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EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES IN UGANDAN MUSIC VIDEOS: A CASE STUDY OF "IT'S OKAY" AND "SOMEBODY"

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to Ugandan Cinematographers, videographers, editors, producers, video directors and musicians whose efforts in story telling go beyond beats and lyrics to make expressive music videos for their audiences.

To all those that shape stories by adding meaning and depth to the videos that people watch, expanding budgets and creating beyond the usual, you are heartily appreciated.

This study is also dedicated to our parents for their support in giving us a reason to fight on to the accomplishment of this degree.

APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with the approval of the university supervisor.

Supervisor's name: MR. POLLY KAMUKAMA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the usage of cinematic techniques in music videos with the aim of exploring the usage of cinematic techniques in Ugandan music videos for specific purposes. The study was motivated by the need to solve the lack of critical analysis and academic attention of the Ugandan music videos.

A qualitative research method was used and data was collected and analyzed thematically using interviews, questionnaires, observations and document analysis from Edrine Paul, Acidic Vokoz and Calvin the Entertainer.

The findings reveal that music videos have evolved from simple performance recordings into sophisticated audiovisual productions that combine music, storytelling, cinematography, editing, costume, lighting, choreography, and symbolism to communicate meaning and engage audiences. The study further established that cinematography in music videos plays a major role in visual storytelling through the coordination of camera movement, framing, colour, editing, and rhythm to communicate emotions and narrative meaning. However, some artists are struggling financially to brand and produce high quality music videos.

The study concludes that music videos should be valued and evaluated more because they involve deliberate cinematic construction in which is potential for artist branding, cultural representation, effective communication and stylized entertainment. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide useful information for researchers, policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders- especially for the Ugandan Music Industry.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 10 years, there has been a drastic change in the production of Ugandan music videos that is, from poor lighting and fluctuating quality to high-quality videos that use different visual aesthetics and diverse story telling methods. There is a possibility that in most cases, anything can be recorded to work as a music video thus musicians can choose to do anything in front of the camera; with or without a director. However, some Ugandan music videos have been directed or produced overtime to an extent that video directors employ the use of cinematic techniques, scripts, professional actors, dynamic plots, creative editing, Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) among others, for an organized production intended to directly or indirectly captivate the audience (fan base) with an effective story line or cinematic look.

In this research, cinematic techniques are defined as the deliberate application of Mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and pacing, colour grading and tone, the relationship between visuals and audio, intertextuality, and star image, to transform a musical track into a structured visual narrative, constructing deep thematic meaning. These elements function as a coordinated visual language that constructs emotional intimacy and power dynamics within the selected case studies: "It's okay" by Acidic Vokoz and "Somebody" by Sheebah Karungi.

These cinematic techniques are clearly defined as follows:

- Mise-en-scène: The arrangement of everything that appears before the camera lens, including set design, props, costumes, lighting, and actor blocking, which collectively establish the visual world of the music video.
- Cinematography: The technical and creative choices involving camera angles, shot sizes and types and camera movements that dictate how the audience perceives the characters and space.
- Editing and Pacing: The cutting, splicing, and arrangement of visual shots, alongside the rhythm and speed of these transitions, which control the temporal flow and emotional tension of the narrative.

- Colour Grading and Tone: The post-production manipulation of color palettes, contrast, and saturation used to evoke specific moods, underscore psychological states, or signal narrative shifts.
- Relationship Between Visuals and Audio: The structural interplay between the sonic elements of the song (lyrics, beats, instrumentation) and the accompanying moving images.
- Intertextuality: The ways in which the music videos reference, mimic, or dialogue with other external texts, cultural symbols, genres, or historical media to layer meaning.
- Star Image: The pre-existing public persona, cultural reputation, and celebrity branding of artists like Sheebah Karungi and Acidic Vokoz, and how these established identities influence audience reception and narrative execution within the videos.

This study intends to explore the application of cinematic techniques in the music videos and how these techniques play a crucial role in shaping the narrative, emotional tone, and visual quality of music videos by transforming a simple musical performance into a compelling visual story to capture the audience's attention. This study will particularly focus on two recent Ugandan music videos *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz (2024) and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi (2025), both of which are directed by Edrine Paul.

1.1 Background of the Study

There are several Ugandan music award programmes recognizing outstanding musicians according to who has the best videos or popularity of the song, song of the year, artist of the year among others. These raise arguments from both critics and fans, because while some artists do not deserve such recognition, other equally capable artists are denied the opportunity. Elias (2026) highlights how local Ugandan artists and fans are deeply divided over which musical achievements genuinely deserve international recognition. This roots from Kapeke's reaction to Joshua Baraka's collaboration with Shenseea, that is "Morocco", released on February 13, 2026.

The famous "Bebe Cool list[1]" that features the best songs and artists of the year is based on Bebe Cool' personal expert opinion, song popularity, media airplay, digital streaming success, the cultural impact of their projects, and overall professionalism. This list usually causes criticism, sparks arguments on the fairness and unfairness of the assessment especially when artists' projects that are worth noticing are not considered. For example, this list has brought more popularity to Ugandan female artist, Tracy Melon in 2026. "When Bebe Cool remarked on his annual list that he did not know a single song by her, fans reacted swiftly and loudly, shining an even brighter spotlight on an artiste whose work had already been speaking volumes." (Ssejjombwe et al., 2026, para. 3).

In addition to this list, there are different countdowns on television stations and radio stations for promotion of artists and their songs and the criteria here is also different. It is sometimes based on who can pay money for airplay, how much viewers or listeners request and hype a song, among others.

Although most of the information mentioned above might focus on either the music, lyrics or popularity of the song to draw attention, it has inspired this study to explore the usage of cinematic techniques in Ugandan Music Videos. This is so, that these cinematic techniques can be considered in analyzing music videos for recognition and appreciation of artistic effort in creating music videos with a greater impact on the audience and the society. Directors who have used and are using these techniques, as well as artists who spend a lot of money to produce high quality videos deserve unbiased credit rather than attaching the success of their projects to financial capability only.

This study is also influenced by Batte's comprehensive historical analysis of the music industry. Batte (2015) outlines the evolution of Ugandan music videos from their early tracking stages to today's highly commercialized marketplace. He notes that while independent efforts to film

[1] The Bebe Cool List is an influential annual review published every January 1st by Ugandan reggae and ragga artist Moses Ssali (professionally known as Bebe Cool). Serving as a critical commentary on the contemporary Ugandan music industry, the list ranks and evaluates the standout musicians, hit songs, and breakout artists of the preceding year. It carries significant cultural weight in Uganda, routinely sparking widespread media debate and shaping public discourse regarding local industry performance standards, artist rivalries, and commercial success.

standalone visual performances began in the 1990s, early pioneers like Moses Matovu and Steve Jean were heavily constrained by technology, often relying on wedding videographers rather than professional film crews. His study highlights how the explosive growth of local television networks and the global influence of platforms like Music Television (MTV) forced a rapid transition toward high-end cinematic standards. Ultimately, Batte argues that these modern production values have successfully bridged the gap between technological advancement and artistic reception, transforming local music videos into a highly respected and globally competitive art form.

The current State of Ugandan Music and Videos is characterized by:

- High Production Value with a major surge in visual quality, moving away from low-budget basic recordings to sharp, professional high-definition releases.
- Digital Dominance where music videos are now released simultaneously with audio tracks, utilizing platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook as primary distribution networks rather than relying solely on local television airplay.
- Commercial Pressure due to a heavy economic reliance on the visual component. This sometimes shifts heavy creative and financial capital toward lavish video shoots over stable long-term copyright and audio engineering structures.

Through these trends, it is evident that cinematic techniques dictate the reception of Ugandan music videos by transforming local auditory tracks into multi-sensory visual narratives that elevate an artist's brand and drive immense audience engagement. In Sheebah Karungi's visual masterpiece "*Somebody*," directed by Edrine Paul, deliberate cinematic techniques like crisp 4K resolution, saturated color grading, and scenic beach framing instantly elevate the song's breezy, romantic mood. These choices shift the audience reception from standard appreciation to widespread awe. Furthermore, the music video uses dynamic camera movements, seamless pacing, and vibrant costume design that sync perfectly with the choreography. This triggers high-utility cultural reception, generating viral TikTok dance challenges, digital replays, and establishing Sheebah's dominant visual era, eventually leading up to major live milestones like concerts.

1.2 Problem Statement

There is limited critical analysis and academic attention on Ugandan music videos. The Ugandan music industry is growing fast, but people mostly care about the audio track and social media trends. There is very little academic research or serious discussion about how Ugandan music videos are made. Because of this, great work in lighting, camera work, and storytelling goes unnoticed. Instead, people only care if a song is a hit on the radio or clubs, or if it goes viral on TikTok.

This lack of appreciation causes a big problem. Many artists make cheap, poorly directed videos because they view the video as a quick tool to promote the song, not as a piece of art. This matters because bad videos stop Ugandan music from growing internationally. Global Television channels like MTV Base and TRACE Africa will not play videos that look unprofessional. Furthermore, when we ignore good filmmaking, we lose the chance to document Ugandan culture properly, we stop local film crews (like camera operators and editors) from earning a good living, and we miss out on videos that can teach or change society. When music videos are not given proper attention, it affects the artist's capability to be creative and impact society meaningfully.

The modern Ugandan music video industry is driven by an elite group of visionary directors who have shifted the market from low-budget clips to high-definition, cinematic art pieces. These include Edrine Paul, Sasha Vybz (Ian Akankwasa), Marvin Musoke, Aaronaire (Aaronaire on set), Simon SPK, Frank Mugerwa (Jahlive) among others. Without critical analysis and academic attention, the work of these directors and their teams is ignored and dismissed as just 'nice' videos.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What cinematic techniques are used in Ugandan Music Videos?

2. Which people are involved in production and promotion of music videos and what challenges do they encounter in doing their work?
3. How do Ugandan music videos blend traditional and modern elements such as music styles, dance and cultural references to create a unique cinematic language?
4. How do audiences receive and interpret the cinematic techniques employed in Ugandan music videos?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

- The study intends to explore how cinematic techniques are applied in Ugandan music videos for specific purposes.

Specific Objectives

- To identify how Ugandan music videos apply cinematic techniques to engage audiences.
- To investigate individuals involved in production and promotion of Ugandan music videos plus the challenges they encounter in doing this work.
- To investigate how Ugandan music videos blend traditional and modern elements to create a unique cinematic language.
- To test how audiences receive and interpret Ugandan music videos.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it broadens the understanding of Ugandan music videos beyond entertainment by examining them as cinematic and artistic productions that communicate meaning through visual storytelling. The research helps to show that music videos are not only promotional tools for songs, but also creative works that combine film techniques, performance, culture, and social commentary.

Academically, the study contributes to the fields of Film, Drama, Media, and Cultural Studies by adding scholarly knowledge about Ugandan audiovisual production. Since limited research has been carried out on cinematic techniques in Ugandan music videos, the study creates a foundation for future researchers interested in African cinema, music video production, visual culture, and audience reception.

For filmmakers, video directors, editors, cinematographers, and musicians, this study highlights the importance of intentional visual construction in music videos. By analyzing how techniques such as camera work, lighting, editing, colour, costume, performance shape meaning, the research may encourage creatives to produce more thoughtful, innovative, and technically refined audiovisual content.

To the Ugandan music industry, the study promotes appreciation for the technical and artistic labour involved in music video production. Recognition is often focused mainly on the popularity of songs and artists, while directors and production teams receive little attention. This research therefore emphasizes the contribution of visual creators in shaping the success, identity, and impact of music videos.

