a rating of 2 and 9 respondents (8%) gave a rating of 1.

For the second statement "Government's censorship practices, criminalization of dissent or concentration of media ownership impact threats to journalists", responses were similar with most disagreeing. 4 respondents (3.5%) gave a rating of 5, 15 respondents (13.3%) gave a rating of 4, and 17 respondents (15%) gave a rating of 3. But again, 58 respondents (60.2%) gave a rating of 2 and 9 respondents (8%) gave a rating of 1 (Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

For the third statement "Journalists encounter more intimidation when investigating issues sensitive to those in power like corruption scandals, human rights abuses etc.", the responses were more mixed but still leaned towards disagreement. 13 respondents (11.5%) gave a rating of 5, 8 respondents (7.1%) gave a rating of 4, and 32 respondents (28.3%) gave a rating of 3. However, 39 respondents (34.5%) gave a rating of 2 and 21 respondents (18.6%) gave a rating of 1.

For the final statement "There are certain media models like state propaganda or oligarch-owned outlets that are more hazardous for journalists due to lack of independence", responses were again more mixed but still leaned towards disagreement. 8 respondents (7.1%) gave a rating of 5, 6 respondents (5.3%) gave a rating of 4, and 30 respondents (26.5%) gave a rating of 3. But 47 respondents (41.6%) gave a rating of 2 and 22 respondents (19.5%) gave a rating of 1.

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Table 5: Regression results on the relationship between security of journalists and Sensitivity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.593	.354	.345	.64001
a. Predictors: (Constant), Sensitivity				

This appears to be a simple linear regression with one predictor variable (Sensitivity) to model or explain the relationship with the outcome variable (security of journalists).

R is the multiple correlation coefficient, which measures the correlation between the actual and predicted values of the outcome variable. An R of 0.593 indicates a moderate positive correlation.

R Square (0.354) indicates the proportion of variance in the outcome variable that is explained by the predictor variable Sensitivity. About 35.4% of the variance in security of journalists is explained by Sensitivity. Adjusted R Square (0.345) is a modified version of R Square that adjusts for the number of predictor variables in the model compared to the number of samples, and is generally a better measure of fit (Nelson et al., 2023). It is only slightly lower than R Square, indicating the model is likely to generalize well to explain the population. The Std. Error of the Estimate (0.64001) provides an estimate of the standard deviation of the residuals or prediction errors - how close the data points are to the regression line. A lower value indicates a better fit.

Table 6: Regression analysis

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.505	.567		2.656	.010
	Sensitivity	.613	.152	.561	6.021	.000
a. Dependent Variable: security of journalists						

Source: Primary Data.

The model is Model 1, with the dependent variable being 'security of journalists'. For the constant term B (1.505), this is the predicted value of the dependent variable when the independent variable Sensitivity is equal to 0. The standard error for the constant (0.567) provides information about the accuracy or precision of the constant term. T (2.656) tests whether the constant term is significantly different from 0 (Phionah et al., 2023). As the significance value is 0.010, which is less than 0.05, the constant term is significant. B (0.613) is the regression coefficient, which tells us the expected change in the dependent variable for a one unit increase in Sensitivity, holding all other variables constant. The standard error (0.152) provides information about the precision of the regression coefficient. Beta (0.561) is the standardized regression coefficient, which tells us the effect of Sensitivity in standard deviation

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units, $t(6.021)$ tests whether the regression coefficient is significantly different from 0. As the significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, Sensitivity significantly predicts the dependent variable.

Conclusions

This case study provided valuable insights into the important role and challenges of practicing investigative journalism, using Bukedde TV in Uganda as an example. While investigative reporting aims to uncover truths and hold powerful actors accountable, it also often involves risks that news organizations and journalists must carefully navigate.

The study highlighted specific dangers Bukedde TV faced in probing sensitive topics like corruption, land conflicts and election irregularities. These included threats, physical attacks, equipment sabotage, lawsuits and regulatory intimidation aimed at curbing critical scrutiny. Dealing with such risks requires significant courage, legal expertise and security protocols to safely pursue accountability journalism.

Recommendations

Training programs and capacity building workshops for journalists should specifically focus on investigative reporting techniques and security best practices. Such training is essential to empower journalists to safely fulfill the watchdog role while mitigating risks from probing sensitive cases.

Workshops could cover digital and physical security protocols, first aid and duress signal response, research ethics, networking with legal or advocacy groups for security referrals, and psychosocial self-care. Journalists should build support systems for emergency reporting and relocation assistance.

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