

**THE ROLE OF SPORTS JOURNALISM IN PROMOTING YOUTH
PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA SPORTS: A CASE STUDY
OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (UCU)**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I Carl Loum, declare that this dissertation is my original and independent investigation. It has never been submitted to any institution of learning for an award nor has it been published online. Omissions and commissions in this dissertation are entirely mine.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Carl Loum', with a yellow highlighter mark under the 'l'.

Signature:

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Date: 18th / December / 2025

S23B90/019

APPROVAL

This dissertation is submitted to the school of journalism, Media and Communication with my approval as the supervisor,

MR. Geoffrey Abraham Bakiraasa Ssenoga.

(Supervisor)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. ABSENOS', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Signature.....

Date; 18th / December / 2025

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my beloved parents, my partner Rebekah Rose, family and friends who have always supported me through the course of my studies and career, and the department of sports at the university.

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May God bless you abundantly!

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Problem statement.....	3
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	4
1.4 Objectives of the study.....	4
1.5 Research questions.....	4
1.6 Scope of the study	4
1.6.1 Geographical scope	4
1.6.2 Content scope.....	5
1.6.3 Time scope	5
1.7 Justification.....	5
1.8 Significance of the study.....	6
1.9 Chapter Conclusion.....	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.0 Introduction.....	7
2.1 Influence of sports journalism on youth participation and development	7
2.2 Challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting youth-centred sports.....	8
2.3 Strategies for strengthening sports journalism to enhance youth sports development	10
2.4 Theoretical review	11
2.4.1 Agenda-Setting Theory	11
2.4.2 Assumptions and tenets of the theory	12

2.4.3 Strengths and limitations of the theory	12
2.4.4 Application to the theory to the study	12
CHAPTER THREE	13
METHODOLOGY	13
3.0 Introduction.....	13
3.1 Research design and approach	13
3.2 Study area.....	13
3.3 Study population and sample size	14
3.4 Different ways to gather samples	14
3.5 Sources of data.....	15
3.5.1 Primary source	15
3.5.2 Secondary source	15
3.6 Data collection method and instrument	15
3.6.1 In-depth interviews	16
3.6.2 Key informant interviews.....	16
3.7 Procedure of data collection.....	16
3.8 Data analysis	16
3.8.1 Analysis of qualitative data.....	16
3.9 Ethical considerations	17
3.10 Limitations of the study	18
CHAPTER FOUR.....	19
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION	19
4.0 Introduction.....	19
4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents.....	19
4.2 Influence of sports journalism on youth participation and development in UCU.....	21
4.2.1 Sports media coverage and student participation.....	21
4.2.2 Impact of sports journalism on skills development.....	23
4.3 Challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting youth-centred sports.....	25
4.3.1 Challenges faced in covering and promoting youth sports at UCU.....	25
4.3.2 Impact of coverage challenges on the visibility and growth of student sports.....	27
4.4 Strategies for strengthening sports journalism to enhance youth sports development	29
4.4.1 Strategies for enhancing sports journalism for youth participation	29

CHAPTER FIVE	32
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	32
5.0 Introduction.....	32
5.1 Summary of findings.....	32
5.2 Discussion of findings.....	33
5.2.1 Influence of sports journalism on youth participation and development in UCU.....	33
5.2.2 Challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting youth-centred sports.....	35
5.2.3 Strategies for strengthening sports journalism to enhance youth sports development.....	36
5.3 Conclusions.....	37
5.4 Recommendations.....	38
5.5 Areas for further research	39
REFERENCES	40
APPENDICES	43
Appendix 1: In-depth Interview Guide	43
Appendix 2: Key Informant Interview Guide	45

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Background Information about the respondents.....	19
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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at exploring the role of sports journalism in promoting youth participation and development in Ugandan sports: a case study of Uganda Christian University (UCU). The study was guided by the following objectives; analyzing the extent to which sports journalism influences youths' willingness to participate and develop their abilities in sports in UCU, identifying the challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting the participation and development of youth-centred sports coverage in UCU, and suggesting strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of sports journalism in promoting youth sports and development in UCU.

The study employed the use of a case research design where qualitative research approach was used. The methods of data collection used during the study were obtained through in-depth interviews and key informant interviews. A sample of 20 sports students was using the principle of saturation and simple random sampling, whereas the key informants who are sports journalists from *The Standard UCU* who cover sports activities in UCU and the management of sports department in UCU were selected using purposive sampling method.

The study found that UCU's sports journalism program is very important for getting more young people engaged and helping them get better at what they do. This is because it makes sure that student players are known, encouraged, and praised. On the other hand, there are issues, like not having enough money, bad communication, and not having enough people representing some sports. This makes it hard to cover everything and make the tool better. According to the study, the most important things for getting more people involved, making sure everyone felt welcome, and helping people improve their skills were regular reporting, using digital platforms, showing role models, and working with sports management.

Lastly, the study recommended the need for increasing and consistently maintaining coverage of students sports, leveraging digital and social media platforms, highlighting student achievements and role models, enhancing collaboration between the sports department and journalists, and incorporating educational and skill-development content to boost visibility, engagement, talent development, and sustained youth participation in sports at UCU.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study was about the role of sports journalism in promoting youth participation and development in Ugandan sports: a case study of Uganda Christian University (UCU). This chapter presents background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, justification and theoretical framework.

1.1 Background of the study

Sports journalism has become an important way to get kids involved in sports and help them grow, as well as bring together athletes, fans, and the community as a whole. It is very important for getting young people to be active (Malik, 2021) since it helps them understand the ideals, opportunities, and successes in the sports sector. Sports journalism elevates the visibility of young athletes and sporting events through narrative and media coverage, hence cultivating interest and involvement among youth demographics (Matsiola et al., 2022). It does more than only report on youth sports; it also impacts people's opinions about them and attitudes in society, which creates a good environment for growth (Howie et al., 2020). Sports media is not simply entertaining, but it can also help young people do better in sports (Bruner et al., 2023).

Young adults and teens can write about sports. It helps them grow by giving them stories that teach them characteristics like discipline, teamwork, and resilience (Abi, 2020). There is also extra aid for youth sports clubs that they can't obtain anywhere else. This helps people get money and help (Wenner, 2021). Internet sports writing is bigger and more significant than ever since young people can now read more enjoyable and interesting sports writing. Camiré et al. (2022) contend that adolescents and young adults can cultivate friendships and discontinue detrimental behaviors if they possess the ability to communicate about sports effectively. Matthews (2024) says that sports have been better and more competitive since they went digital. Young people also like stories about sports more.

It has been done in the US, UK, Germany, and Japan to make national sports programs more kid-friendly and to get more kids to play sports (Bruner et al., 202). The media in the US

have written a lot on school sports and youth clubs. This has helped spread the word that being active and playing sports are good for you (Howie et al., 2020). Local and community sports media have been covering sports in the UK for a long time. Manik (2021) feels it makes people more eager to join in and brings them closer. News stories in Japan that cover sports often talk about national ideals and how driven young people can be. Matsiola et al. (2022) argue that in Germany, sports writing uses both old and modern instruments to train and motivate young athletes. There are big plans for school and society that want to help kids grow in every way, and sports writing is a big part of those plans.

Ncube et al. (202) argue that South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya are only a handful of the African countries where sports writing is becoming more vital for young athletes and their progress. Many individuals are interested in South Africa's school sports and track and field events. This has helped more people find good people and learn about programs that can help them grow (Abi, 2020). Sports are helping young people in Nigeria get to locations and meet new people, but money issues still need to be fixed (Nwabuwe, 202n). Kenya watches over young people and advises them to perform sports with other people and use both old and new technology to run. Kahwa et al. (2021) say this helps the country meet its growth goals. The facilities aren't perfect, but they indicate that sports writing may teach and move young people in sub-Saharan Africa (Nwabuwe, 201).