The study is equally significant to audiences because it encourages viewers to engage critically with music videos rather than consuming them only for entertainment. Audiences may begin to understand how visuals influence emotions, perceptions, identity, fashion, gender representation, and social values.

The study may influence future music video production and criticism in Uganda by encouraging higher production standards, creative experimentation, and more serious academic and professional evaluation of music videos as cinematic works.

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Overview

This study is delimited to the critical examination of cinematic techniques employed in two selected Ugandan music videos: *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi, both directed by Edrine Paul. The scope is defined by subject matter, geographical focus, analytical framework, time period, and methodological approach, each of which is outlined in the sections below.

By concentrating on two music videos produced within the same directorial vision, the study maintains analytical focus and internal consistency. The decision to examine works by the same director — Edrine Paul — is deliberate: it allows the study to isolate directorial style as a controlled variable and investigate how the same visual intelligence operates across different artists, genres, and target audiences.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study is geographically confined to Uganda. Both selected music videos are productions of the Ugandan entertainment industry, conceived, directed, and distributed within the Ugandan cultural and commercial context. The study does not extend its analytical claims to East African music video production at large, nor does it draw systematic comparisons with international music video industries, except where such references serve to contextualize specific cinematic choices.

1.6.3 Subject and Thematic Scope

The subject scope of this study is restricted to the analysis of cinematic techniques as they appear in the two selected music videos. The cinematic elements examined include mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and pacing, colour grading and tone, the relationship between visuals and audio, intertextuality, and star image. The study does not examine audio production, music composition, lyrical analysis, or the business and commercial dimensions of music video production, except where these directly intersect with the visual elements under analysis.

1.6.4 Temporal Scope

The study situates itself within the contemporary period of Ugandan music video production, broadly defined as the decade spanning 2015 to 2026. Both selected videos — released in 2024 and 2025 respectively — fall within this era of elevated production quality and are therefore representative of current industry standards.

1.6.5 Methodological Scope

The study employs a qualitative textual analysis methodology, with the two music videos serving as primary texts. The analytical approach draws on established film study frameworks and applies them to the specific context of African popular music video production. The study does not employ quantitative methods such as audience surveys or statistical measurement of engagement metrics.

1.6.6 Delimitations

In order to maintain analytical focus and academic rigour, the following areas fall outside the scope of this study:

- A comprehensive survey of all Ugandan music videos. The study makes no claim to represent the totality of Ugandan music video production.
- The production process. The study does not investigate behind-the-scenes decisions or production budgets except where publicly documented.
- Music composition and audio engineering. Sound is considered only in relation to how it interacts with the visual narrative.
- Legal and copyright dimensions of the music videos.
- The personal biographies of the artists or director beyond what is directly relevant to understanding their artistic practice.

Within these defined boundaries, the study aims to produce a focused and academically grounded analysis of cinematic techniques in contemporary Ugandan music video production, contributing to a field that remains significantly under-examined in East African academic discourse.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Music videos have evolved from simple performance recordings into sophisticated audiovisual productions that combine music, storytelling, cinematography, editing, costume, lighting, choreography, and symbolism to communicate meaning and engage audiences. Scholars and filmmakers increasingly recognize music videos as cinematic texts capable of influencing emotions, identities, and cultural perceptions. Existing literature on cinematography and music video production provides useful insights into how visual techniques shape audience experience. This review examines literature related to cinematography, visual storytelling, editing, audience reception, and cultural representation in music videos while identifying the gaps that necessitate this study.

Cinematography in Music Videos.

Maria Beatriz Antunes Ribeiro (2021) argues that music videos should not be underestimated because they involve deliberate cinematic construction similar to film production. Ribeiro believes that many people completely “...underrate the effort that goes into producing a music video..." (2021, para. 1). She further explains that cinematography in music videos plays a major role in visual storytelling through the coordination of camera movement, framing, colour, editing, and rhythm to communicate emotions and narrative meaning, all of which add meaning to this research. Ribeiro further emphasizes that the synchronization between visuals and music contributes significantly to audience engagement and interpretation. This study is relevant because it supports the argument that music videos are important cinematic works worthy of critical analysis and academic study.

While Ribeiro provides a useful framework by arguing that music videos use deliberate cinematic tools, her work leaves a significant geographic and cultural gap by focusing mostly on Western music industries. Her commentary assumes access to high-end Hollywood-style film equipment, completely overlooking how cinematography works within local industries or different cultural

settings like Uganda. Due to lack of a clear framework to analyze the unique visual language of Ugandan media, this leads to Ugandan music videos being dismissed as simple commercial tools rather than advanced cinematic works of art.

This research directly bridges this gap by applying Ribeiro's personal commentary to the Ugandan music video industry, focusing on the work of music director Edrine Paul. Combining a detailed visual analysis of two case studies; *It's Okay* by Acidic Vokoz and *Somebody* by Sheebah, with interviews (featuring the director, the artists, and a media journalist), questionnaires, and data analysis, this study looks at how deliberate filmmaking techniques are used in Uganda. By examining how Edrine Paul works around budget limits, Ugandan locations, and cinematic techniques, this research creates a clear critical framework to understand the technical skills, beauty, and cultural meaning in Ugandan music videos.

Tal Lazar (2023), describes cinematography as the process of visually organizing a story through camera placement, lighting, costume, movement, and composition. Lazar explains that music videos exist between live performance and narrative cinema because they combine performance with cinematic storytelling. He emphasizes the importance of pre-production planning, scripting, and visual design in producing meaningful and emotionally engaging imagery to help audiences understand character emotions and narrative tone. He points out that a narrative music video effectively exists between live performance and standard cinema, utilizing actors, thematic conflicts, and scenes to build emotionally engaging imagery without relying on spoken dialogue (para. 11, 14). This is relevant to Acidic Vokoz' *It's okay* as will be analyzed in chapter four. This framework aligns directly with the earlier arguments made by Ribeiro (2021), as both authors insist that music videos are meticulous cinematic works where directors intentionally engineer visual setups to trigger deep emotional responses from an audience.

However, Lazar's commentary ignores a significant industrial gap by assuming standard production environments where crew members share uniform professional training, knowledge and understanding, which is not the case with the Ugandan music industry. This gap is in turn challenged by prominent Ugandan broadcasting journalist Calvin Kalule (Calvin Da Entertainer), who observes that parts of the domestic music industry struggle with a profound lack of

professionalism. Kalule highlights in an interview, that many people in the music industry "learn on the job", do not know how to use their money, or what is required of them on set, they want to do all the jobs themselves and do not understand how the music industry works as a business, even hiring many categories of people. (Personal communication, June 5, 2026).

This reality creates a complex barrier for Ugandan music directors, contrasting sharply with the structured workflows championed by Lazar and the idealistic artistic environments described by Ribeiro. Current academic literature entirely lacks an understanding of how high-quality cinematography can exist unstructured, commercially driven industrial constraints as in Uganda.

This research directly bridges this gap by investigating how deliberate cinematic construction is successfully achieved despite these structural shortcomings, focusing specifically on the work of video director Edrine Paul. By exploring how Edrine Paul enforces technical discipline, on-set professionalism and uses cinematic techniques within local production limits, this study transforms global cinematic commentaries into a localized academic framework within which to analyze Ugandan music videos.

Justin Jones discusses the technical and creative processes involved in constructing visually powerful music video scenes. He explains how camera movement, lighting setups, visual effects, framing, and shot composition contribute to mood creation and audience engagement. Cinematographer Jones highlights the use of dolly movements, handheld shots, lighting contrast, and visual effects to intensify emotion and spectacle within music videos. (2023) This study agrees with these cinematography essentials since they establish that music videos are cinematic constructions that must have good camera movement, lighting setups, among others in order to attract and engage the audience to the message being portrayed.

Consequently, this study agrees with some arguments of Jones (2023), Lazar (2026), Ribeiro (2021) as discussed above and intends to show how these epic filmmaking techniques are achieved locally through a detailed textual analysis of *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi as will be analyzed in Chapter Four.

Cinematography plays a central role in determining the visual quality and artistic impact of music videos. According to Kasaija (2022), cinematography encompasses the art and technology of motion picture photography including lighting, camera selection, lenses, filters and scene composition. He argues that cinematography "breathes life to the ideology of the whole film production process through elevating these production ideas to a vision and a visual reality" (Kasaija, 2022, pg. 1).

In the current generation of high-quality productions, Ugandan Music Videos have mainly been shot with high quality and this study, agrees with Kasaija because nowadays a bad quality music video doesn't appeal more to the audience. Calvin Kalule also agrees that while broadcasting, music videos are reviewed before they are streamed and one of the factors to consider is quality.

The Role of Lighting in Music Videos

Lighting is one of the most important cinematic techniques used in music videos. Kasaija (2022) identifies several lighting methods used in making music videos. These include key lighting, fill lighting, backlighting and diffused lighting. These techniques help establish atmosphere, create visual depth in achieving specific cinematic looks.

The literature suggests that improper lighting contributes significantly to poor quality videos. Many low budget productions struggle to achieve cinematic standards because of limited access to professional lighting equipment and technical expertise. Kasaija (2022) notes that some videographers place lights without a clear purpose which results in a very bad music video. Effective lighting therefore improves image quality and also enhances emotional expression and visual storytelling.

Camera Techniques and Visual Storytelling

Camera work is another fundamental cinematic technique used in music videos. Through camera angles, directors can influence audience perception and engagement. Kasaija (2022) emphasizes that cinematography involves controlling what viewers see and how images are presented on

screen. He states that "the artistry of cinematography comes in controlling what the viewer sees or doesn't see" (Kasaija, 2022, pg. 2).

Music videos often employ close-up shots to capture emotion, wide shots to establish scenery and tracking shots to create energy and movement. These techniques support narrative development and visual rhythm which allows the imagery to complement the musical composition. Visual storytelling enables audiences to understand and interpret the song even when the audio is absent.

Editing and Post-Production Techniques

Editing is crucial because it shapes the final presentation of music videos. Modern music production relies heavily on digital technologies and software tools that facilitate editing. According to Ssejjombwe (2024), production involves multiple stages. These include recording, arranging, editing, mixing and mastering. Although the article focuses primarily on music production, the same principles apply to music video making where editing determines pacing, continuity and audience engagement. The integration of editing techniques such as rapid cuts, transitions, color correction and visual effects help synchronize visuals with musical rhythms. These techniques contribute to the overall appearance of the music video.

This study intends to expose one of the challenges faced in editing and post production in the Ugandan music industry where by editing is assumed rather than studied.

Creative and Technical Expertise in Music Video Production

The literature consistently emphasizes the need for both creativity and technical competence in producing high-quality music videos. Ssejjombwe (2024) explains that production is both a creative and technical process requiring artistic vision. Successful producers and directors must understand how to combine creative ideas with technical tools to achieve desired outcomes.

Similarly, Kasaija (2022) found that many Ugandan music videos suffer from limited technical knowledge and inadequate professional training. The study concluded that cinematographers, light designers and technicians require specialized education and professional development to improve

production quality and international competitiveness. These findings suggest that mastery of cinematic techniques is essential for the growth of music videos.

Lessons from the Film Industry

The relationship between film and music video production continues to strengthen as both industries share common storytelling and visual communication practices. The Ugandan music industry can learn valuable lessons from the film industry regarding innovation, audience engagement, branding and production quality. Effective use of cinematic techniques in music videos demonstrates how storytelling can increase audience reach and commercial success.

