

Advancing gender diversity in leadership: the role of work-life balance and gender participation in Ugandan public universities

Monica Tushabe , Mahadih Kyambade, Afulah Namatovu & Sheilla Oyella

To cite this article: Monica Tushabe , Mahadih Kyambade, Afulah Namatovu & Sheilla Oyella (2025) Advancing gender diversity in leadership: the role of work-life balance and gender participation in Ugandan public universities, Cogent Social Sciences, 11:1, 2486553, DOI: [10.1080/23311886.2025.2486553](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2486553)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2486553>



© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 02 Apr 2025.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 494



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Advancing gender diversity in leadership: the role of work-life balance and gender participation in Ugandan public universities

Monica Tushabe^a, Mahadih Kyambade^a , Afulah Namatovu^b  and Sheilla Oyella^a

^aDepartment of Leadership & Governance, Makerere University Business School, Kampala, Uganda; ^bDepartment of Applied Computing & IT, Makerere University Business School, Kampala, Uganda

ABSTRACT

Despite advancements in promoting gender equality in the workforce, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions across various organizations. Several studies have examined the relationship between women's representation and work-life balance (WLB); however, limited attention has been given to the mediating role of gender participation. This study addresses this gap by expanding the congruity theory to assess the direct and indirect effects of work-life balance in public universities in Uganda, a context that has received minimal scholarly attention. A self-administered survey was conducted among 289 respondents using a convenience sampling technique. Structural and measurement models were analyzed using Smart PLS 4 software. The findings revealed that work-life balance directly influences women's representation in leadership positions. Additionally, gender participation was found to mediate this relationship. These results highlight the importance of fostering inclusive and supportive work environments that accommodate diverse needs and promote women's advancement into leadership roles. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a nuanced understanding of the interplay between work-life balance, gender participation, and women's representation. It further emphasizes the need to address systemic barriers and biases to enhance gender diversity and inclusion in organizational leadership. The findings offer practical recommendations for managers and policymakers to cultivate a supportive and inclusive organizational culture that values work-life balance and gender diversity.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 3 December 2024
Revised 3 March 2025
Accepted 26 March 2025

KEYWORDS

Work-life balance; participation; women representation; leadership; congruity theory; Uganda

SUBJECTS

Gender; Gender-Related Issues; Gender Inequality; Leadership; School Leadership; Management & Administration

Introduction

The limited female representation in positions of leadership is a prevalent issue worldwide (Casad et al., 2021; Norberg & Johansson, 2021; Namuddu et al., 2024). Despite their qualifications and capabilities, women are often overlooked for top decision-making roles (Jose & Sivaraman, 2023; Evans & Pfister, 2021). In addition to depriving organizations of a variety of viewpoints, this lack of representation reinforces gender stereotypes and inequalities. Uganda's public universities have long struggled with gender representation among faculty and staff (Mayanja, 2020; Kyambade et al., 2024h). However, the issues of work-life balance and gender participation have emerged as significant contributors to the underrepresentation of women in these institutions. Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between a person's professional responsibilities and personal obligations (Tushabe et al., 2023). It involves effectively managing time and energy in a way that allows individuals to fulfill their work commitments while attending to their personal and family needs. Achieving work-life balance is particularly challenging for women in academia, especially in a society like Uganda where gender roles are often traditional and rigid (Tushabe et al., 2023). The expectation that women should prioritize their familial responsibilities can create barriers to their professional growth. Women pursuing careers in public universities often face the difficult task of balancing their academic workload with household and caregiving responsibilities (Akuamoah-Boateng, 2020).

CONTACT Mahadih Kyambade  mahadkyambade@gmail.com  Department of Leadership & Governance, Makerere University Business School, Kampala, Uganda

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

This may result in elevated stress levels, exhaustion, and a limited capacity to fully engage in their professional roles. As a result, many women may refrain from pursuing higher positions or choose to leave academia altogether. Previous studies of Kalysh et al. (2016) and Fritz and Van Knippenberg (2018), tend to have ignored the roles of work-life balance and gender participation in improving women leadership in academia.

Achieving work-life balance is vital for various reasons. It not only improves overall well-being but also enhances an individual's productivity and job satisfaction. When individuals have the flexibility to attend to their personal commitments while fulfilling their professional responsibilities, they are more likely to be content and interested in their work (Uddin, 2021). Women, in particular, face several challenges when it comes to balancing work-life. Societal expectations and Women are frequently burdened more by traditional gender norms when it comes to providing care and household chores. Balancing these responsibilities with a demanding career can be extremely challenging. When women are able to balance work-life, their likelihood of job satisfaction increases (Tushabe et al., 2023). This satisfaction can lead to improved motivation and productivity for women, which ultimately paves the way to climb the corporate ladder and assume leadership positions. Work-life balance initiatives help organizations retain talented female workers (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020). When organizations provide flexible work schedules and support systems, women are more inclined to stay and grow within the organization (Masterson et al., 2021). This increased retention rate contributes to higher representation of women in leadership roles. Achieving work-life balance can help eliminate gender biases that often hinder women's progress in the workplace (DeSimone, 2020). By providing equal opportunities and support for both genders to balance their personal and professional lives, organizations can create a more inclusive and equitable work environment. When women in leadership positions have achieved work-life balance, they serve as role models for aspiring female professionals (Naseem et al., 2020). Seeing successful women in top positions who can manage their personal and professional lives effectively encourages other women to pursue leadership roles. Gender diversity in positions of leadership fosters innovation and creativity within organizations (Tushabe et al., 2023). By promoting work-life balance and creating a supportive work atmosphere for women, companies can tap into a broader range of perceptions, ideas, and experiences, resulting in increased success and innovation.

Gender participation being the active involvement and contribution of both men and women in various aspects of society, including decision-making processes, professional opportunities, and leadership positions (Tushabe et al., 2023). Historically, women have faced significant barriers and discrimination that limit their access to leadership roles (Coleman, 2020). By promoting gender participation, we can dismantle these obstacles and build a society that is more equal and inclusive (Forkuor et al., 2020). One of the fundamental aspects of gender participation is challenging and breaking stereotypes associated with gender roles. Society has long held the belief that certain roles and positions are inherently better suited for men, while others are seen as more appropriate for women (Teixeira et al., 2020). By encouraging equal participation, we challenge these stereotypes and create a more balanced and diverse work environment (Uddin, 2021). Gender participation also brings a diversity of viewpoints and ideas to the table. When women are actively involved in decision-making processes, their unique experiences and viewpoints can contribute to more well-rounded and inclusive solutions (Tushabe et al., 2023). By having a diverse range of voices in leadership positions, we can address the needs and concerns of a wider demographic, leading to better outcomes for everyone involved.

Achieving equal representation of women in leadership positions is vital for creating a more balanced and equal society. When more women hold positions of power and influence, it can have a profound impact on various levels (Hessami & da Fonseca, 2020). Having women in leadership positions provides crucial role models for future generations. Young girls and women need visible examples of success and achievement to inspire them to pursue their aspirations. By increasing women's representation in leadership roles, we create a more inclusive narrative and encourage younger generations to strive for their goals without limitations (Cosentino et al., 2021). Gender bias is a prevalent issue that often hinders women's advancement in their careers. However, by promoting gender participation and increasing women's representation in leadership positions, we can help address and mitigate this bias. When women are in powerful positions, it challenges the notion that they are unfit for leadership, thus breaking down barriers for future generations (Coleman, 2020). Representation matters when it comes to shaping

policies and decision-making processes. Women often have unique perspectives and experiences that can inform policy decisions on issues such as healthcare, education, and work-life balance (Smith et al., 2022). By including more women in leadership positions, we ensure that these policies are more reflective of the diverse needs and interests of the population as a whole.

