

## Original Research Article

### WORK-LIFE BALANCE, GENDER ROLE BELIEFS, GENDER PARTICIPATION AND WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between work-life balance, gender role beliefs, gender participation, and women's representation in leadership positions in public universities in Uganda. The study had responses from 280 staff from Makerere University. A cross-sectional study survey was adopted which involved descriptive, correlation, and regression approaches. The findings of this study revealed work-life balance, gender role beliefs, and gender participation significantly and positively influence women's representation in leadership positions in public universities in Uganda. Women who take on more leadership roles in public universities have to realize work-life balance, they have to be given equal opportunity to participate in all university activities with support accorded to them just as the case is, with male employees. They should be supported to take on leadership roles and higher academic qualifications just as their male counterparts. The results show that among other driving forces to venture into leadership positions, achieving work-life balance is one of the most significant ones. Lack of ample time, gender stereotypes, social and cultural norms as well as family responsibilities are the greatest hindrances women face in achieving balance hence hindering their representation in leadership positions in public universities. This study shows how women's representation in leadership positions can be improved by family, domestic, and work-related factors.

**Keywords** - Women Representation, Work-life Balance, Gender Role Beliefs, Gender Participation, Public Universities, Uganda

**Paper type** - Research paper

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is crucial in ensuring sustainable development across the world [1]. Indeed, one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 5 is to ensure the full participation of women in leadership and decision-making roles. Globally, research shows substantial women under-representation in core professions such as surgery in Pakistan [2], broadcast media in Canada [3] and corporate boards in Australia [4]. Also, [5] indicates wide incidences of women's under-representation in Barbadian unions. In Uganda, the National Development Plan (NDP III) is advocating for wholesome human capital development for both men and women to achieve increased socio-economic transformation. However, according to [6], Makerere University which is the biggest, oldest and leading university in Uganda has less than 29% of women in leadership positions such as Deans, Heads of Departments, and Directors of units, among others. Yet according to [7] increased performance in organizations can be achieved with increased involvement of women in managerial positions.

In the United States of America, [7] and [8] show that a woman on a management team of any company increases 16 per cent of the company's return on equity compared to 4 per cent of a male management team with no woman. Though, men are receiving greater support for holding key leadership and authority positions than women world over [9]. Archival research found that leadership positions occupied by women were often accompanied by a greater risk of failure [10]; [11]; [12]. Additionally, research shows that women are insufficiently regarded as good leaders or experts and are likely not to hold authoritative positions in an organisation [3]. Thereupon, this shows mixed opinions about women's representation in leadership positions. As such, these knowledge gaps are motivations for further

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research on the phenomenon in developing countries such as Uganda where even women's participation in leadership is socially scolded.

According to the Feminist theory [13], women's limited representation in leadership positions is a gender inequality phenomenon which can be studied through critical analysis of gender-related factors such as gender role beliefs, and gender participation. This is because gender beliefs are critical to successful leadership and management role performance [14]. Also, [15] found that gender stereotypes are critical for the performance of female leaders. Furthermore, assertiveness in women is likely to increase their aggressiveness in leadership. However, the contribution of gender role beliefs and gender participation in improving women's representation in leadership positions is empirically voided. Also, the feminist theory focuses on understanding the nature of gender inequality other than the actual mechanisms of lessening inequalities in women's representation in leadership positions. Given that women have been perceived to be risk-averse in leadership positions and the un-ending cultural beliefs about their inability to hold leadership positions because of lack of certain traits, these concerns can affect their participation and representation in leadership positions [16].

From the complexity theoretical framing, organizations such as universities are made up of complex structures with dynamic networks of interactions [17]. These dynamic networks in organizations, homes and societies may be a hindrance for women in executing their leadership roles effectively. Nevertheless, [18] state that the work-life balance policy supports women and men in universities for example they are paid maternity and paternity leave which acknowledges the reality of people's lives and how aspects other than employment take supremacy at different stages. But, since complexity theory focuses on flatter, more flexible organizations, rather than top-down, command-and-control styles of management [19], appropriate work-life balance by women can probably improve their performance in leadership positions in universities. Though, this lacks empirical evidence. It is therefore timely to examine the contribution of work-life balance on women's representation in leadership positions. This is because [20] shows that it is hard for women to rise to leadership, management and administrative positions because of weak dynamic organizational policies on gender and the university culture which give men an upper hand hence creating a gender gap. Also, this is regardless, of the fact that women are presumed to be doing relatively well in higher education, management and the professions which have arguably reduced the marginalization in the public mindset [5].