Film-inspired approaches such as narrative construction, character development, advanced cinematography and high production values have become increasingly common in music videos. These techniques help artists create memorable visual identities while enhancing the emotional impact of their music. This means that music videos increasingly function as short cinematic productions rather than simple promotional materials.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gaps in cinematography, industry professionalism while establishing critical frameworks for critically examining Ugandan music videos as elaborated specifically with *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi. The study intends to explore not only the visual and technical strengths of these productions but also the broader cultural meanings, audience interpretations, and challenges involved in music video production within the Ugandan music video industry.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted in carrying out this study. It describes the research design, study population and sampling strategy, data collection methods and instruments used, data analysis approach, measures taken to ensure validity and reliability, ethical considerations observed, and the limitations encountered during the research process. Together these sections establish the academic transparency upon which the findings presented in Chapter Four are grounded.

The methodology was shaped by the dual nature of the research questions, which seek both to examine cinematic techniques within two visual contexts and to understand how practitioners within the Ugandan music industry conceptualize, execute, and evaluate those techniques. This dual focus; textual and experiential, required a design capable of capturing meaning from both audiovisual material and lived professional experience, making qualitative inquiry the most appropriate methodological foundation.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding phenomena through the meanings people assign to them and through systematic interpretation of texts and experiences, rather than through numerical measurement or statistical generalization (Creswell, 2014). This design is appropriate because the central research questions require interpretative analysis of visual and cinematic meaning, professional experienced perspectives, and audience engagement with music videos, most of which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative methods alone.

Specifically, the study employs a qualitative case study design using two Ugandan music videos that is, *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi as its bounded primary cases. A case study design allows for in-depth, contextualized examination of a specific

phenomenon (the deployment of cinematic techniques within selected music videos) within its real-world setting (the Ugandan entertainment industry), consistent with Yin's (2014) definition of case study research.

The study operates within an interpretivist paradigm, holding that meaning is constructed through interpretation rather than objective measurement. This paradigm supports the study's approach to reading visual texts, analyzing interview responses from industry practitioners, and drawing meaning from the perspectives and experiences of those directly involved in Ugandan music video production and media.

3.2 Study Population and Sampling

The study population comprises of individuals directly involved in, or professionally connected to; the production, performance, broadcast, and critical evaluation of Ugandan music videos. This includes music video directors, recording artists, and entertainment media personalities with direct industry knowledge and experience.

Purposive sampling was employed to select both the primary videos and the human participants. Purposive sampling is a non-probability technique in which cases and participants are selected on the basis of specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, rather than by random selection (Patton, 2002). This approach is standard in qualitative research where depth and relevance of insight are prioritized over statistical representativeness. A total of three participants were involved across all data collection instruments, that is, Edrine Paul (a Ugandan music video director), Acidic Vokoz (a Ugandan artist) and Calvin the entertainer (a Ugandan media personality).

3.2.1 Selection of Primary Texts

The two music videos were selected based on three deliberate criteria. First, both are directed by the same director that is Edrine Paul, allowing the study to analyze directorial style and investigate how the same visual sensibility adapts across different artists and genre contexts. Second, both were released within the contemporary digital production era (2023–2024), ensuring the

techniques observed reflect current Ugandan music video standards. Third, both videos achieved significant cultural and commercial visibility in Uganda, making them meaningful and impactful examples of current audiovisual production.

3.2.2 Overview of the selected Case Studies.

To ensure a rigorous application of cinematic textual analysis, this study utilizes two purposively selected Ugandan music videos that offer contrasting narrative structures, power dynamics, and emotional landscapes. A brief descriptive overview of each text is provided below to contextualize the subsequent data analysis.

3.2.2.1 Case Study One: "It's okay" by Acidic Vokoz (2024)

"It's Okay" is a melancholic, narrative-driven Afro sounds music video that explores the themes of emotional vulnerability, betrayal, and psychological acceptance following a romantic breakup. Visually, the video utilizes a somber, muted color palette and heavy shadow play to establish a mood of isolation and grief. The visual narrative tracks the male protagonist (portrayed by Acidic Vokoz) navigating the emotional fallout with his girlfriend who falls in love with his boss moments after he introduces her to him (the boss). The video relies heavily on tight close-ups, slower editing pacing, and emotive mise-en-scène to externalize internal heartbreak, offering a critical text for analyzing emotional intimacy and vulnerable masculinity within local visual media.

3.2.2.2 Case Study Two: "Somebody" by Sheebah Karungi (2025)

In contrast, "Somebody" is an upbeat, modern Dancehall and Afro-pop visual performance that explicitly celebrates romantic possession, sensual empowerment, and unyielding confidence. Moving away from a singular linear storyline, the video heavily emphasizes high-energy choreography, rapid editing cuts, and a vibrant, highly saturated color palette typical of

contemporary mainstream Ugandan pop visuals. The protagonist (portrayed by Sheebah Karungi) commands the screen through dominant blocking and expressive body language, projecting an established "Star Image" centered on fierce autonomy and sexual agency. This video serves as an ideal analytical counterpart, providing rich material for investigating dynamic power structures, high-tempo visual pacing, and the proactive construction of female authority.

3.2.3 Selection of Human Participants

Three key informants were purposively selected and interviewed. All three are industry practitioners with direct professional connection to the subject matter of the study:

- **Edrine Paul —**Director of both music videos under study. As the creative authority behind the visual construction of *It's okay* and *Somebody*, Edrine Paul provided first-hand insight into directorial intent, cinematographic decision-making, production constraints, and the visual philosophy informing his work within the Ugandan music industry.
- **Acidic Vokoz —** Acidic Vokoz (Kakaire Mutwailu) — Recording artist and lead performer in *It's Okay*. As a primary creative collaborator in the production of the video, Acidic Vokoz offered the artist's perspective on the relationship between musical intent and visual execution, including the role of performance, styling, and narrative in realizing the song's emotional message on screen.
- **Calvin the Entertainer —** (Calvin Kalule) is a multi-award-winning broadcast journalist, entertainment media personality, and Head of Entertainment at Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC TV), where he has hosted the long-running music- associated programme 'Horizon Vibe' for over a decade (Sqoop, 2019; Chano8, 2015). Calvin brings a qualified media industry perspective to the study — evaluating music videos professionally from the standpoint of broadcast standards, audience reception, and industry trends. His inclusion as a key informant situates the study's analysis within the broader context of how Ugandan music videos are received, evaluated, and mediated by the entertainment press.

In addition to the three key informants as mentioned above, a questionnaire was administered to all three industry participants involved in the study. The decision to target industry professionals

rather than general audiences reflects the study's primary focus on the production, intent, and professional evaluation of cinematic techniques, rather than casual public consumption.

3.3 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Data was collected through four complementary methods: interviews, questionnaires, observation, and document analysis. The use of multiple methods constitutes methodological triangulation, which strengthens the credibility and depth of findings by cross-referencing data from different sources (Denzin, 1978).

3.3.1 Interviews

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with each of the three key informants: Edrine Paul, Acidic Vokoz, and Calvin the Entertainer. Each interview lasted approximately ten minutes and was recorded through video to ensure accuracy of documentation and to allow for thorough transcription and analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow the researcher to pursue a consistent set of themes across all participants while remaining flexible enough to follow up on unexpected or particularly insightful responses (Bryman, 2016). The interview guide as the instrument used in this method was developed around the study's research questions and analytical framework, covering themes including: directorial intent and visual decision-making; the relationship between music and visual narrative; the role of cinematography, lighting, editing, and colour in constructing emotional meaning; production challenges within the Ugandan industry; and the role of cinematic techniques in constructing star image and audience engagement.

Video recording the interviews served a dual purpose: it preserved the complete verbal and non-verbal content of each exchange for accurate transcription, and it provided a primary source document that could be reviewed and verified by the research team at any point during the analysis process.

3.3.2 Questionnaires

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to all three industry participants involved in the study. Targeting industry professionals ensured that responses reflected informed, experience-based perspectives on cinematic techniques, production practice, and music video quality for direct relevance to the study's analytical focus. Questionnaires are appropriate for gathering structured responses across multiple participants efficiently, particularly when the researcher seeks to understand patterns of professional perspective and evaluation (Creswell, 2014).

The questionnaire instrument combined open-ended and closed-ended questions, allowing respondents to both select from defined response options and articulate personal professional judgements in their own words. Questions were grouped around the core cinematic elements under analysis: visual aesthetics, narrative construction, colour and mood, performance and star image, editing, and the overall impact of cinematic technique on audience engagement, in alignment with the study's analytical framework.

3.3.3 Textual Review

Textual review of the two primary music videos constituted a core data collection method. This involved repeated, structured viewing of both '*It's okay*' and '*Somebody*' using pre-designed review guides aligned to the study's seven analytical categories: mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and pacing, colour grading and tone, the relationship between visuals and audio, intertextuality, and star image.

The textual reviewing procedure followed three stages. First, each video was viewed in full without interruption to develop an overall impression of narrative structure, emotional tone, and visual style. Second, each video was viewed a second time with timestamped notes recorded against each analytical category. Third, sequences of particular cinematographic or narrative significance were reviewed frame-by-frame to allow for precise description of shot composition, camera movement, colour treatment, and editing rhythm.

Documents were reviewed and analyzed as a supplementary method to contextualize the primary data. Documents reviewed include: the academic and industry literature cited in the Literature Review (including Kasaija, 2022; Ssejjombwe, 2024; Ribeiro, 2021; Lazar via Berklee Online; the Adobe Cinematography Guide; and the Cinema UG article on lessons from the music industry); published reviews and commentary on the selected music videos from Ugandan entertainment platforms; and award nomination records from the 2024 HiPipo Music Awards which document the commercial and critical reception of *It's okay*.

Document analysis is a recognized qualitative method in which existing recorded materials are examined to extract relevant information and contextual meaning (Bowen, 2009). In this study, documentary sources were used to triangulate findings from interviews, questionnaires rather than to serve as stand-one primary evidence.

3.4 Data Analysis

All data collected through interviews, questionnaires and textual review was analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report.

Interview recordings were transcribed in full and coded systematically alongside questionnaire responses and observation notes. Codes were mapped against the study's seven analytical categories, and recurring patterns, convergences, and divergences across the two case studies were identified and organized into overarching themes.

For the visual data gathered through textual review, analysis was made through reading the music videos as audiovisual texts and interpreting the meaning produced by specific cinematic choices within their Ugandan cultural and social context. Findings were then triangulated to produce a coherent, cross-validated set of conclusions presented in Chapter Four.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, validity and reliability are evaluated through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and more appropriate to the interpretivist paradigm than conventional positivist notions of validity and reliability.

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility was established through methodological triangulation across four data collection methods, which allowed cross-checking of findings from interviews, questionnaires, textual review and data analysis. The analytical framework was grounded in established film and media theory, providing a recognized academic basis for interpretation. The face-to-face video-recorded interviews further strengthen credibility by allowing findings to be anchored in verbatim, verifiable participant responses.

3.5.2 Transferability

While this study does not claim to be representative of all Ugandan music video production, the depth of its case study findings and the detailed documentation of its analytical process allow other researchers to assess the relevance of the findings to comparable contexts within the Ugandan or wider East African music video industry.

3.5.3 Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability was ensured by documenting the research procedure in sufficient detail that it could be replicated by another researcher. Confirmability was addressed by grounding all interpretive claims in specific, identifiable evidence from the data such as direct quotations from interview transcripts, timestamped observations from the videos, and documented secondary sources — reducing the risk of unsupported interpretation.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles applicable to academic research at Makerere University. The following ethical considerations were observed throughout:

- Informed Consent: This is to say all three interview participants — Edrine Paul, Acidic Vokoz, and Calvin the Entertainer — were informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Consent was obtained prior to the conduct of each face-to-face interview, including consent to video-record the session and use it for academic purposes related to the research.