Kamwa et al. (2021) assert that writing about sports is an effective method to encourage youth in Uganda to participate in them. This is true at Africa Christian University (UCU) and other schools like it. Local newspapers, TV stations, and social media sites talk about college games, local sporting events, and the achievements of young athletes. Tongjo 2021 says that this makes kids want to play sports even more. Read news stories about sports that educate kids how to get better and how to compete in a healthy way. This will make them want to play sports more (Namasinga & Orgeret, 2020). Oyako adds that writing about sports at UCU has helped students learn more about other disciplines, get more engaged in sports, and become better at being in charge, leading, and working with others. Mbabazi (2019) says that writing about sports is an excellent method to get more people engaged and assist all of Uganda's college students grow.

1.2 Problem statement

Ideally, sports journalism should stimulate youth engagement, skills growth, social interaction, and overall well-being through consistent coverage and positive media framing at institutions like UCU (Howie et al., 2020). However, youth participation at UCU continues to decline with recent data showing a 15% decline in sports involvement and a 12% drop in skills development at UCU over five years (Sentongo, 2025). Mbabazi remarked in 2019 that sports are better for your health and happiness and make you 18% more likely to meet new people. Purnomo et al. (2024) argue that this trend could make more young people do nothing and friends spend less time together. This will make it take them longer to attain their athletic ambitions. Some folks think we should go soon. The Ministry of Sports and UCU are two bodies that are in charge of a number of activities. Kamwa et al. (2021) makes it plain that more needs to be done.

They also looked at the media's role in youth sports in a broader approach, including Girginov & Dowling (2025) and Oyako (2024). Write about sports to help Kenyan youths get along in college athletics. We don't know much about it yet. People who play sports and people who write about sports for the news have both been studied. They told us what to do and how to accomplish it. Very few people know how sports writing can assist high school students get into college and do well there. UCU was one of the few places that did a study. Teenagers and young adults in Uganda should get better in sports by playing them. Reading about sports is one method to do this. The biggest attention should be on Kenya Christian University (KCU).

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore the role of sports journalism in promoting youth participation and development in Ugandan sports with specific focus on Uganda Christian University (UCU).

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To analyze the extent to which sports journalism influences youths' willingness to participate and develop their abilities in sports in UCU.
- ii. To identify the challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting the participation and development of youth-centred sports coverage in UCU.
- iii. To suggest strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of sports journalism in promoting youth sports and development in UCU.

1.5 Research questions

- i. To what extent does sports journalism influence youths' willingness to participate and develop their abilities in sports in UCU?
- ii. What challenges are faced by sports journalists in promoting the participation and development of youth-centred sports coverage in UCU?
- iii. What strategies can enhance the effectiveness of sports journalism in promoting youth sports and development in UCU?

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of the study covered three dimensions that is; geographical, content and time and these were discussed in detail below.

1.6.1 Geographical scope

This study was carried out in Uganda Christian University located in Mukono district, central Uganda. UCU was chosen since it is among the top universities with a vibrant sports scene and well-known media channels, therefore it is the perfect place to investigate how sports journalism encourages young people's engagement and growth in university sports.

1.6.2 Content scope

This study specifically focused on; analyzing the extent to which sports journalism influences youths' willingness to participate and develop their abilities in sports in UCU, identifying the challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting the participation and development of youth-centred sports coverage in UCU, and suggesting strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of sports journalism in promoting youth sports and development in UCU.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study covered scholarly material and institutional reports published within the last five years, from 2021 to 2025. This period was ideal for looking at current developments in UCU's sports journalism practices and how they affect young people's participation and growth, especially in terms of sports participation, skills development, social development, and health and wellbeing among students.

1.7 Justification

It was clear that not enough people know how being a sports reporter affects the health and safety, skill development, and social growth of young people in Uganda who play sports at university, especially at UCU. Kids' sports are supported by many UCU and national programs, but many students are still not interested in them, their skill development is slowing down, and they aren't doing as many things that are good for their physical and mental health (Howie et al., 2020; Purnomo et al., 2022). There is a lot of research on sports writing in Uganda. Most of it looks at the media, how it's changing online, and how it writes about sports in general. One thing that hasn't been looked at a lot is how sports journalism directly changes how involved and grown young people are in college. Lots of people didn't know that. This study tries to fill in that gap.

1.8 Significance of the study

People who work in the media and communication sector, such sports journalists and college media outlets, may find the research helpful since it will help them understand how sports journalism may affect young people's participation and growth in college sports. It will teach students how to improve their framing, covering, and storytelling skills so that they can better demonstrate how young people are involved in UCU sports activities.

The UCU administration, the Sports Department, and other entities that work to improve sports will also benefit from the research since it will help them understand why fewer young people are getting involved, learning new skills, making friends, and getting involved in health-related activities. It will also give helpful tips on how to employ better sports journalism approaches to fix these problems and make things better for young people.

The researcher will gain from the research by broadening their understanding of how sports journalism helps to encourage youth sports and development in higher education institutions, particularly in the setting of UCU. At last, the research will be a great resource for other scholars trying to find out how sports journalism, youth behavior, and sports development in Ugandan universities are related.

1.9 Chapter Conclusion

The chapter started with an introduction which outlined the key areas covered; this was followed by the background to the study. The chapter proceeded with problem statement and handles the purpose of the study. Objectives of the study were determined as well as research questions which were basically derived from the research objectives. The scope of the study was determined and lastly, the chapter handled significance of the research. This set ground for literature review in chapter two and methodology in chapter three.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter covers other works from other literatures. It is important that a closer look is taken at similar works done on the role of sports journalism in promoting youth participation and development and review some of the literatures pertinent to the study, for comparison, confirmation and differences to be laid bare. Due to this, this chapter is meant to contain the review of various literatures considered relevant to the study.

2.1 Influence of sports journalism on youth participation and development

Researchers Howie et al. (2020) looked into how kids' sports programs help kids make friends. They found that kids and teens are more likely to be involved when they read about sports in the news. Purnomo et al. (2024) also found that people who watch a lot of media about young sports are more likely to learn new things and set goals. Teens and young adults are more likely to play sports if they know they can learn how to do it and join teams. Both tests proved this to be true. According to Purnomo et al. (2024) and Howie et al. (2020), reading good sports news can help kids feel better about themselves and get better at sports.

In 2022, Matsiola et al. looked into how digital stories can be used in sports writing. They found out that kids like sports more and play them more when they watch movies about those sports. For kids to do better, they said, they should be given fun and interesting things to work on together and think about. In each study, it was found that kids might like digital sports content. This could make kids enjoy sports more and want to play them more. Rojas-Torrijos and Nölleke (2023) and Matsiola et al. (2022) both said that kids might enjoy writing about sports and find it useful for getting better at what they do. That claim is backed up by this study.

In 2020, Abi looked into how the words used in sports news show what's important to teens and young adults in Algeria. Youths are more likely to join if they can see it, and it helps them make friends. Bruner et al. (2023) did a different study and found that teens who watch sports shows on TV are more likely to be nice and good with other people. A study from each group found that

hearing about your child's teamwork and accomplishments makes you more likely to keep playing sports yourself. Abi (2020) and Bruner et al. (2023) say this shows that the point of sports writing is to help people get better at the sports they already play and to get more people to play them.

In 2021, Wenner looked at how sports, the media, and society all together are connected. He learned that writing about sports can help kids and young adults find out who they are and get involved in their communities. Nwabuwe wrote a lot in 2023 about sports programs for kids in countries in Sub-West Africa. He learned that these programs helped kids get better at sports and more of them to play. A lot of studies have shown that sports news is more than just giving you the facts. For a long time, teens and young adults have liked it because it keeps them busy and makes them feel like they belong. These things are all very important for their growth. Nwabuwe and Wenner (2021) say that planning media shows well does more than just get kids excited. They also make them better people.

This is how sports are run in 2025. The media and sports offices should work together so that kids can learn more and get more tools to help them play. They also said kids could show off their skills and talk to their teachers about moving sports writing sites (2022). This is how they get bigger. Kids seem to be more interested in sports, get better at them, and make new friends when sports writers talk about more than just the scores of games. They are happy and healthy now that they did it. There are two studies that say writing about sports can help kids become more interested in sports and also help them grow as people.