Furthermore, existing research on women's representation in leadership positions is sporadic. A few studies on the phenomenon such as [5] indicate that family, domestic and workplace factors are imperative in determining women's representation in leadership positions in Barbados. This was a small qualitative study that focused on only 17 women leaders from unions in Barbados. The findings of this study may not be generalized to other big and women dominated countries such as Uganda where out of 45.74 million people, 51 per cent are women. The current study builds on the suggestion by [5] and [2] to further and empirically validate the contribution of family, domestic and workplace factors such as work-life balance, gender role beliefs and gender participation on women representation in a public university setting. This research setting is expected to be more sensitive to women's representation than trade unions in Barbados [5], broadcast news coverage in Canada [3], corporate boards in Australia [4], Surgery profession in Pakistan [2], among others. As such studies on women's representation in a developing African and hugely women populated country like Uganda (females=51 per cent) are unavailable.

Additionally, a few studies on women's representation are anchored on theoretical stances. This is confirmed by [4] who allude to the fact that the field of women's representation on corporate boards is relatively under-theorized. The few theorized studies such as [4] have focused on institutional factors other than organizational factors such as work-life balance, gender role beliefs and gender participation which the current study focuses on to solve the problem at the organizational level using feminist and complexity theories. Also, calls for further research on how women's representation can be improved are eminent (see [3]; [21]) at an organizational level [4]. Arising from the aforementioned inconsistencies, this

study aims at providing initial empirical evidence of the contribution of work-life balance, gender role beliefs and gender participation to women's representation in leadership positions in public universities.

Using Pearson's correlation coefficients, we find that work-life balance, gender role beliefs, and gender participation are all significantly and positively associated with women's representation in leadership positions in public universities. Also, multiple regression results show that work-life balance, gender role beliefs and gender participation predict 49.4 per cent of the variance in women's representation in leadership positions. All three independent variables are significant predictors of women's representation in leadership positions.

The current study has a multitude of contributions such as adding to the scarce literature on the influence of family and work-related factors on how women can achieve better representation in leadership positions. The study also shows how dynamic organizational aspects such as balancing work and family needs by women can be overcome using complexity theory and feminist theory to achieve better performance in positions of leadership. This study is also important for those charged with governance of entities since it clearly shows how they can leverage the potential of women without compromising their social, domestic and family needs through demystifying the current gender biases and beliefs and breaking the barriers in the work-life affairs.

The rest of the paper is compiled as follows. Section 2 presents a theoretical and literature review and hypotheses development. Section 3 contains the research methodology. Section 4 presents and discusses the results. The last section is a summary and conclusion.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS**

#### **2.1.1 Feminist theory**

According to [22], Feminist theory highlights the presence of a gendered social structure. Policastro states that according to feminists, gender is socially constructed and acts as a mechanism for social stratification in a male-dominated society and this case the university. [23] adds that feminist theory is a reminder to rethink our assumptions, especially about issues of gender and power. They add that these are fundamental concerns and therefore in this study the researcher tried to place the feminist ideologies at the centre of gender issues in universities with a major concern to the oldest and biggest university in Uganda (Makerere University). Feminist research in higher education also foregrounded affectivity, embodiment and culture, both within research fields but also in their analyses of higher education [24].

In the context of the challenges in higher education, feminists have analyzed the gendered nature of leadership and organizational restructuring [25], and governance [26], [27], and their impact on the conditions of possibility for equity within universities. Early 21st century debates circle whether we are in a post-feminist era or whether gender equity has stalled in higher education [28]. Gender is no longer an equity category in universities for students, but rather for the under-representation of women in leadership and this continues to be a policy issue [26]. According to [29], feminist academics have existed within/against dominant cultures' ways of being and knowing. Women's presence has challenged dominant ontologies, epistemologies and practices within universities, by not only including women as subjects as well as objects of research but through the feminist ambition to change universities themselves, to make them more inclusive and representative of the social and economic life [30]. Feminist scholars have influenced the design and implementation of policies while advancing the understanding of gender social inequality and its intersections [26]. However, they have done so largely outside the mainstream of university funding and outside legitimized avenues of so-called 'university feminism' to shape social awareness and leadership debate for social justice [31].

