

# Moderating Effects of Gender Policy on the Relationship between Good Governance in UWEP and Women Economic Empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale Districts

Moses Ntirandekura, Dr. Aloysius Tumukunde, Assoc. Prof. John Anyabe Adams

PhD Candidate and Assistant Lecturer, Kampala International University<sup>1</sup>, Senior Lecturer, Kampala International University<sup>2</sup>, Senior Lecturer, Kampala International University<sup>3</sup>.

**Abstract:** *The study aimed at establishing the moderating effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts of South Western Uganda. A sample size of 255 was used to provide quantitative data. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analyses with the help of Statistical Package for Social Scientists as well as thematic analysis. The study revealed that gender policy has significant positive moderating effects on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment. The study concluded that gender policy had significant positive moderating effects on the relationship between good governance and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts of Southwestern Uganda. The study recommends that the district management in collaboration with local authorities and community leaders should implement targeted awareness campaigns to bridge the information gaps regarding existing gender policy (Uganda Gender Policy 2007).*

**Keywords:** Moderation, Gender Policy, Uganda Gender Policy 2007, Women Economic Empowerment, Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP)

## Introduction

Globally, gender policies have a long history intertwined with the global women's movement, which gained momentum in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first major breakthrough came with the suffrage movements in the early 20th century, which won women the right to vote in many Western nations. Post-World War II, international organizations like the United Nations began to take a more active role in promoting gender equality. The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was a significant milestone, mandating gender equality in legal, political, and economic spheres. Over time, the conversation around gender policies has expanded beyond legal rights to include economic empowerment, as evidenced by the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which emphasized women's economic rights and access to resources (United Nations, 1995).

In Africa, gender policies have evolved significantly, particularly post-independence. Many African nations began to address gender inequalities formally through their constitutions and development plans in the 1960s and 1970s. The African Union's Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the Maputo Protocol, adopted in 2003, was a watershed moment in the continent's legal framework, pushing for women's rights in all aspects of life, including economic empowerment. However, traditional societal norms, poverty, and limited access to education have hindered progress in many areas, although strides have been made in addressing these challenges in recent decades (African Union, 2003).

In East Africa, countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have implemented policies focused on gender equality and

women's economic empowerment. These policies align with broader African Union frameworks, with national governments developing action plans to enhance women's roles in economic development. For instance, Uganda's National Gender Policy (1997, revised in 2007) was formulated to create an enabling environment for women to participate in the economy. Kenya's Vision 2030 and Tanzania's Development Vision 2025 both include objectives targeting gender equality as critical for economic growth (Republic of Uganda, 2007).

In Uganda, gender policies and women's economic empowerment have been central to development agendas, particularly with the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) introduced in 2015. UWEP aims to increase women's access to financial resources, support their entrepreneurial ventures, and create sustainable economic opportunities. Additionally, Uganda's constitution, adopted in 1995, includes strong provisions for gender equality, establishing legal frameworks that protect women's rights and promote their economic empowerment. Despite these efforts, women in rural areas still face barriers such as limited access to finance, education, and decision-making power (Republic of Uganda, 2015).

In Kisoro and Kabale districts, the implementation of national gender policies has focused on addressing local challenges faced by women. Like in many rural areas of Uganda, women in these districts often rely on agriculture as their primary economic activity. National initiatives such as UWEP have been extended to these districts, providing women with microfinance opportunities to boost their economic prospects. However, traditional patriarchal norms and limited infrastructure in these regions continue to pose challenges. Efforts are being made by

local governments and NGOs to promote women's empowerment through training, access to financial services, and inclusion in leadership roles (UWEP, 2019).

### Statement of the Problem

The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) was launched with the goal of promoting women economic empowerment through financial inclusion and entrepreneurship. Central to its success is the role of good governance, which involves transparency, accountability, participation and equitability in the management of resources. Ideally, gender policies should enhance good governance by ensuring that women have equal access to opportunities, decision-making processes, and benefits from UWEP. In turn, this would lead to significant economic empowerment for women in Kisoro and Kabale districts, thereby reducing poverty and gender disparities (Republic of Uganda, 2015). However, the real situation on the ground reveals significant challenges. While the implementation of gender policies in Uganda has created a more favorable environment for women, patriarchal norms, limited education, and unequal access to resources continue to hinder the full realization of these policies' potential. In Kisoro and Kabale districts, women still face challenges in accessing financial services, decision-making roles, and entrepreneurial opportunities. This has led to a gap between policy intentions and actual outcomes, particularly in how good governance in UWEP is translating into tangible economic empowerment for women (UWEP, 2019). The problem is that despite the existence of gender policies and efforts through UWEP, many women in Kisoro and Kabale remain economically marginalized. Governance challenges, such as inadequate transparency and participation of women in leadership, limit the effectiveness of these policies. Additionally, gender-based disparities in accessing resources and information are pervasive, preventing women from fully benefiting from UWEP initiatives. This issue is further compounded by cultural norms that restrict women economic roles and decision-making authority (Kabonesa & Kindi, 2019). Efforts have been made at the national and district levels to strengthen gender policies and governance structures. These include the creation of gender-sensitive financial services, entrepreneurship training programs, and initiatives to increase women's participation in local governance. However, what remains unsolved is the persistent gap between policy and practice (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2023). Based on this background, this study was conducted to examine the moderating effect of gender policy on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts.