2.2 Challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting youth-centred sports

Limited financial resources and news room support; The newsroom doesn't get enough money or help. Malik (2021) believes that journalists don't have enough money to thoroughly cover activities and events, and that media corporations don't pay much attention to child sports. Bernstein and Kian (2024) also suggest that bias against girls and women in the sports media and a lack of government support make it tougher for young athletes, especially girls, to be recognized and get active because their tales are less likely to be shared. Sports reporters can't always cover

youth sports events because of money and legal issues. This makes it tougher for young people to flourish and get active.

Lack of professional training and technical knowledge; Holt et al. (2020) found that not all writers knew how to effectively cover youth sports events. This suggests that they either don't report enough or they report things in the wrong way. Matthews (2024) also notes that most writing schools don't teach youngsters how to write about sports in a way that illustrates how they change and grow. This is why writers aren't ready to urge youngsters to join in the right way. It's tougher for reporters to find stories that will engage young athletes, help them grow better, and help them rise up in the world.

Media commercialization; The urge to make sports journalism more profitable is a huge concern, according to Summerley (2020). This means that the media pays more attention to huge events than to projects for young athletes, which makes the teams less visible.

Camiré et al. (2022) also suggest that journalists don't pay attention to sports programs that help kids grow because they are worried about ethics and employ market-based reporting methods, which makes the programs less effective. Sports journalism doesn't actually support programs that get people more excited and help them get better at what they do. Because of this, stories concerning teens and young adults are generally overlooked.

Logistical and infrastructural constraints; Kahwa et al. (2021) demonstrate that journalists inadequately cover youth activities due to difficulties in accessing local events and conflicts with sports management. Oyako (2024) also mentioned that it's harder for young people to write about sports because the buildings where newspapers are made are getting old and sports groups and writing schools don't talk to each other. These things make it impossible for sports journalists to write about how young people are often in the news.

Declining youth engagement with media platforms; According to Sentongo (2025), more and more teens and young people don't use media. This means that youth games don't get as much

airtime as they should. This means that the news isn't as helpful or compelling for young people. Atuhaire says that young people don't read the news the same way they used to. This makes it difficult for sports journalists to reach the individuals they want to reach, which hinders interest and talent advancement. Technology and people connect with sports media in very different ways when it comes to helping young athletes.

2.3 Strategies for strengthening sports journalism to enhance youth sports development

Integrating digital story telling in sports coverage; Matsiola et al. (2022) believe that telling stories about sports through social media and audiovisual narratives makes young people more interested in sports material and drives them to join. Perreault and Bell (2022) also believe that sports reporters may make their work more entertaining and change it up when they employ digital technologies. This helps connect the dots between young people doing sports and sports news in the media. Studies have demonstrated over and over again that using digital storytelling in sports writing can help youngsters get better at sports, develop friends, and stay active every day.

Getting sports and news outlets to work together: Bruner et al. (2023) add that another method to do this is to encourage reporters to work with sports groups to get more people interested in and supportive of programs for young people. Also, Abi (2020) states that when reporters work together as a team, they can gather the most up-to-date information on local sports events and kids' projects. This leads to fair coverage and good depictions of activities for kids. These relationships make kids' games so popular. This makes them desire to learn new things, play, and grow as a group.

Offering sports writers particular training: Wenner (2020) argues that educating reporters how to write about young sports can make the news better and more useful. For instance, they could find out how the games effect moral issues and growth. Summerley (2020) thinks that finding new ways to tell stories and getting youngsters interested in journalism can help reporters write stories

that teach and motivate young athletes. This makes their case even stronger. These kinds of activities make sure that students can read sports news and develop better at it.

More time spent on covering a wide range of youth games that involve everyone: Girginov and Dowling (2025) said that if sports writers want to get more people interested in kids' sports, they should focus on girls and low-income places that don't get enough attention. To make young people more interested in sports news, Ncube et al. (2025) say that including different stories and points of view makes it more true to society and helps people grow personally and socially through sports. People will see and hear about youth sports events more often if the news is fair and equal.

Utilising media for youth engagement; Do you want to get kids interested in your business by using computers and TV? In 2019, Mbabazi said that putting educational youth sports shows on TV helps people learn more about the subject and makes them utilize the internet and TV more. People say that writers may learn more about young people on social media by posting breaking news, interesting data, and stories that make people want to keep going to sports events. You may use this method on a lot of different sites. It shows that writing about sports can get kids to play, learn new things, and make friends.

2.4 Theoretical review

2.4.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

In the year 1972, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw came up with the Agenda-Setting hypothesis, which served as the basis for their investigation. According to Zain (2014), the mass media has the ability to affect public opinion by drawing attention to issues that are determined to be significant rather than by prescribing beliefs. A common use of this method is to provide academics with assistance in appreciating the ways in which news coverage and media emphasis might influence the attention and priorities of individuals. According to McCombs et al. (2018), this is a wonderful chance to investigate the impact that sports journalism has on the engagement and growth of young people.

2.4.2 Assumptions and tenets of the theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory is based on a few major assumptions. First, media coverage affects how much people know about topics. The more people see something, the more important it seems. Second, viewers rely on media cues to prioritize information when they form opinions or make decisions (Kim et al., 2017). Third, the idea posits that individuals' daily lives are directly shaped by the frequency and prominence of media coverage, hence influencing their perceptions of significance. It ultimately posits that while behavioral impact may occur indirectly via attention and awareness, the primary function of the media is to shape attitudes rather than directly dictate actions (Hao, 2022).

2.4.3 Strengths and limitations of the theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory is useful because it explains how the media impacts what happens. Teachers can tell if changing the order of news articles impacts how much people know and pay attention (Mohammed et al., 2022). This is a terrific approach to see which sports events attract a lot of attention and how often. It will help you find out how well sports news gets young people involved. One problem with the idea is that it assumes that people are passive and doesn't take into account how their own experiences, peer pressure, and beliefs can change their thoughts. A larger issue is prioritized over a minor behavioral modification. This can make it harder for young people to figure out what will happen in the long run (Zain, 2014).

2.4.4 Application to the theory to the study

This study is directly related to the Agenda-Setting Theory since the sports media at Uganda Christian University may make youth sports the most important issue. McCombs et al. (2018) assert that this may alter students' perceptions of their self-worth. The media regularly talk about how sports may help young people get healthier, learn new skills, make friends, and get involved. This could make youngsters happier and help the area grow. We believe that the way the media

covers some issues could help young people pay attention, modify how they get involved, and assist UCU's sports programs grow in a good way (Hao, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains how the research was done and what steps were taken. The methods employed for this inquiry was examined. This includes the study design, the place, the people, and the number of people in the sample. The study also talks about the sample procedure, the variables being examined, the research equipment utilized, the data analysis methods, ethical issues, and any probable problems with the research.

3.1 Research design and approach

The study used a case study approach. This method allowed for a deeper understanding of specific issues and their connection to larger contexts. As Amin (2005) noted, talking to people in your community can provide valuable insights into their experiences and viewpoints.

The research employed a qualitative methodology. This kind of research helps us understand how people feel, what they want, and how they see complicated social processes. To get qualitative data, interviews were done with people who were relevant, such as the UCU sports department administrators and sports writers from The Standard. The persons who were interviewed spoke a lot about how college sports news changes how young people feel about and get involved in sports. Using this strategy, the researcher was able to collect first-hand accounts and information about why students at Uganda Christian University wish to play sports.

3.2 Study area

The study was carried out in Uganda Christian University located in Mukono district, central Uganda. UCU was chosen since it is among the top universities with a vibrant sports scene and

well-known media channels, therefore it is the perfect place to investigate how sports journalism encourages young people's engagement and growth in university sports.

3.3 Study population and sample size

The study group included people from Uganda Christian University. This group included people from The Standard UCU and other UCU sports staff. Four of the five participants who took part stated they learned something that helped them comprehend better. The number of sports teams a Uganda Christian University student was on was related to how often they went to the gym. This is what people do in qualitative research to make sure they obtain all the crucial information and leave out the less important information. Tolleson et al. (2024) explain that saturation comes when more chats or debates don't bring up fresh ideas or issues that are crucial to the study's goals. The way the study was put up was helpful since it showed us how the students' thoughts and actions regarding writing about sports affected how they learnt and grew interested in the subject. They had to talk to some kids who liked athletics before they could conclude with the group. This was a quick and easy approach to obtain a lot of qualitative data, and everyone in the group could share their thoughts.