- Confidentiality: Participants requested confidentiality regarding specific responses and this was respected. Participants are identified by their professional names only to the extent they consented to being named as contributors to the study.

- Voluntary Participation**:** Voluntary Participation: Participation in both the interviews and the questionnaire was entirely voluntary. No inducements were offered and no pressure was applied to any participant.

- Fair Use of Primary Texts: The two music videos are publicly released and commercially distributed works to You tube where they were accessed on the artists' channels. Their analysis is conducted strictly for academic purposes, consistent with fair use provisions applicable to educational research. No portion of either video has been reproduced or distributed outside this academic context.

- Accurate Attribution**:** All secondary sources are properly attributed in accordance with academic referencing standards. No material is presented as original when it derives from another source.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Despite the measures taken to ensure rigour, this study encountered several significant limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings.

Access to Participants**:** The most substantial limitation encountered during this research was the difficulty of securing and maintaining contact with intended participants. Miscommunication, clashing timetables, and missed meetings considerably delayed the data collection process and, in some instances, the research team was required to reschedule interviews multiple times before they could be successfully conducted. This challenge is reflective of the broader reality of conducting fieldwork within a busy creative industry where practitioners operate on unpredictable and demanding schedules. As a result, the final participant sample was limited to those who were ultimately accessible rather than all those originally intended for inclusion. For example, the fourth participant, 'Sheebah Karungi' could not be accessed after multiple appointments with her manager. Eventually, we shared a questionnaire intended for her to record a video answering the questions since physical meeting was difficult but this too was in vain.

Small Participant Sample**:** The study involved three participants in total. While all were purposively selected for their direct relevance to the research, this small number means that the data reflects a limited range of individual perspectives. A larger or more diverse participant group — particularly one including a wider range of audience voices beyond industry professionals — might have produced broader and more varied findings.

Scope of Case Studies: The study focuses on two music videos, using other videos as relevant examples where the two case studies are limited and makes no claim to represent the full range of cinematic practices across the Ugandan music video industry. Findings are specific to the selected case studies as well as the cinematic techniques and should be interpreted accordingly.

Limited Access to Production Documentation**:** The study did not have access to full production documentation such as original scripts, budgets, or pre-production materials for either video. Such materials may have offered additional insight into the directorial intentions behind specific cinematographic choices.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has established the methodological foundation of the study. It has outlined a qualitative, interpretivist case study design; described the purposive sampling procedure used to select the two primary texts and three key interview participants; detailed four data collection methods — face-to-face video-recorded interviews, questionnaires, systematic video observation, and document analysis — alongside their respective instruments. This chapter has also explained the thematic analysis approach applied to process the data; addressed validity and reliability through Lincoln and Guba's framework and documented the ethical considerations observed. It further acknowledges the limitations of the study, including the significant practical challenges of participant access encountered during fieldwork.

Having established this methodological framework, the study proceeds in Chapter Four to present the findings of the cinematic and narrative analysis of *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi, drawing on all four data sources to produce a comprehensive, evidence-based account of how cinematic techniques function within these two significant Ugandan music videos.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As previously mentioned in chapter three, this chapter shows the findings of the study and is structured to address the study's specific objectives and research questions, ensuring that the analysis is focused and directly relevant to the problem statement. The findings are presented in sections to provide a comprehensive understanding of the use of cinematic techniques in Ugandan music videos.

This chapter analyses the cinematic techniques employed in Ugandan music videos specifically *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz, directed by Edrine Paul and released in January 2024, and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi, also directed by Edrine Paul and released in July 2025. The analysis is structured around the study's seven analytical categories: mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and pacing, colour grading and tone, the relationship between visuals and audio, intertextuality, and star image. Each video is analyzed individually before a comparative discussion situates both works within the broader evolution of Ugandan music video production over the past decade.

The findings reveal a Ugandan music video industry that has undergone significant transformation over the past ten years — moving from productions characterized by limited production design, inconsistent lighting, and minimal narrative construction toward sophisticated audiovisual works that draw deliberately on cinematic language, fashion aesthetics, and intentional visual storytelling. The videos examined in this chapter represent this elevated standard and demonstrate how contemporary Ugandan directors are deploying cinematic techniques with increasing intentionality and artistic confidence.

4.2 PROFILE OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Three participants were selected for the qualitative interviews depending on the topic as well as their connection to the case studies.

4.2.1 Edrine Paul

Is a Ugandan music video director, editor and cinematographer who started his directing career at the age of 17 up to date. He manages a production company named Future trends print Company located in Mengo. He has worked on different music video projects including *It's okay* by acidic Vokoz and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi.

4.2.2 Acidic Vokoz

Is a Ugandan singer, songwriter, originally named Kakaire Mutwailu. He was born in Namutumba Eastern Uganda, and rose to the limelight with his song 'Nkulinako crush'. He continues to release more music till to date and is the official artist to the song *It's okay*.

4.2.3 Calvin the entertainer

Calvin Kalule, professionally known as Calvin the Entertainer, is an award-winning Ugandan broadcast journalist, media strategist, and entertainment personality. He currently serves as Head of Entertainment at UBC TV and manager of Magic1HD, with over 16 years of experience in Uganda's media and entertainment industry. Calvin began his career as a video library operator and later became a television and radio presenter, hosting popular entertainment programs such as Horizon Vibe and Groove Mix. He has played a significant role in promoting Ugandan music and developing youth-oriented entertainment content especially through his TV show 'Horizon Vibe' where he plays Ugandan music and hosts Ugandan artists.

4.3.1 How Ugandan Music Videos Use Cinematic Techniques to Engage Audiences

The findings show that cinematic techniques are no longer optional in Ugandan music videos but are essential for attracting and retaining viewers. Modern audiences expect music videos to provide both entertainment and a story that they can emotionally connect with.

4.3.1.1 Mise-en-Scène

Mise-en-scène refers to everything placed before the camera — the visual composition of the frame including location and setting, costume and styling, props, lighting, and the arrangement and performance of figures within the space (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019). In music video production, mise-en-scène is one of the primary means through which the emotional world of a

song is made visually legible to the audience. The following analysis examines how both videos construct their mise-en-scène and the communicative purposes those constructions serve.

Locations and Setting

This means the physical place, background, and environment where a scene is filmed. It includes the choice of real places, built studio sets, or digital environments (green screen), plus how those spaces are decorated with objects and furniture to tell a story. Location and setting help the audience to depict time and place that is when and where a story happens, such as a futuristic city or the late 90s. Set dressing such as the furniture, wallpaper, and clutter placed inside the space show a character's wealth, job, or habits and sometimes the setting and location is reflected through symbolism to reflect a character's inner feelings or mental state.

For instance, *It's okay* (2024) by *Acidic Vokoz uses* recognizable Ugandan social environments such as a factory or work place rather than artificially constructed sets. Interior domestic spaces communicate emotional intimacy and the vulnerability of the protagonist, while more aspirational exterior environments associated with the rival male figure communicate social status and financial power. From as early as 0:02, the opening medium shots ground the audience in a believable, relatable social world. Audiences within the Ugandan cultural context can immediately read the social codes embedded in each space that is, the working area and the Boss' office. Homesteads, the work place and local architectural structures serve not merely as backdrops but as active signifiers of the characters' social positions and emotional states.

On the other hand, *Somebody* (2025) by Sheebah Karungi is built around multiple stylized, de-realized environments rather than recognizable social spaces. From 0:00 to 0:04, opening wide shots establish a luxurious interior with clean architectural lines and carefully controlled décor. As the video progresses, Sheebah moves through a series of minimal studio environments and fashion-inspired sets. These spaces function as emotional canvases rather than geographical locations. The production deliberately employs negative space, particularly from 0:12 onward, so that viewer attention remains entirely on the performer. These locations do not ask where Sheebah is; they communicate how this space makes her feel — confident, desirable, and emotionally self-possessed.

The contrast between the two videos at the level of location is fundamental: *It's okay* uses setting to construct a social world with narrative stakes, while *Somebody* uses setting to construct an aspirational emotional atmosphere. Both approaches represent a significant evolution from Ugandan music video production of the early 2010s, where limited budgets frequently constrained directors to whatever locations were available rather than environments deliberately chosen for communicative purpose.

Costume and Styling

Costume and styling in mise-en-scène refer to the clothes, hair, and makeup that characters wear on screen. They act as a visual language to show a character's social status, job, personality, and changes over time without using dialogue. The type, style, and cost of outfits help define who a character is, colours draw attention or show differences between people, Clean, ironed clothes or dirty, torn fabrics tell a story about a character's recent struggles or living conditions. Hairstyles and makeup complete the look, showing historical time periods, fantasy elements, or realistic physical states

The Costume in *It's okay* performs a deliberate narrative function. Acidic Vokoz wears a worker's uniform to communicate vulnerability thus positioning him as an ordinary young man (0:02). His styling immediately aligns him with the audience rather than elevating him above it. The rival male character is dressed in a suit and office wear that communicates financial status and material power, providing an immediate visual contrast that makes the central conflict legible without requiring dialogue. The female character's styling shifts subtly between scenes in a way that reflects her movement between the emotional worlds of the two male characters.

As for Sheebah's *Somebody*, Sheebah undergoes multiple outfit changes across the video. This is visible at key transitions from 0:04, 0:26, 1:12 and beyond, with each look reflecting a different emotional or aesthetic facet of a single, continuous identity. The wardrobe encompasses elegant dresses, fitted fashion pieces in red for the dancers, luxury accessories, and contemporary African fashion influences. Rather than representing different characters or narrative moments, the

costume changes communicate emotional progression and identity multiplicity. The audience sees multiple versions of Sheebah, each equally confident and self-possessed.

Performance and Blocking

Performance and blocking dictate how actors bring a script to life, encompassing performance through voice, facial expressions, gestures, and acting style. Blocking consists of choreography, positioning, and movement of actors (and cameras) relative to the set and each other. Performance and blocking include where actors stand, when they walk or sit, how close they get to one another to reflect power dynamics or relationships. This establishes character motivations, psychological states, and audience empathy.

Performance in *It's okay* is grounded in emotional realism. From 0:50 to 1:01, Acidic Vokoz performs directly to camera during the chorus, his facial expression carrying the weight of the lyrical confession (guilt, pain, and the need for self-consolation). The blocking of scenes involving the three central characters uses physical proximity and distance as visual metaphors for emotional connection and separation. During interaction scenes around 0:40 and the burning sequence, characters are positioned in ways that visually exclude the protagonist from spaces he once occupied emotionally. This portrays his isolation without requiring a reaction shot or explicit confrontation.

Alternatively, Sheebah's performance alternates between direct camera address and choreographed movement throughout the video. From 1:12 to 1:21, she performs directly toward the audience, her facial expression combining intimacy with confidence. The blocking of dance sequences, particularly from 0:41 onward where supporting dancers are arranged around her, reinforces her centrality within every frame. She performs simultaneously for the viewing audience and for an implied romantic interest within the video's emotional world. This duality produces a sense of intimacy even within the video's large, luxurious spaces.

Props and Symbolism

These refer to physical objects used by actors or placed in a set that carry deeper, hidden meanings. They help tell a story, show a character's feelings, or explain big ideas without using any words.

