

The Role Of Media In Addressing Corruption In Uganda: A Case Of Delta Tv

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Abstract

The study examined the “Role of media in addressing corruption in Uganda (public sector) a case study of Delta TV” The study was carried out at Delta TV Uganda in Katwe Muganzilwaza building, Kampala Capital City . The study achieved the following objectives; to establish the role of media in addressing corruption in Uganda, to establish the causes of corruption in Uganda, and to examine the measure to curb corruption in Uganda. The researcher adopted the case study research design and correlation study design which explored the Role of media in addressing corruption in Uganda. Data was collected from a sample of 30 respondents in using self-administered questionnaires and was later analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient (r). The findings revealed media had a positive and significantly related to addressing corruption in Uganda ($P=0.000<0.01$, $r=0.75$ the study concluded that majority of the respondents agreed that there is a significant relationship between media and addressing corruption. Additionally the finding showed that media has contributed to its fight against corruption through promoting accountability, transparency, economy, efficiency and effectiveness, rule of law, integrity, probity, independence and objectivity of public officers, democratic participation and equality and inclusiveness. Furthermore the study looked at the causes of corruption which included poverty, armed conflict, foreign aid syndrome, bureaucracy and poor governance. It was recommended that Uganda should fight corruption through promoting good governance, e- government, legal compliance, internal controls and auditing, respect rule of law to ensure zero tolerance to corruption.

Keywords: Media, Corruption and Delta Tv

Background of the Study

Globally, the media is widely recognized as a cornerstone of democratic societies, fulfilling a critical role as the "Fourth Estate." Its function extends beyond mere information dissemination to acting as a watchdog over the powerful, a platform for public discourse, and a catalyst for accountability (Julius et al., 2024). In the relentless fight against corruption a phenomenon that stifles economic development, erodes public trust, and violates human rights the media's investigative and agenda-setting powers are indispensable (Frank et al., 2023a). Investigative journalism uncovers malfeasance that would otherwise remain hidden, while sustained media coverage can place corruption at the center of public debate, pressuring governments to enact reforms and hold perpetrators accountable (Phionah et al., 2023). International bodies like the United Nations and Transparency International consistently emphasize media freedom and access to information as vital tools for achieving Good Governance and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16, which promotes peaceful and inclusive societies with accountable institutions. The global digital revolution has further amplified this role, enabling real-time reporting and the circumvention of traditional censorship in many contexts (Sophie & Crispus, 2024). However, this potent force is increasingly met with

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sophisticated forms of repression, including strategic lawsuits, digital surveillance, and disinformation campaigns, creating a precarious environment for journalists worldwide (UNESCO, 2021; Transparency International, 2023).

Across the African continent, the media operates within a complex and often contradictory landscape. The proliferation of digital media and social networking platforms has empowered a new generation of citizen journalists and civil society organizations to bypass state-controlled narratives and shine a light on graft (Christopher & Nelson, 2024). However, the watchdog role of the African media is consistently constrained by a nexus of political, legal, and economic challenges. Governments frequently employ restrictive laws, such as criminal defamation and "false news" statutes, to harass and silence critical journalists (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). State-owned media often dominate the information space, while private outlets face economic pressures that can lead to self-censorship or "capture" by political and business elites with vested interests. Despite these formidable obstacles, the media remains one of the most vibrant and resilient sectors in civil society, continually adapting its strategies to investigate corruption and inform the public, even in the face of significant personal risk (Wasserman & Maweu, 2021; Reporters Without Borders, 2024).

Uganda presents a stark case study of the tensions between media's potential and the realities of a constrained operational environment. The country consistently ranks high on perceived corruption indices, with grand corruption in public procurement, natural resource management, and service delivery being pervasive issues that drain national resources and impede development (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). The Ugandan constitution and legal framework ostensibly guarantee freedom of the press, yet in practice, the media landscape is heavily regulated and often hostile to independent journalism (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) frequently issues directives against media houses deemed critical of the government, and laws such as the Computer Misuse Act and the Anti-Pornography Act have been weaponized to target journalists and activists. Physical attacks, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests of reporters are not uncommon, creating a climate of fear. In this context, the ability of the media to perform its watchdog function is severely tested. While some mainstream outlets do engage in investigative reporting, the space for sustained, critical scrutiny of the highest levels of power is limited (Mercy et al., 2023). This has prompted a strategic shift towards more nuanced forms of journalism, including increased coverage of parliamentary proceedings, judicial processes, and the work of civil society organizations, as indirect ways of keeping corruption in the public eye (AFIC, 2022; Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, 2023).