Women remain significantly underrepresented in leadership roles globally, with only 28% occupying top management positions in education (Casad et al., 2021). In Uganda's public universities, women make up less than 30% of academic leadership positions despite comprising 40% of faculty (Mayanja, 2020). Work-life balance challenges, exacerbated by traditional gender roles, and limited gender participation in decision-making processes are critical barriers to women's leadership (Tushabe et al., 2023). While most studies have looked at work life balance, gender participation and women representation at work place separately, they have ignored the relationships among these variables (Kalysh et al., 2016; Fritz & Van Knippenberg, 2018; Cho et al., 2016). Furthermore, these studies have only focused on the western world primarily large corporations ignoring developing countries and service sector organizations like academia. Therefore, our study bridges this gap by studying the relationship between work life balance and women representation with gender participation as a potential mediator in this relationship in a developing country and in a service-oriented organization, which makes our study unique. Work-life balance and Gender participation play a vital role in promoting women's representation in leadership positions. By actively having policies that enable women to work as they balance home duties and involving both men and women in decision-making processes, breaking stereotypes, and addressing gender bias, we can build a more equal and inclusive workplace. The impact of women's representation in leadership positions extends beyond the individual, shaping policies, inspiring future generations, and creating a more diverse and balanced workplace. It is crucial that we continue to strive for equal gender participation to unlock the full potential of women in leadership roles.

Objectives of the study

- i. *To examine the direct impact of work-life balance on women's representation in leadership positions within Uganda's public universities.*
- ii. *To investigate the mediating role of gender participation in the relationship between work-life balance and women's representation in leadership.*
- iii. *To provide insights into the contextual challenges and systemic barriers influencing work-life balance and gender participation in a developing country setting.*
- iv. *To contribute to theoretical advancements by applying and expanding the congruity theory to assess gender dynamics in leadership.*
- v. This paper contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between work-life balance and women's representation in leadership, focusing on Uganda's public universities, an under-researched context. It introduces gender participation as a mediator in this relationship, offering a fresh perspective on gender dynamics. Unlike prior studies that emphasize the Western world, this research expands the global understanding of women's leadership in developing countries. Additionally, it addresses gender bias by exploring how inclusive decision-making and gender participation can help dismantle stereotypes and promote equality in the workplace.

The following sections will delve into a detailed analysis of the relationship between work-life balance, gender participation, and women's representation in leadership. Specifically, they will explore the theoretical framework, methodology, results of the empirical investigation, and implications for policy and practice in promoting gender equality in leadership roles within public universities in Uganda.

Literature review

Theoretical underpinning

The congruity theory, also known as the congruence theory, explores the concept of fit or compatibility between individuals and their environments (Islam et al., 2019). According to this theory, individuals are

more likely to be successful and satisfied in their roles when there is a match between their characteristics and the expectations associated with those roles. When we apply the congruity theory to women's representation in leadership positions, we can see how societal expectations and gender norms create a mismatch. Traditionally, leadership roles have been associated with traits such as dominance, assertiveness, and competitiveness, which are more commonly attributed to men (McLaughlin & Aikman, 2020; Sumra, 2019; Kyambade & Namatovu, 2024a). As a result, women may face prejudice and bias when seeking leadership positions, leading to a lack of congruity between their gender and the expected qualities of leaders. The incongruity between societal expectations and women's leadership aspirations can have significant implications for their confidence and willingness to pursue leadership roles. Research suggests that when women perceive a lack of congruence between their gender and leadership roles, they may experience reduced self-confidence, imposter syndrome, and a reluctance to seek out leadership opportunities (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). Achieving gender equality in leadership positions requires a conscious effort to bridge the congruity gap. By challenging traditional stereotypes, providing support and opportunities, and fostering an inclusive work environment, organizations can create a space where women's leadership aspirations can thrive (Kossek & Buzzanell, 2018). It is only through such efforts that we can pave the way for a more gender-balanced and diverse leadership landscape.

Women bring a unique set of experiences to leadership positions. They have had to navigate obstacles and challenges in both their personal and professional lives, which can contribute to their ability to lead with empathy and understanding (Guy & Arthur, 2020; Kyambade et al., 2024h). Their experiences as women in a male-dominated society often provide them with a different perspective, allowing them to approach problem-solving and decision making with a fresh and inclusive mindset (Valsecchi et al., 2023). Studies have shown that women possess a diverse range of expertise that is beneficial to organizations (Power, 2020; Shahzad et al., 2021; Staniscuaski et al., 2021). They excel in areas such as communication, emotional intelligence, and collaboration, which are crucial skills for effective leadership. Additionally, research has demonstrated that gender-diverse teams tend to outperform homogenous teams in terms of innovation and solving problems (Tushabe et al., 2023). By embracing diverse viewpoints and leveraging the expertise of women, organizations can tap into a wealth of untapped potential. Despite the progress made in gender equality, some still question the authority of women in leadership positions. However, it is essential to recognize that authority is not determined by gender but by knowledge, experience, and competence. Women are just as capable of leading with authority as their male counterparts. Organizations that value and respect the authority of women in leadership positions are more likely to foster an inclusive and empowering culture.

Work-life balance and women's representation

Finding a work-life balance can be challenging in the fast-paced, cutthroat world of today, and has become a vital aspect of one's overall well-being. Research suggests that maintaining a healthy work-life balance positively affects the professional success of women and their ability to attain leadership positions (Tushabe et al., 2023). Additionally, scholars have examined various factors that contribute to a lack of work-life balance for women, such as gender stereotypes, societal expectations, and organizational culture (Brown et al., 2021). Understanding these dynamics is essential in formulating strategies and policies that promote representation of women in the work-force while fostering a sustainable work-life balance. Scholars have long acknowledged the significance of work-life balance in enhancing job satisfaction and overall life satisfaction (Aruldoss et al., 2021). For women, managing the demands of work and own life is particularly challenging due to societal expectations and traditional gender roles. Research indicates that when women are able to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance, they experience increased job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation in the workplace (Popoola & Fagbola, 2021; Kyambade, Bartazary, et al., 2024). This, in turn, improves their chances of career advancement and leadership positions. However, numerous obstacles hinder women's capacity to uphold a positive work-life balance. Gender stereotypes often perpetuate the notion that the primary role of women is caregiving and domestic chores, which places an additional burden on their professional lives (Chauhan, 2022). Societal expectations and cultural norms also influence women's choices, making it difficult for them to devote

equal attention to their careers (Meeussen et al., 2020). Furthermore, organizational culture and policies can contribute to the unequal distribution of work and family responsibilities. Unsupportive workplace environments, lack of flexible work arrangements, and inadequate parental leave policies can further exacerbate the challenge of achieving work-life balance for women (Tushabe et al., 2023). To enhance women's representation in the workforce and promote a healthy work-life balance, organizations and policymakers need to take various measures. Encouraging gender-neutral parental leave policies, implementing flexible work arrangements, and promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives can effectively contribute to accommodating the needs of working women. Cultural shifts and challenging traditional gender roles are also necessary to eliminate the societal expectations that hinder women's achievement of work-life balance. Overall, by prioritizing balancing work and life, and supporting women's representation, society creates an environment where women thrive both professionally and personally. While there is a significant body of literature exploring the relationship between work-life balance and various organizational outcomes, there exists a notable gap in research focusing specifically on the impact of work-life balance initiatives on women representation in leadership positions (Kyambade, Tushabe, & Namatovu, 2024). Although studies have examined the effects of work-life balance practices on employee satisfaction, retention, and performance, there is limited empirical evidence regarding their influence on the representation of women in leadership roles within organizations. Many studies are conducted in Western contexts and focus primarily on large corporations (Kalysh et al., 2016; Fritz & Van Knippenberg, 2018; Cho et al., 2016), overlooking the unique challenges faced by women in different industries, regions, and organizational settings.

Research suggests that achieving a healthy work-life balance enhances job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation, which are critical factors for career advancement (Popoola & Fagbola, 2021; Aruldoss et al., 2021). When women are able to balance the demands of their professional and personal lives, they experience improved job satisfaction, making them more likely to pursue leadership roles (Tushabe et al., 2023). Therefore, the relationship between work-life balance and women's representation in leadership positions is positive, as work-life balance supports women's professional success and leadership aspirations. Furthermore, we acknowledge that gender stereotypes, societal expectations, and unsupportive organizational cultures negatively impact women's ability to achieve work-life balance (Brown et al., 2021; Chauhan, 2022). These challenges create barriers to leadership representation for women, which reinforces the positive relationship between fostering work-life balance and enhancing women's leadership representation. Organizations must adopt gender-inclusive policies, such as flexible work arrangements and gender-neutral parental leave, to mitigate these challenges and promote women's leadership roles (Meeussen et al., 2020).