#### **2.1.2 Complexity theory**

According to [32], complexity theory provides an understanding of how systems grow, adapt, and evolve. It explains how the relationships between members of these systems give rise to collective behaviour. For example, it explains how interactions between university structures give rise to gender issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Complexity theory sheds light on how the university system interacts with its environment in terms of rounds of negotiation and adaptation of gender practices in university leadership. According to [33], effective solutions to the deeply embedded structural inequalities that characterize the 21st century, especially in universities, there is a need to understand how gender inequality intersects. [33] adds that these systems are complex, pervasive, persistent, mutually constituted, and socially constructed power relationships. When gender inequalities are viewed as power relationships, evaluation needs to identify what and how dominant groups benefit from denying others access to material and social resources, such as adequate leadership representation. In these circumstances, evaluation is required to look in-depth at all those measures that might alter the balance of power such as; shifts in workplace control; equal access to education and greater opportunities to reach higher-level decision making within universities.

## **2.2 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.2.1 Work-Life Balance**

Work-life balance is a self-defined state of well-being which allows one to effectively manage multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in the community; it supports physical, emotional, family, and community health [34]. Work-life balance is construed in terms of gender role attitude and social role. Gender role attitude entails the clusters of socially or culturally defined or learned expectations about how male and female members of a society should behave in specific situations [35]. [36] defines social roles in terms of sets of social tasks and social rights. Women's representation consists of the articulation and presentation of political and administrative agendas of given groups by various actors in decision-making arenas and key social forums in democratic societies [37]. [38] indicates that female managers are frequently faced with conflicting roles that require their time and physical energies, either from their families or from their occupational roles. Such conflict affects their ability to perform both roles effectively. Studies show that, compared to their male counterparts, women in management still carry the major burden of home and family problems regardless of their positions in the organizations when compared to their male counterparts [39], [40], [41]. According to [42], women are affected by work and life balance because some women are forced to quit their work to care for their children, which delays and even obstructs their advancement into higher ranks. According to [43], women who are in management positions also experience pressure resulting from working out their gender expected roles and their leadership status. According to the theories in use, while personal, behavioural, and environmental factors are viewed as significant, the relative influence of each of them is believed to depend on situational features. For instance, individuals who are situated in an environment where gender roles are rigidly enforced may be more influenced by personal or family issues. From the literature discussed, it can be concluded that women differ from men based on life experiences and different personal qualities which leads to their handling of organizational issues and leadership differently than the norm. This study will add to the already existing literature on work and family life balance and women's representation at Makerere University. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

*H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between work-life balance and women's representation*

### **2.5 Gender Role Beliefs**

Gender role beliefs are defined as a set of beliefs and opinions about males and females and the purported qualities of masculinity and femininity [44]. Gender roles provide guidelines for normative behaviours that are typical, ought to be, and thus “likely effective” for each sex within a certain social context [45]. The fundamental issue here is how universities handle inequalities among their male and female staff. In universities with low power distance, staffs strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power. According to [46], the literature suggests that gender roles were traditionally divided into strictly feminine and masculine roles. With time these traditional roles started shifting towards more liberal roles for both women and men. Currently, the roles have been diversified today into many different acceptable male or female gender roles. However, gender stereotyping is still common in most organizations [47]. This particularly affects women’s advancement in professional careers like management, which is traditionally and historically believed a man’s domain as “Think manager Think male” is considered a global phenomenon [48]. Therefore, it is very important to determine the role and impact of sex-role stereotypes on the career advancement of women in the management profession or managerial positions. The most surprising fact is that women know about their own stereotypical, traditional role behaviour but do little to change the situation and remain passive victims [49]. Given progressing literature on gender role beliefs and women representation, the literature has been silent on women’s representation but loud on role beliefs hence the need to investigate the gender role beliefs and women’s representation in Makerere University. Therefore, the findings in this study will add to the existing literature on the relationship between gender role beliefs and women’s representation. It can therefore be hypothesized that:

*H2: Gender role beliefs are positively and significantly related to women’s representation.*

## **2.6 Gender participation**

Gender participation is the full involvement of both men and women in policymaking, economic and sectoral analysis, and project design and management [50]. Despite the aims of participatory development to involve people in development that affects them directly, surprisingly little attention is paid to understanding who wants to “participate”, what makes their participation possible, and what’s in it for them [50]. Often, participatory processes have left women on the side-lines, along with the gender issues that shape their lives. Combining gender awareness and participatory approaches can be used to unlock men’s and women’s voices for gender redistributive change and gender-sensitive programmes and policy development. [51] argued that the general gender attitudes are unstable, disorganized, inconsistent, and hence non-ideological. [52] refers to gender differences in voting preferences and levels of political participation.