3.4 Different ways to gather samples

A basic random selection technique was used to choose the sports teams at Ugandan Christian University. This makes sure that everyone in the group has an equal chance of being picked (Howie et al., 2020). After assigning a number to each qualified sports student, the technique kept randomly picking participants until the saturation condition was met. When working with these young people, simple random sampling made it much easier to hear different opinions on how sports journalism affects young people's growth and involvement.

On the other hand, UCU's sports department director and reporters for The Standard UCU were picked utilizing a planned sampling method. These people provided the in-depth qualitative data needed for this method. Their unique experiences, points of view, and comprehension of the study's goals made it possible. The systematic sample technique can assist researchers at UCU learn more

about how sports writing affects the growth of young sports, including the ways it does so and the problems it causes.

3.5 Sources of data

While carrying out the research study, both primary and secondary data were used by the researcher.

3.5.1 Primary source

Primary data are important for all areas of research because they are accurate information about the results of an experiment or observation. Primary data from the field was obtained through in-depth interviews and key informant interviews to selected respondents in order to get their opinions. Primary data helped the researcher in collecting information for the specific purposes of their study. The researcher collected the data himself, using in-depth interviews and key informant interviews.

3.5.2 Secondary source

Secondary data refers to handling, collecting and possibly processing data by people other than the researcher in question. For the purposes of a historical research project, secondary sources are generally scholarly books and articles. This source was used to collect data from already written literature for example e-books, journals, published articles and periodicals. Documentary resources are classified in order to facilitate the data collection and textual analysis (Mubazi 2008).

3.6 Data collection method and instrument

The researcher collected data from respondents by use of in-depth interviews and key informant interviews as the data collection methods.

3.6.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth conversations with the Ugandan Christian University athletics students proved to be the most effective way to gain a deeper understanding. By doing things in this manner, we have the opportunity to get a good look at how students feel, what they have done, and what they think about sports writing, as well as how it influences their ability to play sports and improve their skills in sports. People can acquire clear answers, get rid of confusion, and record a lot of important qualitative information that quantitative approaches could overlook when they communicate to each other in depth. By looking at the personal experiences, motivations, and problems that keep young people from playing sports in this way, we can see how sports journalism affects their growth and involvement.

3.6.2 Key informant interviews

They talked to managers of UCU's sports department and sports writers from The Standard UCU. These people were some of the most important sources. A lot of people in business and the field thought of great ways that sports journalism could help kids get involved and grow. Key sources were used to learn more about institutional rules, problems that come up when writing about youth sports, and ways to get more kids involved. This is the only way to get correct and up-to-date information from people who run and write about sports events at UCU so that the study can look at both the academic and practical sides of sports writing there.

3.7 Procedure of data collection

The researcher obtained a recommendation and an introductory letter from the School of Journalism, Media and Communication in UCU, after which he sought permission from the different respondents in Uganda Christian University to use as a case study. The researcher approached various respondents to conduct key informant interviews.

3.8 Data analysis

3.8.1 Analysis of qualitative data

This involved the use of narrative analysis. This method is used to analyze content from various sources, such as interviews of respondents, observations from the field, or surveys. It focuses on using the stories and experiences shared by people to answer the research questions. Thus, qualitative data was edited and reorganized into meaningful phrases. In other words, a thematic approach was used to analyze qualitative data where themes, categories and patterns were

identified. The recurrent themes, which emerged in relation to each guiding question from the interviews, were presented in the results, with selected direct quotations from participants presented as illustrations.

3.9 Ethical considerations

The current study's researcher was quite cautious to prevent any form of plagiarism. Following this approach, the suggested referencing style was carefully used to adhere to the ethical norms set by the managing body and to follow the authoring referencing methods exactly. Conversely, the main data collecting methods were first tested to see whether they were capable of gathering the desired information and whether any errors are found. Any errors were corrected prior to the actual data collecting process in order to achieve the validity in this study.

Furthermore, participants in finishing this study were told in advance what the study is about and what is involved so they can make a deliberate and conscious decision on whether they wish to take part in the study or not. This means that any suitable prospective participants were not compelled to take part in the research; therefore, notifying them guaranteed that data was only gathered from those who were ready to engage. This helped to guarantee that accurate information is obtained.

In addition, ethical research calls for a researcher to distinguish between probing and invading on participants' privacy as qualitative research by definition entails a close relationship between the researcher and the subjects. The researcher sought to go through the data gathered from the participants without identifying them to a third party in order to preserve privacy. The researcher also clarified that participants' data was strictly for research uses and that anonymity was produced. When addressing personal concerns, the researcher likewise refrained from interviewing subjects in public locations.

The researcher was also accountable for seeing to it that every reasonable measure is taken throughout the course of this study to prevent study participants from suffering harm.

The study used every research technique while also honoring every attempt to protect the participants from damage.

The researcher finally also made required attempts to reduce prejudice during this project. By choosing research participants free of prejudice, this was accomplished as this guarantees the researcher did not impose personal prejudices on the attitudes of certain respondents, therefore making the study objective.

3.10 Limitations of the study

First and foremost, some respondents were not willing to provide information because of being suspicious of where the information would be taken. This was solved through the remarkable reputation in the study context as a learning institution and also obtaining an introductory letter from the university.

Finally, the researcher was limited by funds that were needed to facilitate the research such as motivating the respondents, printing fees and even daily transport to the organization to collect data. However, the researcher used self-initiatives and strategies to mobilize financial assistance from family and friends who wished him well.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the analysis of the findings, presentation, interpretation, and discussion of the findings. The report was generated from the in-depth interviews conducted with sports students from Uganda Christian University (UCU) and key informant interviews with sports journalists from *The Standard UCU* who cover sports activities in UCU and the management of sports department in UCU. The analysis of data in this chapter started with the demographic profile of the respondents and then afterwards followed the thematic analysis. The analysis revealed several perceptions which were organised into themes.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents the general background information about the respondents who are sports students from UCU in relation to their gender, age, sports discipline and year of study in Uganda Christian University (UCU) as shown in the table below;

Table 1: Background Information about the respondents

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	12	60.0
	Female	8	40.0
	Total	20	100.0
Age	18-20 years	4	20.0
	21-23 years	11	55.0
	24-26 years	5	25.0
	Total	20	100.0

Sports discipline	Athletics	4	20.0
	Basketball	4	20.0
	Volleyball	4	20.0
	Football	4	20.0
	Netball	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0
Year of study in UCU	1 st year	3	15.0
	2 nd year	9	45.0
	3 rd year	6	30.0
	4 th year	2	10.0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: *Primary data*

The data suggest that 60% of sports students are male, which means that UCU sports are more popular with men. There were 40% female students, which is a smaller but still important percentage of sports players than male students. This distribution indicates a gender disparity in sports engagement, with males more actively involved in university sports activities than girls.

Most of the people who answered (55.0%) were between the ages of 21 and 23. This suggests that most of the sports students who took part are in their early twenties and may be in the middle of their academic programs. After that, 25.0% of students are between the ages of 24 and 26, which suggests that there aren't many older students in sports. The group of 18 to 20-year-olds had the lowest percentage, 20.0%. This means that first-year students or younger students are less likely to play sports than older students.

The data also showed that the answers were evenly distributed amongst different sports. Athletics, basketball, volleyball, football, and netball each made up 20.0% of the total. This equal representation means that the study received perspectives from students who play all of UCU's major sports. This means that the insights are balanced and not skewed toward one sport. This amount of sameness suggests that UCU students play all of the sports they play in a balanced way. Finally, 45.0% of the people who answered were second-year students. This suggests that second-year students are the most involved in sports and the easiest to reach for research. 30.0% of the students were in their third year, which shows that mid-level students were quite involved. 15.0%

of the students were in their first year, which is a lower percentage than the other years. This could be because they were still getting used to university life. The lowest percentage of students who played sports was 10.0%, which was probably because many students in their last year of school cut back on sports as they focus on their studies and dissertations.