### Objective of the Study

To establish the moderating effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts of South Western Uganda.

### Hypothesis

Gender policy does not have significant positive moderating effects on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts of South Western Uganda.

### Literature Review

#### Effects of gender policies on the relationship between good governance on women economic empowerment

Gender policies can have an important moderating effect on the relationship between good governance of programs and women's economic empowerment. Specifically, strong gender policies that promote women's equal access to opportunities, participation in decision-making, and fair distribution of benefits can help to ensure good governance frameworks like that of Uganda's Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) better translate into tangible economic gains for women (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2023). However, the continued existence of socio-cultural barriers and lack of implementation of certain policy measures weakens this relationship. For gender policies to maximize their moderating potential, challenges around women's participation, access to resources, and cultural norms must be more fully addressed through progressive reforms, capacity building initiatives, and gender-responsive programming (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2023). With comprehensive efforts to strengthen both gender policies and governance, the gap between policy objectives and real empowerment outcomes for women can be narrowed.

A study by Mathenge, Muhula and Onsomu (2021) explored the role of women's participation in implementing gender policies and its relationship to empowerment in Kenya. The researchers conducted focus group discussions with 80 women and the findings revealed that active involvement in policy implementation, such as organizing workshops and providing feedback to officials empowered them to understand political processes and assert their priorities more confidently. Nonetheless, the above studies done in Kenya relied on qualitative and secondary data without quantitative data which compelled the researcher to carry out this study to gather both qualitative and quantitative data to fill the gap.

A study by Nalule, Achola and Bakunda (2021) examined women's satisfaction with gender regulatory policies and their perceptions of empowerment in Uganda. The researchers assessed awareness of legal frameworks protecting women, such as land ownership laws and self-reported levels of satisfaction. The findings of the study revealed that women living in areas with more active civil society organizations promoting women's rights expressed higher satisfaction with policies and also reported feeling more empowered economically and politically compared to those in regions with fewer advocacy groups.

Additionally, Atuyambe, Kibira, Musinguzi, Ssali, and Bukenya (2019) assessed the effect of Uganda Gender Policy 2007 on

women's economic empowerment in central Uganda. The study found that while the policies aimed to promote women's access to resources and participation in economic activities, in reality many rural women still faced social, economic and cultural barriers among other factors that limited their ability to benefit from interventions. However, the study by Nalule, et al., (2021) and Atyambe et al., (2019) ignored other factors like laxity in enforcement, violation and limited awareness/sensitization that limit full achievement of women economic empowerment and gender equality goals which formed the basis for this study.

Smith and Johnson (2018) state that while good governance positively influences women economic empowerment, the presence of gender policies does not significantly alter this relationship and concluded that gender policy does not significantly moderate the relationship between good governance and women economic empowerment and suggested that gender policies alone may not enhance the impact of good governance on women economic outcomes.

A study by Nambale and Muwanga (2022) critically examined the effectiveness of gender policies in Uganda, including those aimed at women's economic empowerment, and found that these policies have not fully addressed the challenges faced by women. Despite the presence of comprehensive gender policies, the research identified persistent gaps in implementation, particularly in reaching the most marginalized women. The study highlighted that while policies are well-designed on paper, they often fall short in practice due to inadequate resources, lack of enforcement, and persistent socio-cultural barriers. As a result, these policies have had limited success in overcoming the systemic challenges that inhibit women's full economic participation and empowerment.

Tumusiime and Kasozi (2017) state that existing gender policies in Uganda contribute to women empowerment, highlighting that Uganda's gender policy framework, including initiatives like the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), has played a crucial role in enhancing women economic opportunities. The study demonstrates that these policies provide essential support structures, such as access to financial resources, training, and networking opportunities, which collectively empower women to overcome traditional barriers and succeed in entrepreneurial ventures. The authors affirm that the alignment of gender policies with practical support mechanisms has been effective in advancing women's economic status and fostering greater gender equality.

A study by Muhanguzi and Ninsiima (2017) supports the notion that protecting women against gender-based violence (GBV) is crucial for their empowerment and overall well-being. The research underscores the importance of implementing robust legal frameworks and support systems to combat GBV in Uganda. The authors found that gender policies such as the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Bill, along with grassroots initiatives and advocacy programs, have been

instrumental in raising awareness and providing protection for women.

Abem, Okello and Were (2020) examined the moderating role of Uganda Gender Policy 2007 in strengthening the impact of good governance on women economic empowerment through entrepreneurship programs in Northern Uganda and the findings found that the policy helped address some of the deep-rooted socio-cultural barriers that had previously prevented women from participating meaningfully in decision making related to entrepreneurship initiatives and benefiting equally from the opportunities provided.

Similarly, Twinomugisha and Clarke (2022) performed a descriptive analysis of policy documents and project reports, noting that the overarching goals set within Uganda's National Gender Policy of mainstreaming gender equality and empowering women across all sectors of development appeared well aligned with and conducive for fully empowering women in business opportunities, particularly when coupled with accountability measures and inclusive practices implemented as part of good governance of entrepreneurship programs.