H1: *Work-life balance is related to women's representation.*

Work-life balance and gender participation

The concept of work-life balance itself encompasses not only work-related aspects but also personal fulfillment, family responsibilities, and individual well-being. Scholars argue that balancing work and life is crucial for both men and women, with gender playing a significant role in how individuals approach and perceive this delicate equilibrium (McDowall & Kinman, 2021). While progress has been made in recent years, the literature consistently highlights gender disparities, with women often shouldering a disproportionate burden in managing family and work demands (Tushabe et al., 2023). A comprehensive literature review reveals that work-life balance is impacted by multiple factors, including societal norms and cultural beliefs (Brown et al., 2021). Traditional gender roles, for instance, still persist in many societies, where women are expected to take on a larger share of caregiving responsibilities. This gendered division of labor often impedes women's career progression, limiting their participation and advancement in the workforce (Pike & English, 2022). Conversely, men may face adverse consequences and societal stigmatization when they prioritize family obligations over their careers, highlighting the pervasive impact of gender norms on balancing work and life (Lafferty et al., 2021). Additionally, research findings suggest that organizational policies and practices also shape work life balance outcomes (Oyewobi et al., 2022).

Workplaces that prioritize flexibility and provide supportive policies, such as flexible work hours or parental leave, tend to promote a healthier work-life balance for workers of all genders (Tushabe et al., 2023). However, it is critical to note that these policies should not solely focus on facilitating women's participation but should also encourage men's equal engagement in caregiving responsibilities. Literature emphasizes the importance of challenging traditional gender stereotypes and creating inclusive, gender-neutral work environments that foster work-life balance for all individuals (McDowall & Kinman, 2021). Literature demonstrates that work-life balance and gender participation are intrinsically linked. Achieving gender equality in work-life balance requires addressing societal expectations and challenging traditional gender roles. Additionally, implementing inclusive organizational policies and practices that support both genders in balancing work and family obligations, plays a crucial role in enhancing gender participation. Understanding and addressing the complex interplay between gender and balancing work-life is vital for fostering equality and promoting individual well-being in contemporary society. While numerous studies have explored the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) initiatives and employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational outcomes (Kalysh et al., 2016; Fritz & Van Knippenberg, 2018; Cho et al., 2016), there exists a significant gap in the literature concerning the specific impact of WLB practices on gender participation in the workforce. Although some research has touched upon the intersection of WLB and gender, few studies have systematically examined how WLB initiatives influence gender participation, particularly in terms of increasing women's representation and participation in the workforce.

The concept of work-life balance encompasses various aspects, including personal fulfillment, family responsibilities, and individual well-being, and it plays a critical role in the professional landscape for both men and women. Notably, gender dynamics significantly shape how individuals' approach and perceive work-life balance (McDowall & Kinman, 2021). The literature indicates that women often face greater challenges in achieving this balance due to traditional gender roles, which assign them a disproportionate share of family and caregiving responsibilities (Tushabe et al., 2023). This suggests a negative relationship between the pressures of managing work and family responsibilities and women's career progression, as these obligations can limit their participation and advancement in the workforce (Pike & English, 2022). Conversely, when workplaces implement supportive policies that prioritize flexibility – such as flexible work hours and parental leave, this tends to promote a healthier work-life balance, thus establishing a positive relationship between effective organizational practices and improved work-life balance outcomes for all genders (Oyewobi et al., 2022).

H2: *work-life balance is related to gender participation.*

Gender participation and women representation

Gender participation refers to the active and equitable involvement of all genders in various social, economic, and political activities, including decision-making processes and workforce engagement (Park et al., 2021; Saifuddin et al., 2019). It emphasizes dismantling stereotypes and biases that limit opportunities based on gender and advocates for equal access to roles traditionally dominated by one gender (Tushabe et al., 2023). Unlike women representation, which focuses specifically on increasing the presence of women in leadership, gender participation encompasses broader efforts to foster inclusivity at all levels of an organization or society. This concept highlights the importance of both men and women working collaboratively to achieve balanced perspectives and shared responsibilities. For instance, enabling flexible work policies and addressing cultural biases can significantly enhance gender participation (Lafferty et al., 2023). Women representation, on the other hand, refers specifically to the proportion of women holding positions of authority, power, or influence within an organization or society. It focuses on ensuring that women have a visible and impactful presence in leadership roles, including executive management, boards of directors, and political offices (Kyambade et al., 2024b). Women representation aims to challenge systemic barriers such as discriminatory hiring practices, limited access to mentorship, and unequal professional development opportunities (Saifuddin et al., 2019). It is driven by the belief that diverse leadership leads to better decision-making, more equitable policies, and greater organizational success (Park et al., 2021).

While gender participation and women representation are closely linked, their distinction lies in scope and focus. Gender participation is an overarching concept that seeks to promote inclusivity at all levels of an organization, whereas women representation specifically addresses the numerical and substantive inclusion of women in leadership roles. For example, achieving gender participation might involve initiatives like inclusive hiring practices and gender-sensitive policies, while achieving women representation might focus on increasing the percentage of women in top-tier leadership positions. Despite significant progress in understanding gender dynamics, research often treats gender participation and women representation as separate constructs, neglecting the nuanced relationship between them (Tushabe et al., 2023). Macro-level studies frequently analyze workforce gender participation rates but fail to connect these trends to disparities in women's representation in leadership roles (Saifuddin et al., 2019). Additionally, much of the literature has centered on Western contexts, overlooking unique cultural and institutional challenges in developing countries like Uganda (Kyambade et al., 2024b).

H3: *Gender participation is positively related to women representation.*

The mediation role of gender participation

In today's modern work environment, balancing work and life balance has become a key priority for many specialists. This is particularly important for women in leadership positions who face unique challenges in navigating their roles at work and their responsibilities outside of the office. The concept of balancing work and life refers to the equilibrium between one's professional commitments and personal life, including personal well-being and family (Ul Hasan et al., 2020). It is vital for organizations to appreciate the role of gender participation in mediating the link between balancing work-life and women in leadership positions, as it can significantly impact the overall success of both individuals and organizations (Kyambade et al., 2024a). Balancing work and life is vital for women in leadership positions. Often, women face additional expectations and responsibilities in their personal lives, such as caregiving and managing household responsibilities (Kayaalp et al., 2021). These extra demands can make it harder for women in leadership roles to strike the ideal equilibrium between personal and professional lives (Tushabe et al., 2023). However, when women successfully manage their work and personal lives, they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction, better mental and physical well-being, and increased productivity (Aruldoss et al., 2021). The concept of gender participation refers to the level of gender diversity within an organization, especially in leadership positions. When organizations promote and encourage gender diversity, it can act as a mediator in the link between balancing work-life and women in leadership positions (Pace & Sciotto, 2021). A diverse leadership team can provide support and understanding to female leaders, creating an inclusive environment that values work-life balance. This increased gender participation can lead to better flexibility options, reduced gender biases, and improved work-life integration for women in leadership positions (DeSimone, 2020). The link between balancing work-life and women in leadership is complex and multi-faceted. Research has consistently shown that balancing work-life has a significant influence on the career progression and work satisfaction of women in leadership roles (Tushabe et al., 2023). When women balance a healthy work-life, they are likely to stay committed to their roles, exhibit higher levels of job engagement, and experience lower levels of burn-out. Moreover, balancing work-life positively impacts the retention and attraction of women to leadership positions within organizations. Despite the growing body of literature examining the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) practices and women's representation in leadership roles, there remains a significant gap in understanding the mediating role of gender participation in this relationship. While several studies have explored the direct effects of WLB initiatives on women's representation, few have systematically investigated how gender participation mediates the relationship between WLB and women's advancement into leadership positions. Existing research on WLB and women's representation often highlights the positive impact of flexible work arrangements, supportive organizational cultures, and family-friendly policies on increasing women's access to leadership roles. However, these studies tend to overlook the intermediary mechanisms through which gender participation influences women's

representation in leadership. Gender participation refers to the proportional representation of men and women at various levels of the workforce, from entry-level positions to senior management roles.