The first World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education published by [53] provides evidence that there is a significant increase in the number of women-involvement in higher education and women’s participation in politics and corporate organization is getting better. [54] showed that the political empowerment of women in Pakistan has shown a tremendous increase in women’s representation through minimal challenges for women in health, education and economic participation. Empirically, according to [55]; within politics, women can play a variety of roles: as voters, political party members, candidates and officeholders, and members of civil society. Although the exception, laws restricting women’s rights to vote and to stand for election persist in a handful of Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Women generally have the right to join a political party seek administrative positions in government agencies and authorities and seek elected office in their own right. According to [56], women’s representation in power positions is considered significant for different reasons; for social justice that advocates institutions to be just and treat people with equality; for equity and parity that focus on the gender pay and opportunity gap of leadership that can be facilitated by diverse practices. Given the literature above, there are gender policies and advocates, especially for women’s representation in leadership at different levels such as national levels, local and organizational. However, the literature does not provide in-depth literature on women’s representation in universities in

Uganda especially Makerere University which is thought to have many gender disparities hence the need to carry out this study. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

*H3: Gender participation is positively and significantly related to women's representation.*

## 2.7 Model

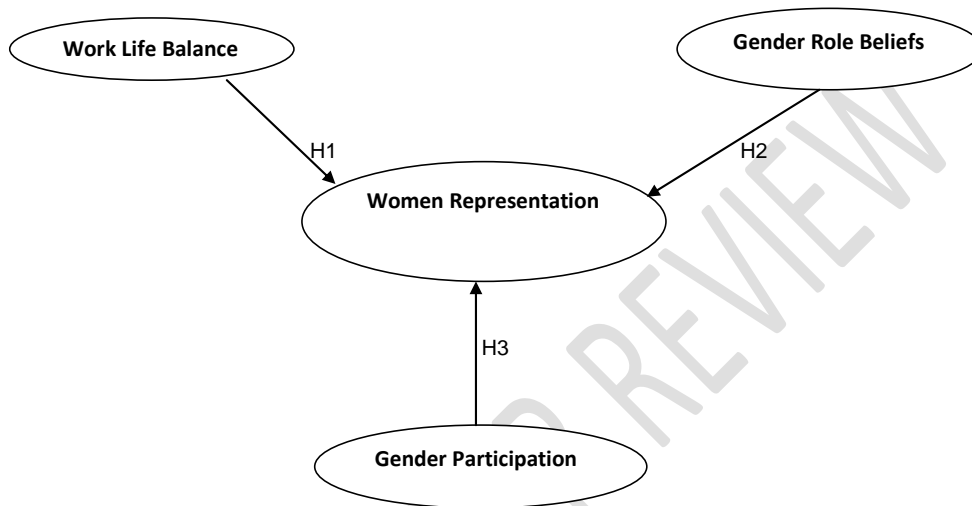


Fig 1. Model showing women's representation

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Design, population and sample

The study used a cross-sectional research design. The study population constituted 1338 academic and administrative staff from Makerere University in its 10 university colleges. The study focused on academic staff (assistant lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of departments, Faculty Deans, Associate Professors and Professors) and administrative staff (administrative assistants, administrators and senior administrative staff). The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan [57] and a sample size of 297 staff were produced (Appendix I). We selected Academic and Administrative staff as a unit of enquiry. Respondents are picked based on their position and expertise population. 280 questionnaires were collected back offering a response rate of 94.2%.

### 3.2 Questionnaire and variable measurement

To attain self-reported information, a Likert scale questionnaire is designed to measure the views or attitudes of respondents. The questionnaire design is based on our review of relevant literature regarding work-life balance, gender role beliefs, gender participation and women's representation in leadership positions. Women representation (equity, gender mainstreaming) which is the dependent variable was measured using the respondents' mean rank of 15 items included in the questionnaire as adopted with modifications from [20] and anchored on a five-point Likert scale.