4.2 Influence of sports journalism on youth participation and development in UCU

4.2.1 Sports media coverage and student participation

From the interviews conducted with selected sports students from UCU and sports journalists from *The Standard UCU* who cover sports activities in UCU and the management of sports department in UCU, they were asked for their views on how media coverage of sports at UCU motivates them to participate in sports activities and their responses were as follows;

Media visibility; A lot of UCU sports students have said that they are more likely to participate when they see greater coverage of their games in the news. Players and coaches have said that seeing publicity of their accomplishments in school newspapers and online (like *The Standard UCU* and social media accounts) makes them feel acknowledged and motivates them to do better. The children wanted to achieve better so that they might also be highlighted in sports reports about their classmates. A spirit of good competition begins. Important sources agreed that media coverage is important for getting people to know about less popular sports. Kids are more likely to want to play when they know more about what they can do.

Recognition and validation; Another important thing to learn from the interviews is that students feel valued and recognized. After getting positive feedback from interviews, photos, and media coverage, students say they feel more secure and excited to take part in sports. They say this is because they feel like they belong to the university community. They thought that media publicity would be more motivating than private compliments since it reaches more people. Some important people in the story agreed with this idea and said that talking about the triumphs of student athletes is a fantastic way to get more students interested in sports and make them feel like their skills are important.

Information and awareness: Students also said that since they do not miss possibilities, media coverage helps them to stay up to date on current and future sporting events, therefore boosting involvement. They said that a lot of kids wouldn't know about selection trials, competitions, and training times if they didn't get news from the media. Key informants said that sports coverage serves as a communication tool since it allows students to get information quickly, therefore raising participation during trials and contests. They underlined that regular media coverage guarantees that sports events are visible and available to the whole student body.

Role modeling and inspiration: Students responded that reading about other students in sports articles offers them ideas for what they could do in other areas. They mentioned that reading about successful individuals, athletes, and talking to them makes them think they can be successful too. Key informants agreed and indicated that the media chooses to focus on positive stories to get people interested and make kids aspire to be like their peers who are strong at sports. The main sources suggest that these stories get people interested and make new players want to go out and try.

Building up the sports culture on campus: A lot of students indicated that covering sports makes UCU's sports culture stronger by making sports seem more fun and okay to do. They noted that youngsters are drawn to the school pride and camaraderie that come with playing sports when they witness a lot of them. Important sources say that one of the purposes of media coverage is to encourage a strong sports culture. This is because a busy sports culture makes kids want to do things for enjoyment and for competition.

Support for developing talent: A larger number of students responded that media coverage makes them want to do better because they know their effort might be seen. They claimed that seeing stories about people getting better, growing, or learning new skills in the news makes them feel better and keeps them motivated to work out. Key informants underlined that youngsters need to understand that they can do things in order to regard athletics as a method to grow as persons. They said that frequent coverage helps youngsters be responsible with their academics and respect

the rules.

Setting up chances for exposure: Both students and important sources noted that media coverage creates new opportunities for more exposure, which motivates students to get involved. They indicated that receiving coverage in the media could help them be noticed by sports agents, sponsors, or other groups. Key informants agreed with this and said that coverage often goes beyond UCU's school channels and is shared on social media, which makes student athletes more visible, potentially opening up future chances outside of UCU. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

“.....When I see my teammates featured in The Standard or on UCU social media, it pushes me to train harder so that I can also be recognized.....” **Sports student**

“.....Our coverage helps students see the excitement around sports, and once they see their peers shining, they want to be part of that energy.....” **Key informant**

4.2.2 Impact of sports journalism on skills development

From the interviews conducted with selected sports students from UCU and sports journalists from *The Standard UCU* who cover sports activities in UCU and the management of sports department in UCU, they were asked for their views on ways sports journalism has influenced youths skills development in improving their abilities in sports and their responses were as follows;

Exposure to skills through media analysis: Students noted that media analysis's exposure of them to expert analysis and match breakdowns, which enable them, grasp tactical aspects of their sports and hence improve their skill development. They said that when reporters emphasize the strengths and shortcomings of teams or specific athletes, it inspires them to improve their talents and fix typical errors. Key informants further said their reporting deliberately includes analytical commentary to enable student athletes to think about their performance and grasp how professional players use methods. Sports department officials say that regular coverage motivates players to take training sessions more seriously because they know their performance could be publicly evaluated, therefore promoting more discipline and work.

Motivation through recognition and visibility: Students said that being highlighted in *The Standard UCU* or UCU's internet sports channels makes them feel valued, which inspires them to want to get better at what they do. They said that good press of their performances motivates them to work more to keep or exceed their acknowledged accomplishments. From the perspective of the key informants, honoring great athletes is a deliberate tactic used to raise morale and motivate others to follow the example of the best performers. Sports department officials underlined that highlighting players and teams inspires healthy competition among students, therefore motivating them and promoting a culture of constant development in training.

Access to role models and inspiration; People who answered said that UCU's sports media usually talks about former players and up-and-coming stars, which gives current students someone to look up to. Stories like this make them think that if they work hard and get better, they can also become great players. People who are important to the story said that they talk about UCU athletes' wins on purpose to encourage young players and make them feel good about how they're getting better at their sport. Leaders in the sports department said that these news articles make kids think about sports in a fresh perspective. They don't just regard sports as a pleasant thing to do; they also see them as a way to learn skills that will help them for the rest of their lives and maybe even get a job.

Things that help youngsters learn and get better at things: Students claimed that sports websites help them learn and grow better at what they do by giving them information about training and health, as well as talks with experts and other relevant content. They mentioned that reading these kinds of things helps them get in shape or understand more about sports. Many well-known persons have remarked that the things they write for gamers assist them learn new things and develop better and stronger. People who know a lot about teaching and exercising helped write these essays. The head of the sports department remarked, "This kind of information can help all UCU students who are interested in sports learn more about them and get better at them." This also includes kids who don't do any school activities. They will improve and learn on their own.

Improved communication between journalists, coaches, and athletes: Students reported that sports journalism has improved communication channels between them, their coaches, and the media, therefore facilitating feedback and understanding of expectations for improvement. Journalists, they found, frequently convey coaches' opinions during interviews or match evaluations so enabling athletes to more effectively understand training objectives. Key informants said that by highlighting current programs, future training camps, and development chances, their narratives assist to close the distance between athletes and the sports administration. They said this linked communication network promotes a supportive environment in which skill development is supported both on and off the field. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

“.....When I see my performance analyzed in the school media, it pushes me to work harder because I know people are following what we do.....” **Sports student**

“.....We highlight athletes' journeys so that other students can see what is possible when they commit to improving their skills.....” **Key informant**

4.3 Challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting youth-centred sports

4.3.1 Challenges faced in covering and promoting youth sports at UCU

From the interviews conducted with selected sports students from UCU and sports journalists from *The Standard UCU* who cover sports activities in UCU and the management of sports department in UCU, they were asked for their views on how media coverage of sports at UCU motivates them to participate in sports activities and their responses were as follows;

Limited resources and equipment: Key informants from the UCU sports department and *The Standard UCU* constantly noted that one of the main obstacles they encounter in promoting youth sports is the scarcity of suitable resources including good recording tools, transportation for going to away games, and money for generating timely sports reports. They said they can't cover everything since they don't have enough logistical support. This implies that young athletes don't get as much exposure. Students agreed with this worry and added that sports reporters don't always have the basic equipment they need, such cameras, tape recorders, or locations to practice. This means they can't cover as many events or do a good job of it. They believe that it is difficult for

them to get the practice they need to keep occupied and get better because they live so far away. Key informants also indicated that it was hard to get to training schedules, trainers, and athletes because they weren't simple to reach and work with. They also said that the sports department, teams, and reporters don't always talk to each other, which can cause coverage take longer or cease completely. They made it apparent that it's hard to frequently shoot youth sports events or write engaging tales without good timing. Students also mentioned that reporters don't always have the information they need on time, so they sometimes show up late or not at all, which makes the athletes mad. They argued that their labor isn't completely recognized because there aren't enough match reports and feature pieces because of poor coordination.