H4: *Gender participation mediates the link between work life balance and women representation.*

Methodology

Sampling design and data collection

The study used a quantitative research design involving 289 workers connected to Uganda's public universities. This methodology was used in the study to look into how women's representation is impacted by work-life balance. Non-probability convenience sampling method was used for this study. This study adopts a positivist methodology, utilizing a survey approach to systematically investigate relationships between variables. An explanatory research framework was employed to examine how one variable influences another (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Additionally, researchers applied deductive reasoning to develop research models and formulate hypotheses. The structural and measurement model were measured using the Smart PLS 4. Ugandan public universities provided a sample that was drawn from in order to test the theoretical model. An employee survey questionnaire was distributed to employees of Makerere University and Kyambogo University which are two biggest universities in Uganda especially in the central region (Kyambade, Namatovu, Mugambwa, et al., 2024). Convenience sampling was employed in this case. The data was collected in August 2022 and October 2022. As per Hair et al. (2017), the literature on Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling, the power analysis technique is the best method for determining an effective sample size. A power analysis ought to be performed in order to ascertain the sample size, taking into account the model's constructs with the greatest number of predictors (Hair et al., 2019). The sample size for this study was determined using G-Power software version 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al., 2007). We employed a power analysis based on the following parameters: effect size = 0.5, alpha level = 0.05, power = 0.80. We selected these parameters based on prior research findings in the field and considerations of statistical significance and practical significance. The calculation yielded a recommended sample size of 350 participants to achieve adequate statistical power for detecting the anticipated effects. Three hundred fifty employees of these public universities were therefore given questionnaires. 289 useful responses were extracted from this. Based on this technique's advantages, disadvantages, practicality, and financial implications, a justification has been developed for its application. The current study had an 82.5% response rate, or 289 valid responses. There is no set standard for what constitutes a satisfactory minimum rate of response (Mellahi & Harris, 2016). For research purposes, it was not ideal to have a response rate below 20%, according to Malhotra and Grover (1998). Cohen (1992) proposed that a PLS-SEM analysis should require a minimum of 103 samples. This requirement is satisfactorily satisfied by the sample size of 289 responses in the current study. The study was approved by the ethics committee of Faculty of Management - MUBS with reference number MUBS-0271. Consent to participate was also obtained from participants verbally and was written on our survey questionnaires. Our research assistants were able to read these consent letters that our respondents agreed to ensure clarity and understanding. Furthermore, all participants involved in the study were served with letters to accept or reject participation. Therefore, informed consent to participate was obtained from participants in writing and all participants involved in this study accepted to be part of the study.

Demographic profile of the sample and control variables

There were 43% men and 57% women in the sample. It is significant to note that 16% of study participants were younger than 30, and 47% of participants were between the ages of 30 and 40. In addition, 22% of the subjects were in the 40–50 age range. Moreover, Table 1 shows that 26% of the participants had an experience of over 10 years. The Education Level of respondents is Bachelor's Degree with 40%, Master's Degree: 35%, PhD: 25%. Understanding the education level of respondents allows us to examine how educational attainment influences perspectives on work-life balance and career advancement. Higher educational qualifications may correlate with greater awareness and advocacy for policies

promoting work-life balance, potentially impacting women's representation in leadership. The Marital Status of respondents was Single: 30%, Married: 55%, Divorced: 10%, Widowed: 5%. Marital status may affect individuals' responsibilities and perceptions of work-life balance. Married participants, especially those with children, may face additional pressures in managing work and family obligations compared to their single counterparts. This dynamic could influence their career progression and leadership aspirations. Respondent's Biological Children, results indicate that 40% had no children, 30% had 1 child, 20% had 2 children and 10% had 3 or more children. The number of biological children is a critical factor in assessing work-life balance. Participants with children may experience greater challenges in achieving balance due to caregiving responsibilities, which can impact their job satisfaction and aspirations for leadership roles. The respondent's Income Level in Uganda shillings is as follows 25% earned below \$3000 monthly, 45% earned \$3000–\$4000 and 30% earned above \$4000. Income level can influence individuals' ability to access resources and support for achieving work-life balance. Higher-income respondents may have more flexibility in their work arrangements or access to childcare solutions, affecting their career progression and representation in leadership positions.

Variable measurement

The study utilized a self-administered questionnaire that measured respondents' agreement or disagreement with the research questions using closed-ended items on a five-point Likert scale (Spector, 1992). In order to encourage respondents to express unambiguous positive or negative views, a five-point scale was used to reduce neutral or ambiguous responses (Spector, 1992). In order to reach a large number of respondents and obtain average ratings on the survey questions, the questionnaire was selected as the data collection method (Spector, 1992). Utilizing pertinent research on women's representation and work-life balance, the questionnaire was created. Gender roles, attitudes, and social roles were used to define work-life balance (Lyness & Judiesch, 2014). Equity and gender mainstreaming were used to operationalize women's representation (Moser & Moser, 2005). Gender participation was measured by the level of involvement and gender gap as per previous scales by (Cook and Glass, 2014; Kyambade, Tushabe, Namatovu, et al., 2024)

Common method bias

Since all of the variables' data came from a single source, we used a single factor by Harman with confirmatory factor analysis in which all indicators are intentionally loaded onto a single factor to determine whether common method variance had any impact on the dataset. According to the results, a single factor only accounts for 31.4% of the variance, which is less than the necessary value of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). As a result, neither the biasness nor the responses' substantial biases present a serious issue. As a result, the suitability of data ensuing statistical analysis is verified (Sewante et al., 2025).

Table 1. The sample's demographic profile.

Demographics	Characteristic	Number	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	124	43
	Female	165	57
	Total	289	100
Age	Under 30	45	16
	30–40	137	47
	40–50	64	22
	Above 50	43	15
	Total	289	100
Work Experience	Less than 1	23	8
	1–3	45	16
	4–6	81	28
	7–10	63	22
	Above 10	77	26
	Total	289	100

n = 287. Source: Field study by the authors September 2020–March 2022. Bold numbers represent total values.

Construct loadings

Because PLS-SEM has numerous corresponding constructs in the current study, it was used in “Smart-PLS 4” for the current analysis. Regarding the item loadings of the latent variables, Table 2’s factor loadings are discussed; each item was meaningfully loaded to its corresponding variables. The indicators measured have approximately minimum loadings (coefficients) of 0.510 and approximately a maximum loading of 0.901. All of the factors’ variance inflation factors (VIFs) were below the +5 cutoff value (Diamantopoulos & Siguaaw, 2006), indicating that there were no issues related to multicollinearity for the research model. Thus, Table 2 presents research constructs summary along with their matching loadings (coefficients) for the measurement items.

Findings

The statistical package SmartPLS 4 was utilized to conduct PLS-SEM (partial least square) and other related tests. Since CB-SEM (co-variance based structural modeling) requires normally distributed data, PLS-SEM was used instead of CB-SEM. Conversely, the PLS-SEM method makes no presumptions regarding the data’s distribution. Consequently, the PLS-SEM approach has been used because abnormal data do not confuse the overall results (Goodhue et al., 2012). Furthermore, Fornell and Larcker (1981)’s method was applied in order to assess discriminant validity. The results indicated that discriminant validity is present because the under-study constructs satisfy assumptions that are both basic and strict. It’s important to note that the values that represent the AVEs of the constructs and lie at the diagonal (indicated in bold) in the Fornell-Lacker’s table (Table 3) have to be more than 0.50. To confirm the discriminant validity existence, each variable AVE’s must be more valuable than those of other variables at both the row and column positions (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Structural equation modeling – hypotheses testing

Using a 5000-retest bootstrapping system, standard errors, the coefficients, significance values (p) and t-qualities of the suggested framework were determined as per Ramayah et al. (2018). After a careful model fitness examination, path analysis becomes crucial. In this stage of analysis, causal connections between the constructs under study are analyzed and determined. The findings show how work-life balance affects women’s representation in leadership roles at Uganda’s public universities, both directly and indirectly.