For example, props in *It's okay* are selected for their narrative and symbolic utility. The gifts delivered to the girl's home as visible during reaction close-ups at approximately 1:04 to 2:18, function as physical evidence of the protagonist's emotional investment, making his vulnerability tangible and specific. The burning sequence uses fire both as a narrative event and as a symbolic act of emotional severance. These props are embedded within a recognizable Ugandan social context of spending on loved ones with gifts, making their significance immediately legible to local audiences without requiring explanatory framing.

Symbolism in *Somebody* operates at a more abstract level than in *It's okay*. Recurring visual motifs such as architectural framing elements, luxury accessories and elegant décor function cumulatively rather than as discrete narrative signifiers. The frame-within-a-frame compositions at 0:26 and 1:40 use architectural elements to isolate Sheebah within visually sophisticated structures, reinforcing her status as both subject and spectacle. These visual ideas collectively communicate self-worth, emotional confidence, and the affirmation of desirability, as per the thematic core of the song.

4.3.1.2 Cinematography

Cinematography encompasses the artistic and technical choices involved in capturing moving images, including shot sizes, camera angles, camera movement, composition, lighting, focus, and lens selection (Kasaija, 2022). According to the Adobe Cinematography Guide, cinematography influences how audiences emotionally respond to characters, spaces, and actions. The following sub-sections examine each cinematographic element across both videos.

Shot Sizes

Shot size refers to the distance between the camera and its subject, which determines how much of the subject and environment is visible within the frame. Different shot sizes produce different emotional and narrative effects. For example, wide shots establish context and environment, medium shots balance character expression with setting, and close-ups intensify emotional engagement (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019).

Table showing shots in *It's okay* – Acidic Vokoz

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:02–0:05	Medium Shot	Opens with medium shots on characters' faces when revealing emotions of guilt, emotion and reaction to close-up symbolism from lyrics. Camera maintains focus on Acidic Vokoz through direct symbolism, highlighting his face and his emotional state.	The medium shot creates an immediate emotional connection while introducing the narrative naturally. It balances character expression with environmental context.
0:50–1:01	Medium Close-up	Throughout the chorus, the camera consistently frames Acidic Vokoz from the chest upward during performance.	Repeated medium close-ups establish the artist as the emotional anchor, maintaining intimacy while communicating the sincerity of his performance.
0:40	Close-up	Close-up shots capture the interaction between the young woman and the elderly man, highlighting their facial expressions.	These close-ups emphasize tension and secrecy while directing audience attention to emotional reactions rather than surrounding detail.
1:04	Medium Long Shot	A few reaction close-ups for reactions are also constantly used during the burning scene and during the arrival of a mysterious character up until 3:42.	The framing demonstrates the relationship between character and environment, symbolizing emotional isolation while illustrating narrative space.
1:18–2:18	Medium Shot	Medium shots are used during this section to show the environment that the protagonist (Acidic Vokoz) is in, to show his environment and to symbolize the power of his emotional state.	Repeated medium shots create visual consistency allowing emotional performance and narrative progression to occur simultaneously.

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
2:38–2:43	Close-up	Close-ups introduce a mysterious character entering the narrative.	The tighter framing generates suspense by withholding environmental information while focusing entirely on the character's identity.
3:15	Frame Within a Frame	One last frame within a frame at 3:15 for the shock of the girl that kept saying no, for her reaction at the end.	The framing isolates the character psychologically, symbolizing reflection and the consequences of her earlier decisions.

Table showing shots *Somebody* – Sheebah Karungi

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:00–0:04	Wide / Establishing Shot	Opening shots are wide shots to establish location from 0:00 to 0:04.	Establishing shots immediately communicate the glamorous aesthetic while providing spatial awareness of the performance environment.
0:04	Medium Shot	A medium shot introduces Sheebah as the central performer.	Clearly establishes the artist's identity while balancing facial expression, costume and body language.
0:05	Medium Long Shot	The camera widens slightly to include more of the environment surrounding Sheebah.	Integrates the performer with the designed set, allowing the luxurious mise-en-scène to contribute to her characterization.
0:12	Tracking Medium Shot	Medium shot of Sheebah at 0:12 through to 1:21 shot performing her song.	The moving medium shot introduces visual dynamism and maintains engagement while reflecting the rhythm of the song.
0:26	Frame Within a Frame	Creative production design places Sheebah within architectural framing elements.	Directs viewer attention exclusively toward the performer while adding visual sophistication and depth.
0:41	Wide Shot	Wide shots reveal the dancers performing alongside Sheebah.	Wider framing emphasizes choreography and spatial relationships between performers.

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
1:12–1:21	Medium Close-up	Medium close ups of Sheebah's face from 1:12 through to 1:21 shot performing.	Strengthen audience intimacy and emphasize facial expression while maintaining visibility of costume.
1:40	Frame Within a Frame	Medium close up of Sheebah's face from 1:12 through to 1:40 with creative set design frame within a frame at 0:26 for the dancer.	Creates depth while positioning Sheebah as the clear visual focal point despite surrounding performers.
1:51–2:03	Close-up	Medium close ups of Sheebah's face through the crowd at 1:51 to 2:03.	Diversify visual rhythm while illustrating the reactions and participation of surrounding characters.

The two videos employ shot sizes for different narrative purposes. *It's okay* primarily uses medium shots and close-ups to advance a character-driven story, allowing audiences to experience emotional vulnerability and interpersonal conflict. In contrast, *Somebody* employs shot sizes to celebrate performance and visual spectacle, alternating between wide shots that showcase choreography and close-ups that reinforce Sheebah's celebrity image. The continual variation of shot size in *Somebody* creates a more dynamic performance aesthetic than the narrative-focused consistency of *It's okay*.

Camera Angles

Camera angles refer to the position of the camera relative to the subject being filmed. The angle from which a subject is photographed significantly influences how the audience perceives them for instance, eye-level angles create equality and realism, high angles suggest vulnerability or diminishment, and low angles communicate power and authority (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019).

Table showing camera angles in *It's okay* – Acidic Vokoz

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:02–0:05	Eye-Level Angle	The opening medium shot presents the protagonist at eye level, creating a natural perspective that introduces the narrative without visual exaggeration.	Encourages viewer identification with the protagonist, creating realism and emotional accessibility from the beginning.
0:40	Eye-Level Two-Shot	The interaction between the elderly man and the young woman is captured from an eye-level perspective.	Allows viewers to interpret the interaction objectively while emphasizing character relationships rather than visual dominance.
0:50–1:01	Eye-Level Performance	Acidic Vokoz is consistently framed at eye level throughout the chorus.	Positions the artist as emotionally equal to the audience, making his performance feel sincere and personal.
1:04	Slight High Angle	The medium long shot slightly overlooks the protagonist as he occupies the environment alone.	Enhances the feeling of emotional vulnerability and reinforces the loneliness suggested by the narrative.
2:38–2:43	Low Angle Introduction	The mysterious character is introduced with a slightly lower camera angle.	Creates intrigue and gives the character greater visual significance within the narrative.
3:15	Eye-Level Framed	The girl's final reaction is shown through a frame-within-a-frame at eye level.	Combines visual enclosure with emotional realism, emphasizing reflection while preserving believability.

Table showing Camera angles in *Somebody* – Sheebah Karungi

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:00–0:04	High-Angle Establishing	Opening wide shots observe the location from a slightly elevated perspective.	Reveals the scale and elegance of the environment while establishing the video's glamorous identity.
0:04	Eye-Level Medium Shot	Sheebah is introduced directly at eye level.	Immediately connects the audience with the performer and establishes her as the focal point.

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:41	Slight Low Angle Wide	During the dance performance the camera looks slightly upward toward the dancers.	The subtle low angle increases performers' visual presence and enhances the energy of the choreography.
1:12–1:21	Eye-Level Medium Close-up	The camera maintains eye-level framing during Sheebah's direct performance.	Encourages audience connection while highlighting confidence and emotional expression.
Throughout	Mixed Eye-Level Angles	Most performance shots maintain eye-level framing with only subtle variations.	Reflects the polished, fashion-inspired style while maintaining visual elegance throughout.

Unlike *It's okay*, which introduces subtle high and low angles to reinforce emotional vulnerability and narrative importance, *Somebody* relies predominantly on eye-level framing to maintain glamour, confidence and direct engagement. The restrained use of dramatic angles in *Somebody* aligns with its performance-driven aesthetic, whereas *It's okay* employs angle variation more purposefully to support character development and emotional storytelling.

Camera Movement

Camera movement refers to the physical displacement of the camera during a shot. Movement choices, whether static, tracking, push-in or otherwise, shape the audience's relationship to the subject and communicate emotional and narrative information beyond what is visible in a fixed frame (Lazar, Berklee Online).

Table showing Camera Movement in *It's okay* – Acidic Vokoz

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
Opening	Static Camera	Opening scenes use restrained camera movement as the narrative is introduced.	Limited movement allows viewers to concentrate on character relationships and the unfolding story rather than visual spectacle.
Chorus	Slow Push-in	The camera gradually moves closer to Acidic Vokoz during emotionally expressive performance moments.	The push-in intensifies emotional engagement and visually reinforces the sincerity of the lyrics.

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
1:04	Tracking Movement	The camera follows the protagonist through the environment.	Tracking maintains spatial continuity and emphasizes the character's emotional journey within the narrative space.
Narrative scenes	Motivated Movement	Camera movement follows character actions rather than moving independently.	Motivated movement creates realism and strengthens audience immersion in the story.
Final sequence	Static Frames	Camera movement becomes increasingly restrained toward the conclusion.	The reduction in movement shifts attention toward emotional resolution rather than visual dynamism.

Table showing Camera Movement in *Somebody* – Sheebah Karungi

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:00–0:04	Slow Reveal	The camera glides smoothly across the luxurious location before revealing the performer.	Elegant movement establishes the video's premium aesthetic and introduces the performance environment.
0:12	Tracking Shot	The camera tracks alongside Sheebah as she performs the opening verse.	Creates fluidity while matching the rhythm and confidence of the performance.
Dance sequences	Lateral Tracking	The camera moves horizontally with the dancers.	Following the choreography creates visual energy and maintains audience engagement.
Performance	Slow Push-in	Gentle forward movement accompanies emotional singing moments.	Increases intimacy without interrupting the polished visual style.
Throughout	Stabilized Gimbal	Most movements remain smooth and controlled throughout.	Consistent stabilization contributes to the luxurious, fashion-oriented visual identity.

Camera movement in *It's okay* primarily serves the narrative, following characters and emphasizing emotional development through restrained, motivated motion. In contrast, *Somebody* uses fluid tracking, gliding reveals and stabilized movement to enhance performance and visual elegance. Movement in *It's okay* supports storytelling; movement in *Somebody* contributes to spectacle, rhythm and the artist's on-screen presence.

Composition

Composition refers to the arrangement of visual elements within the frame to direct audience attention, establish balance, create depth, and communicate meaning. According to the Adobe Cinematography Guide, compositional techniques such as the rule of thirds, symmetry, leading lines, and negative space are fundamental tools through which cinematographers shape how audiences read and respond to images.