It is within this challenging national context that Delta TV, a prominent private television station, operates. As a key player in Uganda's competitive broadcast market, Delta TV represents a critical node in the country's information ecosystem. Its role in addressing corruption is multifaceted and strategically significant (Julius, 2024). Unlike

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international media or niche investigative platforms, Delta TV possesses a distinct advantage: deep local knowledge, cultural resonance, and direct access to a Ugandan audience. The station's potential impact lies in its ability to tailor its coverage to issues of immediate local concern, such as corruption in municipal services, education, or healthcare, making the abstract concept of graft tangible for its viewers (Julius, 2025). By dedicating airtime to investigative documentaries, hosting talk shows that feature accountability advocates and public officials, and providing consistent news coverage of corruption scandals, Delta TV can perform an essential agenda-setting function (Phionah et al., 2023). Its approach whether through confrontational exposés or more measured, advocacy-oriented journalism serves as a vital barometer for the capacity of mainstream Ugandan media to hold power to account (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). Therefore, this study is imperative to critically examine and document the specific strategies, content, and challenges faced by Delta TV in its efforts to combat corruption. Understanding its role provides crucial insights into the practical realities, limitations, and potential pathways for effective anti-corruption journalism within Uganda's complex socio-political environment (Zowena et al., 2023).

Statement of the problem

Corruption remains a pervasive and debilitating challenge in Uganda, severely undermining governance, economic development, and the delivery of public services. Despite the existence of anti-corruption laws and agencies, grand and petty corruption persist, indicating a critical failure in accountability mechanisms (Moses et al., 2025). Within this context, the media is constitutionally mandated to function as a public watchdog, exposing malfeasance and fostering a culture of transparency (Frank et al., 2023b). However, the operational environment for Ugandan media is severely constrained by repressive laws, political interference, and economic pressures, which collectively stifle investigative journalism and critical reporting. This raises a critical problem regarding the efficacy of mainstream media in fulfilling this watchdog role. As a prominent private television station, Delta TV's specific contribution to this fight is not clearly understood (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). It is unclear whether the station's reporting strategies are effectively uncovering and highlighting corrupt practices or if its potential is being neutralized by the very systemic and legal challenges it seeks to confront (Phionah et al., 2023). Therefore, this study is necessary to investigate the specific role and effectiveness of Delta TV in addressing corruption, analyzing the nature of its coverage, the challenges it faces, and its overall impact on public discourse and accountability in Uganda.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the role of media in addressing corruption in Uganda
2. To examine the causes of corruption in Uganda
3. To examine the policy measures can be taken to curb corruption in Uganda

Methodology

The methodological approach for this investigation was grounded in a longitudinal survey design, which facilitated the observation of relationships and trends pertaining to the role of media in addressing corruption over a specified

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period. A quantitative approach to data collection was primarily employed, enabling the researcher to gather standardized data from a diverse range of stakeholders for robust statistical analysis (Abiodun et al., 2022). The study population was systematically identified and categorized into five key groups central to the research problem: government officials, civil servants, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and journalists, totaling 50 individuals (Hassan Abdi et al., 2020). From this population, a sample of 30 respondents was selected, comprising 4 government officials, 10 civil servants, 3 NGO representatives, 3 CSO representatives, and 10 journalists. This sampling strategy aimed to minimize respondent bias and provide a wider, more representative coverage of perspectives relevant to the study's focus (Anwar et al., 2022).

A mixed-method sampling procedure was utilized to select participants. Purposive sampling, a non-probability technique where researchers use their judgment to select cases that best enable them to meet their research objectives (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021), was administered to government officials, NGOs, and CSOs to ensure that respondents with specific, relevant knowledge were included. Conversely, random sampling was administered to civil servants and journalists to provide an equal chance of selection for individuals within these groups, thereby enhancing the generalizability of findings from these segments (Olanrewaju, Lukman Abiodun, et al., 2021). Data was sourced from both primary and secondary origins. Primary data was collected directly from respondents through self-administered questionnaires, interviews, and observational techniques. Secondary data was obtained through a comprehensive review of existing literature on the role of media in addressing corruption in Uganda, which helped to contextualize the primary findings within the broader academic and policy discourse.

The primary data collection instruments included closed-ended questionnaires designed to quantify perceptions on the media's role, as well as an interview guide administered to staff in the production section of Delta TV to gain in-depth insights with a logical flow. Furthermore, observation was used to gather information from various departments within the station, for which an observation checklist was designed (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). For data analysis and processing, the collected information was edited, coded, and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022). The analysis generated descriptive statistics and utilized cross-tabulations to describe the sample. Inferential statistics and various data visualization tools, including tables and charts, were applied to establish relationships between variables. The core variables the independent variable (the role of media) and the dependent variable (addressing corruption) were measured using a series of statements rated on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree), to capture respondents' perceptions (Joshi et al., 2015). Throughout the research process, stringent ethical considerations were upheld.