However, the two previous studies did not identify some challenges in implementation of the policy such as limited monitoring and inadequate resourcing at local levels that seemed to be hampering the National Gender Policy from having its full moderating effect on facilitating economic empowerment objectives. Therefore, this research was done to identify how the policy could better facilitate women economic empowerment outcomes through complementing on good governance in Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme in Kisoro and Kabale district.

A study by Kiggundu and Tumwine (2021) on evaluation of effectiveness and implementation of gender policies in Uganda found widespread dissatisfaction with Uganda gender policy among women beneficiaries. The research revealed that many women felt the policy failed to address their real needs and challenges adequately. Key issues included the lack of effective implementation, insufficient support mechanisms and persistent socio-cultural barriers that continued to limit women's economic opportunities and empowerment. The study underscored the gap between policy intentions and actual outcomes, highlighting that despite the presence of gender policies, many women remained disempowered and dissatisfied with the level of support and change facilitated by these policies.

A study by Ayo and Namata (2019) indicates that women in Uganda are increasingly aware of their rights because of various awareness campaigns and educational programs. The research focused on urban areas where non-governmental organizations and government initiatives have been active in disseminating information about women's rights and gender equality. The findings revealed that women who participated in these programs showed a high level of awareness about their legal

rights, including the right to own property, access education and participate in political and economic activities.

However, a study by Mutesi and Mugisha (2019) states that a significant number of women, particularly in rural areas, remain unaware of their rights due to the differences in information access between urban and rural women, attributing the lack of awareness to limited educational opportunities and inadequate outreach by organizations promoting women's rights. Many rural women were found to be unaware of their legal rights and the protections available to them under the law. This lack of awareness perpetuates cycles of discrimination and hinders efforts to improve their socio-economic status, as these women are less likely to challenge violations of their rights or seek support from relevant institutions.

### Methods

The researcher used pragmatism philosophy which states that the world can be interpreted in various ways and a comprehensive understanding cannot be attained from any single viewpoint as multiple realities may exist (Kumar, 2011). Pragmatism philosophy acted as the cornerstone for this research because allowed integration of mixed research methods to give a thorough grasp of the research issue. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey research design since the design enables capturing a snapshot of the population at a specific moment, facilitating the identification of trends and patterns. The total target population for this study was 2397. The sample size for this study was 343 respondents chosen from Kisoro and Kabale Districts using the formula of Slovin (1960) and both simple random and purposive sampling were used to select respondents. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data and descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and moderated regression were used to analyse the data.

### Findings

The researcher administered 285 questionnaires and only 255 were returned full filled by the respondents which indicated 89.5% response rate and 37 key informants responded to interviews.

### **Moderating effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts of South Western Uganda**

The fifth objective determined the moderating effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts of South Western Uganda. The presentation of the findings began with descriptive analysis on the items of gender policy followed by interview responses.

### **Description on gender policy in Kisoro and Kabale districts**

The researcher investigated the extent to which respondents agreed and disagreed with the statements about gender policy and the findings were presented in Table 4.1.



**Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of gender policy in Kisoro and Kabale districts**

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std
There is existing gender policy	72(28.2%)	109(42.7%)	0(0.0%)	41(16.2%)	33(12.9%)	3.57	1.380
The gender policy is effective	69(27.1%)	80(31.4%)	0(0.0%)	60(23.5%)	46(18.0%)	3.26	1.515
I am satisfied with the existing gender policy	72(28.2%)	83(32.6%)	0(0.0%)	55(21.6%)	45(17.6%)	3.32	1.511
I take part in implementing gender policy	63(24.7%)	77(30.2%)	0(0.0%)	68(26.7%)	47(18.4%)	3.16	1.509
I am aware of my rights as women	69(27.1%)	102(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	50(19.6%)	34(13.3%)	3.48	1.411
I am treated equally like men in the community	49(19.2%)	56(22.0%)	0(0.0%)	87(34.1%)	63(24.7%)	2.77	1.508
I am protected from gender based violence	51(20.0%)	60(23.5%)	0(0.0%)	80(31.4%)	64(25.1%)	2.82	1.526
I know laws that prevent gender discrimination	52(20.4%)	66(25.9%)	0(0.0%)	79(31.0%)	58(22.7%)	2.90	1.514
I feel am empowered by Uganda Gender Policy	72(28.2%)	83(32.6%)	0(0.0%)	55(21.6%)	45(17.6%)	3.32	1.511
My district authorities sensitize women about gender policy that promote women economic empowerment	51(20.0%)	62(24.3%)	0(0.0%)	79(31.0%)	63(24.7%)	2.84	1.525
Uganda Gender policy is properly enforced in my district	46(18.0%)	68(26.7%)	0(0.0%)	79(31.0%)	62(24.3%)	2.83	1.500

**Source: Primary data, 2024**

From Table 4.1, the study findings on the statement that; "There is existing Uganda Gender Policy" revealed that 72(28.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 109(42.7%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 41(16.2%) disagreed and 33(12.9%) strongly disagreed indicating a mean of 3.57 and standard deviation of 1.380. the study findings imply that most respondents were in agreement that there is existing gender policy but there was significant variations as indicated by the higher standard deviation of 1.380.