Work-life balance with its dimensions of gender role attitudes and social roles [20] was measured using the respondents' mean rank of the fourteen items of information included in the questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). Gender role beliefs are measured using respect for the power and cultural beliefs [7] and [18]. Thus, respondents are asked to indicate their

perception of improving gender role beliefs using twelve items which are anchored on a five-point Likert scale with 1 =strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Gender participation is measured by the level of involvement and gender gap [11] and [20] We generate fourteen items which are anchored on a six-point Likert scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree

### **3.3 Tests of factorability, validity, reliability and assumptions of parametrical data**

We conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) based on principal components and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  to examine the validity and reliability of the scales as measures of work-life balance, gender role beliefs, gender participation and women representation in leadership positions in public universities. EFA was further performed to reduce data to a smaller size and to identify patterns in data. To determine convergent validity, the principal components were extracted by running principal component analysis using the varimax rotation method, and factor loadings below 0.5 coefficients were suppressed to avoid extracting factors with weak loadings. Before performing the principal component analysis for scales, we assessed the suitability of the data for factor analysis based on sample size adequacy, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett tests. The results show the KMO values: work-life balance =0.735, gender role beliefs=0.612, gender participation=0.677 and women representation=0.695. Bartlett's test of sphericity in all scales reached statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ) (the significant value was 0.00 for each scale). Overall, the results support the factorability of the correlation matrices because our correlation matrices are significantly different from the identity matrices in which the variables would not correlate with each other. The determinants for all the three matrices were greater than 0.01, implying that there was no multicollinearity or singularity between variables.

We determined the content validity index (CVI) by dividing measures assessed as useable by total measures per variable. The CVI for each variable was above 0.7 (work-life balance=0.880, gender role beliefs=0.920, gender participation=0.900 and women representation=0.800). Thus, the instrument achieved content validity.

The data collected was measured to reveal internal consistency in the responses. The internal consistency for the measurement was measured by Cronbach's Alpha [58]. The standardized coefficient for all the scales was found to be 0.70 and above (work-life balance=0.709, gender role beliefs=0.810, gender participation=0.871 and women representation=0.784.

Before conducting further analyses to test our hypotheses we checked our data for normality to determine the applicability of parametric tests. This was done by using skewness and kurtosis statistics. The skewness scores for our variables were close to 0, and kurtosis results ranged between -2 and +2; also, standard errors for each of the variables were not very different from their respective Skewness and kurtosis scores, and therefore, the normality assumption was not violated. We tested for homogeneity of variance using Levene's test [59]. The test results are non-significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) for all the variables, and thus homogeneity of variance is not violated.

## **4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics were run to describe the characteristics of a population. Table I shows the mean scores of the study variables. Work-Life Balance had the highest mean score of 3.816 with a standard deviation of 0.48146. Gender role beliefs had the lowest mean score of 3.5156 with a standard deviation of 0.46194. Since the standard deviations relative to mean values are small; the calculated means highly represent the observed data. The data also indicate that independent variables are rated high toward women's representation in public universities. This means that appropriate work-life balance, gender role beliefs, and gender participation are critical for improving women's representation.

**Table I. Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work life balance	2.20	4.70	3.8160	.48146
Gender role beliefs	2.25	4.75	3.5156	.56721
Gender participation	2.09	4.82	3.5960	.56930
Women representation	2.46	4.69	3.6530	.46194

Sources: Primary data

#### 4.2 Correlation analysis results

Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to establish the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The correlation results in table II show that there is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and women's representation ( $r=.536^{**}$ ,  $P<.01$ ). This suggests that when there is a balance in women's roles and responsibilities at home and work such as; attending to the family when it is family time and attending to work when it's time for work, it signifies that there is work-life balance. This implies that a significant increase (equal treatment, equal representation) in work-life balance positively correlates with a significant increase in women's representation. The results further indicate that attributes of work-life balance are significant with women's representation and its attributes. This implies that a significant level of association in gender role attitude (assigning male duties to women) and social role positively correlates with a significant level of association inequity and gender mainstreaming.

The correlation results in table II also show that there is a significant and positive relationship between gender role beliefs and women's representation ( $r=.440^{**}$ ,  $P<.01$ ). This suggests that when there is a positive belief about women's ability to handle men's roles such as; making complex decisions; holding topmost leadership positions, trust, ability and competence, it signifies that there is a positive gender role belief. Such role beliefs correlate positively with a significant level of association in women's representation. The results further indicate that attributes of gender role beliefs (respect for the power and cultural beliefs) bring about an improvement in women's representation and its attributes (equity and gender mainstreaming). This means that a significant level of association in respect for the power and cultural beliefs positively correlates with women's representation.