Table 2. Item loadings.

Variables	Indicator	Indicator reliability	Cross loadings	VIF	Alpha	rho-A	Composite Reliability	Ave
Work-life balance	WLB1	0.914	0.803	4.135	0.885	0.878	0.789	0.576
	WLB2	0.925	0.810	4.471				
	WLB3	0.868	0.801	2.203				
	WLB4	0.850	0.811	1.785				
	WLB5	0.900	0.510	1.132				
	WLB6	0.878	0.672	1.101				
Gender participation	GPA1	0.820	0.573	4.711	0.912	0.786	0.871	0.541
	GPA2	0.916	0.707	4.879				
	GPA3	0.832	0.891	2.614				
	GPA4	0.898	0.901	3.089				
	GPA5	0.664	0.592	4.204				
	GPA6	0.851	0.684	4.370				
Women representation	WR1	0.922	0.599	1.887	0.874	0.875	0.921	0.501
	WR3	0.867	0.631	2.871				
	WR4	0.867	0.810	2.276				
	WR5	0.908	0.731	1.889				
	WR6	0.924	0.712	2.306				
	WR7	0.861	0.593	2.003				

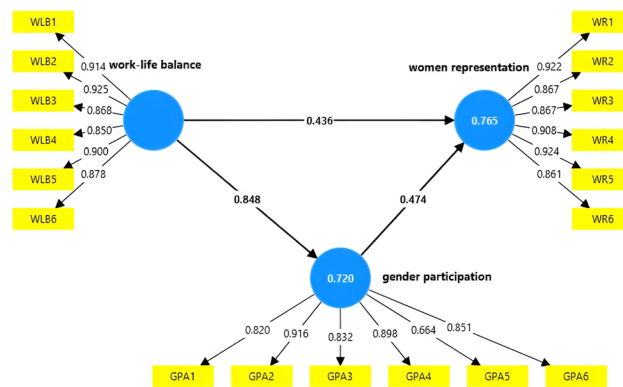
Table 3. Fornell & Larcker's discriminant validity.

Construct	Work-life balance	Gender participation	Women Representation	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Q-Square
Work-life balance	0.657	0.398	0.499	–	–	–
Gender participation	0.284	0.677	0.511	0.301	0.287	0.059
Women representation	0.391	0.492	0.587	0.417	0.399	0.141

AVEs, or extracted square roots of average variance, are displayed diagonally. *Source:* Estimates made by authors using SmartPLS 4.

Table 4. Path coefficients for hypothesis relationship.

Hypotheses	Beta	t	p	Status
H1 Work-life balance → Women's representation	0.436	8.01	0.00	Supported
H2 Work-life balance → Gender participation	0.848	6.79	0.00	Supported
H3 Gender participation → Women's representation	0.474	5.31	0.00	Supported
H4 Indirect effect: Work-life balance → Gender participation → women representation	0.720	0.765	94%	Supported

**Figure 1.** Path analysis framework (SmartPLS 4).

Direct effect

The findings indicate a strong correlation between women's representation (WR) and work-life balance (WLB) ($\beta=0.436$, $t=8.01$). Gender Participation (GP) and work-life balance (WLB) are positively correlated ($\beta=0.848$, $t=6.79$). Women's representation (WR) is positively impacted by gender participation (GP) ($\beta=0.474$, $t=5.31$). Refer to Table 4.

Indirect effect (mediating effect)

The approach of variance account for (VAF) was used to test the mediating effect; VAF was computed by dividing indirect effect by total effect. Figure 1 shows that the calculated value was 94%, indicating full mediation.

Discussion

According to this study, women's representation is significantly and favorably impacted by work-life balance (WLB). The results align with the theory, and it can be contended that balancing work-life can considerably improve the representation of women in leadership. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the importance of supportive organizational cultures and flexible work arrangements in promoting gender diversity and women's career advancement (Tushabe et al., 2023; Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012; DeSimone, 2020). WLB initiatives, such as flexible

scheduling, telecommuting options, and parental leave policies, create opportunities for women to better balance their professional and personal responsibilities, thereby increasing their likelihood of pursuing and attaining leadership positions. Furthermore, the discussion underscores the role of organizational policies and practices in shaping women's career trajectories and opportunities for advancement. Organizations that prioritize work-life balance not only attract and retain talented women but also create a conducive environment for their professional development and leadership aspirations. By fostering a culture of flexibility and inclusivity, these organizations empower women to thrive in leadership roles and contribute to the overall success of the organization (Kyambade et al., 2025). Moreover, while work-life balance initiatives can create opportunities for women's advancement, they may not address the root causes of gender inequality in the workplace. Policies such as flexible working arrangements may inadvertently perpetuate gender stereotypes and reinforce traditional gender roles, placing a disproportionate burden on women to balance work and caregiving responsibilities. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to adopt intersectional approaches that consider the unique experiences and challenges faced by women from diverse backgrounds.

According to the results, WLB significantly and favorably affects gender participation (GP). According to Kotera et al. (2020) and Gragnano et al. (2020), there is a strong connection between gender participation in the model and work-life balance. The findings of this study align with theoretical frameworks. The results suggest that organizations that prioritize work-life balance practices tend to have higher levels of gender participation in the workforce. This finding underscores the importance of WLB initiatives in creating inclusive and supportive work environments that attract and retain a diverse workforce. By offering flexible working arrangements, childcare support, and other WLB benefits, organizations can accommodate the needs of employees with caregiving responsibilities, thereby increasing gender participation rates. Organizations with a strong commitment to work-life balance tend to have leaders who champion diversity and inclusivity, creating a culture where employees feel valued and supported regardless of their gender (Kyambade, Mugambwa, et al., 2024). This positive organizational climate fosters greater gender diversity and participation by breaking down barriers and biases that may inhibit women's entry and advancement in the workforce. However, it is essential to recognize that promoting work-life balance alone may not be sufficient to achieve gender parity in the workforce. While WLB initiatives can create opportunities for women to participate more fully in the workforce, addressing systemic barriers and biases is necessary to ensure equal access to opportunities and advancement. Structural inequalities, gender stereotypes, and cultural norms continue to shape gender participation patterns, highlighting the need for broader societal and institutional change.

Finally, a hypothesis was created by recent research to investigate the connection between women's representation and gender participation (Tushabe et al., 2023). The results of this study show that gender participation significantly and favorably affects the representation of women. The results align with theoretical frameworks, and it is contended that gender participation significantly predicts the representation of women in the model (Settles et al., 2022; Light et al., 2022). Organizations with higher levels of gender participation in the workforce tend to have greater representation of women in leadership roles. This finding suggests that increasing the overall participation of women in the workforce creates a pipeline for women to advance into leadership positions. Furthermore, the debate highlights the importance of addressing systemic barriers and biases that inhibit women's participation and advancement in the workforce. While gender participation is a necessary precursor to women's representation in leadership, it is not sufficient on its own. Structural inequalities, gender stereotypes, and unconscious biases continue to hinder women's progress in organizations, making it essential to implement targeted interventions to address these barriers. Moreover, the discussion underscores the role of organizational culture and leadership in shaping gender participation and women's representation outcomes. Organizations with inclusive and supportive cultures tend to attract and retain a diverse workforce, creating opportunities for women to thrive and advance into leadership roles (Kyambade, Namatovu, Namubiru, et al., 2024). Additionally, leaders who prioritize diversity and inclusion can help create an environment where women feel valued and empowered to pursue leadership positions.