From Table 4.1, the study findings on the item that "the gender is effective" revealed that 69(27.1%) of respondents strongly agreed, 80(31.4%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 60(23.5%) disagreed and 46(18.0%) strongly disagreed, resulting in a mean score of 3.26 and a standard deviation of 1.515. These results suggest high agreement on the effectiveness of the policy in the selected districts but standard deviation reflected high variation in responses, meaning that there are still efforts needed to improve the effectiveness of the gender policy.

The study results in Table 4.1 indicated that 72(28.2%) of respondents strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the existing gender policy, 83(32.6%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 55(21.6%) disagreed and 45(17.6%) strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.32 and a standard deviation of 1.511. The standard deviation of 1.511 reflects a wide dispersion of opinions, indicating that while some are quite satisfied, others are strongly dissatisfied. This suggests that the policy implementation should address the concerns of the dissatisfied respondents to achieve women economic empowerment.

Study findings in Table 4.1 on the statement "I take part in implementing gender policy" showed that 63(24.7%) of respondents strongly agreed, 77(30.2%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 68(26.7%) disagreed and 47(18.4%) strongly disagreed (Mean= 3.16 and Std=1.509. The mean score suggests a moderate level of participation. The standard deviation of 1.509 indicates a wide range of responses, reflecting both strong involvement and strong disengagement among respondents.

Concerning the item that "I am aware of my rights as women", study results in Table 4.18 revealed that 69(27.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 102(40.0%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 50(19.6%) disagreed and 34(13.3%) strongly disagreed. These study findings had a mean score value of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 1.411. These results imply that while a majority of respondents are aware of their rights, there remains a substantial portion who were not, highlighting the need for continued education and awareness-raising efforts.

From Table 4.1, the study findings on the statement "I am treated equally like men in the community" revealed that 49(19.2%) of respondents strongly agreed, 56(22.0%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 87(34.1%) disagreed and 63(24.7%) strongly disagreed, resulting in a mean score of 2.77 and a standard deviation of 1.508. The lower mean score of 2.77 underscores the shows that there was still inequality among communities in Kabale and Kisoro districts and standard deviation of 1.508 indicates a wide range of responses, reflecting varying experiences. These results imply that gender inequality is a prominent issue in the community, necessitating targeted interventions to promote equal treatment.

Table 4.1 showed the study findings on the statement that "there is less gender based violence in our communities" and the findings indicated that 51(20.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed 60(23.5%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 80(31.4%) of respondents disagreed and 64(25.1%) strongly disagreed (Mean= 2.82 and Std=1.526). The mean score of 2.82 highlights an overall perception that gender-based violence was still a significant problem and the implication is that there is an urgent need for more effective measures to combat gender-based violence and to create safer communities.

From Table 4.1, the study findings on the item that "I know laws that prevent gender discrimination" indicated that 52(20.4%) of respondents strongly agreed, 66(25.9%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 79(31.0%) disagreed and 58(22.7%) strongly disagreed, resulting in a mean score of 2.90 and a standard deviation of 1.514. Since most of the respondents disagreed, it implies a need for increased education and outreach efforts to ensure more people are informed about the laws that prevent gender discrimination.

Table 4.1 indicated that study findings regarding the statement "I feel am empowered by Uganda Gender Policy" was strongly agreed by 72(28.2%) of the respondents, 83(32.6%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 55(21.6%) disagreed and 45(17.6%) strongly disagreed, with a mean response of 3.32 and standard deviation of 1.511. These results imply that while the Uganda Gender Policy is empowering for many, there is still a considerable group that feels un empowered, pointing to a need for more inclusive and effective policy implementation.

The study findings in Table 4.1 on the statement "My district authorities sensitize women about the policies that promote women economic empowerment" indicated that 51(20.0%) of respondents strongly agreed, 62(24.3%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 79(31.0%) disagreed, and 63(24.7%) strongly disagreed (Mean= 2.84 and Std=1.525). These results imply that there is a need for district authorities to enhance their efforts in educating women about the gender policy to be able to promote economic empowerment.

Study findings in Table 4.1 on the statement "Uganda Gender Policy is properly enforced in my district" showed that, 46(18.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 68(26.7%) agreed, 0(0.0%) were undecided, 79(31.0%) disagreed and 62(24.3%) strongly disagreed (Mean=2.83 and Std= 1.500). The findings indicated that most respondents disagreed that the Uganda National Gender Policy is properly enforced in both district. The findings suggest the need for reevaluating enforcement approaches and mechanisms to ensure compliance.