Also results in table II indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between gender participation and women's representation ( $r=.663^{**}$ ,  $P<.01$ ). This suggests that when there is more involvement of females in activities of the university such as taking part in decision making during meetings; engaging in top leadership activities for all, research and publication, and attending conferences and seminars, it raises their credentials and vibrancy in policymaking; it's associated with women participation. This further implies that a significant level of association in gender participation positively correlates with a significant level of association in women's representation.

**Table II: Correlations results**

Variables	1	2	3	4
Work Life Balance (1)	1			
Gender Role Beliefs (2)	.446 <sup>**</sup>	1		
Gender Participation (3)	.568 <sup>**</sup>	.386 <sup>**</sup>	1	
Women Representation (4)	.536 <sup>**</sup>	.440 <sup>**</sup>	.663 <sup>**</sup>	1

Notes: n = 280. \*, \*\*indicate that correlation is significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively (one-tailed)

Source: Primary Data

### 4.3 Multiple regression analysis results

The regression model was used to determine the extent to which work-life balance, gender role beliefs, and gender participation predict women's representation in leadership positions in public universities in Uganda, the case of Makerere University. The results are presented in Table III. The results in Table III indicate that work-life balance, gender role beliefs, and gender participation are significant predictors of women's representation. This implies that an increase in work-life balance, gender role beliefs, and gender participation **affects** women's representation by an increase. The results indicate that the three predictor variables (work-life balance, gender role beliefs, and gender participation) predict 49.4% of the women's representation (Adjusted R Square = .494). However, of the three predictor variables, gender participation is a stronger predictor with a beta value of 0.497 which implies that one unit increase in gender participation **increases** women's representation by 0.497, followed by work-life balance and lastly gender role beliefs (Beta = .179; .168 respectively). This implies one unit increase in work-life balance and gender role beliefs increase women's representation by 0.179 and 0.168 respectively.

**Table III: Regression results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIP
(Constant)	1.078	.159		6.770	.000		
Work Life Balance	.160	.048	.179	3.304	.001	.720	1.388
Gender role Beliefs	.139	.040	.168	3.483	.001	.919	1.088
Gender Participation	.419	.048	.497	9.444	.000	.695	1.439

R=0.707, R square, 0.499, Adjusted R Square=0.494, R Square Change=0.499, F Change=91.780

Dependent Variable: Women Representation

### 4.4 Discussion

The correlation results in table II show that there is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and women's representation. This means that when female employees balance their limited time between work and family, they are more comfortable and in a better position to get greater representation in leadership roles. Additionally, the results show that women are more productive when they have a suitable balance between their work and other aspects of life. It is important that female and male employees at the university accord each other support and that they cooperate in all work situations. **This** builds a greater relationship among workers and ultimately increases work productivity. Accordingly, the institution has a role to play in putting in place measures that favour work-life balance for female employees as a way of helping them to increase their productivity levels.

The findings are supported by earlier studies by [38] who assert that female managers are frequently faced with conflicting roles that require their time and physical energies, either from their families or from their occupational roles. Such conflict affects their ability to perform both roles effectively. Studies show that, compared to their male counterparts, women in management still carry the major burden of home and family responsibilities regardless of their positions in the organizations as compared to their male counterparts, [39], [40], [41]. According to [42], women are affected by work-life balance because some women are forced to quit their work to care for their children, which delays and even hinders their advancement into higher ranks.

The findings further support those of [43] who argue that women who are in leadership and management positions also experience pressure resulting from working out their gender-expected roles and their leadership status. The correlation results in **Table II** show that there is a significant positive relationship between gender role beliefs and women's representation. This means that when

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Organizations recognize and accept that women can perform the exact roles men perform, it is bound to increase their participation and inclusion in leadership roles of the Organization. Organizations have to ensure that female and male staffs in leadership positions are accorded equal respect and that the rules governing universities should bear equality for both genders; this encourages female employees to take on leadership in the universities and to do their work more efficiently. There should be consistency in the development of both female staff competencies for example in terms of going for further studies. The study results suggest that fair terms in areas of staff development and rewards are important in encouraging women's involvement in leadership roles as well as productivity improvement.