Table showing composition in *It's okay* – Acidic Vokoz

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:02–0:05	Centre Composition	The protagonist is positioned centrally during the opening sequence.	Immediately establishes the protagonist as the focal point and introduces him as the central figure in the narrative.
0:40	Two-Character Framing	The elderly man and the young woman occupy different sides of the frame.	Visually represents the relationship and tension between the two characters while guiding attention to their interaction.
1:04	Environmental Framing	The protagonist is framed against the surrounding landscape.	The environment becomes an extension of the character's emotional state, reinforcing isolation and longing.
Burning scene	Layered Composition	Foreground flames, midground characters and background scenery occupy separate planes.	Layering creates depth and increases dramatic intensity while directing attention through the frame.
2:38–2:43	Selective Framing	The mysterious character is isolated from surrounding distractions.	Creates suspense and encourages curiosity about the character's role in the narrative.
3:15	Frame Within a Frame	The final reaction is enclosed by architectural elements.	Symbolizes emotional confinement and reflection while emphasizing the consequences of the character's decisions.
Throughout	Leading Lines	Roads, fences and architecture subtly direct attention toward characters.	Natural guidance of the viewer's eye without distracting from the story.

Table showing composition in *Somebody* – Sheebah Karungi

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:00–0:04	Symmetrical Composition	Establishing shots emphasize architectural symmetry within the luxurious setting.	Symmetry immediately establishes the polished visual identity of the music video.
0:04	Centre Composition	Sheebah is positioned centrally as she is introduced.	Central framing reinforces her importance and identifies her as the dominant visual subject.
0:26	Frame Within a Frame	Architectural structures surround Sheebah within the frame.	Isolates the performer while adding visual sophistication and depth.
0:41	Wide Performance	Dancers are arranged symmetrically around the performer.	Balanced choreography reinforces order, luxury and visual harmony.
1:12–1:21	Shallow Depth	Sheebah remains sharply focused while the background appears blurred.	Selective focus isolates the performer and strengthens audience engagement.
1:40	Layered Composition	The crowd occupies the foreground while Sheebah remains visible beyond them.	Multiple visual planes create depth and reinforce her status as central performer.
Throughout	Negative Space	Certain shots leave empty space surrounding Sheebah.	Negative space isolates the performer, increasing visual emphasis and conveying confidence.

The composition of *It's okay* primarily supports narrative storytelling, using balanced framing, environmental composition and layered depth to communicate relationships and emotional development. *Somebody* emphasizes visual elegance, frequently employing symmetry, central composition and frame-within-a-frame to celebrate the performer's image and reinforce its luxurious aesthetic. While both videos create depth through layered compositions, *It's okay* uses composition to immerse audiences in a story world, whereas *Somebody* uses it to elevate spectacle and performance.

Lighting

Lighting is a fundamental element of cinematography that shapes mood, directs audience attention, establishes atmosphere, and reinforces narrative meaning. Kasaija (2022) identifies several lighting methods used in music video production — key lighting, fill lighting, backlighting and

diffused lighting — each contributing to different emotional and visual effects. The two videos under study employ lighting in markedly contrasting ways that reflect their respective aesthetic and communicative objectives.

Table showing lighting in *It's okay* – Acidic Vokoz

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:02–0:05	Natural Lighting	The opening sequence is illuminated primarily by available daylight, producing realistic skin tones and environmental detail.	Natural lighting establishes authenticity and grounds the audience within a believable environment, supporting the narrative-driven style.
Opening	Soft Lighting	Light falls evenly across the protagonist's face with gentle shadows.	Enhances facial expressions and emotional vulnerability while maintaining a realistic visual appearance.
0:40	Motivated Lighting	Light appears to originate naturally from the surrounding environment during the interaction scenes.	Increases realism by making illumination appear consistent with the scene's physical environment.
0:50–1:01	High-Key Natural	During the chorus, the artist remains evenly illuminated without harsh shadows.	Ensures facial expressions remain visible while reinforcing the sincerity of the performance.
Burning scene	Practical Lighting	Flames provide visible illumination during the dramatic sequence.	Increases emotional intensity and realism while making the fire an important narrative element.
2:38–2:43	Selective Lighting	The mysterious character receives stronger visual emphasis through controlled lighting.	Immediately draws audience attention and increases narrative suspense.
Throughout	Low-Contrast	Shadows remain controlled and detail is preserved throughout most scenes.	Reinforces realism and prevents visual distraction from the unfolding story.

Table showing lighting in *Somebody* – Sheebah Karungi

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:00–0:04	High-Key Lighting	The opening location is brightly illuminated, revealing every aspect of the luxurious environment.	Establishes glamour, sophistication and an aspirational visual style from the outset.

Timestamp	Technique	Observation	Analytical Effect
0:04	Beauty Lighting	Sheebah's face receives soft, flattering illumination that minimizes harsh shadows.	Enhances the performer's appearance and strengthens her celebrity image.
0:12	Controlled Studio	Artificial lighting remains consistent as the camera tracks with the performer.	Ensures visual continuity while maintaining a polished, professional aesthetic.
0:26	Accent Lighting	Decorative lighting highlights architectural features surrounding Sheebah.	Increases visual richness and draws attention to the carefully designed set.
0:41	Performance Lighting	Bright, evenly distributed lighting covers both dancers and the main performer.	Consistent illumination supports choreography by ensuring all performers remain clearly visible.
1:12–1:21	Soft Key Lighting	A dominant key light gently illuminates Sheebah's face during close-up performance shots.	Emphasizes facial beauty while maintaining emotional warmth.
Throughout	Colour-Controlled	Lighting complements the warm colour palette without creating extreme contrast.	Contributes to a cohesive visual identity and supports the romantic atmosphere.

Lighting in *It's okay* primarily serves realism and emotional storytelling, relying on natural, motivated and practical sources to preserve authenticity. *Somebody* employs stylized, high-key and beauty lighting to reinforce glamour and performance. Whereas lighting in *It's okay* functions to communicate emotional depth, lighting in *Somebody* functions as an aesthetic tool that enhances spectacle, fashion and celebrity representation — reflecting a distinct evolution in the technical ambitions and production resources of Ugandan music video practice.

4.3.1.3 Editing and Pacing

Editing does a lot of the heavy lifting in a music video — it is what shapes the narrative, sets the rhythm, and ultimately decides how much emotional punch the final product lands with. At its core it's about choosing which shots to use and how to arrange them so the visuals sync with the music, without losing continuity or losing the viewer along the way. Pacing is really about how fast the visuals move and how well that speed lines up with the music's own rhythm. Get it right, and the audience feels the emotional arc of the song the way it's meant to be felt.

For example, *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi time stamp [1:00] leans on smooth continuity cuts and rhythmic transitions to weave performance footage together with the narrative thread. The cuts track the song's tempo closely, which keeps viewers locked in while still giving Sheebah's performance and the storyline room to breathe. The result is a video that feels polished, almost cinematic in how tightly it's put together. This editing makes the pace of the song alternate between slower, more narrative-driven moments and quicker performance sequences. It is a back-and-forth sequence that mirrors the emotional shifts in the song itself and keeps things from feeling flat.

On the other hand, *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz time stamp [00:30, 01:02] takes the opposite approach. The editing is slower and more deliberate. Longer shots and transitions that don't rush let the audience actually sit with the emotional performances and symbolic scenes rather than skim past them. Slow motion shows up selectively, at moments of struggle or hope, which reinforces the song's inspirational core. It's a video where the editing, cinematography, and symbolism are all pulling in the same direction, specifically towards resilience and healing. The slower pace is really what carries the song's message of perseverance and hope.

To put it clearly, editing is the action and pacing is the result. Editing controls pacing through shot duration (on screen), cutting frequency (between cameras and scenes), audio and silence (sound effects, music beats or intentional pauses). The relationship between Editing and Pacing is important because good pacing controlled by precise cuts helps the audience feel sadness, joy or suspense at the right time (as seen in *It's okay*). Changing the pace up and down stops the video from feeling boring and flat (as seen in *Somebody*).

4.3.1.4 Colour Grading and Tone

Colour grading does double duty — it sharpens the visual quality of a video while also setting the mood and reinforcing whatever themes are running underneath. Warm colours tend to read as happy, hopeful, comforting, while cooler tones lean toward sadness, isolation, or reflection.

Tone is what you get when: editing, colour, lighting, cinematography, performance, and narrative all come together into one emotional atmosphere. Cinematography lets audiences read a character's emotions and the story's tone visually — you don't need the dialogue, or in this case the lyrics, to do all the work.

For example, *It's okay* (00:28- 00: 32, 00:36-00:42) uses desaturated colours to achieve flashbacks and portray the difference between the past and the present, giving the audience the back story of the narrative. The muted, warm tones evoke a bittersweet longing for past moments with the partner. The video uses lifted shadows, and warm or sepia shifts to separate past memories from the present timeline.

Somebody [01:25] leans heavily into warm colour grading, building an atmosphere that feels romantic, confident, elegant. Rich skin tones and vibrant backdrops feed into the luxurious visual style that's become part of Sheebah's image.

It's okay moves between muted and warm tones depending on the scene. During the harder, more emotional moments, the colours mute down to underline the hardship; when the mood turns hopeful, warmer tones creep back in to signal healing and recovery.

Somebody comes across as romantic, glamorous and confident with elegant cinematography, smooth editing, warm lighting, stylish costuming, and polished colour grading combined to present Sheebah as both emotionally open and visually put-together.

It's okay is inspirational, emotional, hopeful. Between the emotional performances, the symbolic storytelling, the unhurried pacing, the warm lighting, and the carefully controlled colour grading, everything is working toward the same idea — resilience in the face of hardship. This is really the video the study points to as the clearest example of cinematic technique doing the work of conveying hope and healing.

Put together, these two videos make the case that editing, pacing, colour grading, and tone aren't optional extras — they're the techniques that shape how an audience feels, how well a story lands, and how visually compelling a contemporary Ugandan music video ends up being. Each artist blends these tools differently depending on genre and theme, however, deliberate cinematic choices are what turn a music video into something people actually connect with.

4.3.1.5 The Relationship between Visuals and Audio.

This refers to how imagery, camera movement, and editing synchronize with or contradict the song's audio elements, such as the beat, lyrics, and mood (what you see vs. what you hear). In a music video, this interaction dictates how the audience feels, interprets the rhythm, and engages with the story being told. When perfectly aligned, they create a cohesive, multi-sensory experience that amplifies the song's overall message.

"…When the right combination of sound and image converge, there is an intangible constructive interference.…. Images can also deepen our emotional response to music, and expand the storytelling potential of songs." (Strymon, 2016).

Key Components of the relationship between Visuals and audio include:

The Musical Score (The Foundation)

This is the rhythmic and melodic heartbeat of the video. It drives the pacing, dictates the cuts, and establishes the primary mood. For example, "*It's okay*" by Acidic Vokoz is a smooth, mid-tempo Afro-pop and Zouk score with a steady 4/4 percussion groove, a warm sub-bassline, and ambient synth and emotional vocals. Its vocal integration involves a call and response of '*It's okay*' or 'It is okay'. On the other hand, Sheebah's '*Somebody*' is a modern afro-pop with dancehall fusion, danceable tempo and conversational vocal delivery.

Sound Effects (Foley):

These are the specific, localized sounds that bring a sense of physical weight and realism to the screen. In a music video, these could be the scuff of a dancer's shoe, or the bass-heavy boom of a subwoofer in a club scene. They are usually recorded in post-production. For example, a swoosh in *It's okay at 0:12* brings us to the protagonist's reality (Acidic Vokoz) when he sees his girlfriend with his boss. In *Somebody,* the visual space is optimized for high-tempo choreography and dominance. Foley here is rarely used to create stark silence; instead, it is layered synthetically or mixed tightly into the rhythm of the track to augment the Star Image and physical movement.

Dialogue & Vocal Tracks

This includes spoken word -whether it is a raw vocal sample, a spoken-word intro or the central lyrical performance—delivers the literal narrative to the viewer. For example, ‘Buwooma’ music video by A pass & Kaboo opens with an old clip of a scene of people in an open setting enjoying local beer and a man asking for music as he drinks, that time is passing by ‘they’ (his colleagues) have to go and work elsewhere. The entire music video presents the same setting of people enjoying local beer with music playing. This shows that the context of the video is from the first scene.