#### Regression Analysis of the moderating effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts

The researcher used moderated regression analysis using regression process macro to establish the moderating effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts and the results were presented in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 as follows;

**Table 4.2: Moderated regression analysis of effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment**

Model summary												
Model	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p-value					
	.746	.557	.667	105.076	3.000	251.000	.000					
Coeff												
Model		Coeff	Se	T	P	LLCI	ULCI					
Constant		2.683	.939	2.857	.005	4.532	.833					
Good governance		.494	.073	6.759	.000	.350	.638					
Gender policy		.15	.296	.050	.000	.597	.568					
								R2-chnng	F	df1	df2	p

Good governance x Gender policy	.23	.022	1.070	.006	.066	.020	.002	.144	1.000	251.000	.006
------------------------------------	-----	------	-------	------	------	------	------	------	-------	---------	------

In the hypothesis testing for the moderating effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts, the analysis in Table 4.2 revealed a strong relationship with an  $R^2$  value of 0.557, indicating that approximately 55.7% of the variance in women economic empowerment can be explained by good governance and gender policy. The F-statistic of 105.076 with a p-value of 0.000 suggests that the model is statistically significant. Good governance has a significant positive effect on women economic empowerment (p-value=0.000), with a coefficient of 0.494, implying that good governance in UWEP programme enhances women economic empowerment.

The gender policy also had significant positive effects (p-value=0.000) with a coefficient of 0.15 and the interaction term of good governance and gender policy was also significant as indicated by p-value=0.006, showing significant moderating effects, implying that the effects of good governance in UWEP on women economic empowerment is influenced by the presence of gender policy.

The change in  $R^2$  for the interaction term is 0.23, indicating that the moderation effect explains additional variation of 23% in women economic empowerment beyond the main effects. Conclusively, the study findings suggest that while good governance directly contributes to women economic empowerment, the presence of gender policy moderates this relationship. Therefore, effective implementation of gender policy enhances the positive effects of good governance in UWEP on women economic empowerment in the selected districts of southwestern Uganda.

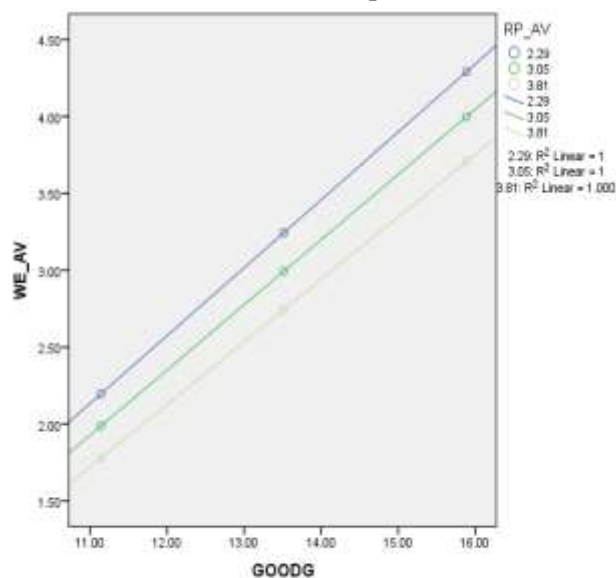
The fitted equation for the model was indicated as;

$$Y = 2.683 + 0.494X_1 + 0.15X_2 + 0.23(X_1W_1)$$

Whereby Y= Women economic empowerment

- $\beta_0$  = is a constant
- $X_1$  = Good governance
- $X_2$  = Gender policy
- $X_1W_1$  = the interaction term (Good governance x Gender policy)

**Figure 4.2: A line graph of moderating effects of gender policy on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment**



#### Key

GOODG: Good governance

RP\_AV: Gender policy

WE\_AV: Women economic empowerment

Figure 4.2 shows the line plot indicating the relationship between good governance in Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts, moderated by gender policy. The three lines represent different levels of the moderating variable gender policy at values of 2.29, 3.05 and 3.81.

The positive slopes of the lines indicated that as good governance increases, women economic empowerment also increases. The different lines show that the relationship between good governance in the programme and women economic empowerment is stronger when gender policy is higher (as shown by the steepest line corresponding to gender policy of 3.81). This suggests that the effect of good governance in UWEP on women economic empowerment is more pronounced when gender policy is at higher levels. The  $R^2$  values of 1 indicate a perfect linear relationship for each level of gender policy.

#### Hypothesis Results

From the study findings in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that gender policy does not have significant positive moderating effects on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women

economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts and accepted the alternative. Hence, the study concluded that gender policy has significant positive moderating effects on the relationship between good governance and women economic empowerment in the selected districts.

A key informant was asked whether gender policy was effectively implemented in his district to promote women economic empowerment and this is what he reported;

*"In my view, the policies have not been as effective as we would have hoped." While the intention was to empower women, the implementation has faced several challenges. Many women in my district are still not aware of the opportunities available to them and accessing financial resources continues to be difficult. We need deeper engagement with the communities and better monitoring of how the policies are implemented in reality. Unless we address these issues, the goals of increased participation of women in business and paid work in order to economically empower women will remain unfulfilled".*  
(KABKI, 15/1/2024, KISKI, 17/1/2024))

A respondent was asked whether he had anything else to tell the interviewer regarding gender regulatory policies and women economic empowerment and this is what he had to say; me apart from what I have asked you above? If Yes what is it?, If no give reasons for your answer.