Results

Table 1: Shows Responses on a democratically elected board of governors in public sector

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Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	27
Agree	12	40
Not sure	2	7
Disagree	12	23
Strongly Disagree	1	3
Total	30	100

Source: Primary data 2024

Table 1 indicates that the majority of the respondents are in agreement that media promotes a democratically elected board taking the highest percentage of 20(67%) whereby 12(40%) Disagreed and 8(27%) strongly disagreed respectively. This implies that media promotes a democratically elected board hence a addressing against corruption in Uganda (Nelson et al., 2023).

Table 2: Shows Responses on accountability in decision making of public officials

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	10
Agree	17	57
Not sure	3	10
Disagree	5	17
Strongly Disagree	2	6
Total	30	100

Source: Primary data 2024

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents are in agreement that media promotes accountability in decision making whereby 17(57%) agreed and 3(10%) strongly agreed respectively. This implies that the media promotes accountability in decision making hence addressing corruption in Uganda.

Table 3: Shows Response on integrity and probity of public officials (Uganda)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	67
Agree	3	10
Not sure	1	3
Disagree	6	20
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

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Table 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that media promotes integrity and probity of public officials taking highest percentage of 20(67%) this implies that cases of conflict of interest, bribes, corruption and embezzlement among public officials have dropped compared to the late 1990s.

Table 4: Shows Responses on a transparent and open leadership of public officials (Uganda)

Response	Frequency	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	-	-	
Agree	23	77	
Not sure	1	3	
Disagree	4	13	
Strongly Disagree	2	7	
Total	30	100	

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 4 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that media promotes transparency and practice open leadership taking highest percentage of 23(77%). This implies that media promotes transparency and practice open leadership hence fighting corruption. 4.2.5 Media promotes fairness, honesty and equity among public officials.

Table 5: Shows Responses on a fairness, honesty and equity of public officials

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strong Agree	-	-
Agree	15	50
Not sure	5	17
Disagree	6	20
Strongly Disagree	4	13
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 5 shows that the majority of the respondents agree that mass media promotes fairness, honesty and equity among public officials is practiced where by 15(50%) disagreed and 4(13%) strongly disagreed respectively. This implies that media promotes fairness. Honesty and equity among public officials hence addressing corruption in Uganda

Table 6: Shows Responses on an objectivity and independence of public officials

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	25	83
Not sure	2	7

Disagree	3	10
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 6 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that Media promotes objectivity and independence when making decisions taking the highest percentage of 25(83%). This implies that Media promotes objectivity and independence when making decisions hence fighting corruption in Uganda.

Table 7: Shows Responses on a responsiveness of public officials

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	21	70
Not sure	2	7
Disagree	7	23
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Table 7 shows that the majority of the respondents agree that Media promotes responsiveness of public officials to public needs and demands taking the highest percentage of 21(70%). This implies that Media promotes responsiveness of public officials to public needs and demands hence addressing corruption and promoting effective service delivery in Uganda.

Table 8: Shows Responses on economical use of public funds

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	27	90
Not sure	-	-
Disagree	3	10
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 8 indicates that majority of the respondents agree that Media promotes economic and efficient using public funds highest percentage of 27(90%). This implies that Media promotes economic and efficient using public funds hence addressing corruption in Uganda.

Table 9: Shows Responses on poverty

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	7
Agree	28	93
Not sure	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 9 shows that the majority of the respondents are in agreement that poverty has resulted into corruption in Uganda whereby 28(93%) agreed and 2(7%) strongly agreed respectively. This implies that poverty has resulted in to corruption in Uganda.

Table 10: Shows Responses on poor governance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	17	57
Not sure	3	10
Disagree	5	16.5
Strongly Disagree	5	16.5
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 10 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that poor governance has resulted into corruption in Uganda taking the highest parentage of 17(57%). This implies that poor governance has resulted into corruption in Uganda.

Table 11: Shows Responses on armed conflicts

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	7
Agree	13	43
Not sure	3	10
Disagree	12	40
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 11 shows that the majority of the respondents agree that armed conflicts have resulted into corruption in Uganda taking the highest percentage of 15(50%). This implies that armed conflicts have resulted into corruption in Uganda.

Table 12: Shows Responses on foreign aid

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	23
Agree	15	50
Not sure	3	10
Disagree	5	17
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 12 indicates that the majority of the respondents are in agreement that foreign aid has resulted into a cycle of corruption in Uganda hereby 15(50%) agreed and 7(23%) strongly agreed respectively. This implies that foreign aid has resulted into a cycle of corruption in Uganda.