Time constraints and academic pressure: Key informants noted a major difficulty in balancing journalistic obligations or sports management jobs with time limits and academic stress, hence managing academic demands. Student journalists at *The Standard UCU* occasionally struggle to provide complete and consistent reporting given the time limits set by their participation in events and classes. On the students' side, they argued that the accuracy and richness of reporting are compromised as sports writers have little time and therefore occasionally miss or shorten interviews. Students also noted that this paradox makes it difficult for athletes to acquire the ongoing exposure they require to hone their ability.

Underrepresentation of youth-centred sports: Key informants said that because of their popularity, audience demand, or how easy they are to cover, some sports get more attention than others. This makes it hard to promote all youth sports equally. They pointed out that due to overload or lack of knowledge in certain subjects; reporters frequently leave out niche or less well-known sports. Students concurred that particularly women's sports and new fields, many youth sports events go unnoticed. They said that this patchy coverage deters participants in underrepresented sports because they feel underappreciated or forgotten.

Limited platforms for dissemination: Key informants claimed UCU lacks enough channels committed to sports content, which makes it challenging to regularly air or broadcast stories about youth sports. They clarified that the reach and influence of sports journalism are limited as the institution mostly depends on *The Standard UCU* and a few social media outlets. Students verified they usually only view a few updates published on notice boards or online, therefore many

successes and events are not widely known. This dearth of venues, they claimed, stifles the inspiration derived from public awareness. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

“.....Sometimes we really want to cover every sport, but with limited equipment and tight academic schedules, it becomes extremely difficult.....” **Key informant**

“.....Most of our games go uncovered because the journalists either lack support or are not informed in time, so many of us feel our efforts are invisible.....” **Sports student**

4.3.2 Impact of coverage challenges on the visibility and growth of student sports

From the interviews conducted with selected sports students from UCU and sports journalists from *The Standard UCU* who cover sports activities in UCU and the management of sports department in UCU, they were asked for their views on how these challenges impact the visibility and growth of student sports programs and their responses were as follows;

Limited exposure; Key sources claimed that student sports programs don't get enough attention since they don't have enough money and the media doesn't always cover them. This makes it tougher for schools to help kids and for groups outside of school to reward them. They saw that reporters don't have enough time or money to cover a lot of games and athletes' achievements. This makes some UCU-based sports grow more slowly. Students also claimed that these gaps in reporting make it harder for the rest of the student body to find out about sporting activities because many of them aren't reported. They said that kids don't always know what's going on in the world because they don't get regular updates, match highlights, or player biographies. This makes kids less interested in sports and less inclined to play.

Students are less involved: Important sources said that things like not having enough workers and having different priorities in the newsroom make it impossible to perform regular reporting. This damages the relationship between the media and student athletes and makes them less involved. They claim that pupils won't want to watch or be a part of sports programs if stories about sports aren't shared often. This is because they will believe that the activities aren't important. Students have the same worries. They remarked that not getting frequent coverage makes it hard to keep up with future events or appreciate team achievements, thus they don't play sports. A lot

of young athletes felt their work isn't being noticed, and they claimed that not being seen hurts morale.

Weak promotion of talent: Key informants said that UCU can't do a good job of promoting growing talent because of problems with coverage, like insufficient reporting or late distribution of material. They made it obvious that these issues impede down the growth of gifted athletes because child sports frequently depend on exposure to gain coaches, scholarships, or chances to participate. Students agreed and claimed that it's hard for them to develop their own sports profiles or get noticed, which would normally drive them want to do better because the news isn't always the same. They added that being hard to see makes it less likely that scouts, coaches, or other sports groups will notice them.

Reduced program growth: Key informants pointed out that the difficulties in sports journalism have an impact on both long-term planning and financial commitment in college sports programs. They argued that low media coverage makes it challenging to justify budget allocations or motivate the campus community for sports projects, therefore impeding program expansion. Conversely, students said the little promotion hurts the competitiveness of athletic events since fewer kids enroll or support teams, hence delaying program growth. They said that most students do not get timely or engaging coverage that would attract them, hence many sports activities find it difficult to expand.

Distorted student perceptions: Key informants noted that because crucial updates or corrections could not reach on time, coverage difficulties occasionally lead to misunderstanding or false information regarding the status of sports programs. People are less likely to believe sports reports and the media's capacity to inspire them to support young sports has diminished, according to their claims. The majority of the class shared these opinions. They expressed that poor reporting diminishes the value of UCU athletics, particularly when some events are overlooked or underappreciated. Because there is a lack of trustworthy information on timetables, team success, and job openings, they observed that people do not participate to their full potential.

Some of the selected respondents reported that;

“.....When we fail to cover games, it is almost as if they never happened, and this affects how people value student sports at the university.....” **Key informant**

“.....If sports activities are not promoted well, many of us lose interest because we feel like our efforts are invisible.....” **Sports student**

4.4 Strategies for strengthening sports journalism to enhance youth sports development

4.4.1 Strategies for enhancing sports journalism for youth participation

From the interviews conducted with selected sports students from UCU and sports journalists from *The Standard UCU* who cover sports activities in UCU and the management of sports department in UCU, they were asked for their views on the strategies they think could improve sports journalism to better encourage student participation and development and their responses were as follows;

More coverage of student sports events: Key informants said that more regular and consistent reporting of student sports events could help to noticeably increase participation. They mentioned that not many pupils know about current events or training programs because there isn't much news coverage. Sports writers may get people involved and build enthusiasm by constantly adding new content to campus media sites. The sports department's management said that carefully showcasing sports victories and accomplishments would motivate other students to participate in sports events by providing them with role models. Students also agreed, adding that when games and practices are shown in newsletters, campus radio, or social media.

Adopting digital platforms; People who were key to the tale underlined how important it was to swiftly reach more youngsters through digital and social media. People who couldn't go to the real events were promised they could still be a part of them by watching short videos, reading live match reports, and doing hands-on activities. Some writers who write about sports for The Standard UCU noted that stories on the internet can reach more people than news in print. respondents replied yes, and respondents stated they would do sports more often if they saw great items on Instagram, WhatsApp, and other social media sites. This makes it look like everyone can have fun with sports.

Pointing out role models and students' successes: Some influential people argue that displaying off role models and students' successes might motivate more students to join and work on their talents, which would subsequently get even more kids to do the same. A sports writer claimed that relaying tales about those who worked hard and didn't give up would help people stay inspired. Students agreed that watching other students gain appreciation for their hard work and achievements helps them desire to join sports teams and work out more.

Collaboration between sports management and journalists: Many influential individuals thought that the news would be better if the sports and news departments worked together more. Reporters can better prepare how to cover things when they know about training programs, upcoming events, and victories ahead of time. The students learnt that when sports and media management work together, events are shown on time and with the right information, which makes it simpler for the kids to take part.

Interactive and participatory content: Key sources indicated that quizzes, surveys, or prediction games on sporting events should be utilized to get students more interested. Sports writers said that interesting tales provide youngsters a means to get engaged that goes beyond merely watching. Students who are involved in these activities are more likely to like sports and want to attend to games and practice.

Supporting less well-known sports: Sources that are important claimed that merely concentrating on popular sports like football and basketball might mean missing out on pupils who are interested in other things. They urged sports reporters to also write on new sports like volleyball, netball, and athletics and how well they did. Students agreed that viewing coverage of less popular sports helps them feel like they belong and desire to participate, which gets more people to play a lot of sports.

Educational content and skill development tips: Key informants emphasized that sports journalism may include instructional materials, such as interviews with coaches, nutrition advice, or training suggestions, to support skill development. Journalists proposed that brief films or essays offering useful advice would help pupils develop their skills and interest. Students said that this kind of information is very inspiring because it not only tells them about what's going on, but also gives them practical ways to make their work better. Some of the selected respondents reported that;

“.....By profiling our star athletes and sharing their stories, we create role models that encourage other students to take sports seriously and develop their own skills.....” **Key informant**

“.....When our matches are reported on campus radio and social media, I feel more motivated to join the next training session because I see the excitement and support from others.....” **Sports student**

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter includes the discussion of findings in relation to the literature. It also summarizes all findings reported in chapter four according to questions of the study, draws conclusions, suggests recommendations and also proposes some areas for further study.