Diegetic Sound (In-World):

This is the audio that naturally exists within the environment of the video. For example, In the gift-burning scene of Acidic Vokoz's *It’s okay,* from 2:04-2:10, the acoustic transition to an echo signals that the protagonist's mind is an empty, echoing vacuum. The act of burning the gifts (physical symbols of the dead relationship) triggers a psychological dissociation. The echo functions as an externalization of internal grief, trauma, and the hollow feeling of loss. The protagonist can hear and feel it at that moment. In other cases, it could be footsteps, a door opening and closing among others. It is usually something the characters can hear and interact with.

Non-Diegetic Sound (External):

This is the audio added purely for the audience's benefit. Characters within the video cannot hear it. It sits "on top" of the video to establish tone and build emotional momentum. This includes the song's mastered studio track itself and added sound effects. For instance, in *Somebody,* the entire visual architecture is built to serve the pre-recorded dancehall studio track. The beat, synthesized vocal loops, and rhythmic instrumentation dictate every camera cut, frame transition, and choreographic sync. "*Somebody*" leaves the characters entirely unaware of their environmental sounds. We see intense footwork, dynamic costume adjustments, and spatial movements, but the actual physical sounds of the room are completely omitted from the mix. This strips away expected realism making Sheebah’s power absolute.

Harmony vs. Contrast:

This refers to how your audio interacts with your visuals to completely give the meaning of a video. This is done through synchronization or ironic juxtaposition.

Matching (Synchronization): When the audio and visuals perfectly align, you create emotional immersion. Sheebah's *Somebody* executes synchronized beat syncing properly through, editing, cutting, panning, dancing or moving the camera on the exact beat of the song. For example, at 00:48(cut on beat), 00:58- 01:00 (dancing on beat), 01:46-01:47(zoom out on beat) among others.

Contrasting (Ironic Juxtaposition): When the audio and visuals purposefully clash, you create deeper thematic or emotional subtext. For example, showing a chaotic, violent, or heart-wrenching scene while a slow, sweeping, cheerful orchestral track plays create a haunting sense of irony and leaves a stronger, more lasting impact on the viewer's psyche.

Lyrical Interpretation:
This involves showing visual representations of what the artist is singing, either literally (using props or characters) or metaphorically (using colour psychology and symbolism). For example, *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz tells a story of a girl who leaves her boyfriend for a company boss. She undermines her lover for a richer man until she is overlooked for another lady to fulfill the boyfriend's statement that "she too, will cry one day". Even though her boyfriend tries to win her back, she continues to despise him by burning his gifts. The video introduces this story with its characters, an inciting incident, climax and resolution from start to end. The story is presented visually in a company setting, with workers, uniform, work to do and offices.

According to Illustrate Magazine, "visuals add context fast. They communicate mood, identity, and meaning in a way that helps audiences connect with a song instantly, especially on scroll-first platforms." (illustrate, 2026)

4.3.1.6 Intertextuality

This refers to the way music videos borrow, reference, or recreate ideas, images, narratives, cultural symbols, films, fashion, previous music videos, and celebrity identities to create meaning. Rather than existing independently, music videos often communicate through references that

audiences already recognize, allowing viewers to connect familiar meanings with new visual narratives.

As Andrew Goodwin (1992) argues, music videos rarely function as isolated texts; instead, they rely on cultural references and the performer's image to generate meaning. References can be from films, television, literature, religion, history, traditional culture, fashion, politics, previous music videos, or popular culture. These references enrich the narrative by allowing audiences to associate familiar meanings with the current music video.

Acidic Vokoz's "*It's okay*" borrows from everyday Ugandan corporate life by presenting office spaces, uniforms, workplace relationships and class differences. These familiar settings immediately communicate themes of social status, ambition, and betrayal without requiring extensive dialogue.

Similarly, Sheebah's "*Somebody*" adopts visual aesthetics commonly associated with contemporary Afro-pop and international fashion culture through glamorous costumes, luxury settings, choreography and confident performance styles, positioning the artist within a modern African pop identity.

Music videos often borrow visual codes expected within particular musical genres. Costume design, lighting, editing rhythm, camera movement and performance style work together to reinforce audience expectations.

For example, "*It's okay*" adopts conventions of Afro pop storytelling by combining dramatic acting, emotional close ups, realistic locations and narrative progression.

In contrast, "*Somebody*" emphasizes energetic dance routines, glamorous fashion, colourful production design and performance-based cinematography typical of contemporary Afro-pop and dancehall music videos. Through these conventions, audiences immediately recognize the genre before fully processing the narrative.

Music videos frequently incorporate indigenous cultural practices, local languages, traditional costumes, architecture, ceremonies and social customs. These cultural references strengthen

authenticity while celebrating national identity. For example, many Ugandan music videos feature Luganda dialogue, rural landscapes, African fabrics, traditional dances and community gatherings to reflect everyday Ugandan experiences. Such elements help local audiences identify with the story while introducing international viewers to Uganda's cultural heritage. According to Goodwin (1992), these cultural references allow music videos to function as cultural texts rather than merely promotional materials.

4.3.1.7 Star Image

It also examines how an artist's established public identity (star image) influences audience interpretation of a music video. Similarly, Richard Dyer (1979) explains that stars are carefully constructed through media appearances, performances, interviews, fashion, and publicity, making their image an important text that audiences decode alongside the music video itself.
Richard Dyer (1979) argues that audiences consume not only songs but also the personalities behind them.

For example, Acidic Vokoz has established himself as a humble, emotional storyteller whose songs often address everyday relationships, heartbreak and resilience. In "*It's okay*", his calm performance, expressive acting and modest appearance reinforce this authentic and relatable public identity.

On the other hand, Sheebah Karungi consistently presents herself as confident, independent, fashionable and empowering. In "*Somebody*", her stylish wardrobe, commanding choreography, direct eye contact with the camera and luxurious visual presentation reinforce the powerful female persona that audiences already associate with her brand.

The consistency between an artist's public identity and their music videos strengthens audience trust and brand recognition. Closely related to star image is the performer's on-screen persona. This refers to the specific character or identity the artist performs within the music video.

For example, Acidic Vokoz portrays a vulnerable young man experiencing heartbreak and disappointment in "*It's okay*", allowing audiences to empathize with his emotional journey. Conversely, Sheebah performs as a confident, glamorous and desirable woman in "*Somebody*", reflecting themes of confidence, attraction and self-worth.

Performance personas often extend an artist's existing brand while adapting it to fit the song's narrative. For example, audiences familiar with Sheebah's previous music videos expect high energy choreography, glamorous fashion and confident performances. Likewise, fans of Acidic Vokoz anticipate emotionally driven storytelling grounded in relatable social experiences. These expectations influence how audiences interpret the narrative before the story fully unfolds

Artists use recurring visual elements to maintain a recognizable identity across multiple music videos. This includes recurring fashion styles, colour palettes, performance techniques, locations and themes. For example, Sheebah consistently employs luxurious costumes, confident choreography, stylish makeup and vibrant cinematography, reinforcing her image as Uganda's "Queen Karma." Similarly, Acidic Vokoz repeatedly emphasizes realistic storytelling, emotional performances and socially relevant themes that resonate with ordinary Ugandans. Maintaining this consistency helps strengthen audience loyalty while making the artist instantly recognizable.
Music videos may either reinforce an artist's established image or intentionally reinvent it.
Reinforcement occurs when a video continues the image audiences already know. "*Somebody*" reinforces Sheebah's established identity as a confident, fashionable and empowered female performer.

Reinvention occurs when artists deliberately adopt new visual styles or characters to signal artistic growth, expand their audience or challenge existing perceptions for example, Sheebah's song named Exercise reinvented her persona from the one the audience was used too because it was calm. This balance between consistency and innovation allows artists to remain relevant while preserving their brand identity.
Intertextuality as Storytelling

According to Richard Dyer (1979), stars function as cultural texts whose meanings are produced through repeated media representation. Andrew Goodwin (1992) argues that music videos continually construct meaning through intertextual references and the artist's performance image rather than through music alone.

INTERPRETATION:

These findings indicate that cinematic techniques are powerful communication tools. They improve emotional engagement, strengthen storytelling, increase entertainment value, and make Ugandan music videos more competitive both locally and internationally

4.3.2 How Individuals are Involved in Production and Promotion of Ugandan Music Videos and the Challenges They Encounter

The findings show that music video production requires teamwork among many professionals. Each person has a specific responsibility: Artists write and perform the music while sharing their creative vision. Directors oversee the entire production and transform the song into visual storytelling, Cinematographers control camera work and shot composition. Lighting technicians create the desired mood through lighting. Editors organize and refine the recorded footage into a finished video. Choreographers design dance routines. Costume designers and makeup artists create the appearance of performers and characters. Marketing teams, bloggers, influencers, DJs, broadcasters, and public relations officers help promote the completed music video to reach larger audiences.

Respondents identified the greatest challenge in production and promotion of Ugandan Music videos as limited funding. Producing professional quality videos requires expensive cameras for example, Blackmagic, drones, lighting equipment, editing software, costumes, transport, and filming locations which many independent artists cannot afford. This in turn limits access to advanced technology. Although Uganda has talented filmmakers, many cannot access the latest production equipment because it is costly which makes them deliver their creativity as 'below

standard’. Additionally, artists often have busy schedules with performances and media appearances while filming is taking place. This leaves little time for rehearsals, script revisions, or additional shooting days for quality production and involvement in promotion. For instance, Acidic Vokoz mentioned that while they were shooting the video (*It’s okay*), he was supposed to be performing at a show elsewhere thus quickening the process.

Piracy and copyright infringement reduces artists' earnings because videos are copied or shared illegally without permission. This makes it difficult for artists to recover the money invested in production. Most of the times, the videos earn them recognition and popularity but not enough money to maintain the status. If an artist does not earn enough out of their work, the other people on the chain of promotion cannot contribute beyond the artists’ means.

Respondents also mentioned limited sponsorship, insufficient government support, and strong competition from international music videos, which often have much larger production budgets. Promotion is equally challenging because social media algorithms require artists to consistently post content and invest in paid advertising to reach wider audiences.

These findings show that producing successful music videos requires collaboration among many professionals. However, addressing financial, technological, and promotional challenges would significantly improve Uganda's music video industry.

4.3.3 How Ugandan Music Videos Blend Traditional and Modern Elements to Create a Unique Cinematic Language.

The findings reveal that many Ugandan music videos combine traditional cultural elements with modern filmmaking techniques.

Traditional elements include local languages for example, Uganda is enriched with languages like Luganda, Runyankole, cultural ceremonies, traditional dances, indigenous costumes, folklore, African symbols, and rural landscapes. For instance, both *It’s okay* and *Somebody* lean mostly towards Luganda. This reflects Uganda's cultural heritage and makes the videos authentic.

At the same time, directors use modern filmmaking tools such as high-definition cameras, drones, digital colour grading, computer-generated visual effects (CGI), and advanced editing software to improve production quality. This combination allows Ugandan filmmakers to maintain their cultural identity while producing videos that meet international standards.

For example, one of the Ugandan musicians known for branding with costumes of an African heritage is Azawi, under Swangz Avenue. Most of Azawi's videos represent cultural setting and identity. For example, 'Bamutute', presents a traditional market place with sewing activity (Ankara material and Kitenge), a local home setting and African home. Calvin says, it is possible for Azawi to maintain this style because Swangz Avenue can afford to brand her this way which most artists may not be able to afford.