Table 13: Shows responses on conflict of interest

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	20	67
Not sure	1	3
Disagree	5	17
Strongly Disagree	4	13
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 13 shows that the majority of the respondents are in agreement that Good governance checks on conflict of interest whereby 20(67%) agreed and 4(13%) strongly disagreed respectively. This Implies that Good governance checks on conflict of interest hence checking on widespread public corruption.

Table 14: Shows Responses on ethical behavior

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	17
Agree	23	77

Not sure	2	6
Disagree	-	-
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 14 shows that the majority of the respondents are in agreement that good governance promotes ethical behavior whereby 23(77%) agreed and 5(17%) strongly agreed respectively. This implies that Good governance promotes ethical behavior hence reducing on corruption in Uganda.

Table 15: Shows responses on corruption and embezzlement of public funds

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	18	60
Not sure	2	6
Disagree	5	17
Strongly Disagree	5	17
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 15 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that good governance checks on corruption taking the highest percentage of 18(60%). This implies that good governance is one of the strategies to be used to address corruption in Uganda.

Table 16: Shows Responses on misappropriation of public funds

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	17
Agree	15	50
Not sure	1	3
Disagree	9	30
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 16 shows that the majority of the respondents are in agreement that good governance checks on the misappropriation of public funds whereby 15(50%) agreed and 5(17%) strongly agreed respectively. This implies that good governance checks on the misappropriation of public funds.

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Table 17: Shows Responses on public trust in government agencies

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	24	80
Not sure	-	-
Disagree	6	30
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 17 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that good governance builds public trust taking the highest percentage of 24(80%). This implies that good governance promotes public confidence and trust in government institutions an indicator of performance through service delivery.

Table 18: Shows Responses on internal controls and audit

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	24	80
Not sure	-	-
Disagree	6	30
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 18 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that internal auditing checks on corruption in public sector taking the highest percentage of 24(80%). This implies that internal auditing checks on corruption in Uganda.

Table 19: Shows Responses on internal controls and audit

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	24	80
Not sure	-	-
Disagree	6	30
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 19 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that internal auditing checks on corruption in public sector taking the highest percentage of 24(80%). This implies that internal auditing checks on corruption in Uganda.

Table 20: Shows Responses on legal compliances

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	24	80
Not sure	-	-
Disagree	6	30
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 20 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that legal compliances checks on corruption in' public sector taking the highest percentage of 24(80%). This implies that legal compliances checks on corruption in Uganda.

Table 21: Shows Responses on e-government

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	24	80
Not sure	-	-
Disagree	6	30
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 21 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that e-government checks on corruption in public sector taking the highest percentage of 24(80%). This implies that e government checks on corruption in Uganda.

Table 22: Shows Responses on out-sourcing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	24	80
Not sure	-	-
Disagree	6	30
Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	30	100

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Table 22 indicates that the majority of the respondents agree that out-sourcing checks on corruption in public sector taking the highest percentage of 24(80%). This implies that outsourcing checks on corruption in Uganda.

Conclusion

The media provided a set of performance standards against which public actors could be held accountable. Furthermore, human rights principles informed the content of good governance efforts; they informed the development of legislative frameworks, policies, programmes, budgetary allocations, and other measures. At the time, corruption in Africa was getting worse, with around 80% of the continent's population living on less than two dollars a day, and corruption was identified as a key factor perpetuating this pervasive poverty. To escape the vicious cycle that corruption created for disadvantaged groups, it was essential for people to be able to speak up for their rights and demand accountability from their leaders, thereby ensuring access to basic social services and resources.

However, Uganda, and Africa in general, had been victims of widespread corruption in the public sector. This was characterized by the embezzlement of public funds that were meant for service delivery, a situation that led directly to underdevelopment and social crisis. Consequently, many people were left without essential social services from the government in critical sectors such as education, health, water, and sanitation.

Recommendations

The government should initiate a comprehensive and sustained public sensitization campaign to educate citizens on the profound negative effects of corruption, explicitly demonstrating how the embezzlement of public funds directly hinders the delivery of essential services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

This foundational effort must be coupled with a systemic enhancement of good governance by rigorously promoting the core principles of accountability, transparency, and responsibility among all public servants. Furthermore, the government must actively support, rather than constrain, the media in its watchdog role, recognizing it as a crucial ally by ensuring a safe and enabling legal environment for investigative journalism that exposes graft.

To safeguard national resources, there is an urgent need for the government to establish and empower robust, independent mechanisms for the effective monitoring of all foreign-funded projects, which are particularly vulnerable to corrupt practices. Concurrently, a fundamental overhaul of public administration is required to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, eliminating bureaucratic bottlenecks that often foster bribery.

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