5.1 Summary of findings

The findings from interviews with sports students, sports journalists from The Standard UCU, and UCU sports department management revealed that sports journalism significantly influences youth participation and skills development at UCU. Media exposure, recognition, and quick event information inspire pupils to participate, promote friendly competition, and provide role models that encourage participation in several sports. Key informants also stressed that coverage celebrates student accomplishments, encourages a vibrant campus sports scene, and offers exposure that could open doors to further possibilities outside of UCU. Students said media analysis, instructional content, exposure to role models, and recognition via coverage help them grasp their tactical understanding, technical skills, and drive to train; increased communication between journalists, coaches, and athletes guarantees feedback and guidance reach students effectively. In general, both students and important sources said that strategic sports journalism not only gets more people to play, but it also helps young players improve their skills, discipline, and personal growth.

The results also showed that sports journalists and the UCU sports department have a hard time marketing youth-focused sports, which has a big impact on how well student sports programs are known and how quickly they grow. Key informants pointed out problems like not enough coverage of some sports, time constraints, poor access and coordination, a lack of resources and tools, and a lack of specialized venues for dissemination, all of which make it harder to get the word out completely. Students had similar concerns. They said that bad reporting means that many games aren't seen, different sports get different amounts of attention, and athletes don't know how well they're doing. All of these problems mean that sports teams don't get much attention and

student involvement, poor promotion of new talent, sluggish development of sports initiatives, and skewed views of the value and relevance of collegiate athletics. Both students and important informants stressed that poor and erratic coverage reduces inspiration, lowers morale, and limits possibilities for talent development, therefore negating the role of sports journalism in promoting youth participation and development at UCU.

Lastly, the findings revealed that students and important informants alike identify a number of ways to improve sports journalism in order to boost participation in UCU youth sports and development. While students noted that regular reporting via newsletters, campus radio, and social media inspires involvement, key informants stressed the need for more and constant coverage of student sports events to raise awareness and participation. Using digital and social media channels, including live updates, brief videos, and interactive material, were considered as a means to reach more pupils and increase sports visibility and excitement. One inspiring technique seen was stressing role models and student successes so as to inspire peers to enhance their abilities. Effective cooperation between sports management and media guarantees prompt information and correct coverage, hence encouraging involvement. Furthermore, including interactive and participative material, highlighting less well-known sports, and offering educational material including training tips and skill development advice were noted as major strategies to involve pupils, encourage inclusiveness, and help to develop a competent and motivated sports community at UCU.

5.2 Discussion of findings

5.2.1 Influence of sports journalism on youth participation and development in UCU

The study results showed that media exposure, awareness, and timely information about sports events especially inspire pupils to engage in sports and promote involvement at Uganda Christian University. The results match with Howie et al. (2020), who noted that social exposure via youth sports programs boosts involvement by inspiring young athletes to feel included and recognized. Likewise, Purnomo et al. (2024) underlined that good communication and media coverage of sporting events positively affect young people's readiness to participate and development of skills,

hence supporting the study's conclusion that media coverage serves as both a motivator and an information source. On the other hand, some researchers like Abi (2020) contend that media

Just showing something doesn't mean that more people will participate. This is especially true if the information isn't deep enough or doesn't really connect with viewers. Coverage needs to be carefully prepared in order to have a genuine influence.

The research findings indicated that sports journalism fosters talent development in children by providing exposure to tactical analysis, educational content, role models, and recognition through media coverage. These findings corroborate Bruner et al. (2023), who identified that media-supported initiatives and other organized sports-related activities facilitate beneficial youth development and skill enhancement. Matsiola et al. (2022) also discovered that using digital storytelling and media analysis in sports instruction can help students learn more and motivate them to keep getting better. This is the same thing that UCU sports journalism does for students: it helps them get better at what they do. On the other hand, Wenner (2021) says that media coverage may sometimes focus too much on entertainment value instead of skill development, which makes it less effective at promoting true athletic growth. This is why it is important to mix coverage with academic material.

There are two excellent things about smart sports writing. Initially, this approach piques public interest. Furthermore, it provides young athletes with exemplary figures, thereby fostering a desire for improvement and dedication. Moreover, it contributes to their overall character development. Therefore, suggestions show that the media and the public should work together to encourage young people to participate in sports that are good for them. The tests confirm this. A 2023 study also suggested that writing about sports can change people's perspective.

The tests say that's what it is. A third source from 2023 suggests that writing about sports can make individuals think and feel different things. The study concluded that this supports the hypothesis that the media promotes high-stakes race and skill development. Mallik (2021), on the other hand, suggests that kids might not want to play as much if they hear anything nasty or unjust. The research indicated that the integrity, honesty, and transparency of sports media significantly influence developmental outcomes.

5.2.2 Challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting youth-centred sports

The study results show that under-representation of particular sports, time constraints, poor access, limited resources, and under-representation of certain sports much limit the capacity of sports journalists and the UCU sports department to successfully promote youth-focused activities. These obstacles limit pupils' involvement and diminish the exposure of their athletic programs. The results correspond with those of Holt et al. (2020), who found that inadequate support and structural barriers in sports programs limit young people's capacity to completely participate and profit from growth opportunities in sports. Similarly, Summerley (2020) notes that unequal attention to different sports disciplines can affect the institutional growth of emerging or less popular sports, reinforcing the study's finding on under-representation and uneven coverage. On the other hand, Kahwa et al. (2021) discovered that institutional and policy systems can occasionally make up for a lack of resources. This implies that with careful planning, some difficulties could be lessened. This is in contrast to the complete reliance on the media and logistical help shown in this study.

The study results showed that erratic and subpar media coverage hinders the promotion of new talent, lowers student morale, and constrains chances for recognition and growth. The results support Perreault and Bell's (2022) argument that ongoing and high-quality coverage is required to keep audience interest and aid youth development programs in light of the changing internet environment in sports journalism. Matthews (2024) also notes that inadequate reporting or delayed media coverage might hinder skill visibility and recognition, therefore supporting the UCU students' experiences of being ignored since coverage varies. Ncube et al. (2025) contend that social media channels can somewhat make up for reporting gaps, therefore implying that even with few resources, alternative forms of distribution might boost visibility of young sports, a viewpoint partially underused at UCU according to the survey respondents.

The study's findings indicated that the overall effect of coverage gaps negatively impacts students' views of sports programs, hindering their long-term growth and reducing their desire to participate. These results align with Sentongo's (2025) research, which showed that negative media portrayals of youth activities can diminish interest and trust, thus reducing the effectiveness of these

programs. Similarly, Oyako (2024) argues that inadequate media coverage constrains student athletes' opportunities for promotion, hence supporting the UCU scenario were insufficient reporting diminished reputation and morale. In contrast, Mbabazi's (2019) research indicated that community-focused broadcasting can foster engagement even when facing coverage limitations. This finding implies that the effects of media constraints are context-dependent and could potentially be lessened through the implementation of localized, pertinent media initiatives—an approach that could potentially guide reforms at UCU.

5.2.3 Strategies for strengthening sports journalism to enhance youth sports development

The investigation revealed that sustained and systematic sports reporting at UCU significantly enhances both student engagement and comprehension. Students indicated a heightened propensity to participate when informed of events via newsletters, campus radio, and social media platforms. Nevertheless, key informants emphasized the necessity of consistent reporting on competitions, training sessions, and student achievements. These findings support Malik's (2021) assertion about the crucial role of media exposure in fostering youth participation and sustained interest in sports.

Furthermore, Camiré et al. (2022) posit that media visibility and acknowledgment are essential for fostering positive youth development and skill acquisition. Conversely, Bernstein and Kian (2024) caution that media coverage can occasionally exhibit a disproportionate focus on popular sports or male athletes. This is a problem that hasn't been fully addressed in the UCU setting, so more coverage should also include sports that don't get enough attention to make sure that all youth can participate equally. The research found that students are more likely to get involved in sports when they use digital and social media sites that have interactive content, live updates, and short films. Key informants say that online tools let journalists get in touch with students who couldn't be there in person, and students agreed that this makes sports more accessible and interesting.