*"Yes, there is one other important thing I would like to add regarding gender policy and women economic empowerment, "While the gender policy aims to promote equal opportunities, attitudes of people and their active involvement of all people in its implementation play a significant role as well. The respondents further stated that, even if the financial support is available, deep-rooted attitudes about women's roles may limit how much they can benefit. So, in addition to improving implementation of gender policy, we must also work to change mindsets. Public awareness campaigns about the existing gender policy and its effective implementation could be beneficial. Unless social norms are progressively altered, the full potential of these empowerment policies may not be realized"*  
(KABKI, 15/1/2024, KISKI, 17/1/2024)

### **Descriptive statistics on women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale Districts**

This section addressed the various measurements of women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts and the responses to the items were tabulated in Table 4.3.



**Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts**

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std
Our input as a group is considered in setting priorities to be achieved with the support from UWEP programme	78(30.6%)	92(36.1%)	0(0.0%)	48(18.8%)	37(14.5%)	3.49	1.455
Our group's financial needs are easily and adequately addressed by the support from UWEP programme	49(19.2%)	55(21.6%)	0(0.0%)	82(32.1%)	69(27.1%)	2.74	1.526
We have full control over our own financial resources as a group	75(29.4%)	99(38.9%)	0(0.0%)	46(18.0%)	35(13.7%)	3.52	1.425
Our opinions as group members are considered important during decision making process	69(27.1%)	88(34.4%)	0(0.0%)	55(21.6%)	43(16.9%)	3.33	1.488
I feel am socially and economically empowered by UWEP programme	47(18.4%)	59(23.2%)	0(0.0%)	84(32.9%)	65(25.5%)	2.76	1.506
I have easy access to affordable financial services from other institutions due to UWEP programme	46(18.0%)	53(20.8%)	0(0.0%)	86(33.7%)	70(27.5%)	2.68	1.508
My access to finance from UWEP has enabled me to invest in business and created employment	64(25.1%)	83(32.6%)	0(0.0%)	58(22.7%)	50(19.6%)	3.21	1.482
I can afford to buy my own assets and have full control over them	47(18.4%)	59(23.1%)	0(0.0%)	81(31.8%)	28(26.7%)	2.75	1.516
I have gained knowledge and skills on how skills to properly manage my business	60(23.5%)	79(31.0%)	0(0.0%)	52(20.4%)	64(25.1%)	3.07	1.550
My savings have increased as a result of the support from UWEP	63(24.7%)	81(31.8%)	0(0.0%)	62(24.3%)	49(19.2%)	3.19	1.510

**Source: Primary data, 2024**

The study findings in Table 4.3 indicated that 78(30.6%) strongly agreed that their input as a group is considered in setting priorities to be achieved with the support from UWEP programme, 92(36.1%) agreed with the statement, 0(0.0%) undecided, 48(18.8%) disagreed and 37(14.5%) strongly disagreed. The mean response was 3.49 indicating that most of the respondents were in agreement with the statement with a standard deviation of 1.455 indicating a higher variation in responses. The findings imply that while there is generally positive feedback regarding the consideration of participant

input in setting priorities, addressing the concerns of those who feel less involved could enhance overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the UWEP programme's implementation.

The study findings in Table 4.3 on the statement "Our group's financial needs are easily and adequately addressed by the support from UWEP programme" revealed that 49(19.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 55(21.6%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 82(32.1%) disagreed and 69(27.1%) strongly disagreed (Mean=2.74, Std=1.526). The findings imply that

while some participants found UWEP program beneficial for their financial needs, a significant proportion does not, indicating room for programmatic improvements and further investigation into participant satisfaction and program effectiveness.

Study findings in Table 4.3 revealed that 75(29.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 99(38.9%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 46(18.0%) disagreed and 35(13.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement that they have full control over their own financial resources as a group. The mean response of 3.52 indicates a generally positive perception of beneficiaries having full control over financial resources as a group. However, the standard deviation of 1.425 suggests some variation in responses, suggesting that while many participants feel empowered, there are still underlying challenges or barriers that need to be addressed to enhance overall financial autonomy within the group.

Furthermore, study findings in Table 4.3 indicated that 69(27.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 88(34.4%) agreed with the statement that "Our opinions as group members are considered important during decision making process". 0(0.0%) undecided, 55(21.6%) disagreed and 43(16.9%) strongly disagreed (Mean=3.33, Std=1.488).

The findings of the study indicated on Table 4.3 on the statement that "I feel am socially and economically empowered by UWEP programme" revealed that 47(18.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, that they feel socially and economically empowered by the programme, 59(23.2%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 84(32.9%) disagreed and 65(25.5%) strongly disagreed (Mean=2.76, Std=1.506).

Regarding the statement that "I have easy access to affordable financial services from other institutions due to UWEP programme", the findings of the study indicated that 46(18.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 53(20.8%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 86(33.7%) of respondents disagreed and 70(27.5%) strongly disagreed that they have easy access to affordable financial services from other institutions due to the programme (Mean=2.68, Std=1.508). The mean score suggests that most of the respondents disagreed about the programme's effects on increasing women's access to affordable financial services from other financial institutions. The implication of these results is that the UWEP programme has not been entirely successful in improving the access to affordable financial services from other financial institutions for all women in the selected district.