Omulembe by Spice Diana (directed by Edrine Paul) presents a Ugandan local setting, bark cloth costumes, Ankara shirts and dresses, grinding with stones, drinking Malwa, rope skipping, playing 'duru' among others while using different shots, editing techniques and camera angles to show the different activity in one place.
Mbozi za Malwa by Bebe Cool Ft Sauti Sol (directed by Sasha Vybz) depicts the treasure of having a beer party and the effect it has on the participants. The video transitions between cuts of modern culture to traditional culture showing calabashes, traditional wear, traditional dances among others.

These findings demonstrate that blending traditional and modern elements creates a distinctive Ugandan cinematic style. It promotes cultural preservation while increasing the appeal of Ugandan music videos to both local and international audiences.

4.3.4 How Audiences Receive and Interpret Ugandan Music Videos

The findings show that different audiences interpret music videos differently depending on their age, education, cultural background, personal experiences, and exposure to other international music videos they regularly watch online. Older audiences often pay greater attention to the song's lyrics, moral lessons, cultural values, and the overall message being communicated. On the other

hand, the younger viewers are interested in entertainment through dance moves, fashion, song lyrics and trending information about the music videos.

Respondents also noted that videos with emotional storylines usually receive stronger audience responses than videos that focus only on dancing or artist performance. Social media platforms enable viewers to immediately comment, like, share, and recommend music videos. Positive online reactions increase a video's popularity and visibility.

According to Calvin the Entertainer, positive audience reception often results in more television airplay, higher streaming numbers, increased concert attendance, and greater recognition for artists.

These findings suggest that audiences actively interpret both the visual and musical aspects of music videos. High quality cinematic techniques improve emotional connection, message delivery, and audience engagement, encouraging viewers to watch and share the videos repeatedly.

4.4 Summary of Findings

The study concludes that cinematic techniques including cinematography, lighting, editing, colour grading, storytelling, costume design, symbolism, and location selection play a major role in making Ugandan music videos engaging and memorable. These techniques help artists communicate emotions effectively and strengthen the stories presented in their videos.

The findings further show that music video production depends on collaboration among artists, directors, cinematographers, editors, choreographers, designers, marketers, broadcasters, and digital promoters. Despite this teamwork, the industry continues to face challenges such as inadequate funding, limited access to modern equipment, piracy, insufficient sponsorship, and strong competition from foreign productions.

The study also found that combining traditional Ugandan cultural practices with modern filmmaking techniques creates a unique cinematic identity. This balance helps preserve cultural heritage while making Ugandan music videos attractive to audiences around the world.

Finally, the research established that audience reception depends on storytelling, emotional impact, cultural authenticity, technical quality, and online engagement. Music videos that successfully combine these elements are more likely to gain popularity, build loyal audiences, and achieve commercial success.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that there has been and still is, usage of cinematic techniques in Ugandan Music Videos. These techniques: mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and pacing, colour grading and tone, the relationship between visuals and audio, intertextuality, and star image, have been applied either knowingly or unknowingly and are continually setting a standard in music video production. These cinematic techniques contribute towards visual aesthetic, audience interpretation and artist promotion.

5.2 Recommendations.

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

- Curriculum and Academic Integration: Universities and art institutions in Uganda should expand communication and art syllabi to include music video cinematography as a legitimate text for literary and visual analysis. Departments of literature and film should establish video archives to document, categorize, and critique the evolution of Ugandan visual aesthetics.

- Publish Critical Journals: Local academic journals and peer-reviewed platforms should be created to focus on Ugandan Music videos. This might draw industry experts' attention to work better and deliver for professional analysis and improvement.

- Industry and Professional Development: Local directors of photography and video editors should pursue formal certifications, diplomas, or degrees in film production to master framing, lighting, and narrative pacing. Production houses should invest in higher-standard lighting grids and specialized camera equipment to elevate local production value.

- Resource Sharing: There should be partnerships between production houses (such as Swangz Avenue) and academic bodies (such as Department of Performing arts and Film at

Makerere University) to host masterclasses bridging practical video creation with theoretical storytelling. These can help to establish genre definitions and use an academic framework to categorize Ugandan music videos by distinct visual genres.

- Funding, Policy, and Infrastructure**:** Bodies like the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) should create funding grants specifically for directors who prioritize cinematic storytelling (for music videos) over low-effort commercial formulas. There should be policy changes that reduce import taxes on professional cinema cameras, lenses, and lighting equipment to make high-end tools accessible to local creators.

- Consumption and Exhibition Platforms**:** Music Video Festivals should be launched with dedicated categories for music videos within existing local film festivals, like the Uganda Film Festival (UFF) or Amakula International Film Festival, with a focus on technical direction.

- Entertainment journalists and bloggers should move beyond celebrity gossip and write analytical reviews of music video composition, color grading, and editing. Local creator collectives should host regular screening nights where directors and cinematographers can critique each other's work before public release.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONAIRE AND INTERVIEW GUIDE.

INTERVIEW I: Broadcast Journalist.

Researcher: Oyesigye Emilly

Camera personnel: Hamdan Foziah and Nalwoga Lamulah

Date: [05-06-2026]

Interviewee: [Calvin Da Entertainer]

Introduction: Thank you for accepting to meet us today. My name is Oyesigye Emilly, together with my colleague Nalwoga Lamulah. Another colleague will be joining us shortly. We are students at Makerere University finalizing in Bachelors of Arts in Drama and Film. We are conducting research for our dissertation about exploring the application of cinematic techniques in Ugandan music videos with a case study of two songs *It's okay* by Acidic Vokoz and Somebody by Sheebah Karungi. The information you share will be valuable to our study considering your experience in journalism and running the program Horizon Vibe at UBC TV. Your responses will be recorded and kept confidential to be used solely for academic purposes. Do we have your consent to proceed?

(Wait for Consent)

1. What is your view on storytelling in Ugandan music videos?
2. Comparing from 2015 to date, what differences have you noticed in how music videos are produced and directed?
3. What makes a music video outstanding to Horizon vibe fans out there or to be played on air?
4. What is limiting most Ugandan artists to deliver the best of what is expected of them in the Ugandan music Industry?
5. What is your advice to artists in regards to improving the quality of their music videos?
6. What is delaying us from presenting our videos and artists as unique and also identified as Ugandans on an international level?
7. What do you think about artist branding and production houses like Swangz Avenue? Why do they stand out?
7. What do you say about this research and your conclusion?

INTERVIEW II: Music Video Director

Researcher: Nalwoga Lamulah and Hamdan Foziah

Camera personnel: Hamdan Foziah and Nalwoga Lamulah

Date: [22nd-June-2026]

I**nterviewee**: [Edrine Paul/Cinematographer, music video director,]

Introduction: Good evening, Mr. Edrine Paul. My name is Nalwoga Lamulah, a final-year student pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Drama and Film at Makerere University. Together with my colleagues currently conducting research on "Exploring the Usage of Cinematic Techniques in Ugandan Music Videos: A Case Study of It's Okay by Acidic Vokoz and Somebody by Sheebah Karungi." which were all directed by you .The purpose of this interview is to gain your professional insights as a director and filmmaker, particularly on the use of cinematography, mise-en-scene, editing, visual storytelling, and the relationship between visuals and music in Ugandan music videos. The interview will be brief and your responses will be used strictly for academic purposes. With your permission, I would like to ask you a few questions about your experience and perspective on cinematic techniques in music-video production. This interview will be recorded for academic purposes. Can we proceed please?

(***Wait for consent)***

1. Tell us about Edrine Paul
2. What have been your best projects as far as directing is concerned and why?
3. Which projects are you most proud of so far?
4. Which cinematic techniques are mostly used in your music videos or which ones are you well conversant with?
5. Which production tools best work for you to bring your vision to life?
6. How is light used to enhance the mood ambiance tone of the music video
7. Two of your directed music videos have been selected for our research. That is *Somebody* by Sheebah and *It's okay* by acidic Vokoz what makes them different from each other and outstanding
8. Why is *Somebody* different from *It's Okay*?
9. Do the artists give you their vision of the music video when you are the director?
10. Do you give chance to some of the ideas given by the artists?

11. What was your initial vision of the two selected videos and were the artists satisfied with the outcome?
12. To what extent were your expectations accomplished in these videos?
13. Is there any music video that disappointed you?
14. What identifies and makes you outstanding from other directors?
15. As a music director what's the greatest style identical to you that has pushed you this far?
16. What do you think about the audience while directing?
17. What do you wish other people including researchers, audience members and artists and understood about music videos?
18. Where do you see Ugandan music videos in the next 5years and why?
19. Give us your final remarks about this research and personal thoughts.
20. What's your advice to an upcoming director?

INTERVIEW III: Artist

Researcher: Nalwoga Lamulah and Hamdan Foziah

Camera personnel: Hamdan Foziah and Nalwoga Lamulah

Date: [22nd-June-2026]

Interviewee: Acidic Vokoz

Introduction:

Thank you for accepting to spare your time for us today. My name is Nalwoga Lamulah together with my colleague Hamdan Foziah. We are a group of five however, there are other colleagues who have not managed to make it here. We are students from Makerere University conducting research for our dissertation about Exploring the application of cinematic techniques in Ugandan music videos with a case study of two songs *It's okay* sang by you and *Somebody* by Sheebah Karungi. The information you share will be valuable to our study. Your responses will be recorded, and used solely for academic purposes. Do we have your consent to proceed?

(Wait for consent)

1. Tell us about Acidic Vokoz.
2. When did you start your music career?
3. We selected "*It's okay* " as your outstanding song out of the many, we would like to know what inspired that type of video and idea?

4. What message did you intend to communicate to the audience?
5. How were you involved in the planning and directing of the video?
6. After choosing the music video director to work with, did you tell him your vision or you only explained the song?
7. How did camera angles, lighting and movement contribute to telling the story in the video?
8. Which editing techniques were used and why?
9. What role did editing, color grading and visual enhancement play in enhancing the video's emotional impact?
10. How did the choice of costumes and props support the narrative of the video?
11. How do you think the cinematic techniques used in it is okay influence audience engagement and interpretation?
12. In what ways did you collaborate with the director and production team to achieve the final visual style?
13. What challenges did you encounter while producing it is okay and how were they addressed?
14. What importance do you believe cinematic techniques have in promoting Ugandan music videos?
15. Do you think these cinematic techniques have impacted music videos on an international level?
16. What advice would you give to an upcoming Ugandan musician artist film maker on integrating cinematic techniques into music videos?
17. In your opinion, how can the Ugandan music industry further improve the quality of music video production through cinematic storytelling telling?
18. Final remarks and what you think about the rest of research.

APPENDIX B: Primary Fieldwork Interview Recordings

Description: This appendix provides a direct link to the primary qualitative data collected during the fieldwork phase of this study. The shared repository contains original digital recordings of key participants that is Edrine Paul, Acidic Vokoz and Calvin Da Entertainer discussing about

Ugandan music videos, cinematic techniques and professional standards within the Ugandan music video industry.

Master Repository Link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15kKyaRqIVn5bn9Vb9OSceJA95iHTRv2a

Folder Contents:

Item 1: Interview with Music Video Director Edrine Paul
Date Conducted: June 22, 2026

Item 2: Interview with Broadcasting Journalist Calvin Kalule (Calvin Da Entertainer
Date conducted: June 5 2026

Item 3: Interview with Musician Acidic Vokoz
Date conducted: June 26 2026