These findings are supported by [46] who assert that society imposes expectations on the behaviour of the members of society, and specifically on the gender roles of individuals, resulting in prescriptions regarding gender roles. These sex roles have a profound impact on the relations between men and women in our society in all spheres of life- in the family, educational system, and workplace, and in both management and non-management ranks within a workplace. [60] adds that it has also been observed that it is difficult for women to establish authority and credibility with their subordinates, especially the organizational line managers who view the executive positions in the organization to be headed by men only. This difference in perception leads to a continual struggle by female leaders to deal with the disparity between what people expect of leaders and what is expected of them because of characteristics like sex. When a woman tries strategies of gender reversal and adopts the so-called male characteristics, she might find that she faces another set of problems of alienation and hostility as becoming 'one of the boys' is harder than it looks.

In support, [49] added that females also thought that they seemed to hinder their advancement. Many behave according to stereotypical expectations, underestimate their positions, and support traditional models. They play the passive role and use a special vocabulary reflecting their weak self-confidence. Even female top managers often have low self-confidence and fear of stressing their own opinions. The most surprising fact is that women know about their own stereotypical, traditional role behaviour but do little to change the situation and remain, passive victims,

The correlation results indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between gender participation and women's representation. This means that when women are allowed to fully participate in the activities of the Organization such as taking part in decision making, research and publication, and taking part in top leadership activities, it is likely to influence the perfect utilization of their diverse expertise and eventually result in greater organizational performance. Embracing gender participation expands the employee's voice and helps to generate positive spillover that enhances job satisfaction, increasing productivity and civic participation among the different employees. Organizations should see to it that their male and female employees in leadership positions have equal rights and benefits to encourage them to work efficiently. The gender policy throughout the university should be satisfactory for all employees so that they are comfortable in offering their services to the university.

The findings in this study are supported by the first World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education published by [53] which provides evidence that there is a significant increase in the number of women enrolment and that the [54] showed that political empowerment of women in Pakistan showed a tremendous increase of women representation though with minimal challenges of women in health, education and economic participation.

Given that the study adds more literature on gender participation and women's representation, it adds to the already empirical evidence by [55]; that is to say within organizational politics women can play a variety of roles: as voters, political party members, candidates and officeholders, and members of civil society and now also into academic institutions like Makerere University. World Bank adds that in emerging democracies, women have acquired voting rights only in the past 50 years, whereas in more established democracies, women have had the legal franchise for almost 100 years and now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where this study belongs. [55] further shows that women generally have the right to join a political party seek administrative positions in government agencies and authorities and seek elected office in their own right.

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The objective of the research was to **establish** the relationship between work-life balance, gender role beliefs and gender participation and women's representation in leadership. Therefore, to improve work-life balance in public universities, women need to be supported in their aspiration for leadership positions, and favourable policies should be formulated and implemented to help them strike a balance between their work and family life. **To promote positive gender role beliefs** women should be assigned the perceived men duties, **they** should be given challenging roles just as men and cultural stereotypes should be dealt away with. This will increase the number of women represented in the leadership of public universities. To increase gender participation in public universities, policies should be formulated that reduce the ever-widening gender gap. Power distance in decision making should be reduced and women's political attitude should be improved by allowing women to attain an equal chance of participation in University activities. **Following** the findings of the study, the **following** recommendations have been put forward to harness women's representation in leadership positions in public universities. To increase Gender participation, Public universities should enact and implement policies that give equal opportunity and support to all genders when it comes to participation in university activities. Such policies may include having a fair distribution of work among male and female employees in the university. Women should be supported to take on leadership roles and attain higher academic qualifications like their male counterparts. This will help women realize a better work-life balance and support them to perform better in their roles. To promote positive gender role beliefs, Institutions of higher learning and policymakers should emphasize in their policy structures that the female gender is as competent as the male gender. Policies and their implementation should be geared toward building confidence in women about their abilities and encouraging support for their efforts in leadership roles. This can be done through affirmative action and by creating women's support centres. Such initiatives will encourage and increase women's participation in leadership roles. With such initiatives, women will wholly take part in Organizational leadership roles, will create job satisfaction and for a larger part contribute to overall organizational performance.

The study was only subjected to Makerere University yet there **a** more than six public universities in Uganda. Given the fact that the study was cross-sectional; a longitudinal study may be carried out to study the behavior of variables for a long period. Since the study only used questionnaires with closed-ended questions, there is a need to include open-ended questions and an interview guide to allow respondents to give more views regarding the study variables. Items used for each variable construct need to be increased to provide justifiable results from a well-structured instrument. The same study needs to be carried out in all tertiary institutions in Uganda to contribute extensively.

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Comment [A7]: determine

Comment [A8]: insert comma (,) after beliefs

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