Table 4.3 shows that 64(25.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their access to finance from UWEP programme has enabled them to invest in business and created employment" showed that 83(32.6%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 58(22.7%) disagreed and 50(19.6%) strongly disagreed (Mean=3.21, Std=1.482). The study findings indicated that a significant portion of respondents perceived that access to finance through

the UWEP program positively impacted their ability to invest in businesses and generate employment.

This implication aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty) by promoting economic empowerment and reducing poverty through sustainable livelihoods. Additionally, it supports Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by facilitating productive employment and decent work for all, thus contributing to broader economic development and social stability in the community. These findings underscore the program's potential to drive local economic growth and enhance social well-being through targeted financial interventions.

The study responses concerning the statement "I can afford to buy my own assets and have full control over them" revealed that 47(18.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 59(23.1%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 81(31.8%) disagreed, 28(26.7%) strongly disagreed with the mean score of 2.75 and the standard deviation of 1.516, indicating moderate dissatisfaction on asset control.

Findings of the study in Table 4.3 revealed that 60(23.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 79(31.0%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 52(20.4%) disagreed and 64(25.1%) strongly disagreed that they gained knowledge and skills on how to properly manage their business (Mean=3.07, Std=1.550). The results indicated that a substantial proportion of respondents acknowledge gaining knowledge and skills in business management through the program, with few respondents disagreeing. This suggests a positive impact on their capacity to effectively manage their businesses.

Regarding the statement that "My savings have increased as a result of the support from UWEP", study findings indicated that 63(24.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 81(31.8%) agreed, 0(0.0%) undecided, 62(24.3%) of the respondents disagreed and 49(19.2%) strongly disagreed with the mean score of 3.19 and the standard deviation of 1.510.

The study findings revealed that a significant number of respondents perceive an increase in savings due to support from the UWEP program, with 24.7% strongly agreeing and 31.8% agreeing with this statement. This suggests that the program has effectively contributed to improving financial resilience among beneficiaries, potentially leading to greater economic stability and opportunities for future investment. These findings align closely with efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty) by enhancing economic security and reducing vulnerability among marginalized groups.

### Discussion of Findings

The study findings showed that there was high level of agreement with the statement that there is existing gender as indicated by the mean of 3.57. A study by Tumusiime and Kasozi (2017) supports the finding that there are existing gender policies that significantly contribute to women empowerment.

Their research highlights how Uganda's gender policy framework, including initiatives like the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), has played a crucial role in enhancing women economic opportunities. The study demonstrates that these policies provide essential support structures, such as access to financial resources, training, and networking opportunities, which collectively empower women to overcome traditional barriers and succeed in entrepreneurial ventures.

The findings from the survey indicated that most respondents were in agreement with the statement that gender policy has been effective (Mean=3.26). This implied that there was some effectiveness of gender policy in empowering women. However, these findings disagreed with Nambale and Muwanga (2022) who examined the effectiveness of gender policies in Uganda and found that these policies have not fully addressed the challenges faced by women. The study highlighted that while policies are well-designed on paper, they often fall short in practice due to inadequate resources, lack of enforcement and persistent socio-cultural barriers.

The data districts showed that overall respondents were satisfied with existing gender policy (Mean=3.32). The findings from the surveys agreed with the study by Nalule et al. (2021) on the factors that influence women's satisfaction with gender policies and perception of empowerment which found higher levels of satisfaction in areas with more support for women's rights through civil society engagement.

Kiggundu and Tumwine (2021) disagreed with the above findings as their study found widespread dissatisfaction with Uganda's gender policy among women beneficiaries. The research study revealed that many women felt the policy failed to address their real needs and challenges adequately.

The findings of the study indicated that a relative high level of agreement with that statement that take part in implementing gender policy. The findings corroborate with those of Mathenge et al. (2021) regarding women participation in implementing gender policies relating to empowerment as their study found that women were involved in the implementation of such policies to some degree.

It was also agreed by most women that they were aware of their rights as women as indicated by the mean of 3.48. In support of these findings, a study by Ayo and Namata (2019) indicates that women in Uganda are increasingly aware of their rights, due to various awareness campaigns and educational programs.

In contrast, the study findings disagreed with those of Mutesi and Mugisha (2019) as their findings found that a significant number of women, particularly in rural areas, remain unaware of their rights. The research highlighted the disparity in information access between urban and rural women, attributing the lack of awareness to limited educational opportunities and

inadequate outreach by organizations promoting women's rights.

The study findings revealed that there was laxity in protecting women against gender based violence as most of the respondents were in disagreed with the related statement as revealed by the mean of 2.82. A study by Muhanguzi and Ninsiima (2017) supports the previous assertion by stating that gender policy including Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Bill, along with grassroots initiatives and advocacy programs have been instrumental in raising awareness and providing protection for women.

The study hypothesized that gender policy does not have significant positive moderating effects on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts. From the study findings, the study revealed that gender policy has significant positive moderating effects on the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in the selected districts of south western Uganda. This meant that gender policy enhances the positive relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment in Kisoro and Kabale districts.