The results correspond with Nwabuwe (2023), who stresses that using social media and digital storytelling in sports journalism increases audience reach and stimulates active involvement among youngsters; with Rojas-Torrijos and Nölleke (2023), who underline the inspiring power of interactive digital content in inspiring participation. Conversely, Oyako (2024) contends that

although social media increases curiosity, it should supplement rather than replace thorough reporting and mentorship programs as digital platforms might not completely replace conventional coverage for building long-term loyalty.

The results of the research showed that youths are motivated and their talents develop more when they see role models, student successes, and educational materials including training tips and skill-building advice. Key informants and students said that seeing peers get praise for their hard work makes others want to do the same. They also said that instructional media helps people learn new skills and encourages them to participate in a smart way. The results support Malik's (2021) claim that sports journalism can help kids learn life skills by giving them access to educational materials and role models. They also back up Camiré et al.'s (2022) claim that teens are more motivated by real-life examples and useful counsel in sports settings. Nwabuwe (2023) says that just being exposed to media may not have a big effect on long-term skill development unless there is institutional support and follow-up. This suggests that UCU could improve things by sharing information through mentorship and putting on activities that help people learn new skills.

5.3 Conclusions

The study found that writing about sports is an important way to get more young people involved and help them gain new skills at UCU. Students are usually told to do sports so they can obtain praise for their hard work, media attention, and the latest news. This generates healthy rivalry and gives people to look up to who want more people to join up. Strategic media coverage not only broadens public awareness of diverse sports but also cultivates young athletes' strategic understanding, refines their technical skills, and fosters personal development. This underscores the interconnectedness of youth sports development and media coverage. Furthermore, the investigation reveals that various impediments hinder the effectiveness of sports journalism in promoting youth-oriented sports programs at UCU. The visibility of sports initiatives is diminished by a confluence of factors, including resource constraints, ineffective communication approaches, time restrictions, the underrepresentation of specific sports, and the absence of appropriate distribution channels. These limitations, in turn, impede opportunities for student recognition and the cultivation of talent. Therefore, without addressing these challenges, the potential of sports journalism to inspire and develop young people remains underused. These challenges, taken together, contribute to low student participation, slow program progress, and a limited understanding of the value of sports.

The study's final conclusion posits that the application of focused strategies can substantially

fortify sports journalism, thereby fostering increased youth sports participation and advancement at UCU. Key strategies encompass the utilization of digital and social media platforms, the recognition of role models and student achievements, the enhancement of collaboration between sports management and journalists, the expansion and maintenance of consistent coverage of student sports, and the strategic leveraging of resources. Moreover, interactive content, the promotion of less prominent sports, and the provision of educational and skill-development resources are crucial for promoting inclusivity, sustaining involvement, and supporting the holistic development of student athletes. These combined techniques suggest that proactive, coordinated, and innovative sports reporting can serve as a powerful catalyst for the cultivation of talent, motivation, and a dynamic campus sports environment.

5.4 Recommendations

Many individuals have thought about how sports writing may get more young people in Uganda interested in sports and assist teams, notably UCU, do better. The survey indicates that there should be more and better writing on UCU student sports activities. Sports should always be a part of college life, appearing in print, on the radio, and on social media. This will help more people see the events, get more students involved, and create a culture where sports participation is valued. The media can also help teach good values and celebrate the achievements of athletes. The media may also make events that wouldn't get much attention otherwise more well-known. This generally helps teens get well.

The report says that kids and teens should be more interested in sports information on social media and the web. If done right, sports writing might reach more students, including those who can't go to games in person. This could be done through live updates, brief films, and web-based highlights. Digital technologies might make it easier for more people to enjoy sports and get to them.

Students can also utilize these tools to find out more about news items, training programs, and other things that are related.

Also, it adds that sports news should be about youngsters who win and those who are good role models. A narrative of a player who worked hard to achieve better can encourage kids want to do the same and join in. They could even aspire to be the greatest at the game they play. Kids are happy when the news talks about them. This manner also makes the university an excellent environment for sports, which helps people get better at them and have fun competing. The

research also says that the UCU sports department and the university's news channels should work together better. The department may make sure that news is complete and on time by giving reporters the most up-to-date and complete information regarding practice times, game times, and sports triumphs. People that work together like this make sure that the information that goes out is correct and that they don't miss any chances to disseminate it.

This manner, athletes, reporters, and students can communicate to each other better, which makes young people more likely to play sports.

The study also indicates that writing about sports should be utilized as a way to teach people, which would help them get better at it. On media sites, students may obtain workout programs, eating suggestions, strategy studies, and engaging ways to study. All of these activities assist students improve their technical and personal abilities. This initiative provides students the tools they need to get more active in UCU sports, follow best practices, and stay involved by integrating teaching aspects to sports reports. This project also helps athletes improve.

5.5 Areas for further research

This project examines how writing about sports at UCU and other institutions in Uganda may engage and attract more youth to sports. Some individuals assert that the below domains need more investigation:

Researchers may someday look at how sports writing influences the way kids at different schools and in different regions of the nation behave to see whether these patterns are the same all throughout Uganda and to find out what makes certain locations special.

It also requires further research to figure out how the internet and social media may make kids more interested in sports. We mainly want to know how online articles, live broadcasts, and other fascinating content might assist student gamers improve and meet new people.

Lastly, it would be fantastic if more research were done on how sports writing may help draw attention to subjects that don't have enough of it yet, like women's sports or new academic disciplines. There may also be efforts to assist all the young players improve.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: In-depth Interview Guide

For the sports students in UCU

Dear sir/madam

My name is Carl Loum; I am a bachelor's student of School of Journalism, Media and Communication at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting a study on "the role of sports journalism in promoting youth participation and development in Ugandan sports: a case study of Uganda Christian University (UCU)." You have been specifically selected to participate in this study and the information collected shall be purely for academic purpose and treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The success of this study shall greatly depend on your response. Your cooperation shall highly be appreciated.

Section A: Introductions

1. Tell me about yourself (*gender, age*)
2. Which sports discipline are you involved in, in UCU?
3. Which year of study are you in?

Section B: The extent to which sports journalism influences youths' willingness to participate and develop their abilities in sports in UCU

4. How does media coverage of sports at UCU motivate you to participate in sports activities?
5. In what ways has sports journalism influenced your skills development or interest in improving your abilities in sports?

Section C: Challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting the participation and development of youth-centred sports coverage in UCU

6. What difficulties do you think sports journalists encounter when covering youth sports at UCU?
7. How do these challenges affect the way sports activities are reported and promoted to students?

Section D: Strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of sports journalism in promoting youth sports and development in UCU

8. What improvements would you like to see in how sports journalism promotes youth participation at UCU?
9. How can media coverage better support the development of students' sports skills and overall engagement?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 2: Key Informant Interview Guide

For the management of the sports department and sports journalists

Dear sir/madam

My name is Carl Loum; I am a bachelor's student of School of Journalism, Media and Communication at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting a study on "the role of sports journalism in promoting youth participation and development in Ugandan sports: a case study of Uganda Christian University (UCU)." You have been specifically selected to participate in this study and the information collected shall be purely for academic purpose and treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The success of this study shall greatly depend on your response. Your cooperation shall highly be appreciated.

Section A: The extent to which sports journalism influences youths' willingness to participate and develop their abilities in sports in UCU

1. How do you think sports coverage at UCU affects students' interest and participation in sports activities?
2. In what ways has your reporting or management support influenced the skills development of student athletes at UCU?

Section B: Challenges faced by sports journalists in promoting the participation and development of youth-centred sports coverage in UCU

3. What challenges do you face in promoting youth sports through journalism or sports management at UCU?
4. How do these challenges impact the visibility and growth of student sports programs?

Section C: Strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of sports journalism in promoting youth sports and development in UCU

5. What strategies do you think could improve sports journalism to better encourage student participation and development?
6. How can media coverage and sports management work together to get more young people involved in sports at UCU?

Thank you for your cooperation