Additionally, the researchers have been advocating for an analysis of the mediation effect of gender participation in the connection between women's representation and work-life balance (Aruldoss et al., 2021). The results of this study suggest that gender participation plays a mediating role in the

relationship between work-life balance practices and women's representation in leadership roles. Specifically, organizations that prioritize WLB initiatives tend to have higher levels of gender participation in the workforce, which, in turn, positively influences women's representation in leadership positions (Kyambade, Tushabe, et al., 2024; Fritz & Van Knippenberg, 2018). This mediation effect implies that increasing gender participation serves as a mechanism through which WLB initiatives contribute to enhancing women's representation in leadership. The mediation role of gender participation underscores the importance of creating inclusive and supportive work environments that accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of employees. By implementing WLB practices such as flexible working arrangements, telecommuting options, and family-friendly policies, organizations can attract and retain a more diverse workforce, including women. This, in turn, creates a larger talent pool from which women can be recruited and promoted into leadership positions, thereby increasing their representation in top decision-making roles. Furthermore, our study highlights the significance of organizational culture and leadership in shaping both WLB practices and gender participation outcomes. Organizations with leaders who prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion are more likely to foster supportive cultures that promote WLB and gender diversity. These organizations are better positioned to implement WLB initiatives effectively and create an environment where women feel valued, respected, and empowered to pursue leadership roles. Therefore, it is argued here that, equal women representation in leadership positions in public universities can be developed from organization's adopting work life balance and gender participation practices. To empower women in public universities, it is essential to implement strategies and practices that promote balancing work-life and gender participation. Flexible work schedules, such as work from home or flexible hours, can help women manage their personal obligations while staying actively involved in their professional pursuits (Kyambade et al., 2025). Additionally, providing support services like on-campus daycare facilities can alleviate some of the burdens associated with balancing work and family responsibilities. Public universities must also adopt inclusive policies that actively encourage and support the participation of women in academic leadership positions. This includes eliminating discriminatory practices, establishing mentorship programs, and creating opportunities for professional development and advancement.

Conclusion

Examining the impact of balancing work-life on women's representation in public universities was the primary goal of this study. A mediating analysis of gender participation was tested in this study. By extending the congruity theory's perspective to women's representation, our study adds to literature body of previous studies. To accomplish the goals of the study, a survey-based approach was chosen, and Smart PLS 4 statistical analysis software was employed. The results demonstrate the direct link between women representation and work-life balance. Additionally, women's representation and work-life balance are mediated by gender participation. Furthermore, the congruity theory regarding the representation of women in public universities was reinforced by our findings. The present study offers guidance to policymakers, managers, and upper management regarding the development of human resource policies aimed at fostering a culture of women in leadership within the workplace.

Practical implications

The study underscores the importance of implementing and reinforcing policies that promote work-life balance (WLB) in public universities in Uganda. Administrators should prioritize the development and implementation of flexible working arrangements, parental leave policies, and other WLB initiatives to accommodate the diverse needs of employees, particularly women not to forget the provision of electronic gadget to teach from home (Kyambade & Namatovu, 2024b). Public universities should strive to cultivate a supportive and inclusive organizational culture that values work-life balance and gender diversity. Leaders and managers play a crucial role in fostering such a culture by promoting open communication, providing support for work-life integration, and actively addressing gender biases and stereotypes. Institutions should invest in training programs and professional development opportunities

aimed at promoting WLB awareness and gender inclusivity among faculty and staff. Training sessions can help raise awareness about the importance of WLB practices and provide strategies for implementing them effectively within the university context. Public universities can facilitate mentorship programs and networking opportunities to support women's career advancement and leadership development. Pairing junior female faculty and staff with experienced mentors can provide valuable guidance and support as they navigate their careers and pursue leadership roles within the university. The study findings can inform advocacy efforts aimed at influencing policy changes and institutional reforms to support work-life balance and gender diversity in public universities. Engaging stakeholders, including university administrators, policymakers, and advocacy groups, can help drive meaningful change and create a more inclusive and equitable academic environment. Public universities should establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of WLB initiatives and gender diversity efforts over time. Regular assessments can help identify areas for improvement, measure progress towards gender parity in leadership positions, and ensure accountability for promoting a supportive and inclusive work environment.

Theoretical implications

The study addresses the contextual gap by conducting research in the context of Ugandan public universities, which has numerous theoretical implications. Second, this research adds to the body of knowledge by expanding the congruity theory. Third, this study looked at gender participation's mediating role, which has been overlooked in earlier research. Our study's findings offer recommendations to legislators regarding HRM procedures in public universities that encourage female leadership. Universities with equal representation in leadership positions are more likely to succeed than those without, so training programs aimed at raising women's awareness and knowledge of leadership are essential. Nonetheless, an additional discovery indicates that gender involvement is vital to the execution of tactics aimed at advancing women in leadership positions. Work-life policies that promote balance can help legislators leverage the knowledge and experience of workers to address the women underrepresentation in leadership roles in the workplace.

Limitation and future research

The study has limitations in spite of its much strength. Firstly, data for our study was gathered exclusively from public universities. Future scholars might investigate other areas of education, such as private universities, tertiary institutions, secondary schools, and elementary schools. As a result, we anticipate that future researchers will use multilevel modeling and potential moderators to critically reevaluate the model that was tested in the study. Second, the study looked at the effects of gender participation as a single mediator. Work-life balance and women's representation, however, can also be explained by other factors like health, safety, and views on gender roles.

Acknowledgments

Monica Tushabe: Involved in the conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of the data; the drafting of the paper, revising it critically for intellectual content; the final approval of the version to be published; and agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript. **Mahadih Kyambade:** Involved in the conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of the data; the drafting of the paper, revising it critically for intellectual content; the final approval of the version to be published; and agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript. **Afulah Namatovu:** Involved in the conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of the data; the drafting of the paper, revising it critically for intellectual content; the final approval of the version to be published; and agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript. **Sheilla Oyella:** Involved in the drafting of the paper, revising it critically for intellectual content, and the final approval of the version to be published; and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Ethical review and approval were obtained from Faculty of Management - MUBS research & ethics board for this study.

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Author contributions

CRedit: **Monica Tushabe**: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Mahadih Kyambade**: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Afulah Namatovu**: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Writing – review & editing; **Sheilla Oyella**: Conceptualization, Investigation, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

No funding was received.

About the authors

Monica Tushabe is pursuing her PhD and holds a master's degree in Leadership and Governance of Makerere University. She is currently a Senior Lecturer at Makerere University Business School in Uganda. Her research interests are in Leadership, Governance, Management, Gender Diversity, Women Representation, And Business Ethics. Email: mtushabe@mubs.ac.ug

Mahadih Kyambade is a distinguished Academician and Lecturer in the Department of Leadership and Governance, at Makerere University Business School. Pursuing a PhD in Responsible Leadership, holds degrees of Master of Science in Leadership and Governance, Bachelor of Leadership and Governance and Bachelors of Laws of Makerere University. His research focuses on themes related to Leadership, Governance, Psychological Safety, Gender Diversity, Higher Education, Environmental Studies and Policy. Email: mahadkyambade@gmail.com

Afulah Namatovu is a renowned Academician in the field of Information Management. She's a Lecturer in the Department of Applied Computing & IT, Makerere University Business School. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Information and Information Management of Makerere University. Her research focuses on Information Management, IT, Generative AI, Leadership and Gender issues in Organizations. Email: anamatovu@mubs.ac.ug

Sheilla Oyella is a master's student at Makerere University and holds a bachelor's degree in Leadership and Governance of Makerere University. She is currently a Teaching Assistant at Makerere University Business School in Uganda. Her research interests are in Leadership, Governance, Management, Gender Diversity, Women Representation, And Business Ethics. Email: soyella@mubs.ac.ug

ORCID

Mahadih Kyambade  <http://orcid.org/0009-0006-0257-9601>
Afulah Namatovu  <http://orcid.org/0009-0001-5799-3950>

Data availability statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

References

- Akuamoah-Boateng, C. (2020). Balancing work, family and personal life: Perspectives of female staff at the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 12(1), 43–51.
- Aruldoss, A., Kowalski, K. B., & Parayitam, S. (2021). The relationship between quality of work life and work-life-balance mediating role of job stress, job satisfaction and job commitment: Evidence from India. *Journal of Advances in Management Research*, 18(1), 36–62. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAMR-05-2020-0082>
- Brown, H., Kim, J. S., & Faerman, S. R. (2021). The influence of societal and organizational culture on the use of work-life balance programs: A comparative analysis of the United States and the Republic of Korea. *The Social Science Journal*, 58(1), 62–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2019.03.008>
- Casad, B. J., Franks, J. E., Garasky, C. E., Kittleman, M. M., Roesler, A. C., Hall, D. Y., & Petzel, Z. W. (2021). Gender inequality in academia: Problems and solutions for women faculty in STEM. *Journal of Neuroscience Research*, 99(1), 13–23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jnr.24631>
- Chauhan, P. (2022). "I Have No Room of My Own": COVID-19 pandemic and work-from-home through a gender lens. *Gender Issues*, 39(4), 507–533. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-022-09302-0>
- Cho, Y., Park, J., Ju, B., Han, S. J., Moon, H., Park, S., Ju, A., & Park, E. (2016). Women leaders' work-life imbalance in South Korean companies: A collaborative qualitative study. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 27(4), 461–487. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21262>
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(1), 155–159. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.112.1.155>
- Coleman, M. (2020). Women leaders in the workplace: Perceptions of career barriers, facilitators and change. *Irish Educational Studies*, 39(2), 233–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2019.1697952>
- Cook and Glass. (2014). *Women and top leadership positions: Towards an institutional analysis*.
- Cosentino, A., Weese, W. J., & Wells, J. E. (2021). Strategies to advance women: Career insights from senior leadership women in professional sport in Canada. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 3, 716505. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2021.716505>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- DeSimone, K. (2020). Beyond gender: Reconceptualizing understandings of work–life balance and the extreme work model for 21st-century high-potential top earners. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 33(6), 1071–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-02-2020-0042>
- Diamantopoulos, A., & Siguaw, J. A. (2006). Formative versus reflective indicators in organizational measure development: A comparison and empirical illustration. *British Journal of Management*, 17(4), 263–282. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2006.00500.x>
- Evans, A. B., & Pfister, G. U. (2021). Women in sports leadership: A systematic narrative review. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 56(3), 317–342. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690220911842>
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A. G. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39(2), 175–191. <https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03193146>
- Forkuor, J. B., Buari, M. A., & Aheto, C. K. A. (2020). Breaking barriers: The experiences of women in male dominated informal sector occupations in Urban Ghana. *Gender Issues*, 37(1), 25–43. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-019-09231-5>
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104>
- Fritz, C., & Van Knippenberg, D. (2018). Gender and leadership aspiration: The impact of work–life initiatives. *Human Resource Management*, 57(4), 855–868. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21875>
- Galsanjigmed, E., & Sekiguchi, T. (2023). Challenges women experience in leadership careers: An integrative review. *Merits*, 3(2), 366–389. <https://doi.org/10.3390/merits3020021>
- Goodhue, D. L., Lewis, W., & Thompson, R. (2012). Does PLS have advantages for small sample size or nonnormal data? *Mis Quarterly*, 3, 36, 981–1001. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41703490>
- Gragnano, A., Simbula, S., & Miglioretti, M. (2020). Work–life balance: Weighing the importance of work–family and work–health balance. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(3), 907. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17030907>
- Guy, B., & Arthur, B. (2020). Academic motherhood during COVID-19: Navigating our dual roles as educators and mothers. *Gender, Work, and Organization*, 27(5), 887–899. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12493>
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- Hair, J., Hollingsworth, C. L., Randolph, A. B., & Chong, A. Y. L. (2017). An updated and expanded assessment of PLS-SEM in information systems research. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 117(3), 442–458. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-04-2016-0130>
- Hessami, Z., & da Fonseca, M. L. (2020). Female political representation and substantive effects on policies: A literature review. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 63, 101896. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2020.101896>
- Islam, T., Attiq, S., Hameed, Z., Khokhar, M. N., & Sheikh, Z. (2019). The impact of self-congruity (symbolic and functional) on the brand hate: A study based on self-congruity theory. *British Food Journal*, 121(1), 71–88. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-03-2018-0206>

- Jose, I., & Sivaraman, S. (2023). Gender inequality and gender gap: An overview of the Indian scenario. *Gender Issues*, 40(2–4), 232–254. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-023-09313-5>
- Kalysh, K., Kulik, C. T., & Perera, S. (2016). Help or hindrance? Work–life practices and women in management. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 504–518. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.12.009>
- Kayaalp, A., Page, K. J., & Rospenda, K. M. (2021). Caregiver burden, work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and mental health of caregivers: A mediational longitudinal study. *Work and Stress*, 35(3), 217–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2020.1832609>
- Kossek, E. E., & Buzzanell, P. M. (2018). Women’s career equality and leadership in organizations: Creating an evidence-based positive change. *Human Resource Management*, 57(4), 813–822. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21936>
- Kotera, Y., Green, P., & Sheffield, D. (2020). Work-life balance of UK construction workers: Relationship with mental health. *Construction Management and Economics*, 38(3), 291–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01446193.2019.1625417>
- Kyambade, M., & Namatovu, A. (2024a). Exploring the role of ethical leadership and personality traits in shaping ethical behavior among Ugandan security officers. *International Journal of Public Leadership*, 21(1), 18–36. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPL-09-2024-0107>
- Kyambade, M., & Namatovu, A. (2024b). Transforming the public service via digital leadership in Uganda. *International Journal of Public Leadership*, 21(1), 37–53. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPL-07-2024-0080>
- Kyambade, M., Bartazary, D., Namatovu, A., & Tushabe, M. (2024). Authentic leadership and performance of public servants in Tanzania context: The mediation role of motivation. *International Journal of Public Leadership*, 20(3/4), 189–203. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPL-03-2024-0031>
- Kyambade, M., Mugambwa, J., Namuddu, R., Namatovu, A., & Kwemarira, G. (2024). Staff commitment in Ugandan public universities: Does servant leadership matter? *SEISENSE Business Review*, 4(1), 29–43. <https://doi.org/10.33215/6h3x1822>
- Kyambade, M., Namatovu, A., Mugambwa, J., Namuddu, R., & Namubiru, B. (2024). Socially responsible leadership and job engagement in university context: Mediation of psychological safety. *SEISENSE Journal of Management*, 7(1), 51–66. <https://doi.org/10.33215/61rnkr91>
- Kyambade, M., Namatovu, A., Namubiru, B., & Muganzi, C. (2024). Socially responsible leadership practices in university context: A developing nation perspective. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 39(1), 275–293. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-02-2024-0067>
- Kyambade, M., Namatovu, A., Ssentumbwe, A. M., & Tushabe, M. (2025). Work from home can be distracting: Exploring the moderation role of transformational leadership on teleworking and cyber-slacking. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), 2450115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2450115>
- Kyambade, M., Namuddu, R., Mugambwa, J., & Namatovu, A. (2024a). I can’t express myself at work: Encouraging socially responsible leadership and psychological safety in higher education setting. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), 2373560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2373560>
- Kyambade, M., Namuddu, R., Mugambwa, J., & Namatovu, A. (2024b). Psychological safety and innovative work behavior: Does socially responsible leadership matter? *SEISENSE Business Review*, 4(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.33215/6gahb262>
- Kyambade, M., Nkurunziza, G., Sewante, L., Namatovu, A., & Tushabe, M. (2024h). Servant leadership and healthy work relationships in university context: A moderated mediation analysis of psychological safety and socially responsible leadership. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), 2418802. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2418802>
- Kyambade, M., Tushabe, M., & Namatovu, A. (2024). Work life balance and women representation in leadership positions in Ugandan public universities. *SN Social Sciences*, 4(8), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-024-00947-0>
- Kyambade, M., Tushabe, M., Namatovu, A., & Oyella, S. (2024). Bridging the gender gap: Analyzing women’s participation and leadership representation in university governance. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2432519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2432519>
- Lafferty, K., Phillipson, S. N., & Costello, S. (2023). The relationships between gender ideologies and course choice in higher education: An Australian context. *Gender Issues*, 40(2–4), 206–231. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-023-09312-6>
- Lafferty, K., Phillipson, S. N., & Jacobs, K. (2021). Conforming to male and female gender norms: A characterisation of Australian university students. *Gender Issues*, 37(1), 79–99. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-020-09259-y>
- Light, A. E., Benson-Greenwald, T. M., & Diekmann, A. B. (2022). Gender representation cues labels of hard and soft sciences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 98, 104234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2021.104234>
- Lyness, K. S., & Judiesch, M. K. (2014). Gender egalitarianism and work–life balance for managers: Multisource perspectives in 36 countries. *Applied Psychology*, 63(1), 96–129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12011>
- Malhotra, M. K., & Grover, V. (1998). An assessment of survey research in POM: From constructs to theory. *Journal of Operations Management*, 16(4), 407–425. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-6963\(98\)00021-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-6963(98)00021-7)
- Masterson, C., Sugiyama, K., & Ladge, J. (2021). The value of 21st century work–family supports: Review and cross-level path forward. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 42(2), 118–138. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2442>
- Mayanja, C. S. (2020). Ladder of citizen participation: Insights into female student representatives on Public University councils in Uganda. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 12(2), 121–132.
- McDowall, A., & Kinman, G. (2021). Work-life balance and gender: Challenging assumptions and unravelling complexity. *Aligning Perspectives in Gender Mainstreaming: Gender, Health, Safety, and Wellbeing*, 37–60.

- McLaughlin, K., & Aikman, S. N. (2020). That is what a feminist looks like: Identification and exploration of the factors underlying the concept of feminism and predicting the endorsement of traditional gender roles. *Gender Issues*, 37(2), 91–124. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-019-09240-4>
- Meeussen, L., Van Laar, C., & Van Grootel, S. (2020). How to foster male engagement in traditionally female communal roles and occupations: Insights from research on gender norms and precarious manhood. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 14(1), 297–328. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12060>
- Mellahi, K., & Harris, L. C. (2016). Response rates in business and management research: An overview of current practice and suggestions for future direction. *British Journal of Management*, 27(2), 426–437. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-855112154>
- Moser, C., & Moser, A. (2005). Gender mainstreaming since Beijing: A review of success and limitations in international institutions. *Gender & Development*, 13(2), 11–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070512331332283>
- Namuddu, M. R., Kyambade, M., & Isoh, A. V. N. (2024). Affirmative action for women's representation on boards of public sector organizations in Uganda: What is the necessity? *SN Social Sciences*, 4(10), 177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-024-00968-9>
- Naseem, R., Faiz, R., & Asad, H. (2020). Investigating work-life balance among female academics. *Journal of Research & Reflections in Education (JRRE)*, 14(1).
- Norberg, C., & Johansson, M. (2021). "Women and "Ideal" Women": The representation of women in the construction industry. *Gender Issues*, 38(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-020-09257-0>
- Oyewobi, L. O., Oke, A. E., Adeneye, T. D., Jimoh, R. A., & Windapo, A. O. (2022). Impact of work-life policies on organizational commitment of construction professionals: Role of work-life balance. *International Journal of Construction Management*, 22(10), 1795–1805. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15623599.2020.1742632>
- Pace, F., & Sciotto, G. (2021). Gender differences in the relationship between work-life balance, career opportunities and general health perception. *Sustainability*, 14(1), 357. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14010357>
- Park, J., Lee, S., & Kim, H. (2021). Inclusive leadership and its effect on organizational performance: Exploring the role of gender diversity and participation. *Journal of Organizational Studies*, 58(4), 567–588.
- Park, N. K., Jang, W., Thomas, E. L., & Smith, J. (2021). How to organize creative and innovative teams: Creative self-efficacy and innovative team performance. *Creativity Research Journal*, 33(2), 168–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2020.1842010>
- Pike, K., & English, B. (2022). And roses too: How "Better Work" facilitates gender empowerment in global supply chains. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 29(1), 188–204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12740>
- Podsakoff, P. M., Mackenzie, S. B., Lee, J., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended Remedies. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Popoola, S. O., & Fagbola, O. O. (2021). Work-life balance, self-esteem, work motivation, and organizational commitment of library personnel in federal universities in Southern Nigeria. *International Information & Library Review*, 53(3), 214–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572317.2020.1840244>
- Power, K. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the care burden of women and families. *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy*, 16(1), 67–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2020.1776561>
- Ramayah, T., Cheah, J., Chuah, F., Ting, H., & Memon, M. A. (2018). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.0: An updated and practical guide to statistical analysis*. Pearson.
- Rodríguez-Sánchez, J. L., González-Torres, T., Montero-Navarro, A., & Gallego-Losada, R. (2020). Investing time and resources for work-life balance: The effect on talent retention. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(6), 1920. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17061920>
- Saifuddin, A., Munir, S., & Rehman, F. (2019). Bridging gender gaps in leadership: Analyzing barriers and strategies for inclusion. *Gender and Society*, 33(3), 350–372.
- Saifuddin, S., Dyke, L., & Hossain, M. S. (2019). Walls all around: Barriers women professionals face in high-tech careers in Bangladesh. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 38(7), 705–726. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-11-2017-0247>
- Schueller-Weidekamm, C., & Kautzky-Willer, A. (2012). Challenges of work-life balance for women physicians/mothers working in leadership positions. *Gender Medicine*, 9(4), 244–250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.genm.2012.04.002>
- Settles, I. H., Jones, M. K., Buchanan, N. T., & Brassel, S. T. (2022). Epistemic exclusion of women faculty and faculty of color: Understanding scholar (ly) devaluation as a predictor of turnover intentions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 93(1), 31–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2021.1914494>
- Sewante, L., Kyambade, M., Kwemarira, G., Namuburi, J., Kaliisa, G., & Kayanja, W. (2025). Collective leadership, workplace democracy and diversity management in public universities in Uganda. In *Humanistic Management in the Public Sector: Global Contexts and Perspectives*. (pp. 261–285). Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Shahzad, A., Hassan, R., Aremu, A. Y., Hussain, A., & Lodhi, R. N. (2021). Effects of COVID-19 in E-learning on higher education institution students: The group comparison between male and female. *Quality & Quantity*, 55(3), 805–826. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-020-01028-z>
- Smith, J., Fisher, J., & Ramprogus, V. (2022). Adding University to work and life: The work-life balance and well-being experiences of women who combine employment, HE learning and care of the family. *Community, Work & Family*, 25(5), 583–602. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2020.1779662>
- Spector, P. E. (1992). *Summated rating scale construction: An introduction*. Sage Publications.

- Staniscuaski, F., Kmetzsch, L., Soletti, R. C., Reichert, F., Zandonà, E., Ludwig, Z. M. C., Lima, E. F., Neumann, A., Schwartz, I. V. D., Mello-Carpes, P. B., Tamajusuku, A. S. K., Werneck, F. P., Ricachenevsky, F. K., Infanger, C., Seixas, A., Staats, C. C., & de Oliveira, L. (2021). Gender, race and parenthood impact academic productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic: From survey to action. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 663252. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.663252>
- Sumra, M. K. (2019). Masculinity, femininity, and leadership: Taking a closer look at the alpha female. *PloS One, 14*(4), e0215181. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0215181>
- Teixeira, M. B. M., Galvão, L. L. D. C., Mota-Santos, C. M., & Carmo, L. J. O. (2020). Women and work: Film analysis of most beautiful thing. *Revista de Gestão, 28*(1), 66–83. <https://doi.org/10.1108/REG-03-2020-0015>
- Tushabe, M., Kyambade, M., Kalisa, G., & Birungi, F. (2023). Work-life balance, gender role beliefs, gender participation and women's representation in leadership positions in public universities: A case of Makerere University. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences, 21*(4), 9–21. <https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2023/v21i4488>
- Uddin, M. (2021). Addressing work-life balance challenges of working women during COVID-19 in Bangladesh. *International Social Science Journal, 71*(239-240), 7–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/issj.12267>
- Ul Hasan, Z., Khan, M. I., Butt, T. H., Abid, G., & Rehman, S. (2020). The balance between work and life for subjective well-being: A moderated mediation model. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity, 6*(4), 127. <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc6040127>
- Valsecchi, G., Iacoviello, V., Berent, J., Borinca, I., & Falomir-Pichastor, J. M. (2023). Men's gender norms and gender-hierarchy-legitimizing ideologies: the effect of priming traditional masculinity versus a feminization of men's norms. *Gender Issues, 40*(2–4), 145–167. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-022-09308-8>