The above findings of the study disagreed with Smith and Johnson (2018) who state that while good governance positively influences women economic empowerment, the presence of gender policies does not significantly alter this relationship and concluded that gender policy does not significantly moderate the relationship between good governance and women economic empowerment and suggested that gender policies alone may not enhance the impact of good governance on women economic outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that the inclusion of gender policy as a moderating variable significantly and positively affects the relationship between good governance in Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme and women economic empowerment in both Kisoro and Kabale districts, implying that strengthening gender policy implementation would positively enhance the relationship between good governance in UWEP and women economic empowerment.

### **Recommendations**

The district management in collaboration with local authorities and community leaders should implement targeted awareness campaigns to bridge the information gaps regarding existing gender policies. These campaigns should utilize various communication channels like radios and televisions and community platforms (WhatsApp, Facebooks, Village Saving Groups and Women Associations) to ensure comprehensive coverage and reach across both districts. By improving awareness, women can better understand their rights and entitlements under these policies (right to own assets,

employment rights and rights to pursue legal action) fostering a more empowered and informed community.

District authorities in both Kisoro and Kabale districts should intensify their efforts to sensitize women about policies promoting women economic empowerment. This can be done through targeted awareness campaigns, workshops, and training sessions conducted in collaboration with community-based organizations and NGOs. Sensitization efforts should be tailored to the specific needs and preferences of the local population, utilizing local languages and culturally appropriate messaging to maximize impact and reach.

## REFERENCES

- Abem, R.S., Okello, D., & Were, B.K. (2020). Nexus of Uganda Gender Policy 2007 and women economic empowerment in Uganda. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 43(14), 1230-1241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2020.1728355>
- African Union. (2003). *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3f4b139d4.html>
- Atuyambe, L. M., Kibira, S. P., Musinguzi, G., Ssali, S. N., & Bukenya, J. N. (2019). Assessing the effect of Uganda's national gender policies on women's economic empowerment in central Uganda. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 28(4), 446-462.
- Ayo, B., & Namata, F. (2019). Women's Rights Awareness in Urban Uganda: The Impact of Educational Campaigns. *Journal of Gender and Society*, 16(2), 142-158.
- Kabonesa, C., & Kindi, S. (2019). Cultural factors limiting women's economic empowerment in Uganda. *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems*, 17(1-B), 90-103. <https://doi.org/10.7906/indcs.17.1.7>
- Kiggundu, M., & Tumwine, R. (2021). Women's Satisfaction with Gender Policy in Uganda: An Evaluation of Effectiveness and Implementation. *International Journal of Gender and Development*, 20(3), 321-337.
- Mathenge, O. S., Muhula, S. M., & Onsomu, E. N. (2021). Women's participation in policy implementation and its relationship to empowerment: Evidence from gender committees in Kenya. *World Development Perspectives*, 25, 100523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wdp.2021.100523>
- Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. (2023). *Policy brief on gender mainstreaming*. Republic of Uganda. <https://www.mglsd.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Policy-Brief-on-Gender-Mainstreaming-January-2023.pdf>.
- Muhanguzi, F. K., & Ninsiima, A. B. (2017). Legislative Measures and Grassroots Initiatives in Protecting Women Against Gender-Based Violence in Uganda. *Journal of Gender and Law*, 14(3), 205-221.
- Mutesi, P., & Mugisha, J. (2019). Rural Women's Awareness of Their Rights in Uganda: A Study of Information Access and Educational Gaps. *Journal of Rural Development Studies*, 22(1), 87-102.
- Nalule, B. A., Achola, P., & Bakunda, B. (2021). Women's satisfaction with gender policies and perceptions of empowerment in Uganda. *International Social Work*, 64(6), 1580-1592. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F00208728211029040>
- Nambale, R., & Muwanga, A. (2022). Assessing the Effectiveness of Gender Policies in Addressing Women's Challenges: Evidence from Uganda. *Journal of Gender Policy and Practice*, 19(2), 189-204.
- Republic of Uganda. (2007). *National gender policy*. [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalasset/upload/ud/vedlegg/hum/national\\_gender\\_policy\\_uganda.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalasset/upload/ud/vedlegg/hum/national_gender_policy_uganda.pdf)
- Republic of Uganda. (2015). *Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme*. <https://investuganda.go.ug/index.php/quick-links/uganda-women-entrepreneurship-programme-uwepl>
- Slovin, L.E., (1960). Sampling methods of research. *The Journal of Farm Economics*, 42(4), 766-766.

Smith, J., & Johnson, L. (2018). The role of gender policy in women's economic empowerment: A multi-country analysis. *Journal of Development Studies*, 54(5), 715-732. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2017.1397885>

Tumusiime, N., & Kasozi, J. (2017). The Role of Gender Policies in Empowering Women: Evidence from the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme. *Gender and Development*, 25(4), 541-556.

Twinomugisha, A., & Clarke, C. L. (2022). The impact of gender mainstreaming policy on women's empowerment programming outcomes in Uganda. *Journal of Development Studies*. 58(4), 671-685.

Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (2019). Uganda women entrepreneurship programme annual report 2018/2019. <https://www.statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/publications/UGANDA%20WOMEN%20ENTREPRENEURSHIP%20PROGRAMME%20ANNUAL%20REPORT%202018-2019.pdf>.

United Nations. (1995). *Beijing declaration and platform for action*. [https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Platform\\_for\\_Action.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf)