CULTURE AND WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DISTRICT, UGANDA

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SEPTEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I, Betty Mategeko declare that this study is original and has never been submitted by any other student at Mbarara University of Science and Technology for the award of a PhD in Development Studies

Sign.....

Date 8/9/2025

APPROVAL

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

C.A	:	Career Attainment
C.D	:	Career Development
CA	:	Career advancement
PC	:	Professional Career
WPCA:		Women's Profession Career Attainment
C.G	:	Career Growth
FAWE:		Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWODE:		Forum for Women in Democracy
FGM	:	Female Genital Mutilation
FIDA :		Federation of Women Lawyers
FIDA :		Uganda Association of Women Lawyers
HEIs	:	Higher Education Institutions
ICDP	:	International Conference on Development and Population
IK	:	Indigenous Knowledge
KAB:		Kabale University
M. O. E:		Ministry Of Education
MDGs:		Millennium Development Goals
Mo CCD:		Ministry of Culture and Community Development
NAWAD:		National Association of Women Organizations
NGOS:		Non-Governmental Organizations
NPHC:		National Population and Housing Census
PEAP		Poverty Eradication Action Plan

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDIP:	Social Development Sector Strategic Investment Plan.
SOAWR:	Solidarity of African Women's Rights Coalition.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TE:	Tertiary Education
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHR:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UDHS:	Uganda Demographic and Health Survey.
UNCC:	Uganda National Cultural Centre
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations.
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nation's International Children's Emergency Fund.
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
USE:	Universal Secondary Education
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals

ABSTRACT

Culture remains a powerful determinant of women's professional trajectories, shaping the opportunities, choices, and constraints they encounter in education and the workplace. In Uganda, and particularly within the Bakiga community of Kabale District, traditional norms emphasizing women's domestic roles continue to hinder their advancement despite progressive policies such as Universal Primary Education, Universal Secondary Education, and affirmative action frameworks. This study examines the influence of Kikiga culture on women's professional career attainment, interrogating how cultural beliefs, practices, and gendered expectations intersect with contemporary educational and professional opportunities. Guided by Social Constructionist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, and Cultural Capital Theory, the research explores the dual processes through which women negotiate cultural identity while pursuing professional growth.

The study is anchored in a subjectivist epistemology and a constructivist ontology, acknowledging that knowledge and realities of women's professional career attainment are socially constructed through lived experiences. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed to explore and interpret these experiences in depth. Data were collected from Bakiga women's professionals, key informants, and institutional representatives through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Using a multi-site case study approach in Kabale District, the study draws insights from higher education institutions, local government bodies, and community organizations. The findings reveal persistent cultural barriers early marriages, gendered divisions of labor, and societal expectations that limit women's access to leadership and formal employment. At the same time, the research highlights women's resilience and agency, as some navigate cultural constraints to pursue careers. The study underscores the paradox of cultural preservation versus gender equity,

illustrating how Kikiga cultural norms simultaneously anchor community identity while constraining women's career mobility.

The study concludes that to structural and cultural barriers enhanced to support women's career growth, requires context-sensitive interventions that combine education reforms, gender-responsive policy implementation, and community engagement to reframe cultural perceptions of women's roles. By illuminating the cultural underpinnings of women's professional career attainment in Kabale, the research contributes to broader debates on gender equality and sustainable development, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 5 on Gender Equality and SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth. Ultimately, empowering Bakiga women to reconcile cultural identity with career aspirations is not only essential for their personal advancement but also critical for the socio-economic transformation of Kabale District and Uganda at large.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides background information on the study of culture and women's professional career attainment, states the problem of the study, the general aims of the study, the specific aims of the study, the research questions guiding the study, the scope of the study, the rationale for the study, the definition of operational terms, the theoretical framework, and finally the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the study

Culture plays a fundamental role in shaping societal norms and individual behaviours, influencing the way humans think, feel, and act. It encompasses a wide range of practices, beliefs, values, and traditions that are shared by a particular group of people. These cultural attributes deeply impact various aspects of life, including education, professional advancement, and career attainment. Particularly for marginalized groups such as women, cultural practices and norms can significantly impact their opportunities and prospects (Kumar, 2010). Understanding these cultural dynamics is essential for promoting inclusive development strategies. Culture is a complex and multifaceted concept that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by individuals as members of a society (Causadias, 2020). It also includes the way of life of a particular group of people, including their norms, values, taboos, and various behavioural practices. Culture involves the totality of learned and socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects, and behaviour (Eagleton, 2016; Kwantes & Glazer, 2017). It encompasses the collective body of learned behaviours that are considered to be the tradition of a

particular group and are passed down from one generation to another. In this sense, culture can be understood as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group or category of people from another (Gamsakhurdia, 2020). This "programming" shapes not only everyday actions but also the long-term opportunities that individuals can pursue.

Over the years, several global cultural trends have emerged, each affecting women's professional lives in different ways (Griswold, 2012). In many parts of the world, gender equality movements have led to policy changes that support women's professional career attainment (Griswold, 2012). Countries such as Sweden and Iceland have implemented gender-equal parental leave policies, ensuring that both men and women share childcare responsibilities, allowing women to focus on their careers. The European Union's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 aims to ensure equal pay and representation for women in leadership roles (Debusscher, 2023).

However, in some developing countries, cultural norms still limit women's access to high-ranking positions. In Saudi Arabia, despite recent reforms allowing women to drive and participate more actively in the workforce, deeply rooted patriarchal values continue to limit women's career growth in male-dominated sectors (Aldossari & Chaudhry, 2024). Cultural expectations regarding women's roles in the family significantly impact their professional growth. In Japan, the concept of "M-shaped employment" describes how many women exit the workforce after childbirth and struggle to re-enter at the same level (Ye, 2018). Despite government initiatives to encourage work-life balance, societal expectations often discourage women from prioritizing career ambitions over family obligations.

Therefore, cultural trends continue to evolve, shaping the professional experiences of women across the globe. While some countries have made significant strides in gender equality, others

still grapple with deeply ingrained cultural norms that hinder women's career progression (De Welde & Stepnick, 2023).

In India women are constrained from moving to open labor force and factories, they are expected to keep in doors and look after the family. However, In Japan, the concept of "M-shaped employment" describes how many women exit the workforce after childbirth and struggle to re-enter at the same level (Ye, 2018). Important to note is that in Uganda, the percentage of women in parliament is 34.1 as of December 2024, the number of female parliamentarians is 189 out of 555, and the percentage of women researchers is 28 % compared to the global average of 33 % (UBOS, 2024) In addition, the proportion of women in managerial positions is 35.05 % and women in the wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is only 0.8 % as per 2009 (UBOs, 2024).

In many other countries in Africa, for instance in East Africa, women are making strides in education, entrepreneurship, technology, and politics, moreover they still face challenges which include gender biases and societal expectations that prioritize marriage and family over career ambitions. Conversely in South Africa, progressive labor laws and gender equality policies have improved women's participation in corporate and leadership roles. Nevertheless, traditional patriarchal structures still affect industries such as mining and engineering, where women remain underrepresented. More so, Ethiopia, the growing participation of women in business and government indicates a cultural shift, but deep-rooted gender disparities persist, particularly in rural areas where early marriage and limited educational opportunities continue to hinder women's career growth.

While in Uganda, specific cultural expectations place a strong emphasis on women's domestic roles, making it difficult for them to pursue higher education and professional careers. Despite

this, initiatives like affirmative action and other gender advocacy programs are helping to shift perceptions and encourage women to pursue careers in male-dominated fields, the Kikiga culture remain unclear on the status of women career attainment.

The Bakiga traditionally well known for engaging in activities such as crop farming, hunting, and domestic roles, with gender-specific responsibilities that influenced women's educational and professional opportunities. Informal education was prevalent, with distinct roles taught based on gender, impacting the career attainment of women in the region (Karwemera, 2008). The introduction of formal education and colonial influence brought changes, yet gender-based educational disparities persisted, underscoring the complex interplay between culture and career opportunities (Ssekamwa, 1998). Colonial influence also perpetuated some pre-existing gender inequalities, while modern education systems have struggled to fully dismantle these entrenched norms.

Career attainment, a lifelong process of learning, decision-making, and advancing along a career path, is influenced by psychological, sociological, cultural, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors (Micky, 2020). It includes managing life, learning, and work towards a desired future (Kwesiga, 2002). This process can be viewed from both the organizational and individual perspectives, emphasizing the importance of aligning personal goals with organizational objectives to maximize productivity and job satisfaction (Guttridge, 2005). However, in communities where traditional gender roles dominate, career attainment for women can be hindered, limiting their progression within formal sectors.

In addition to the growth and support of women's professional career attainment, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, provide a global framework for addressing pressing social, economic, and environmental issues for women for people,

inclusive of women. Among the 17 goals, several directly and indirectly influence culture and professional women's career attainment, most notably: SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. These goals promote a shift in cultural attitudes, norms, and institutional practices that have traditionally marginalized women in the workforce. In alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on Gender Equality, there has been a growing emphasis on transforming cultural norms that hinder women's full participation in the labor force. These global frameworks are influencing local cultures by encouraging reforms in education, workplace policies, and gender norms. Despite these shifts, many women, especially in traditional societies, continue to face cultural barriers that impede their career attainment. This study seeks to explore the interaction between such cultural dynamics and the global push for gender equality, with a focus on how culture shapes women's career trajectories.

Connected to the above, the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) are globally recognized as key drivers of innovation, economic growth, and sustainable development. However, they have historically been male-dominated, largely due to deep-rooted cultural beliefs about gender roles and intellectual capabilities. Over time, the increasing inclusion of women in STEM is reshaping cultural perceptions and expanding career opportunities for women, particularly in contexts where cultural norms have traditionally restricted them. STEM fields play a transformative role in influencing culture and professional women's career attainment. Traditionally, cultural norms have portrayed science and technology as male domains, leading to the exclusion of women from these lucrative and influential careers.

The World Bank report (1995) on Gender Equality as Smart Economics, emphasizes the care attainment of women as a weapon for economic empowerment of women. Forms of women empowerment refer to the various dimensions through which women gain control over their live make strategic choices, and achieve full participation in society. These forms often intersect a reinforce each other. Below are the key forms of women's empowerment, include Econom Empowerment This involves giving women access to and control over financial resources, asse income, and employment opportunities, Access to jobs and entrepreneurship, Equal pay a financial independence, Ownership of land and property, Participation in cooperatives a business networks, Economic empowerment is central to enabling women to rise above pover and participate equally in society" (UN Women, 2020).

However, despite global advancements in promoting gender equality in education and care attainment for women, recent research suggests that local cultural practices play a significant ro in shaping these dynamics (UNESCO, 2022). According to Cookson et al. (2023), gender norm deeply embedded within cultures, significantly influence the progress, stagnation, or regression gender equality within career development realms. The Bakiga community's traditional belie prioritize male education, which can impede women's educational opportunities and hinder th career advancement. Such cultural norms often extend into professional spaces, creating additior barriers to women's success. These norms extend beyond superficial aspects such as marria customs and attire, encompassing deeply ingrained gender roles and expectations.

The interplay between culture and education is further complicated by economic and social factc that are culturally sanctioned, such as early marriages and the perceived societal roles assigned men and women (Kohno, et al., 2020). The influence of cultural factors on women's access

education and professional growth leads to significant challenges in these areas. Kumar (2010), in a study focused on the Indian context, posits that women's lives and education are still deeply influenced by cultural forces rooted in history. The cultural environment in which girls are brought up and socialized into womanhood constitutes a formidable barrier that hinders progress and outcomes for many women. According to Rwomushana (2024), Bakiga women face multiple intersecting obstacles based on both their cultural background and socio-economic realities (Rwomushana E. 2024). While cultural values are crucial in maintaining societal coherence and identity, they often perpetuate gender disparities, particularly in career development. This is evidenced by traditional roles that prioritize domestic responsibilities for women, thereby limiting their access to formal education and subsequent career opportunities (Schaefer, 1996).

The interplay between culture and career attainment is well-supported by various theories in anthropology and sociology. Geert Hofstede's framework of cultural dimensions, particularly dimensions like "individualism vs. collectivism and long-term vs. short-term orientation, offers valuable insights (Hofstede, 1980). For instance, societies that score higher on long-term orientation may prioritize education and training investments, potentially impacting how Bakiga culture views the importance of education for women and their career prospects. Additionally, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital offers a valuable lens through which to view education as part of broader social values transmitted through generations (Bourdieu, 1986). This perspective is essential in analysing how cultural heritage and expectations shape the career opportunities available to women. These theoretical frameworks offer a rich foundation to analyse the complex interactions between cultural norms, gender expectations, and career development.

Building on these insights, this study adopts a multi-pronged theoretical approach. Social Constructionist Theory and Liberal Feminist Theory are chosen as primary themes due to their direct relevance in addressing the influence of cultural norms on professional women's career attainment. These theories will guide the examination of how gender roles are culturally constructed within the Bakiga community and how these roles can be reshaped through targeted educational and policy interventions. The integration of Cultural Capital Theory further allows for an exploration of how specific cultural assets within the Bakiga community shape professional growth, particularly for women. By understanding the dynamics of cultural influence through these lenses, the study aims to identify strategic interventions that could alleviate cultural barriers, fostering a more equitable environment for professional women's career attainment within the Bakiga women.

This research seeks to explore the specific cultural practices of the Bakiga women in Kabale District and their impact on women's professional career attainment. By integrating recent research and theories, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the cultural factors that shape women's career trajectories in this region. The findings of this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the intersection of culture and career attainment, particularly in the context of marginalized communities. By shedding light on the specific challenges and opportunities faced by Bakiga women, this study aims to inform policymakers, educators, and community leaders on strategies to promote gender equality in education and professional advancement. This study will not only uncover hidden cultural obstacles but will also pave the way for innovative interventions that align cultural preservation with gender inclusivity. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the development of targeted interventions and policies that

empower women in the Bakiga community to overcome cultural barriers and achieve their career aspirations.

This study focuses on the role of culture in shaping the career attainment of Bakiga women in Kabale District, Uganda. The Bakiga, an ethnic group residing in south-western Uganda, are known for their distinct cultural practices and norms. Examining these cultural attributes in relation to gender and career attainment is crucial for addressing the challenges they face and promoting gender equality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The relationship between culture and women's professional career attainment is multifaceted, influenced by gender equality, socio-cultural factors, and corporate environments. Gender equality significantly affects professional women's career attainment, with organizational culture acting as an intermediary. A supportive culture enhances work performance and career attainment opportunities for women (Siagian, 2024). In Kabale District, Uganda, as in many parts of the world, culture profoundly shapes the aspirations and opportunities for professional women's career attainment. Cultural practices and norms, deeply rooted in the region's history and daily life, have a significant impact on women's educational and professional advancement (Lips,2016).The Bakiga community, characterized by its distinct cultural values, such as early marriages, bride price, and a preference for informal education, presents a unique context to explore these dynamics (Moore, 2002; Kwesiga and Neema, 2015). However, despite these distinctive cultural practices, there is limited research specifically addressing how these cultural norms influence the career attainment of women.

Even though efforts have been made to promote gender womens professional career attainment through various educational reforms and initiatives, such as Universal Primary Education (UPE),

Universal Secondary Education (USE), and affirmative action policies, significant gaps remain in educational attainment and career attainmentbetween men and women in Kabale district (The Gender Policy, 1996; UNESCO, 2018). There gaps have been widened by the affirmation action, lack of strict laws on human and womens rights and the proper use of the guidelines in the consttution. One of the major efforts put in place to enhance women's career attainment is affirmative action. It refers to policies and practices designed to address historical and structural inequalities by actively promoting the inclusion and advancement of marginalized or underrepresented groups particularly in areas such as education, employment, leadership, and public service. It often involves targeted measures, such as quotas, preferential hiring, scholarships, and promotions, aimed at increasing opportunities for women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged populations. Reskin (1998) defines affirmative action as: A set of policies that take gender, race, or ethnicity into account in order to promote equal opportunity and reduce discrimination. Fullinwider (2009) asserts that affirmative action is an intervention strategy that seeks to level the playing field by correcting systemic barriers and past injustices. UNESCO (2003) analyses affirmative action as a range of special measures adopted to overcome inequality and enable disadvantaged groups to access and participate fully in society.

On the same note, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 plays a crucial role in supporting and promoting professional women's career attainment through a comprehensive framework of rights, freedoms, and affirmative action. Article 21, advocates for the promotion of equality and non-discrimination in employment and career growth. The Constitution guarantees equality before and under the law for all citizens regardless of sex, race, or religion. This creates a

legal foundation to challenge discrimination against women in the workplace and ensures equal treatment in hiring, promotion, and remuneration.

In addition, Article 32 on affirmative action mandates the state to take affirmative action in favor of groups historically disadvantaged by discrimination. The problem in this is that Women are often marginalized in education and employment. In addition, Article 30, provides the right of all people to education, The Constitution provides for the right to education for all Ugandans, including women and also the constitution looks at education as a key enabler for women's career development through career attainment. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda serves as a powerful tool for advancing professional women's career attainment. It lays down principles of equality, protection, empowerment, and affirmative action, which form the basis for legal, policy, and institutional reforms aimed at removing gender barriers and fostering inclusive development. It also obligates the state and society to actively promote women's full participation in all spheres of life.

More scholarly research have studied widely the improvements in the educational landscape, women, significant barriers to career attainment across various sectors generally Kabale district (Brown, 1996; Kamau, 2004; Navarro-Astor et al., 2017; Khan, 2022; Mohamed et al., 2021). However scanty studies have been carried out about the Kikiga culture and how it influences the professional women's career attainment statistical data have continuously showed a persistent underrepresentation of women in higher education and leadership roles, reflecting broader national trends (UBOS, 2014; NPHC, 2014). This underrepresentation not only underscores the challenges women face due to cultural constraints but also highlights the potential economic and social consequences for the community. The lack of limited number of women in leadership and

professional sectors can perpetuate economic disparities and hinder comprehensive community development. The continuation of these disparities limits the full potential of women's contributions to both their families and the community at large.

This study investigates the interplay between cultural norms and career attainment among Bakiga women, exploring how traditional values and modern educational opportunities influence their career trajectories. By understanding these dynamics, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse on gender equality and empowerment, providing insights that could inform policy and community interventions aimed at bridging the gender gap in career attainment. The significance of addressing this problem extends beyond academic pursuit; it is crucial for realizing broader developmental goals. When women attain higher levels of education and advance in their careers, they not only improve their own and their families' living standards, but also contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of their communities and the nation (Boserup, 2013). Therefore, understanding and addressing the barriers to career attainment for women in the Bakiga community is imperative for promoting sustainable development and gender equality. Overcoming these barriers could unlock new opportunities for women and foster inclusive development within the region.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1 The general objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of Kikiga culture on women's professional career attainment in Kabale district, Uganda.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

i. To identify the key components of Kikiga Culture that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women in Kabale district.

ii. To analyze how Kikiga culture influences the professional growth and career attainment of Bakiga women in Kabale District.

iii. To explore how Bakiga women balance their cultural identity with their career aspirations and professional growth in Kabale district.

iv. To find out the ways in which career attainment impacts on women's professional career growth in Kabale district.

v. To analyse the challenges faced by Bakiga women in their quest to attain a career in Kabale District.

vi. To devise the strategies to enhancing women's professional career attainment in Kabale District

1.4 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

i) What are the key components of Kikiga culture that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women in Kabale district, Uganda?

ii) How does Kikiga culture influence Bakiga women's professional career attainment in Kabale district, Uganda?

iii) How do Bakiga women negotiate their Kikiga cultural identity with their career goals and aspirations in Kabale district?

iv) How does career attainment impacts on women's professional career growth in Kabale district.

v) What challenges are faced by Bakiga women in their quest to attain a career in Kabale District?

vi) What are the strategies to enhancing Bakiga women's professional career attainment in Kabale District

1.5 Area of the study

The study was conducted in Kabale District, in different institutions and organizations in Kabale district. The institutions included Kabale University, Uganda College of Commerce, and Kabale Technical Institute. In addition, the study involved other organizations such as the Kabale District Local Government, the Human Rights Office, probation office, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), and selected key informants. These institutions and organizations were purposively selected due to their unique roles within the district. Kabale University was considered because at the time it was the only fully-fledged university while Uganda College of Commerce was considered because it was sole degree-awarding institution. In addition, Kabale Technical Institute was considered because it was the only government vocational institution in Kabale District that a warded diplomas at the time. The selection of the study area was further supported by preliminary data obtained from local radio broadcasts and consultations with religious leaders and community elders, which revealed a significant gender disparity between men and women in career attainment. This initial evidence spurred the researcher's interest in examining the effect of Kikiga culture on the career attainment of Bakiga women in the Kabale district.

Furthermore, the chosen institutions and organizations are directly relevant to addressing the study's objectives. Tertiary institutions like Kabale University, Uganda College of Commerce, and Kabale Technical Institute provide critical insights into the educational pathways and career opportunities available to women, reflecting both the progress and challenges within formal education systems. Concurrently, organizations such as the Kabale District Local Government, the Human Rights Office and the NGO offered valuable data on policy implementation and community-level practices that influence career attainment. This multi-faceted approach aligns with established research literature which advocates for the integration of diverse data sources to capture the complex interplay between cultural norms and career advancement (Hofstede, 1980; Bourdieu, 1986). By incorporating perspectives from both educational institutions and local organizations, the study not only broadens its analytical scope but also enriches its capacity to propose informed and context-specific interventions for promoting gender equality in career attainment.

The justification for the choice of the area was that through radio news, information from religious leaders and elders, indicated that there were less women that acquired career attainment compared men. Because of repeated stories, the researcher developed interest to carry out a study to ascertain the effect of culture on women's education career attainment.

1.6 Scope of the study

This research delves into the profound influence of Kikiga culture on the career attainment of Bakiga women in Kabale District, with a particular focus on the cultural components of values, beliefs, norms, customs and sanctions. The study targets educated women and those on education track in institutions of higher learning. The women include are those of 18 years and above, and

are Bakiga women who have lived in Kabale. These components are pivotal as they form the social framework within which Bakiga women organize their professional lives.

Kikiga culture, with its roots deeply embedded in the hilly terrains of southwestern Uganda, encompasses a rich tapestry of language, social structures, customs, and beliefs. For centuries, this culture has dictated the daily activities and societal norms of its people. A critical aspect of this culture is the traditional gender roles, where women are predominantly seen as caretakers and homemakers, thus prioritizing family over professional ambitions. This long-standing view has historically restricted women's participation in the formal workforce, severely limiting their opportunities for career attainment. Additionally, Kikiga culture emphasizes a strong sense of community and collective decision-making. The community significantly influences individual life choices, including those of women, often dictating career paths through societal expectations and traditional practices such as marriage and dowry ceremonies. These practices reinforce the notion that a woman's primary responsibility lies within the home, further limiting her access to formal career opportunities.

Moreover, the pervasive influence of Kikiga cultural norms has led to limited access to educational and professional opportunities, resulting in significant gender disparities within Kabale District. Community pressure and the emphasis on conformity to traditional practices often force women to sacrifice their professional ambitions to meet family and societal expectations. Despite these constraints, a growing movement among Bakiga women especially those with access to higher education is redefining traditional roles and challenging these long-held norms. This study captures the experiences of those who have broken through cultural barriers, as well as insights from key informants, both male and female, who have witnessed the evolving dynamics of gender roles in educational and professional contexts. In summary, this study not only examines how cultural

factors influence career attainment but also highlights the resilience and determination of Bakiga women who are actively seeking to reconcile their cultural identity with their professional aspirations. The study took place in Kabale district in the selected tertiary institutions and selected organizations. Majorly the study targeted women who had progressed with their career and those who were upgrading. It targeting women of 18 years and above and it also included very few Bakiga men.

1.7 Significance of the study

The findings of the study have crucial practical implication policy makers trying to enhance women's professional career attainment. Key stake holders could use the data to develop key strategies that will enhance professional women's professional career attainment. The insights generated from this research supports policymakers in designing and implementing gender-sensitive policies that promote not only equal educational opportunities across all levels but also tailored strategies to enhance women's professional advancement. By addressing socio-cultural barriers, these policies can be more effectively aligned with the unique cultural context of the Bakiga community, thereby improving educational infrastructure and support systems throughout Kabale District and creating an environment that is conducive to women's empowerment and long-term career success.

The study is important in facilitating future research related to women career attainment. By providing qualitative and quantitative data on women's professional career attainment, the study sets a foundation for future research. It identifies current gaps in literature and encourages further studies to explore on related topics on women's professional career attainment. Future research could build on these findings to examine the general causes of involved of few women in attaining a career.

In addition, societal impact becomes one of the significances of the study. It highlights broader societal benefits of women attaining a career like them getting good jobs, increased incomes, economic, social and political development and their general wellbeing. This study will contribute to the field of knowledge by providing new insights or solutions that

The study inspires Bakiga women to endeavor to attain a career and also help other women attain it, after appreciating challenges that hinder them from attainment it. Their motivation to attain a career is based on the positive factors that pertain to it. Some of these include acquisition of skills, getting good jobs and improved standards of living.

The study creates awareness on the importance of women's professional career attainment and how this would contribute to the social, economic, and political development of women in Kabale district. It is hoped to raise the stakeholders' needs to develop appropriate strategies to address the salient issues in Kikiga culture that affect women's professional career attainment in Kabale district.

Further, the significance of this study lies in its potential to inform and transform gender-sensitive policy decisions in Kabale District, ultimately advancing the career attainment of Bakiga women. By uncovering the specific cultural barriers and facilitators that affect their career trajectories, the findings will empower stakeholders including local government, educational institutions, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations to develop targeted interventions that directly address these challenges and foster more inclusive career opportunities.

Moreover, this study plays a critical role in challenging and reshaping cultural perceptions regarding women's education and professional success within the Bakiga women. By highlighting successful case studies and offering evidence-based recommendations, the research aims to shift community mindsets towards a more inclusive view of women's roles beyond domestic

boundaries. This paradigm shift is essential for breaking down longstanding stereotypes that have historically limited women's participation in the formal workforce.

The findings directly benefit Bakiga women by addressing rigid and potentially discriminatory cultural practices. With increased awareness and understanding, women get be better equipped to challenge these practices and advocate for equitable cultural norms, thereby enhancing their dignity and expanding their career opportunities. This shift in cultural attitudes has the potential to create a lasting cycle of empowerment that will positively impact future generations.

Finally, this study serves as a valuable resource for future researchers investigating the interplay between culture and professional women's career attainment, both in Kabale District and in similar socio-cultural settings across Uganda. The comprehensive insights and framework provided herein will contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of cultural norms on gender dynamics, laying the groundwork for comparative and longitudinal studies on women's empowerment in diverse contexts. Finally, this research contributes to broader debates on gender equality and sustainable development, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 5 on Gender Equality and SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth. Ultimately, empowering Bakiga women to reconcile cultural identity with career aspirations is not only essential for their personal advancement but also critical for the socio-economic transformation of Kabale District and Uganda at large.

1.7 Theoretical Frame work

This study examines the influence of Kikiga culture on professional women's career attainment through a multi-layered theoretical approach. In order to address the study's objective of uncovering cultural barriers and facilitators that shape professional women's career attainment, the research draws on Social Constructionist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, and Cultural

Capital Theory. Together, these frame works provide a comprehensive analysis of how cultural norms, gendered expectations, and social resources impact the career outcomes of Bakiga women. Social Constructionist Theory, as advanced by Bem and Coltr (1967), offers valuable insights into how gender roles are socially constructed through processes of socialization. This perspective is crucial for understanding how cultural norms within the Bakiga women shape women's self-perceptions, career aspirations, and decision-making processes. Despite improvements in educational access, traditional gender roles continue to constrain women's career opportunities. By employing a social constructivist lens, the study examines how cultural conditioning within familial and community structures perpetuates gender stereotypes, often leading women to set more modest career goals in order to conform to societal expectations.

Social Constructivism is a sociological and psychological theory that emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in the development of knowledge, meaning, and understanding. Rooted in the works of scholars such as Lev Vygotsky, Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann, the theory argues that knowledge and reality are not merely discovered, but rather constructed through human interaction and language. In the context of gender, career, and cultural identity, Social Constructivism provides a powerful lens to analyze how societal norms and cultural values shape individuals' understanding of roles, including what is deemed appropriate for men and women in society.

The importance of this theory is that knowledge is constructed through social processes. Individuals learn and internalize knowledge through interaction with others, family, peers, institutions, media, and culture at large. Language not only expresses thought but also shapes how people think and what they come to accept as reality. In addition, Reality is socially constructed.

Hence what people consider to be real or true is defined by collective agreement. For instance, the idea that women are "naturally suited" for domestic roles is not biologically determined but socially constructed.

The critiques of the theory assert the following. They say that while Social Constructivism has been influential and widely applied, it is not without criticism. They say that the overemphasis on issue of social influence in determining peoples choices and decisions. In addition, they argue that the theory downplays the role of individual agency and innate factors such as biology, personality, and cognitive ability. By focusing so heavily on social processes, it may ignore the individual's capacity to resist, reinterpret, or challenge social constructs. In addition, critiques say that the theory relies on relativism and Lack of Objectivity. Social Constructivism often leads to epistemological relativism, the belief that truth is entirely subjective and culturally dependent.

To sum it up, the theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how cultural norms and social interactions shape gender roles and career pathways. It is particularly relevant in analyzing how Bakiga women in Kabale District construct and navigate their identities within traditional and modern expectations. However, to fully address the challenges these women face, the theory must be used alongside other perspectives that consider individual agency, structural factors, and policy interventions.

Liberal Feminist Theory, particularly as developed by Wallston (1972), complements this analysis by focusing on structural inequalities. This theory argues that disparities in career progression stem from unequal access to resources such as education and employment opportunities. In the context of Kikiga culture, liberal feminist theory is applied to explore how equal access to education and professional opportunities could dismantle the structural barriers imposed by traditional gender

norms. Through this perspective, the study investigates how educational empowerment and economic independence can challenge and potentially transform these cultural constraints, thereby enhancing women's ability to attain their career. Liberal Feminism is one of the earliest and most influential strands of feminist thought. Rooted in the liberal political tradition, it focuses on the promotion of individual rights, equality of opportunity, and legal reforms to address gender inequality. Liberal feminists argue that women should have the same legal, political, educational, and economic rights as men.

Key proponents of liberal feminism include Mary Wollstonecraft, Betty Friedan, and John Stuart Mill. They emphasized the importance of access to education, equal pay, reproductive rights, and freedom from discrimination in the public sphere. The strength of the theory is that the advocates for equality through legal and policy reform, advocates for changing laws and institutions that discriminate against women like workplace policies, voting rights, property rights. Emphasis on individual rights and choice is encouraged by the theory. Belief that women, like men, are rational individuals capable of making informed decisions and should be free to pursue careers, education, and leadership roles. In addition, it advocates for the Integration over revolution: Focuses on working within existing systems rather than radically transforming society to improve women's status.

The theory is important in relation to professional women's career attainment because it's Practical and Policy-Oriented. Liberal feminism has contributed to tangible reforms, such as laws against gender discrimination, affirmative action, equal pay legislation, and increased access to education and employment.

In conclusion, Liberal Feminist Theory provides a strong foundation for promoting gender equality in education, employment, and legal rights, which are essential for professional women's career attainment. Its focus on individual rights and institutional reform makes it a valuable tool for addressing cultural and systemic barriers. However, its limitations, particularly in engaging with intersectional and deep-rooted cultural issues, highlight the need to complement it with other feminist perspectives that are more culturally sensitive and context-specific.

The last theory is the Cultural Capital Theory formulated by Pierre Bourdieu. It introduces a critical dimension by examining the role of non-economic resources in facilitating or hindering career success. Cultural capital which includes knowledge, skills, language proficiency, and social networks, plays a significant role in determining women's access to educational and professional opportunities. Within the Bakiga women, variations in cultural capital contribute to unequal career attainment, as women from families that value and invest in education accumulate the cultural resources necessary for social mobility. Conversely, women with limited cultural capital remain confined by traditional roles and reduced opportunities for professional advancement.

The theory is important because it, Explains Social Inequality beyond Economics Bourdieu's theory provides a nuanced understanding of how non-financial factors influence life outcomes, such as success in school or at work. Connects Culture to Power and Opportunist, Cultural capital shows how culture is not neutral; rather, it reflects and reinforces dominant class values. Those who possess the right culture language, tastes, and behaviors are more likely to succeed. Relevance to Education and Career, it demonstrates how early exposure to cultural resources like books, mentorship, or communication skills impacts academic success and later career progression.

The critiques of the theory say that the theory heavily emphasizes class reproduction and n underrepresent other forms of oppression, such as gender, race, or ethnicity, unless adapted. Th argue that Bourdieu's framework may appear too deterministic, implying that individuals w limited cultural capital have little agency to break free from disadvantage. In addition, the theo is accused of being grounded in European elite culture, the theory has been critiqued for being l applicable in non-Western or multicultural contexts, where different forms of cultural capital m be valued and lastly, they say that the theory overlooks non-dominant or indigenous cultural forn which may be valuable in certain local contexts but not recognized in formal institutions.

The theory applies well to culture and professional women's career attainment in a way that it highly applicable to understanding how cultural norms and socialization impact women's acce to career opportunities, especially in patriarchal or traditional societies like those found in parts Uganda, including Kabale District. In addition, with regard to Socialization and Gender Rol Women may be socialized from an early age into roles that emphasize obedience, caregiving, a domestic responsibilities, rather than ambition, leadership, or competitiveness, traits often valu in professional settings. This limits their embodied cultural capital in the career domain.

There is also lack of Institutionalized Capital Due to cultural expectations, many women may ha limited access to higher education or professional training, resulting in fewer academic credentia or institutional recognition of their abilities. The last issue of critique is that Cultural Knowled Not Valued by Institution. In many cases, women may possess forms of cultural capital rooted traditional knowledge but these are not recognized in formal employment sectors. Lastly, from th analysis of the theory, women must often adopt or learn dominant professional behaviors, such

assertiveness, formal communication, and networking, to succeed in male-dominated environments, which may conflict with their cultural upbringing.

Cultural Capital Theory offers valuable insight into how culture, upbringing, and education shape women's opportunities for career attainment. It highlights that beyond financial barriers, women face cultural disadvantages rooted in how they are raised and socialized, and what kinds of knowledge and behaviors are valued in society. While the theory has been critiqued for its limited attention to gender and non-Western contexts, it remains highly useful when adapted to include gendered and cultural dynamics, as is the case in analyzing Bakiga women's experiences with career attainment.

The integration of these three theoretical perspectives Social Constructionist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, and Cultural Capital Theory provides a holistic framework for analyzing the multifaceted effects of culture on professional women's career attainment. Social Constructionist Theory elucidates the mechanisms by which cultural norms and gender roles are internalized, Liberal Feminist Theory highlights the structural inequities that must be addressed to level the playing field, and Cultural Capital Theory emphasizes the material and symbolic resources essential for career success. Collectively, these theories offer a robust foundation for identifying the pathways through which cultural practices within the Bakiga community influence women's professional outcomes and for proposing strategies to create a more equitable environment.

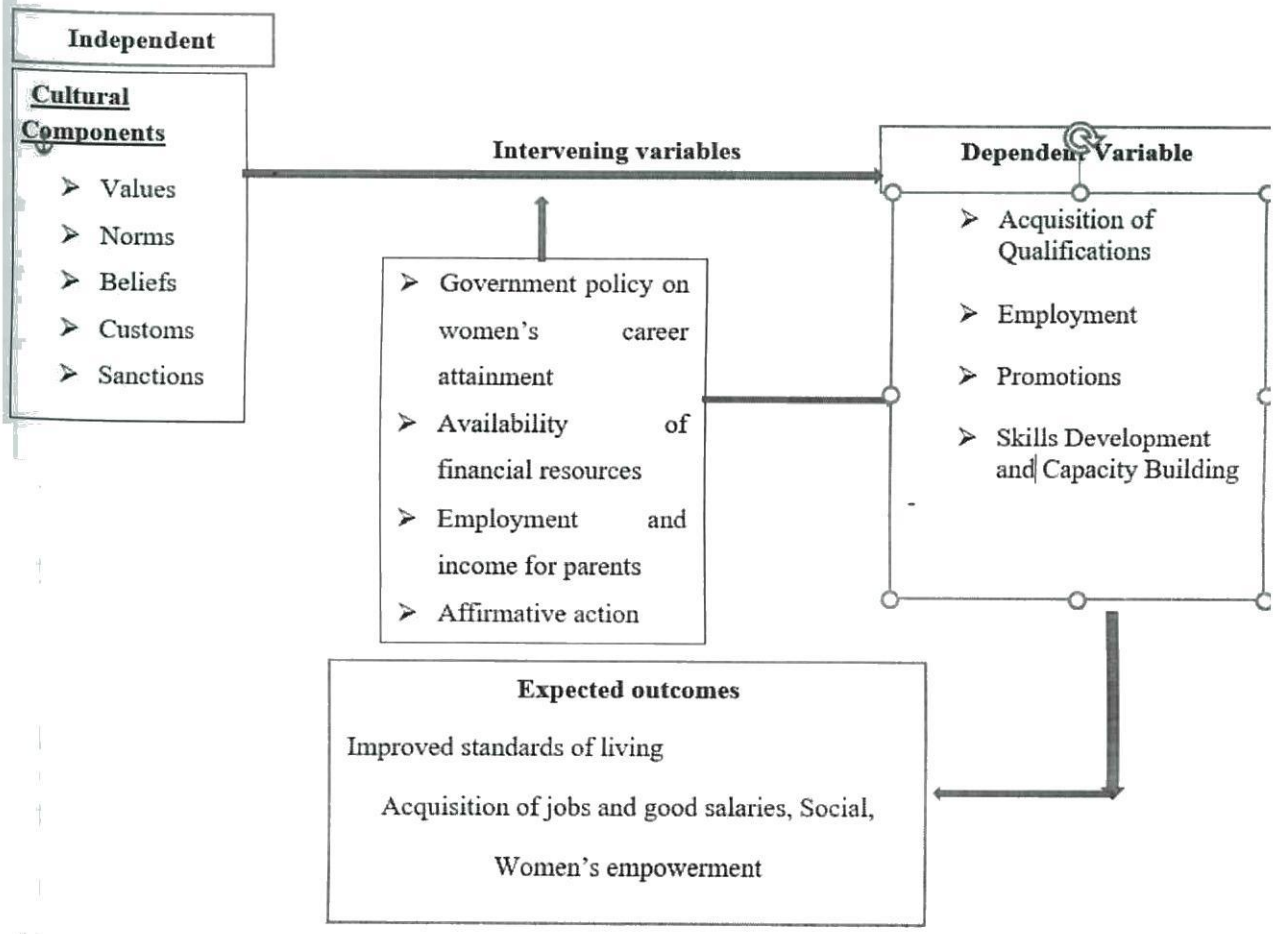
This comprehensive theoretical frame work not only deepens our understanding of the specific cultural barriers faced by Bakiga women but also directly informs the study's objectives. By integrating multiple theoretical lenses, the study is well positioned to generate evidence-based

recommendations for policy interventions aimed at enhancing gender equality and empowering women to achieve their full career potential.

1.9 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the summary of the study and considers the components of culture that influence women's professional career attainment in Kabale district.

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework showing the effect of Culture on professional women's career attainment in Kabale District



Source: Researcher, 2023

The above figure illustrates the effect of culture on professional women's career attainment in Kabale District. The independent variables are components of culture that include values, beliefs, norms, customs and sanctions.

Values determine the choices and preferences that women make. Values determine decisions and aspirations that women make. Hence sometimes women are who they are because of the values they uphold. As a result, values in the Kikiga culture may affect end point in the determination of professional women's career attainment. For women to study and attain a career and keep to their career then they have in their values as something of importance and value. The above conceptual framework illustrates the fact that when values are adhered to and supportive to a woman attaining a career, she attains it, gets a job make money and, in the end, the independent variables like improved standards of living. The intervening variable in this case is the government policy on professional women's career attainment. This implies that values may influence professional women's career attainment positively of the government policy favors professional women's career attainment. The case in Uganda is that women are encouraged to attain a career, there is affirmative action where in many job organizations women are encouraged to apply for jobs and they are actually considered.

In addition, on the conceptual framework norms of Bakiga women determine their value for enhanced career attainment or not. Norms are the expected standards of how Bakiga women should live, should behave, should act and also how they make their life choices. Norms include agreed upon definitions of productive behavior and the mindsets of people. To this effect, norms determine women's decisions to attain a career and the decision to work or not even when a career is attained. When norms are good and positive and in support of professional women's career attainment, then the end result which is the dependent variable will be realized.

The dependent variable is professional women's career attainment. In this case, when women sail through the hustles cause by negative cultural norms, they attain the careers by getting qualifications, the get employment, they get promoted on the job, they get money and incomes so they enhance the education of the children, the health of their children and other family members and generally they become better in terms of standards of living and the wellbeing of their life and that of family members.

Women will study, will acquire qualifications and will be able to get jobs .by the fact that women form half of the population in Uganda's population, then majority would have good like, get jobs or businesses and prosper accordingly. This will influence a good population that is empowered, educated, employed. The dependent variables may affect women career attainment negatively or positively and this influence the end point of a woman with regard to career attainment.

Another component of culture that is illustrated on the conceptual framework is beliefs. This includes women's acceptance that culture is true and real with or without proof. This involves trust, faith, and confidence. The implication of beliefs is that what culture stipulated as a belief is much valued and respected, for instance the believe that early marriage is valued, that virginity is valued, that women should stay around their homes, to have children and others. In the strain to for women to attain career attainment, the beliefs affect them positively or negatively. When they are positive to towards career enhancement, they study and attain career and later enhance its growth. However, they may not wish to attain a career because they believe it's not necessary. As when a belief is positive towards career is attained women attain it and, in the end, the independent variables like acquisition of jobs and the general economic and social and political empowerment of women is enhanced. However, the intervening variables like the financial ability for parents and t determine the end point of professional women's career attainment.

The other component of culture is customs that are widely accepted as the traditional way of behaving and act of doing unique things different from the way others do them. Cultural customs and one of the independent variables result in the support of professional women's career attainment or rejection of the same. If the customs of Kikiga culture support their education and delay in school so that a career is attained, then women benefit. However, where the customs are contrary to the demands of professional women's career attainment then it gets hard to attain them. However, with a trend of change in the modern society and the spread of social media, some women skip the bureaucracy that culture inserts in people. Therefore, may influence women's professional career attainment especially when they positive. However, the intervening variables like influence social media and friends may influence women's professional attainment of a career or not. When attained there could be empowerment of women where they will be having jobs, money, a voice to speak, financial power and ability to participate in decision making.

Lastly the other component of culture is sanctions which are threatening penalties for disobeying the rules. The sanctions may be positive or negative. The positive sanctions include reward for the good things done as described by culture, while the negative sanctions are punishments for wrong doings. In this regard, women may prefer to do what culture stipulates even when it does not enhance professional women's career attainment. In the end, when women fear to break the rules of the society so that they are not subjected to sanction, then they miss out on career attainment or may attain it in case cultural sanctions are in favor of professional women's career attainment. When a career is attained, then women access jobs, make money, participate in politics and generally contribute to social, economic and political development of country.

Government policies play a critical role in shaping the opportunities available to women. Policies that promote gender equality, equal pay, access to education, maternity leave, and women in

leadership can either support or hinder women's career growth. In Uganda, policies aligned with the National Gender Policy and Vision 2040 are designed to remove institutional barriers and promote women's participation in the workforce.

In addition, access to financial resources is essential for education, professional training, and career development. Women from low-income families may face challenges in affording school fees, transport, professional attire, or relocation for work. Limited financial means also restrict access to internships or unpaid opportunities that may lead to long-term career advancement.

Further, employment and Income for Parents' employment status significantly influences their children's educational and career opportunities. When parents have stable incomes, they are more likely to invest in their daughters' education and support their career ambitions. In contrast, low parental income can result in girls being withdrawn from school early or being pressured into marriage or informal work, hindering their long-term career attainment.

It's also important to note that affirmative action involves deliberate measures aimed at increasing the representation of historically marginalized groups, such as women, in education and employment. In Uganda, this includes lower cut-off points for female university entrants, reserved seats in Parliament, and gender-inclusive recruitment policies. These interventions are critical in leveling the playing field for women and enhancing their chances of entering and progressing in various careers.

1.10 Operationalization of key terms

In this study, four important concepts are defined to facilitate understanding and how they were used in the course of the study. They include Culture, a career, Career Attainment, and Bakiga

Women. This provided an understanding of how these concepts are conceptualized and operationalized

1.10.1 Culture

Culture has been defined generally as the totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects, and behaviours that form a way of life for a group of people. It encompasses elements such as behaviour, beliefs, taboos, language, religion, values, and symbols passed from one generation to the next (Eagleton, 2016; Causadias, 2020).

In this study, culture is operationalized as the collection of specific beliefs, norms, practices, and symbols prevalent in the Bakiga women that influence gender roles and shape the expectations regarding professional women's career attainment. More specifically, culture is perceived as aconcept that encompasses the social behavior, institutions, and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, attitudes, and habits of the individuals in these groups· Culture often originates from or is attributed to a specific region or location.

Cultural norms codifies acceptable conduct in society; it serves as a guideline for behaviour, dress, language, and demeanour in a situation, which serves as a template for expectations in a social group. Accepting only a monoculture in a social group can bear risks, just as a single species can wither in the face of environmental change, for lack of functional responses to the change.

Generally, culture refers to a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization. The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. The set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic. the integrated pattern of human knowledge,

belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time, the attitudes, behavior, opinions, etc. of a particular group of people within society.

1.10.2 A career

A career is the job or profession that someone does for a long period of their life. The term Career is often used to refer to a profession, occupation, trade or vocation. A career could define what a person does for a living and range from those that require extensive training and education to those you can perform with only a high school diploma and a willingness to learn. A career could mean working as a doctor, lawyer, teacher, carpenter, veterinary assistant, electrician, cashier, teacher or hairstylist. Career has another definition as well, though. It also refers to the progress and actions you have taken throughout the working years of your life, especially as they relate to your occupation. It is comprised of the different jobs you have held, titles you have earned and work you have accomplished over a long period of time. When viewed in this context, a career includes everything related to your career attainment, including your choice or profession and advancement. Your single career could include a variety of different paths. It's a profession for which one trains, and which is undertaken as permanent calling. It's a job or series of jobs that one undertakes during their working life, like having a job or position as part of the training that one did in the institution and is paid for it or a makes them get skills that enable them to be self-employed.

A career is an individual's metaphorical journey through learning, work and other aspects of life. There are a number of ways to define career and the term is used in a variety of ways. The career as a person's course or progress through life. This definition relates career to a range of aspects of

an individual's life, learning, and work. Career is also frequently understood to relate to the working aspects of an individual's life as in career woman (Wijewardhana & MMM, D. (2021).

A third way in which the term career is used describes an occupation or a profession that usually involves specific training and formal education, considered to be a person's lifework. In this case a career is seen as a sequence of related jobs, usually pursued within a single industry or sector: one can speak for example of a career in education, of a criminal career or of a career in the building trade. A career has been defined by organizational behavior researchers as "an individual's work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations that form a unique pattern over the individual's life span (Wijewardhana, 2021, March).

1.10.3 Career attainment

Career attainment refers to the achievement of desired career goals and milestones, including promotions, salary increases, status, and overall success within one's occupational path. Seibert, Kraimer & Liden (2001) Career attainment refers to the level of accomplishment or success an individual achieves in their professional life. On the other hand, Ng & Feldman (2014) However, it encompasses both the skills and knowledge they have acquired, and the achievements they have made in their chosen field. It's about reaching a desired level of expertise and success in one's career.

Career attainment encompasses both the skills and knowledge they have acquired, and the achievements they have made in their chosen field. It's about reaching a desired level of expertise and success in one's career. Attainment refers to the level of knowledge, skills, or qualifications a learner has acquired at a specific point in time. It reflects what the learner knows, or can do, at a particular stage of their educational journey. Attainment is often associated with outcomes such as

grades, test scores, certifications, or external measures of academic success. These rather narrow descriptors frequently ignore the development of learners' attitudes towards learning, which underpin so much success for individuals and organizations, whether they are schools, academies, or colleges.

Career attainment is described as learning or demonstration the skills and activities necessary for the job and completing the required education or training needed to enter the occupation. A career path involves a sequence of steps taken to advance to advance professionally this sequence of steps could involve education (Wijewardhana, 2021). Career attainment refers to the process an individual may undergo to evolve their occupational status. It is the process of making decisions for long term learning, to align personal needs of physical or psychological fulfillment with career advancement opportunities. Career attainment is defined as the process of learning and improving your skills so that you can do your job better and progress to better jobs. (Mc Donald et al 2016). The main difference between the definition of professional development and career attainment is that professional development advances an employee's career in ways that are aligned with their department's business priorities (Mc Donald et al 2016). Career attainment can also refer to the total encompassment of an individual's work-related experiences, leading up to the occupational role they may hold within an organization (Mc Donald et al 2016).

1.10.4 Bakiga Women

Bakiga women are members of the Bakiga ethnic group, predominantly found in Kabale District in south-western Uganda. The Bakiga are part of the larger Bantu-speaking communities and are historically known for their resilience, industriousness, and strong attachment to cultural traditions Kabonesa and Kindi (2002).

The cultural and social identity of Bakiga women traditionally play central roles in agriculture, family care, and community life. They are known for their hardworking nature, often involved in both subsistence farming and domestic duties. However, Tumushabe (2011) Says that their roles have been shaped by deeply entrenched cultural norms and gender expectations, which tend to prioritize marriage, childbearing, and obedience to male authority over personal ambitions such as education or formal careers.

While many Bakiga women in Kabale today are accessing education and employment opportunities, they often navigate a complex terrain where cultural loyalty and modern career ambitions are in conflict. The need to balance respect for tradition with the desire for professional growth remains a key theme in their lives.

Bakiga women in Kabale District are shaped by a rich cultural heritage, which defines their social roles and responsibilities. While scholars like Karwemera, Kabonesa, and Tumushabe acknowledge the strength and centrality of these women in community life, they also highlight the restrictive nature of cultural expectations that limit their full participation in careers and leadership. Understanding who Bakiga women are requires appreciating both their cultural context and their emerging roles in a changing society.

For purposes of this study, Bakiga women are referred to as women who are born as Bakiga and live in Kabale. These women should have lived by the components of Kikiga Culture and live by the description of those cultural attributes like language, norms, values and customs (Karwemera, 2014).

1.10.5 Professional Career attainment

It refers to the achievement of career goals, advancement, and success in one's profession.

1.10.6 Profession

It refers to an occupation that requires specialized knowledge, kills and training often involving a high level of expertise ethics and accountability. It requires formal education, specialized skills, and code of ethics, accountability and autonomy.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter discusses key terms in a general perspective and provides a justification for the conceptual framework investigating culture and professional women's career attainment, with noted varying views from participants. It discussed culture and its effect on professional women's career attainment in Kabale district. It discussed the elements of culture that influence professional women's career attainment the intervening factors that were brought on board especially by the NRM government like UPE, USE, affirmative action and other government initiated enabling programs in universities like weekend an evening program. The chapter lays a foundation for understanding the complex interplay between culture and professional women's career attainment. It explored the concept of culture, defined as the shared beliefs, values, norms, and practices that shape a society, and examined how these cultural components influence gender roles, expectations, and access to opportunities for women. The chapter has also clarified key terms such as culture, career, and career attainment, and operationalized them in relation to women's experiences in both traditional and modern contexts. Through a review of literature and conceptual frameworks, it has become evident that cultural norms often define and limit women's roles, sometimes reinforcing stereotypes that hinder their professional growth. Patriarchal ideologies, societal expectations of women as primary caregivers, and cultural restrictions on mobility and decision-making remain significant barriers to women's career advancement in many regions, especially in Africa.

The chapter has also highlighted the potential for positive cultural transformation through education, policy interventions, and initiatives such as affirmative action, which are designed to bridge gender disparities. These insights set the stage for the subsequent chapters, which will delve deeper into the empirical analysis, exploring how these cultural factors manifest in real-life scenarios and impact women's career trajectories. Hence the study aims to critically assess how culture can both constrain and enable professional women's career attainment, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on gender equality and socio-economic development.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The intersection of culture and gender plays a pivotal role in shaping women's professional career attainment across various contexts. This literature review explores the cultural norms, gender roles, and organizational practices that influence the career attainment of women. The review is structured around key themes that align with the study's objectives: understanding the components of Kikiga culture related to gender roles, analyzing the impact of these cultural elements on women's careers, how women go make it to their professional growth, examining the challenges women face in attaining careers, and exploring how women negotiate these cultural constraints to achieve professional growth.

2.1 The key components of Kikiga culture that influence the women's professional career attainment

Culture is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of human life and plays a crucial role in shaping behavior and adaptations across different groups. Culture is commonly defined as a complex concept that includes shared knowledge, beliefs, values, behaviors, and material objects that are acquired and transmitted across generations within a group (Schaefer, 1995; Moore, 1998; Webb, 1999; Seidler, 2010). It represents the totality of socially learned experiences that distinguish one group from another (Leong & Lannert, 2010; Lubart, 1998). This definition highlights the dynamic nature of culture, as it evolves in response to changing circumstances (Dwairy, 2019). One of the fundamental functions of culture is to provide individuals with identity, standards for relating to the environment, and criteria for determining importance (Guo, 2006). Culture shapes individuals' understanding of themselves and their place

in society, influencing their behavior and decision-making processes. It provides a framework through which individuals interpret and interact with the world around them.

Moreover, human culture is unique in its cumulative nature, allowing for the accumulation and transmission of knowledge across generations (Castro & Toro, 2014). This transmission of cultural information interacts with genetic evolution, creating a dual inheritance system that shapes human behavior and adaptations (Castro & Toro, 2014). While genetic evolution occurs through biological processes, cultural evolution occurs through the sharing and transmission of knowledge and practices within a group.

Understanding culture is crucial for comprehending human behavior and its variations across different groups. Culture influences various aspects of human life, including social norms, values, communication patterns, and socialization processes. It shapes individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, and provides a framework for interpreting and responding to the world around them.

Numerous studies have explored the role of culture in shaping behavior and cognition. For example, research has shown that cultural values influence individuals' decision-making processes, with individuals from different cultures prioritizing different values (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1992). Additionally, cultural differences in communication styles have been observed, with some cultures emphasizing direct communication, while others value indirect and implicit communication (Hall, 1976; Gudykunst, 1998).

Furthermore, culture plays a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions and interpretations of their environment. Cultural schemas, which are cognitive frameworks shaped by cultural experiences, influence how individuals process and interpret information (Markus & Kitayama,

1991). These schemas guide individuals' attention, memory, and interpretation of stimuli, leading to cultural variations in perception and cognition.

Culture also influences individuals' emotional experiences and expressions. Research has shown that cultural norms and values shape the ways in which individuals perceive and express emotions (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Matsumoto, 1993). Cultural variations in emotional experiences, such as the emphasis on individualistic versus collectivistic emotions, have been observed across different cultures.

Cultural norms and gender roles exert a profound influence on women's professional career aspirations and advancement. Career attainment is a dynamic process through which individuals evolve their occupational status. It involves making strategic decisions to align personal fulfillment with professional growth opportunities. As McDonald et al. (2016) define it, career attainment is the continuous learning and skill enhancement that leads to improved job performance and career progression.

Culture is universal and is centered at ensuring that patterns of human behavior and relationship are enhanced. Culture has varying elements that describe it, and help to different a culture from other cultures since their practice differ from one culture to another.

Therefore, the different components of culture include beliefs, values, customs, symbols, way of dressing, eating habits, religion, customs, norms and sanctions. These components are highly regarded so much so that people of a particular society believe that they attach a particular taboo if not well adhered too (Gelles and Levine, 1995).

Values are one of the components of cultures that cut across all cultures. This involves judgment of what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. A culture's values shape its norms and again shapes its practices. For example, in a central value like group harmony people place great emphasis on harmonious social relationships and dislike interpersonal conflict (Schneider & Silverman, 2010). When interpersonal disputes do arise, people do their best to minimize conflict by trying to resolve the disputes amicably

Another important value of culture is the work ethic. By the 19th century, Americans had come to view hard work not just as something that had to be done but as something that was morally good to do (Gina, 2000). Further, to the above, a culture is illustrated by the norms that describe rules about what people should or should not do, say, or think in a given situation. They provide guideline for every activity like birth, death, making love, making war, what to eat, what to wear, where and when to make a joke and to whom to make it (Brain, 1976). Many people, due to varying factors, and due to that, may violate Norms, sanctions are imposed.

In addition, sanctions provide an illustration of a given culture. These are the socially imposed rewards or punishments by which people are encouraged to conform to norms. Sanctions may be positive or negative. When a person does the right thing, he is given positive sanctions or rewards like use of the words like thank you, good, excellent, keep it up and others. The negative sanctions or punishments are used to discourage a given behavior like, punishment in form of denial of some basic privileges like lunch or use of strong words like don't do it again, (Brain, 1976).

Other components are symbols. A symbol is something that can express or evoke meaning. For instance, a cross, a crucifix, statue, and teddy bear. Many symbols are physical objects that have acquired cultural meaning and are used for symbolic rather than, instrumental purposes (Rochberg,

1982). Depending on cultural evaluations, and personal experiences, people can develop deep and powerful attachments to ordinary objects. Every culture is filled with symbols, or things that stand for something else and that often evokes various reactions and emotions. Some symbols are actually type of nonverbal communication, while other symbols are in fact material objects (Gelles and Levine, 1996).

Furthermore, language describes a given culture. Language is a shared set of spoken and written symbols and rules combining those symbols in meaningful ways. Language is referred to as the storehouse of culture (Harroff, 1962). It is the primary means of capturing, communicating, discussing, changing, and passing shared understanding to new generations (Plog and Bates, 1980). Perhaps the most important set of symbols is language. In English, the word chair means something we sit on. In French, the word chaise means the same thing. As long as we agree how to interpret these words, a shared language and thus society are possible. In the same way, differences in languages can make it quite difficult to communicate. Language is a key symbol of any culture. Humans have a capacity for language that no other animal species has, and children learn the language of their society just as they learn other aspects of their culture (Brown, 2009). Language can be spoken or written. One of the most important developments in the evolution of society was the creation of written language. Some of the preindustrial societies that anthropologists have studied had written language, while others did not, and in the remaining societies the "written" language consists mainly of pictures, not words (Murdock & White, 1969).

The other component are customs. These are the particular ways of doing things that are done regularly and are taken to be a norm. For instance, the custom of making sacrifices to the gods, the custom of punishing girls who get pregnant before marriage and the custom of exchanging bride price for a woman (Harris, 1974).

In addition, the other components are artifacts or material objects describe a given culture. This constitutes a society's material culture. In the simplest societies, artifacts are largely limited to a few tools, the huts people live in, and the clothing they wear. Because of technological advances during the past two decades, many such societies may be said to have a wireless culture, as smartphones, netbooks and laptops, and GPS devices, which dominate much of modern life. However, the artifacts associated with this culture were unknown a generation ago. Technological development created these artifacts and also new language to describe them and the functions they perform. Today's wireless artifacts help reinforce its own commitment to wireless technology as a way of life, if only because children are now growing up with them, often even before they can read and write (Harris, 1974).

Lastly, technology as a body of practical knowledge and equipment for enhancing the effectiveness of human labor and altering the environment for human use constitute a given culture. Technology creates a particular physical, social, and psychological environment (Harris, 1974).

Gender inequality was also believed to an issue that affected career development. This was directly linked to growing disparities in the social context of the family, school and neighborhoods (Deininger & Okidi, 2003). Gender obstacles are also confounded by growing poverty rates which account for disparities in educational access, outcomes and opportunities at primary, secondary and higher levels, and affect girls and women as well as boys and men differently (Gaddis, 2010).

Because gender constructs are culturally specific and historically situated (Haslanger & Haslanger, 2012), the social norms attributed to men and women may be fluid and contentious depending on location, contexts, politics and epistemologies (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). In education, it provides a filtering mechanism through which the potential for social advancement of groups may be

encouraged or discouraged (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Gender constructs may also determine the empowerment of one group and the disempowerment of another which ones, (Mohanty & Alexander, 2007).

According to Mezzadra and Neilson (2013), this could lead to internal exclusion, differential exclusion or segregation. Through gendered processes, women's time, labor and the products of their bodies are appropriated according to how sexual obligations and caring duties are constructed (Mikkola, 2016). These duties and obligations, culturally defined and imposed, from one generation to the next, influence the choices made at family and household, market, community and state levels, about who gets education, how and who does not (Mikkola, 2016).

In addition, 2004, there are family issues, the larger the family size, the fewer the chances appear to be for women in higher education in general. Similarly, the higher the parental/inter-generational level of education, the greater the chances became for girls and women in higher education (Goldin, Katz and Kuziemko, 2006). Apparently, this appears to have been the case also in the Western world, until the 1960s, when more women were welcomed in higher education due to bolder policy moves and reforms (Ono, 2004). These include the introduction of oral contraception in the United States (USA) (Goldin & Katz, 2002) and the elimination of legal or tacit forms of discrimination, which ensure women do not have to give up their education or jobs, when they get married, become pregnant or acquire motherhood (Goldin, Katz, & Kuziemko, 2006).

In addition, Geoffrey (2020), in Africa, university education, in particular was preserved for men. This implies that family, community and state resources were directed towards educating boys. Culturally, girls in Uganda were only favored in education if they had fewer or no brothers.

Otherwise, they were groomed to be married away at the earliest opportunity and socialized to be good wives and mothers. Patriarchal values restrained families from training girls as investment in the girl child was perceived as an investment for the man to whom she would eventually be married (Ssekamwa, 2020).

However, the Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), 69 percent of Ugandan adolescent girls had never attended secondary school and 40 percent were married off by the age of 18 (MoES, 2016). In spite of the introduction of Affirmative Action Policy in 1990, the Universal primary and Secondary Education (USE) policy in 1997 and 2007 respectively, the majority of girls drop out of the schooling system. The highest level of school dropout rates, appear to start from primary five when most girls turn 11, and continues unabated, until primary seven.

Trinkenreich et al (2022), examine women in global software teams (e.g., at Ericsson), detailing how socio-cultural pressures, micro aggressions, motherhood bias, and stereotype threats ("prove-it-again") undermine career progress. They recommend interventions like flexible working, sabbaticals, mentoring, and parenthood support.

Das & Tampubolon (2022) link women's sense of agency focused planning and action, with resilience and well-being, underscoring that cultural empowerment supports career confidence. Galindo-Silva & Herrera-Idárraga (2023, Colombia) show that constitutional embedding of gender-equality principles correlates with shifts in cultural attitudes and increased female employment, highlighting policy's cultural leverage on careers.

Broad career transition review (2022) surveys 63 studies (1975–2022), spotlighting the importance of inter sectionalist, technology, mentorship, sponsorship, and flexible work in how women navigate career shifts. Liani et al. (2021) focus on Sub-Saharan African researchers, revealing the

stress of juggling "two lives" (family and work) and metaphors like "glass ball vs. rubber ball" to illustrate the cultural trade-offs women make. Raburu (2015, Kenya) documents how women academics delay marriage or children, work extra hard, and strategically publish to overcome patriarchal university cultures, showing clear links between cultural norms and career tactics.

South Africa (2023): Study of 412 women in service roles concludes that women who proactively take responsibility for skill-building and career planning advance further. Highlighting agency as a cultural and professional lever. Africa-wide labor analysis (2025) notes women represent ~40% of formal jobs and earn about two-thirds of men's wages, while cultural expectations add an invisible "double burden" en.wikipedia.org.

While professional development focuses on advancing an employee's career within the context of departmental goals (Kwesiga, 2002), career attainment encompasses a broader spectrum of work-related experiences culminating in an individual's occupational role within an organization (McDonald et al., 2016). In today's interconnected world, career development is crucial for acquiring and expanding knowledge bases, particularly in countries like Uganda. However, developing nations often struggle to adapt their tertiary education systems to the demands of a knowledge-based global economy (Kwesiga, 2002).

Traditional gender roles often dictate that women prioritize family responsibilities over professional ambitions, leading to lower career aspirations and limited career progression. In many cultures, including the Bakiga, women are expected to be caregivers and homemakers, roles that are culturally reinforced and often result in women being overlooked for educational and professional opportunities. Research consistently shows that traditional gender roles significantly impact women's career aspirations and progression. Women often face barriers due to family

responsibilities and societal expectations (Domenico & Jones, 2007; Ismail & Ibrahim, 2008). These roles are culturally reinforced, leading to lower educational attainment and reduced likelihood of pursuing STEM careers for women (Dicke et al., 2019). In academic settings, women experience challenges balancing family and work commitments, resulting in slower career advancement (Taylor-Abdulai et al., 2014; Raburu, 2010). Priming traditional gender roles can increase gender stereotypes and decrease women's interest in masculine occupations (Rudman & Phelan, 2010). Rural women, in particular, face additional societal pressures to prioritize domestic responsibilities over career aspirations (Wijewardhana & Dias, 2021).

Despite some evidence of increasing egalitarianism in work and family roles, women still tend to make more job trade-offs for family life compared to men (Maume, 2006). Research has shown that these traditional gender norms are not limited to developing countries but persist even in more progressive societies, where women continue to face barriers in career advancement due to cultural expectations (Anderson, 2017). These norms create a societal pressure that discourages women from pursuing higher education or careers in male-dominated fields, thereby reinforcing the gender gap in certain industries and professions (Martinez, 2016).

2.2 How Kikiga culture influences women professional career attainment

The influence of organizational culture on professional women's career attainment has been a topic of significant interest and research, particularly in male-dominated industries. Numerous studies have pointed out that cultural norms within organizations often favor masculine traits and leadership styles, which are traditionally associated with assertiveness, competitiveness, and confidence - qualities that have long been attributed to men (Campuzano, 2019). This prevailing cultural bias has significant implications for professional women's career attainment, particularly in industries where men hold the majority of leadership positions.

Research has consistently shown that organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping women's career trajectories, especially in male-dominated industries. The dominance of masculine cultural norms and leadership styles can create formidable barriers for women, hindering their access to leadership roles and career attainment opportunities (Elvitigalage et al., 2006). This gender inequality perpetuated by organizational culture can have long-lasting effects on women's professional growth and overall job satisfaction.

Hierarchical cultures, such as those found in many African societies, including the Bakiga, present unique challenges for women in their pursuit of career attainment. In these societies, women with a high-power distance may benefit more from mentoring relationships, but they still face substantial obstacles when trying to climb the organizational ladder (Ramaswami et al., 2014). The construction industry, for instance, is notorious for its macho culture, which often excludes women from decision-making processes and managerial positions (Ng Elvitigalage et al., 2006; Akgemci et al., 2016). This exclusionary culture within the construction industry further perpetuates gender disparities and limits women's opportunities for career growth.

The impact of organizational culture on professional women's career attainment goes beyond individual experiences. It has broader societal implications, as it reinforces gender stereotypes and perpetuates systemic inequalities. By favoring masculine traits and leadership styles, organizations inadvertently limit the potential contributions of women and hinder the overall progress towards gender equality in the workplace.

Efforts to address the influence of organizational culture on professional women's career attainment have been made in recent years. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion, and are implementing initiatives to promote gender equality

and break down barriers for women. However, progress remains slow, and there is still much work to be done to create truly inclusive cultures that value and support the career aspirations of women.

Career attainment refers to the process an individual may undergo to evolve their occupational status. It is the process of making decisions for long term learning, to align personal needs of physical or psychological fulfillment with career advancement opportunities. Career attainment is defined as the process of learning and improving your skills so that you can do your job better and progress to better jobs. (Mc Donald et al 2016). The main difference between the definition of professional development and career attainment is that professional development advances an employee's career in ways that are aligned with their department's business priorities (Mc Donald et al 2016). Career attainment can also refer to the total encompassment of an individual's work-related experiences, leading up to the occupational role they may hold within an organization (Mc Donald et al 2016). In contemporary globalized world, career attainment plays a key role in acquiring and building knowledge base in Uganda. But the developing nations have been lagging behind when it comes to tertiary education, and a key concern is whether these countries would be able to adapt and shape their tertiary education systems to confront the challenges of keeping up with today's knowledge-based globalized world (Kwesiga, 2002).

More specifically, career attainment institutions support knowledge-driven economic growth strategies and poverty reduction by training a qualified and adaptable labor force, including high-level scientists, professionals, technicians, teachers in basic and secondary education, and future government civil service, and business leaders, generating new knowledge, providing the capacity to access the existing global knowledge and adapt it to local use (Kwesiga, 2002).

Career attainment offers better opportunities and life chances to low-income and minority students, thereby increasing their employability, income prospects, and decreasing income inequality. The ethics, values, attitudes, and knowledge that tertiary institutions impart to students contribute to the social capital necessary for constructing healthy civil societies and socially cohesive cultures, achieving good governance, and helping build democratic political systems (Tibenderana, 2003).

Career attainment institutions play an essential role in supporting basic and secondary education. The training of teachers and school principals, from preschool to the upper secondary level, is the primary responsibility of tertiary education institutions. Education specialists with tertiary education qualifications participate in curriculum design and educational research for lower levels (Kwesiga et al, 2003).

Career attainment institutions like tertiary training organizations, have a critical role in supporting knowledge-driven economic growth strategies and the construction of democratic, socially cohesive societies. Tertiary education assists in the improvement of the public institutions through the training of competent and responsible professionals needed for sound macroeconomic and public sector management that enhance career attainment. The academic and research activities provide crucial support for the national innovation system and tertiary institutions often constitute the backbone of a country's information infrastructure, in their role as repositories and conduits of information, computer network hosts, and Internet service providers (Ayers, 1993).

Three broad activities of career attainment institutions that assist the construction of democratic, knowledge-driven societies include supporting innovation by generating new knowledge, accessing global stores of knowledge and putting it to local use, Contributing to human capital formation by training a qualified and adaptable labor force, including high-level scientists,

professionals, technicians, basic and secondary education teachers, and future government, civil service, and business leaders, Providing the foundation for democracy, nation building, and social cohesion (UNDP, 2001).

Rapid changes are occurring worldwide, not only in economics, science, and technology but also in political and social dynamics. From the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, to the recent evolution in Egypt, these events are altering the global political landscape. The outcomes are a transition to democracy in many parts of the world, a greater concern with issues like governance and accountability, increased awareness of human rights, and the rise of civil society organizations. The proportion of the world's countries practicing some form of democratic governance rose from percent in 1988 to 61 percent in 1998, and is continuing to rise. Career attainment institutions themselves have not only been influenced by these changes, but they have increasingly gained importance as pillars of social cohesion, forums of public discourse, and contributors to open debate (Chambers, 1995).

One of the greatest and most urgent challenges facing the poorest countries may be to produce an adequate supply of affordable, nutritious food for their growing populations without causing further environmental degradation. The utilization of modern biotechnology techniques such as genetically modified crops can play a critical role in increasing yields, enhancing nutritional value, improving plant characteristics, for instance, resistance to drought and pests), and decreasing post-harvest loss. To make informed decisions on how to address these challenges, countries need to call on highly qualified specialists who will not be available unless investments in advanced human capital are made (UNDP, 2001).

One specific dimension of scientific and technological progress that is already having strong effect on the tertiary education sector is the information and communication technology revolution. It is revolutionizing capacity to store, transmit, access, and use information. A country's capacity to take advantage of the knowledge economy therefore depends on how quickly it can adjust its capacity to generate and share knowledge. Appropriate, well-functioning information and communications technologies are of vital importance to tertiary education because they have the potential to streamline and reduce administrative tasks and, in general, make possible greater efficiency and effectiveness in the management of tertiary education systems and institutions, expand access and improve the quality of instruction and learning on all levels and vastly broaden access to information and data cross-campus, or across the globe (UNDP, 2001).

University education, one of the last levels in the learning process, is a critical component of human development worldwide that enhances career attainment. It provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labor market but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and a myriad of other personnel. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead effective governments, and make important decisions which affect entire societies (Cvelich, 2011).

An educated populace is vital in today's world, with the convergent impacts of globalization, the increasing importance of knowledge as a main driver of growth, and the information and communication revolution. Knowledge accumulation and application have become major factors in economic development and are increasingly at the core of a country's competitive advantage. The combination of increased computing power, diminishing prices of hardware and software, improvement of wireless and satellite technologies, and reduced telecommunication costs have all

but removed the space and time barriers to information access and exchange (Rawson, 2003). Career attainment can occur on an individual basis or a corporate and organizational level.

A spiral career is any series of short-term jobs that are non-identical to one another, but still contribute to skill-building of a specific attribute that individuals will accept over their lifetime. Many individuals can undergo slight career transitions or accept short-term contract work in the same work field, to build on different skill sets needed for them to succeed in an organizational environment. For example, an individual with a degree in Business hired to do 'project management' in one area of a department can be promoted or transferred to complete another task in the same department to work on 'marketing' (Barnett and Hyde 2001).

As the process of career planning is relational to balancing the varying factors of demands in an individual's life, socio-demographics factors relating to an individual's age, race, gender, and socio-economic status may influence the extent to which they pursue career planning or other opportunities for training and development of skills. The varying aspects of social identity in relation to the context of finding a balance to the demands in personal life will influence individuals to make decisions to change, adapt, or abandon their career path (Cooper at el 1988).

Both men and women for example, will make different types of decisions based on the situational factors that require balance. Women tend to make more choices to balance work and non-work priorities such as child or elder care. This may also discourage some women to pursue their career path, and focus on prioritizing assistance for others. Men will make decisions based on not only having to balance work and non-work priorities, but for advancement and added income (Cooper at el 1988).

The influence of organizational culture on professional women's career attainment, particularly in male-dominated industries, is significant. Masculine cultural norms and leadership styles often prevail, creating barriers for women in accessing leadership roles and career attainment opportunities. This cultural bias perpetuates gender inequality and limits the potential contributions of women in the workplace. Efforts to address these issues are underway, but more work is needed to create inclusive cultures that promote gender equality.

The education barriers and cultural constraints influence Bakiga professional women's career attainment. Access to education is a fundamental determinant of career attainment, yet women worldwide face numerous cultural barriers that hinder their educational opportunities. In many societies, including the Bakiga, traditional gender roles and societal expectations prioritize domestic duties over educational pursuits for women. This cultural bias results in limited educational resources and opportunities for women, particularly in rural areas, which in turn restricts their ability to attain higher education and professional qualifications. Research consistently shows that women face significant cultural and socioeconomic barriers to educational attainment, particularly in rural areas of developing countries. Traditional gender roles, patriarchal norms, and religious misinterpretations often prioritize domestic duties over education for women (Jamshaid, 2020).

Early marriage, poverty, and safety concerns further limit girls' access to higher education (Yewande & Olawunmi, 2023; Ali et al., 2021). Parental education levels, gender biases, and household wealth status significantly influence female educational outcomes (Hashmi et al., 2008). Women who pursue higher education often face challenges balancing societal expectations with academic pursuits (Johnson, 2011). In professional settings, women encounter both internal and external barriers to advancement in educational management (Brown, 1996).

The cultural expectation that women should focus on family responsibilities rather than education has long been recognized as a significant barrier to their career attainment. Numerous studies have consistently shown that family responsibilities pose significant challenges for women in advancing their careers. This literature review aims to explore the impact of cultural expectations on professional women's career attainment, with a specific focus on the challenges they face in balancing work and family obligations, the influence of gender stereotypes, and the gender gap in women's career attainment.

Balancing work and family obligations is a common challenge faced by women in their career progression. Khan (2022) highlights that cultural expectations and gender stereotypes often place a greater burden of family care on women, particularly in rural areas. This burden can lead to reduced career aspirations and expectations (Domenico & Jones, 2006; Prasetia et al., 2024). Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) emphasize that family structure, commitment to family, and work-family conflict are major obstacles for professional women's career attainment. These challenges are not limited to any specific sector, as Venkateswaran (2020) notes that they are observed across various sectors, including private companies, government-linked organizations, and academia.

In addition to the challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities, women also face societal barriers that discourage them from pursuing careers in fields deemed inappropriate for their gender. This is particularly evident in patriarchal societies, where gender roles are strictly defined. The gender gap in STEM fields, which include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, is a significant issue in these societies. Studies conducted in Uganda reveal persistent underrepresentation of women in STEM fields at universities (Lubaale, 2022; Odaga, 2020). This disparity is attributed to societal stereotypes, lack of role models, and inadequate support systems (Warsito et al., 2023).

Patriarchy, gender stereotypes, and limited mentorship contribute to the imbalance in STEM fields. Lubaale (2022) emphasizes the role of patriarchy in discouraging women from pursuing careers in STEM, as these fields are often seen as male-dominated and not suitable for women. Gender stereotypes further reinforce these societal expectations, creating a perception that women are less capable or interested in STEM subjects. The lack of visible role models and mentors also hinders women's profession career attainment, as they may not have access to guidance and support from individuals who have successfully navigated these fields.

The other that culture influences professional women's career attainment is through the workplace gender Bias Gender bias in career attainment is a pervasive issue that has long-lasting effects on individuals and society as a whole. This literature review aims to examine the various aspects of gender bias in career attainment, including its definition, types, and impact on individuals' attitudes and opportunities. It will also explore the underlying factors contributing to gender bias and potential strategies to mitigate its effects.

To begin with, it is essential to understand the concept of gender bias. Gender bias refers to a preference or prejudice towards one gender over the other, often resulting in differential treatment based on gender identity (Orgeville et al., 2014). This bias can be conscious or unconscious and may manifest in subtle or overt ways. Loughlin (2005) categorizes gender bias towards women into three types: Type I, which involves overt sexism with the intention to harm; Type II, which involves tacit sexism with neutral intentions; and Type III, a new type of bias that aims to help women but still singles them out based on their gender.

In order to fully comprehend gender bias, it is crucial to differentiate between the terms gender and sex. Gender refers to socially constructed expectations and roles assigned to women and men,

while sex refers to biological differences between females and males (The Gender Policy, 1995). These socially constructed expectations often lead to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, which play a significant role in perpetuating gender bias in various aspects of life, including career development.

Gender bias in career attainment specifically refers to negative stereotypes assigned to individuals based on their gender, which can hinder their ability to pursue and succeed in certain careers. Historically, positive stereotypes have been associated with men, such as being strong, brave, and natural leaders, while negative stereotypes have been assigned to women, such as being weak, shy, and cowardly (Ssentamu, 1999). These stereotypes influence individuals' attitudes and aspirations towards their career goals, particularly affecting professional women's career attainment.

The impact of gender bias on career attainment is multifaceted. It not only affects individuals' self-perception and confidence but also limits their access to opportunities and resources. Women often face barriers and biases in various stages of their career, including education, recruitment, promotion, and leadership positions (Orgeville et al., 2014). This perpetuates gender inequality in the workforce and hinders the progress towards achieving gender parity.

Several underlying factors contribute to gender bias in career attainment. Societal norms and expectations regarding gender roles play a significant role in shaping individuals' attitudes and opportunities. Traditional beliefs that associate certain careers with specific genders create barriers for individuals who do not conform to these stereotypes. Additionally, organizational cultures and practices, such as biased recruitment and promotion processes, contribute to gender bias in the workplace (Loughlin, 2005).

To address gender bias in career attainment, various strategies can be implemented. Education and awareness programs can help challenge and change gender stereotypes, promoting equal opportunities for all individuals. Organizations can also adopt policies and practices that promote gender equality, such as implementing gender-neutral recruitment processes, providing mentorship and sponsorship programs for women, and fostering inclusive and supportive work environments (Orgeville et al., 2014).

Gender bias in workplace culture significantly hinders women's career progression, manifesting through stereotypes, biased evaluations, and limited access to leadership roles (Wynn & Correll, 2018; Day, 2017). These biases often operate unconsciously, creating a "glass ceiling" effect (Eagly & Carli, 2008). Organizational culture preferences play a crucial role, with women showing less preference for masculine cultures (Vianen & Fischer, 2002). The impact of gender bias is multifaceted, affecting hiring decisions, task allocation, and performance evaluations throughout women's careers (Bol & Fogel-Yaari, 2022).

Work-life balance and intensive parenting demands further complicate women's professional advancement (Eagly & Carli, 2008). Additionally, women face challenges in leadership roles due to societal expectations and the "glass cliff" phenomenon (Khanam & Ishrat, 2024). To address these issues, organizations need holistic approaches, including diversity initiatives, mentorship programs, and changes in long-hours culture (Palermo, 2004; Heilman, 2001).

The presence of gender bias in workplace culture has been widely recognized as a significant barrier to women's career progression. Numerous studies have highlighted the detrimental effects of gender stereotypes and biased evaluations on women's opportunities for advancement. Wynn and Correll (2018) found that women are often perceived as lacking leadership qualities, leading

to their exclusion from leadership roles. Similarly, Day (2017) emphasized that gender bias in performance evaluations often results in women being evaluated less favorably compared to their male counterparts, even when their performance is objectively similar.

The glass ceiling effect, as described by Eagly and Carli (2008), refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women from reaching top-level positions in organizations. These barriers, rooted in gender bias, limit women's access to leadership roles and impede their career progression. The authors argue that these barriers are often unconscious and perpetuated by organizational culture preferences. Vianen and Fischer (2002) support this notion, suggesting that women are less inclined to thrive in masculine cultures, which are characterized by competitiveness, assertiveness, and a focus on individual achievement. This preference for more collaborative and nurturing work environments can further hinder women's advancement in traditionally male-dominated industries.

The impact of gender bias extends beyond hiring decisions and evaluations. Bol and Fogel-Yaari (2022) highlight the pervasive nature of gender bias, affecting task allocation and the opportunities women are given to showcase their skills and abilities. Women are often assigned less challenging or visible tasks, limiting their chances to demonstrate their capabilities and potential for advancement. This biased task allocation can contribute to the perpetuation of gender disparities within organizations.

Work-life balance and intensive parenting demands also pose challenges to women's professional advancement. Eagly and Carli (2008) argue that societal expectations and traditional gender roles place a disproportionate burden on women to balance their professional and personal responsibilities. This can result in women facing difficulties in dedicating the necessary time and energy to their careers, further hindering their progression. Moreover, the expectation that women

should prioritize their family responsibilities over their careers can lead to biases and assumptions about their commitment and suitability for leadership roles.

Women also face unique challenges when assuming leadership positions. Khanam and Ishrat (2024) highlight the "glass cliff" phenomenon, which refers to the tendency for women to be appointed to leadership roles during times of crisis or instability. This places women in precarious positions, where failure is more likely, and they face heightened scrutiny and criticism. Societal expectations and stereotypes about women's leadership abilities contribute to this phenomenon, making it more difficult for women to succeed in leadership positions.

To address these pervasive issues of gender bias and promote professional women's career attainment, organizations need to adopt holistic approaches. Diversity initiatives can help create inclusive work environments that value and celebrate gender diversity. These initiatives can involve setting gender diversity goals, implementing bias training programs, and establishing diversity committees or task forces. Mentorship programs can also play a crucial role in providing guidance, support, and networking opportunities for women. By pairing women with experienced mentors who can offer advice and advocate for their advancement, these programs can help women navigate the challenges they face in the workplace.

Furthermore, organizations should consider changes in the long-hours culture that often penalizes individuals with caregiving responsibilities. Palermo (2004) argues that promoting work-life balance through flexible work arrangements, parental leave policies, and supportive childcare options can help remove barriers to professional women's career attainment. By acknowledging and accommodating the unique challenges faced by women, organizations can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that enables women to thrive professionally.

Gender bias in workplace culture has long been recognized as a significant barrier to women's career progression. Numerous studies have shed light on the detrimental effects of gender bias on women's professional development, highlighting the need for addressing this issue within organizations. This literature review aims to explore the existing research on gender bias in the workplace, focusing on the stereotypes that undermine women's abilities and competence, biased evaluations, and the perpetuation of the glass ceiling effect.

Wynn and Correll (2018) conducted a study that revealed how women are often subjected to stereotypes that undermine their abilities and competence in the workplace. These stereotypes, such as the belief that women are less competent or less suited for leadership roles, can significantly impact professional women's career attainment. The study found that these stereotypes not only influence individuals' perceptions of women's capabilities but also affect the evaluations they receive.

Biased evaluations play a crucial role in perpetuating gender bias in the workplace. Day (2017) emphasizes that women's performance is often undervalued or overlooked compared to their male counterparts. This bias can manifest itself in various ways, such as through lower performance ratings, fewer opportunities for challenging assignments or promotions, and lower salaries. Biased evaluations not only hinder professional women's career attainment but also contribute to a hostile work environment, leading to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover rates among women.

The "glass ceiling" effect is a term used to describe the invisible barriers that prevent women from reaching higher positions in organizations. Eagly and Carli (2008) argue that gender bias, combined with societal expectations and stereotypes, contributes to this phenomenon. These

barriers can include limited access to networking opportunities, exclusion from informal decision-making processes, and a lack of mentorship and sponsorship. The glass ceiling effect not only affects individual women but also perpetuates gender inequality at the organizational level.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, other studies have identified various organizational and cultural factors that contribute to gender bias in the workplace. For example, research has shown that male-dominated work environments, where masculine norms and values prevail, can create a hostile climate for women (Powell et al., 2012). This can result in women feeling marginalized, excluded, and less likely to voice their opinions or ideas. Moreover, organizational policies and practices, such as biased recruitment and promotion processes, can further reinforce gender bias and hinder women's career progression (Kulik et al., 2016).

While the literature reviewed highlights the pervasive nature of gender bias in the workplace, it is essential to acknowledge that progress has been made in recent years. Organizations have started to recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion, implementing initiatives and policies aimed at addressing gender bias. For instance, some companies have introduced unconscious bias training programs to raise awareness among employees and reduce biased decision-making (Castilla and Benard, 2010). Additionally, the implementation of gender quotas and affirmative action policies in certain countries has shown promising results in increasing women's representation in leadership positions (Kanter, 1977).

Gender bias within organizations is a pervasive issue that continues to hinder women's career advancement and perpetuate gender disparities. This literature review aims to explore the impact of masculine cultures within organizations on gender bias, specifically focusing on the

misalignment between organizational culture preferences and women's preferences, as well as the various ways in which gender bias affects women's careers.

The preference for masculine cultures within organizations has been identified as a contributing factor to gender bias. Vianen and Fischer (2002) conducted a study that found women tend to show less preference for masculine cultures, which are often associated with assertiveness, competitiveness, and individualism. These cultural preferences can create a misalignment between women's preferences and the dominant organizational culture, leading to feelings of marginalization and exclusion from certain opportunities for career advancement. This misalignment can further perpetuate gender biases within organizations, as women may face barriers in accessing resources, networks, and promotions.

Furthermore, gender bias not only impacts individual instances but also permeates various aspects of women's careers. Bol and Fogel-Yaari (2022) highlight that gender bias affects hiring decisions, task allocation, and performance evaluations. During the hiring process, women may face biases that result in fewer employment or promotion opportunities. This can be attributed to stereotypes and biases held by hiring managers, which influence their decision-making process. As a result, women may find themselves in positions with limited growth potential and fewer opportunities for advancement.

Task allocation is another area where gender bias becomes apparent. Women often receive less challenging or high-profile tasks compared to their male counterparts. This disparity in task allocation limits women's opportunities for skill development and recognition, as they are not given the chance to showcase their abilities in more demanding roles. This perpetuates the notion

that women are less capable or suited for certain positions, further hindering their career progression.

Biased performance evaluations also contribute to gender disparities within organizations. Women's contributions are often undervalued or overlooked, leading to lower performance ratings and fewer opportunities for advancement. This bias can be attributed to both explicit and implicit biases held by evaluators, who may unconsciously favor male employees or attribute their success to innate abilities rather than their efforts. Biased evaluations not only hinder women's career progression but also reinforce gender stereotypes and perpetuate the cycle of gender bias within organizations.

It is important to note that gender bias is not solely the responsibility of individual employees; it is also influenced by organizational structures and practices. Organizational policies and practices that perpetuate gender bias, such as lack of flexible work arrangements or inadequate support for work-life balance, contribute to the marginalization of women within the workplace. Addressing gender bias requires a comprehensive approach that involves both individual awareness and organizational change.

Work-life balance and intensive parenting demands pose significant challenges for women's professional advancement. Societal expectations often place a heavier burden on women to fulfill caregiving responsibilities, which can hinder their availability and commitment to work. This can lead to women being perceived as less dedicated or competent compared to men, impacting their chances of career advancement (Eagly & Carli, 2008).

Eagly and Carli (2008) argue that societal expectations play a crucial role in hindering women's career advancement. Women are often expected to prioritize their caregiving responsibilities over their professional commitments. This expectation can lead to a perception of women as less dedicated or competent compared to men, ultimately affecting their opportunities for career attainment. The burden of balancing work and family responsibilities falls disproportionately on women, creating challenges for their professional growth.

Moreover, women face unique challenges in leadership roles due to societal expectations and the "glass cliff" phenomenon. Khanam and Ishrat (2024) explain that women in leadership positions often face higher scrutiny and have to navigate societal expectations of femininity and leadership. These expectations can create a double bind, where women are expected to be assertive and decisive as leaders but also nurturing and empathetic as women. This can lead to a perception that women are not as competent or suitable for leadership roles compared to men.

The "glass cliff" phenomenon further exacerbates the challenges faced by women in leadership positions. This phenomenon refers to the tendency for women to be appointed to leadership positions during times of crisis or instability, where the chances of failure are higher. The perception that women are more likely to fail in these challenging situations perpetuates the stereotype that they are less capable or suitable for leadership roles. This bias can limit women's opportunities for advancement and hinder their professional growth.

Research has shown that the gendered expectations placed on women can have detrimental effects on their career trajectories. Eagly and Carli (2008) suggest that organizations need to address these biases and create supportive work environments that accommodate the work-life balance needs of

both men and women. This includes implementing flexible work arrangements, providing parental leave policies, and promoting a culture of inclusivity and equality.

To overcome the challenges faced by women in leadership positions, organizations should also focus on challenging societal expectations and stereotypes. Khanam and Ishrat (2024) propose that organizations should promote diverse leadership styles and challenge the notion that there is only one right way to lead. By recognizing and valuing the unique strengths that women bring to leadership roles, organizations can create more inclusive and equitable environments that allow for women's professional advancement.

However, it is important to note that this literature review is based on the cited sources and may not encompass all relevant research in the field. The findings and conclusions presented here should be interpreted with caution and further research should be conducted to validate and expand upon these insights.

2.3 How Bakiga Women balance their cultural aspirations and professional growth

Career interruptions due to family responsibilities have been widely recognized as a significant factor impacting women's career progression and earnings. Numerous studies have consistently shown that women are more likely than men to experience work interruptions for family reasons, leading to lower occupational prestige and income penalties. This literature review aims to explore the existing research on the negative impacts of career interruptions on women's career advancement and earnings, highlighting the long-term consequences associated with interrupted careers.

Building on the above, Malo and Muñoz Bullón (2004) conducted a study that examined the relationship between career interruptions and women's career progression. The findings revealed that women who experienced career interruptions for family reasons were less likely to attain higher occupational positions compared to their counterparts who did not face such interruptions. Additionally, these interrupted careers were associated with lower earnings, indicating the negative impact of these interruptions on women's financial well-being.

On a similar note, Li and Currie (1992) investigated the effects of career interruptions on women's earnings. Their study found that women who took breaks from their careers for family responsibilities experienced a significant income penalty compared to women who did not have such interruptions. The income penalty persisted even after controlling for other factors such as education and work experience, indicating that career interruptions alone had a detrimental effect on women's earning potential.

In addition, Arun et al. (2004) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the impact of career interruptions on women's occupational prestige. The study found that women who had experienced career interruptions for family reasons had lower occupational prestige compared to women who had uninterrupted careers. This lower occupational prestige can further contribute to reduced earnings and limited career advancement opportunities for women.

However, it's important to note that the long-term consequences of career interruptions on women's earnings were explored by Reitman and Schneer (2005). Their study revealed that even 25 years after experiencing career interruptions, women earned less compared to their counterparts with uninterrupted careers. This finding highlights the enduring nature of the negative impact of

career interruptions on women's financial stability and reinforces the need for addressing this issue to promote gender equality in the workplace.

More to the above, cultural expectations and gender roles play a significant role in perpetuating this issue. Women are often expected to prioritize family over career, leading to career interruptions (Zhou, 2015; Coltrane, 2004). These societal expectations place women in a challenging position, as they are forced to make choices between their career and family responsibilities. The lack of flexible work options exacerbates the problem, leaving women with limited choices and forcing them to make difficult decisions (Ketsche & Branscomb, 2003).

High-achieving women, in particular, face competing devotions to work and family. They often find themselves torn between pursuing high-powered careers and fulfilling their desire for motherhood. This dilemma often leads to either foregoing motherhood altogether or leaving their careers to prioritize their family (Bianchi, 2005). These findings highlight the persistent challenges that women face in balancing their career aspirations with their family responsibilities.

Further, the negative impacts of career interruptions on women's career progression and earnings have been well-documented in the literature. Numerous studies have consistently shown that women who experience career interruptions due to family responsibilities face significant barriers in advancing their careers and suffer financial penalties. For example, Malo and Muñoz Bullón (2004) conducted a study in Spain and found that women who experienced career interruptions due to family responsibilities had lower occupational prestige compared to women who did not experience such interruptions. Similarly, Li and Currie (1992) examined data from Canada and found that women who took breaks from their careers for family reasons had lower earnings compared to women who did not interrupt their careers.

Furthermore, a study by Arun et al. (2004) in the United Kingdom also found that women who had career interruptions due to family responsibilities faced income penalties. The authors observed that these penalties persisted even after controlling for factors such as education and work experience. The long-term consequences of career interruptions for women have also been explored in the literature. Reitman and Schneer (2005) conducted a study in the United States and found that women who experienced career interruptions earned significantly less even 25 years later compared to women with uninterrupted careers. This finding suggests that the negative impacts of career interruptions can have lasting effects on women's earnings.

In addition, cultural expectations and gender roles contribute to the challenges faced by women in balancing career and family responsibilities. Zhou (2015) examined the influence of cultural expectations on work-family conflict in China and found that societal norms emphasizing women's role as primary caregivers often lead to career interruptions. Similarly, Coltrane (2004) explored the effects of gender roles in the United States and found that women are more likely to experience career interruptions due to family responsibilities compared to men.

Important to note is that lack of flexible work options further compounds the challenges faced by women. Ketsche and Branscomb (2003) examined the impact of workplace flexibility on women's career decisions in the United States and found that the absence of flexible work arrangements forces women to choose between their career and family. This limited choice often results in women either sacrificing their career aspirations or compromising their family responsibilities. High-achieving women, who often have demanding careers, face unique challenges in balancing work and family. Bianchi (2005) explored the experiences of high-achieving women in the United States and found that they often struggle to reconcile their desire for motherhood with the demands

of their careers. This dilemma frequently leads to either delaying or foregoing motherhood altogether, or leaving high-powered careers to prioritize their family.

Another way in which culture influences professional women's career attainment is the way of the Bakiga people origin and the mixed cultures that interchanged with their own culture. The Bakiga people, predominantly residing in the Kigezi region of southwestern Uganda, are believed to have originated from Rwanda, with historical ties tracing back to the Kingdom of Bumbogo. The Bakiga are known for their strong cultural heritage, which continues to play a significant role in shaping societal norms, including gender roles and expectations that influence professional women's career attainment in Kabale District (Karwemera, 2008; Ngologoza, 1998). In addition, the Bakiga community have a deeply rooted history that emphasizes clan-based organization. Each clan, identified by specific totems, governs the social and cultural norms within the community. The leadership within these clans is traditionally patriarchal, with significant decisions made by male elders, known as the "Abukuru bekika," who are responsible for administering justice and maintaining cultural traditions (Ngologoza, 1998). This patriarchal structure reinforces traditional gender roles, where men are seen as the primary decision-makers, and women are expected to fulfill domestic responsibilities. Such structures are reflective of the broader cultural context in many African societies, where gender roles are strictly defined and maintained (Tietcheu, 2005).

Kikiga culture assigns distinct roles to men and women, which are deeply ingrained and socially enforced. Men are typically involved in activities such as hunting, erecting homes, and making significant family decisions, while women are responsible for domestic chores, including cooking, child-rearing, and agricultural tasks such as digging and bush clearing (James, 2008). The expectation for women to prioritize family responsibilities over personal ambitions is a recurring

theme in Bakiga society, aligning with broader cultural norms that discourage women from pursuing higher education and professional careers.

Marriage practices within the Bakiga community further reinforce traditional gender roles. The payment of bride wealth, a significant cultural practice, often positions women as assets within marriage, with their primary value seen in their ability to bear children and manage the household (Veronica, 1998). Polygamy, though less common, is practiced in certain clans, and marriage within the same clan is strictly prohibited, further entrenching the social segmentation within the society (Ngologoza, 1998).

The traditional kikiga culture places considerable emphasis on maintaining the status quo, where the roles of women are largely confined to the domestic sphere. This cultural expectation limits women's access to education and professional development, as their contributions are often valued more in terms of their roles as wives and mothers than as professionals (Smith & Johnson, 2018). For instance, the communal nature of Bakiga life, where nearly all activities are done collectively, emphasizes the importance of community over individual career aspirations, particularly for women (May & Edel, 1996).

Virginity and sexual purity are highly valued in Kikiga culture, with severe consequences for women who deviate from these norms. Unmarried women who become pregnant face harsh social sanctions, including exclusion from the community, which can severely limit their educational and career opportunities (James, 2008). These cultural pressures contribute to the challenges women face in balancing family responsibilities with career aspirations, often leading to career interruptions and reduced opportunities for advancement.

Despite the restrictive gender norms, there are aspects of Kikiga culture that have the potential to empower women, particularly through the community's value on education and leadership within certain clans. The royal clan of Bamuhutu, known for its love of research and education, represents a cultural enclave where educational attainment is highly regarded (Karwemera, 2008). However, this empowerment is not uniformly distributed across the community, and women from less privileged clans may find it challenging to access similar opportunities.

Cultural practices such as the Ekizino dance and the use of traditional musical instruments like the enanga and drums are integral to Bakiga identity, fostering a sense of community and continuity (Karwemera, 1994). These cultural expressions, while primarily focused on communal cohesion, also offer avenues for women to participate in cultural leadership, albeit in roles that are often seen as extensions of their domestic responsibilities (Elvitigalage Dona et al., 2006).

2.4 How Bakiga women benefit from attaining a career

Women benefit from paid work and rising earnings reliably increase women's personal and household resources, shifting intra-household decision-making toward their preferences. Classic bargaining models predict that when a woman's "threat point" (outside options/independent income) improves, her say in household allocation rises. Evidence shows that when income is directed to women, spending tilts toward children's goods and nutrition. As one early UK policy study noted, after benefits were shifted to mothers, "spending on women's and children's clothing" increased (Anderberg, et al, 2016).

Health and well-being including mental and physical wellbeing. Employment is positively associated with mental health compared with unemployment; reviews find work can be "beneficial to health", with the caveat that poor-quality jobs and overwork can offset gains. Control over

resources also improves health for women and daughters. In South Africa, pensions received by women had "a large impact on the anthropometric status of girls" Marriage, and aspirations (Duflo E, 2003).

According to Jensen (Fertility timing: Better job prospects reshape life-course choices delaying marriage and childbearing and raising schooling and aspirations: Bangladesh (garment sector expansion): girls exposed to factory jobs delay marriage and first birth and stay in school longer. India improved female job access led to delayed marriage and reduced fertility intentions. These studies show that when careers are attainable, the opportunity cost of early marriage and childbearing rises and investments in human capital increase. Safety and intimate partner violence (ILO, 2018-2024).

Enhanced economic standing can reduce IPV through improved exit options and bargaining power. In the U.S., narrowing the gender wage gap reduced violence against women (paper title encapsulates the result: "The Gender Wage Gap and Domestic Violence"). A concise takeaway from the abstract: decreases in the wage gap reduce violence. American Economic Association

In Mexico, women-targeted cash transfers (Oportunidades/Prospera) are linked to lower long-term spousal violence in several analyses. IDB Publicationssites.carloalberto.org

However, dynamics are context-specific. UK evidence shows male and female unemployment have opposite-signed effects on IPV, highlighting potential "backlash" risks if women's employment rises without supportive norms and protections. Children's outcomes and intergenerational effects: When women control more income, households allocate more to kids' health/education; classic results show maternal resources benefit children disproportionately (UK

child benefit reform; South African pensions above). The broader implication: professional women's career attainment amplifies intergenerational human capital. sjlundberg.weebly.com.

Career attainment raises income and agency, but gains can be muted by heavy unpaid care. Globally, women still shoulder the bulk of unpaid care, constraining hours, productivity, and promotion prospects. The ILO documents enormous care burdens and their labor-market effects; more recently it estimated hundreds of millions of women are kept out of the labor force by unpaid care. One line captures the persistence: the gap in unpaid care time narrowed by "only seven minutes per day" over decades in parts of the region International Labour Organization.

Long-run security and pensions

Career interruptions, part-time spells, and lower lifetime earnings translate into lower pensions, heightening old-age poverty risks. Across the EU, women's average pensions have been about 25% lower than men's (2015 data). Reviews for developing countries conclude that increasing women's access to work improves welfare through higher own-income, bargaining power, delayed early marriage, and better child outcomes while emphasizing the need for complementary policies (childcare, safe transport, anti-harassment laws) to avoid backlash and to convert access into sustained career attainment.

2.5 Challenges posed by culture in a bid to enhance women's professional career attainment.

Culture defines gender roles where inequality manifests itself in a number of spheres within the family, labor market, politics, employment, education, judicial structures and in cultural-

ideological production. Furthermore, it fosters inequalities, reinforces gender related power differentials and increases violence against women (Gerhard, 2001).

Some cultural practices like payment of bride wealth in the hope that the woman is bought like any other property, lead to increased violence against women that include beating and overworking them. The international community as a serious human rights violation has identified this. Katherine (1993) states that domestic violence under international human rights law is a threat to human life. Different problems that arise from domestic violence included threatening women's right to life and physical integrity, increased torture, unfair treatment of woman faced with domestic violence, and results into gender bias that leaves victims more vulnerable. Notably, discrimination in a legal system perpetuates a norm tolerating violence against women, and violates women's fundamental rights to life, physical integrity and equality.

The other challenges relate to gender stereotypes. Gender stereotyping continues to prevail in technical and professional fields. Schaefer (1995) defines gender stereotype as social view of men or women based on a particular cultural belief. Giddens (1996) adds that gender stereotypes as defined by a given cultural setting, interfere with women's rights. A stereotype is a widely accepted judgment or bias regarding a person or group even though it is overly simplified. Stereotypes about gender can cause unequal and unfair treatment because of a person's gender. Some of the stereotypes include personality traits, for example, women are often expected to be passive and submissive, while men are usually expected to be confident and aggressive. Activities like caring for children are often considered best done by women, while household repairs are often considered best done by men. Consequently, occupations have often been gendered until recently (Global Gender Gap Report, 2013).

In addition, gender biases poise a challenge to professional women's career attainment. Gender bias refers to negative stereotypes that are labeled on one gender. Due to the patrilineal system, positive stereo types were given to men, including; men are strong, men are brave, men are leaders; men are worriers, bold and others. The negative stereotypes were given to women like women are weak, shy, and cowards. Such words influence a person's zeal and attitude towards achieving certain goals in their lives, including education. Such stereotypes affect the attitude of women and men differently, with regard to women's right to tertiary education (Ssentamu, 1999).

More to the above, women's lack of access to education is not always related to scarcity of vacancies in schools. It also emerges from expectations, attitudes and biases in communities and families. Economic costs, social traditions, and religious attitudes limit girls' educational opportunities. Other factors also limit girls from attaining a career. Some of these are based on the individuals, families and communities. Inability to read, write and calculate complicates a girl's efforts to engage in both market-focused production and household activities as effectively and efficiently possible. This affects her family's welfare and diminishes her potential contribution to the development of the household, local and national economy (Nzita and Nampa, 1997). National Gender Policy (1997, under revision).

There is also lack of basic policies that would strengthen the enhancement of professional women's career attainment. For instance, the UNDP Uganda Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025 helps align national efforts with SDGs; priorities include inclusive governance, women's economic productivity, climate adaptability, and culturally responsive rights. UN Women Strategic Note 2022–2025, focused on justice, governance, income-generation, protection services, and norms transformation that impact on career attainment: However, while these policies strengthen women's rights, expand economic access, reduce workplace bias, and improve social conditions

supporting women's professional development, they are inactive in Uganda, and Kabale district in particular.

More to the above, cultural beliefs are one of the limiting factors that affect women's access to professional women's career attainment. Cultural beliefs, norms and values promote early marriages and teenage pregnancies. This was supported by a statement made by Ahunna Onochie, who condemned negative cultural practices including early marriages and teenage pregnancies that are hostile to the dignity and health of women (Moore S, 1996).

According to Giddens (1997), cultural customs influence high levels of school dropout in most countries around the world. He says that due to the belief in cultural norms and customs, parents do not allow their girl children to join tertiary education, while others mistreat wives who go for further education. During armed conflict, violence is also used to humiliate the women, and to undermine morale and resistance. When in class, girls reflect on what went on at home, how their mothers were battered, coupled with sleepless nights due to noise, stress and fear, a situation that leads to low participation and interest in education.

Furthermore, the patriarchal society imposes limitations on women's activities. Women are supposed to be economically dependent on men. They do not participate in decision making, lack control over income even when they are producers of wealth and have no access to finance. Moreover, social practices as a result of culture affect women especially widows, divorcees and separated women. Assets, including those accumulated during their marriage are likely to be returned to their husband's clan. As a result, girl children in those families do not study but the priority is given to boys (UNDP, 2001).

According to the Chronic Poverty Report (2009), the reason why women return to their parents' homes or move into enterprises with low incomes is low education that results from cultural practices. Women do not access tertiary education, some lack basic education, do not own property, land, and have no capital to startup businesses; issues that affect professional women's career attainment. In addition, cultural beliefs encourage women to be submissive to men even which condition threatens their right attaining a career, hence end they do not attain a career.

Related to the above, due to cultural beliefs, women do not own much property, are poor and fail to go for further studies. The Human Poverty Index in Uganda estimated poverty to be 37.5% in 2001. This index reflected a high proportion of women not expected to survive to the age of 42. It showed that 42.9% of women were illiterate, 37.0% women lacked health facilities, and 43.0% lacked access to clean water. It is important to note that most of these problems directly affect women and are as a result of cultural norms and beliefs (UNDP, 2001). Burkey (1996), further, states that women are denied education in order to provide labor to the family.

Similarly, Evelyn (1984) found that the rural women in Malaysia work 15 – 16 hours a day, either in their fields or rubber gardens, gather fruits and vegetables, look for fuel, fetch water, cook, bathe the children and feed them, prepare and feed pigs and chicken. As casual laborers, they have no security and receive low wages, almost lower than what men receive for doing the same work. Not only are poor, rural women over worked, their lives are never ending drudgery, and they are burdened with frequent pregnancies which sap them of their energy. However, they have no time, nor can they afford to be sick although they are. As a result, women do not participate in development in most ways; even what is truly their participation is attributed to men.

Moore (1996) attributes the struggle women go through to do hard work, to cultural components. He looks at culture as one of the key barriers to women's rights. He further explains that women are harassed and segregated at the work place. Some organizations pay less to women, while others do not wish to employ them at all for senior jobs. In a way woman are denied their right to freedom of choice of the kind of job they wish to do.

In light of this litany of handwork and deprivation, women in the Third World would be assured to be the prime target of development assistance, yet the period of colonial government, followed by several decades of development assistance, has left women not only untouched but by general opinion, worse off than their grandmothers (Hong, 1984). Development planning and development programs have been formulated for men and by men. The needs of women have been essentially ignored. Changes in land use rights have also deprived them of customary right to cultivate and control land.

The other challenge is that culture affects the way of life of the people and defines their style of life, including the way of dressing, defining roles of men and women, shaping people's behavior and attainment of a career. Culture contributes to the way gender roles are defined including who does what and who should not do what. Cultural norms create stereotyped gender-role definitions in which males are encouraged to exercise control and authority over women. There is still for instance a widely held belief that women provoke violence or are somehow deserving abuse. Popular mass media on culture-including television, movies, and music often reinforces the notion that women enjoy being abused. The belief is that it is a positive masculine trait to control women, and that these stereotypical notions of what it means to be male and female are natural (Giddens, 1996).

In many societies, there are proverbs which stigmatize women and place them in lower classes of societal arrangement. For instance, in Rwanda, there is a proverb which says that *ntankoko kazi ibika isaki iriho* (Which means that women are not supposed to talk in the presence of men). In essence, women's right to free expression is denied). Another proverb in Kinyarwanda says that *iravuze umugore ruvuga umuhoro* (Which means that a household where women dominate is destroyed quickly). These proverbs were culturally determined as a gender stereotypical weapon that was meant to discourage women from freedom of speech and expression. To date such expressions have been used to discourage women from expressing themselves and participating in decision making, hence a hindrance to professional women's career attainment (Chambers, 1995).

In addition, in most African societies, men and women substantially occupy different positions, most of which are culturally determined. In a number of cases, due to skewed relations of power, women occupy subordinate positions and this subordination is captured in African languages. In Botswana a man was traditionally viewed as a "*mosadi ke ngwana wa monna*" meaning that a woman is the child of the man. Consequently, women had limited legal capacity, though in reality some women had more independence and rights than others depending on social and marital status, individual drive and the broadmindedness of the men around them (Bailey, 1992). All the mentioned setbacks form a hard wall for women to navigate through as they strain to attain a career.

Ginnis and Tippis (2002) explained that culture influences a woman's choice of the course to study in an institution. It starts in primary and secondary schools where women and girls are not supported to enjoy their right to offer sciences and Mathematics. Those who insist on offering them are discouraged by the teachers and other people. The belief is that science subjects are for

men or boys while arts subjects are for women. In the end women miss out on professional courses like engineering, and medicine, which they would have done.

Kwesiga (2002) agrees with the above statement and adds that culture defines gender roles that determine what boys and girls should do or not do especially with regard to access to education. Women do work that is not paying like cleaning the house, cooking and looking after children due to low education, while men do serious work like driving, building, business, and other professions due to their level of education.

Kwesiga et al (2002) looked at gender roles as the way people act, what they do and say, to express being a girl or a boy, a woman or a man. Although gender roles vary greatly, from one culture to another, from one ethnic group to the next, and from one social class to another, every culture has gender roles that define expectations of the way women and men, girls and boys, should dress, and behave. Children learn gender roles from an early age from their parents and family, their religion, and their culture, as well as the outside world, including television, magazines, and other media. As children grow, they adopt behaviors that are rewarded by love and praise. They stop or hide behaviors that are ridiculed, shamed, or punished. This happens early in life. By age of three, children have usually learned to prefer toys and clothes that are "appropriate" to their gender.

Related to the above, Niwagaba, (2000) has argued that in some cases women have been the major culprits of the very efforts towards their development by tending to value culture so much and overlooking other important life aspects like career growth and attainment. The implication is that women who have benefited from interventions like affirmative action have not only failed to encourage fellow women but have actually attempted to block them from reaping similar benefits.

On the same note, Giddens (1997) suggests that women contribute to their own suffering. This is because of the strong cultural beliefs that are embedded in them. These beliefs are imparted through the process of socialization, right from birth, up to the time they become elderly. Some women are the ones who remove their children from school so that they secure them for marriage, while others over work their daughters with the belief that they are preparing them for marriage.

In the political arena, Bailey (1992) has argued that women face constraints in engaging in elective process due to cultural factors, limited economic resources, spousal control and misconception that leadership is a male domain. At the same, time low literacy among women, inadequate skills in public speaking, poor resource mobilization and networking, and limited access to vital information are challenges that undermine their competence. For instance, only 38% female headed households' own radios compared to 53% for male headed households.

Male dominance has been cited as a major obstacle to women's attainment of their career. Friedl (1975) defines male dominance as a situation in which men have high preferential access, although not always exclusive rights, to those activities to which the society accords the greatest values, and the exercise of which permits a measure of control over others. It is significant that Friedl recognizes that men are favored in terms of accessing certain economically and socially significant economic resources and rights, such as access to land and property.

The other challenge to professional women's career attainment has been religious beliefs. Many religions in Uganda have strong conservative beliefs that are not easy to change. According to Genesis Chapter 2, the creation story indicates that the woman was created from the rib of the man which clearly indicates that without a man, a woman would not have been. This belief increases vulnerability of women because sometimes men justify their authority basing on this scripture.

Further still, most of the religions in Uganda do not permit divorce after the church wedding. To this effect the women are encouraged to keep in marriage relationships even when the marital relations are a threat to their life (Genesis 2).

More specifically, Chambers (1993) attributes the denial of women attainment of their career to early marriages. Girls marry at a tender age for various reasons, ranging from poverty to the mindset that respects culture. While the legal age for marriage in Uganda is 18 years and above, parents and other relatives interest girls into early marriages. This is mostly done by poor parents in order to raise income for the rest of household members. Many girls perceive marriage as an escape route from family poverty while the common cultural practice of charging bride price brings quick and substantial wealth to her family. As a result, parents push girls to get married even, when young, or when they have not decided to marry. Girls also sometimes withdraw themselves from school, especially if their needs for necessities like shoes and dresses are not met by their parents/guardians.

Another challenge to attainment of women's career is that parents and relatives promote inequality between boys and girls right from childhood. For instance, boys have freedom to play and socialize freely, while girls are kept at home to do housework. This leads to differences in enjoying their human rights. Boys and girls have different roles and responsibilities in their daily work. Boys tend to do heavier, riskier work that is usually located outside of the home. Boys' work tends to have a higher status than the work done by girls, who have the main responsibility of caring for children and the elderly, and providing food for the family (Gelles, 1995).

Cultural biases also result into failure by women to realize their ability to attain a career. Due to this, 70% of the world's poor are females, while the numbers of women living below the poverty

line have increased disproportionately in recent years compared with the number of men. Women have limited access to economic resources, such as capital, credit, labor and land, and limited opportunities for employment and career advancement which restricts their ability to improve their economic situation. Women also have unequal access to education and training opportunities, which leads to low literacy levels and employment in unskilled, low status jobs (Christopher, 2012).

Culture promotes gender inequality in access to and control over productive resources. This act has been a hindrance to women's economic, social and political emancipation. Without resources, women cannot take off, and cannot contribute to economic growth. While women are more engaged in agriculture, they lack land where to cultivate; hence they depend on borrowing and begging. This denies them the right to acquire wealth (Ministry of Gender and Economic Development, 2007).

Another challenge to women attainment a career is occupation segregation. Some organizations prefer to employ men to women. This discourages women from according to the findings in the *New Vision* 3rd March, 2014), it was reported that women were paid less compared to men even when they had similar qualifications and have similar responsibilities. This was attributed to the cultural belief that men need more money than women, to look after their families. This tendency leads to violation of the women's rights to equal pay at the work place.

In addition, Chambers (1995) explains that there is limited chance of women to generate income and be promoted to more prestigious positions or jobs due to low education. Women are prevented by the artificial barriers from receiving job promotions or income raises. Few women a quire a

career because they lack resources to facilitate them study amidst competition and limited resources while others are constrained by home chores.

Similarly, the World Bank Report, (2005), revealed that women work considerably long hours than men (between 12 and 18 hours a day with a mean of 15 hours), compared to an average of men working for 8 to 10 hours a day. Women bear the brunt of domestic tasks in addition to agricultural and other productive work. The time required for these tasks with almost absence of even rudimentary domestic technology is hectic. This has a negative effect on the life of a woman.

According to the UNICEF 'Gender Equality-Big Picture' Report for 2007, women perform 66% of the world's work, produce 50% of food but own only 1% of property. Women receive only 10 per cent of worldwide income and perform more than 70 per cent of unpaid work around the globe and two-thirds of the poorest of the poor in the world are women. Women in developing countries own only about 10 per cent of all farmland and hold less than two per cent of all titles, although they produce up to 80 per cent of staple foods. Women are more often affected and jeopardized by poverty, which leads to lacking power to control resources, and participate in decision making.

Through the Millennium Development Goals the global community promised all children quality education regardless of their gender, ethnicity and educational needs. Undoubtedly much progress has been achieved. For example, the number of pupils in school has increased by a third across Africa since 1999, but considerable challenges remain and will require attention in the policies and commitments developed for post 2015. However, moving from policy rhetoric to practical reality is often the hardest step. For this there is need to challenge much existing thinking around systems and practices, harnessing and combining the latest thinking and tools such as findings from cognitive science and mobile technologies (James, 2008).

Kyabagga (2002) similarly explained that women's ability to acquire a career are sometimes frustrated by men who still have demands that interfere with women's potential to attain a career. Some of the demands include increased numbers of children that a woman should produce, amount of work, and other related family chores. According to him, men's support in form of reduced demands was needed to enhance women's ability to attain a career.

2.5 The strategies to enhanced professional women's career attainment.

According to Clark (1991) women should participate actively in all sectors like the economy, health and agriculture after acquiring basic skills from tertiary institutions. While culture defines sophisticated institutions for women like education (teaching) and secretarial work, there should chance for women to working in all sectors with ease without gender segregation. However, the tendency has been that women are more involved in agriculture at the level of cultivating and harvesting, but have minimal say or decision on when to sell and after selling and where to invest the money. Such decisions in the kikiga culture are made by men. However, involving women in all sectors and at all levels would act as a motivator for them to study with the hope that they will be employed, and that they will be involved in decision making, and policy formulation especially of the issues that affect them as well. In addition, the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education would help to bridge the gap between the ratios of boys to girls. It was important to ensure that both boys and girls enroll at all levels of education. When this is done, then enrollment at the tertiary level would become easy and in the end career attainment would be facilitated (Cassels, 2004). There has been the introduction of the quota system in Uganda in awarding scholarships at the university, where students from all districts benefit and with equal numbers of girls and boys. This would solve the problem of poverty by some parents and students,

and unfortunately some of the beneficiaries come from urban rich families (New Vision, Wednesday, 12th May, 2014).

On 26th September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly, chaired by President Museveni recommended the Sustainable Development Goals that were to be achieved by the year 2030. The goals were introduced to replace the Millennium Development Goals that expired on 31st December 2015. The 2030 Agenda is a shared responsibility and a universal road map for development with emphasis on equality in all aspects of life. One of the recommended goals was inclusive and equitable education of both men and women.

The Millennium Development Goal on education for all people and reduction of poverty by some percentage, helped in increasing the enrollment rates at all levels. According to the report in the Monitor newspaper of *Wednesday 26th August*, 2015, it was reported that more than 80 % of girls had enrolled for primary school but noted that they dropped out tremendously at O-level, A-level and very few made it to tertiary level especially at the University for Degree courses. It was reported that defilement remained the leading crime committed in 2013, where 1000 cases were recorded and four out of ten children were sexually abused at school. Therefore, the government and the general public including parents were argued to provide maximum protection to the girl children in all places they go to especially schools. This would reduce the number of cases of defilement and rape that result in unwanted child birth, hence girls would be able to remain in school and study until they completed tertiary education.

The Minister of State for Youth, Madam Evelyn Anite, reported in *New Vision* of Tuesday, Marh 20th, and 2015 that 62% of the girls in Uganda had their first sexual intercourse by the age of 18 years; they get sexually exploited by older men who have money and they drop out of school.

Hence, parents, teachers, politicians were all called upon to fight sexual exploitation and teenage pregnancies that hinder women from upgrading to higher institutions of learning.

Another recommendation was given by the First Lady Mrs. Janet Museveni, when she launched the National Campaign on adolescent girls. She noted: "We cannot only look to the government, the UN, NGOs and CSOs, we must talk to ourselves, talk to parents, to relatives and other members of the society about the help that girls need. They need to be helped to grow as future mother's, grow up with dignity, confidence, and must be whole". (The Daily Monitor, Friday, 20th March, 2015).

In addition to the suggested recommendation above, Busingye, (2015) suggested that cultural institutions were to fight bad cultural practices by discouraging the bad ones and promoting those that facilitate women's access to education career development. In addition, He noted that the State must re-think its higher education strategy and put in place a differentiated higher education sector with different institutions qualitatively performing their roles. In his article, he suggested that more polytechnics, technical colleges, trade and tourism practical training institutions should be established because they would offer practical skills that would strengthen their career development strategies which would enable them to get jobs, contribute the country's welfare and improve the welfare of households and the entire population.

Kyomuhangi (1997), explained that by changing gender roles that create the gender gap and developing awareness through examining different gender roles would enhance gender equality. At the same time change in men's attitudes and women's knowledge, attitudes and behavior are necessary conditions for harmonious partnership for men and women, issues of sexuality and

reproductive health, and the understanding of their joint responsibilities, so that men and women are equal partners, in public and private life.

Rosalind (2001) in a study of organizations working for peace and reconciliation in the Great Lakes region of Africa found that women's organizations are a key to their empowerment. They have multiplied and have improved women's access to incomes, and other resources. These organizations provide a forum for women to address their issues, through psychological counseling, medical assistance, and the support of victims. Not only do they offer a network of support, they also provide micro-credit initiatives, legal assistance, education programs and various forms of concrete support.

According to the Uganda Women's Network (1997), Uganda has obligation under International Human rights Law, to address the plight of women under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, calls for the modification of social and cultural patterns of conduct for elimination practices based on gender stereotypes, and calls for the implementation of affirmative action measures as a tool to combat discrimination.

The way forward to increased enrollment of women attainment of career could be borrowed from the discussion that was presented while commemorating Nelson Mandela's' day (on 18th July 2014. It was noted that "education is the great engine of a personal career growth. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine and the child of a farm worker can become the president of a great nation. This meant that a woman can get what may not be given by society through education, can attain a career through education. Hence, the way forward to professional women's career attainment is

the emphasis of what tertiary education gives to a woman and unfolds her potential to development in all spheres of life through career growth. The next chapter describes how this research was conducted, and how the data collected will be analyzed.

2.6 Conclusion and literature gaps

The literature reveals that, while considerable scholarship has examined the intersection of culture, gender, and career attainment, most studies have focused on urban or corporate contexts and generalized cultural settings, leaving a noticeable scarcity of empirical research that investigates the unique, lived experiences of Bakiga women and how localized cultural practices shape their career attainment. Although existing studies provide valuable insights into the influence of traditional cultural norms, organizational practices, and societal expectations on women's career trajectories, they often overlook the distinct socio-cultural dynamics of rural, indigenous communities like the Bakiga.

Furthermore, although established theories such as Social Constructionist Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, and Cultural Capital Theory have been employed to explain gender disparities in career attainment, the current literature does not fully integrate these frameworks within the specific context of kikiga culture, thus creating a theoretical gap regarding the intersection of traditional practices and modern career attainment. Methodologically, most research in this field relies on quantitative approaches that may not capture the nuanced ways in which cultural values and gender norms are internalized by women; there is a pressing need for qualitative and mixed-methods research that can explore the subjective experiences and coping strategies of Bakiga women in navigating cultural constraints. Additionally, from a practical standpoint, the literature offers limited guidance on how to translate culturally specific factors into actionable policy

interventions, with a dearth of evidence-based recommendations tailored to the socio-cultural context of the Bakiga women.

In summary, chapter two provides a comprehensive thematic analysis of existing literature on the relationship between culture and professional women's career attainment. Drawing from diverse scholarly perspectives, the chapter has unpacked the multifaceted ways in which cultural norms, values, beliefs, and practices shape women's career trajectories across different contexts. The first theme explored the components of culture, highlighting how language, customs, gender roles, religion, and social structures collectively influence societal expectations of women. These cultural elements often reinforce traditional roles that prioritize domestic responsibilities over professional aspirations. The second theme examined the influence of culture on women's career development, revealing that deeply embedded patriarchal norms continue to dictate what is considered appropriate for women in the workforce. Cultural prescriptions often discourage women from pursuing leadership positions, limit their educational opportunities, and undermine their professional ambitions. Under the third theme, the literature discussed how women interface with career growth, showing that despite cultural barriers, many women exhibit resilience, ambition, and adaptability. Women often navigate complex cultural expectations by balancing professional demands with familial obligations, using education and mentorship as tools for empowerment. The fourth theme focused on the challenges women face in attaining a career, such as gender discrimination, lack of access to resources, limited support systems, and rigid societal expectations. These challenges are often more pronounced in traditional or conservative societies where gender roles are strictly defined. Finally, the chapter addressed strategies adopted to promote professional women's career attainment, including affirmative action policies, gender-sensitive education reforms, mentorship programs, and advocacy for women's rights. These

interventions have proven effective in challenging restrictive cultural norms and creating more inclusive environments for professional women's career attainment.

Overall, this thematic literature review has established that while culture can serve as a barrier to professional women's career attainment, it also presents opportunities for transformation. With the right strategies and structural support, cultural norms can evolve to support gender equality and enable more women to achieve their full professional potential. The next chapter will build on these insights by examining empirical evidence and contextual case studies to further understand the lived experiences of women in relation to culture and career advancement.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework of the study, detailing the research philosophy, design, and approach, as well as the study area, population, sampling procedures, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations. It also discusses data quality control measures, provides a justification for the chosen methods, acknowledges limitations in data collection, and concludes the chapter by summarizing the overall research process.

3.1 Research philosophy: Epistemological and Ontological perspectives

Epistemology concerns the nature and scope of knowledge and addresses questions such as what is known and how we know what we know. In this study, an epistemological position of subjectivism is adopted, which posits that knowledge is not an objective entity waiting to be discovered but is constructed through individual experiences and interactions. Drawing on Creswell (2009) and Kumar (2005), this perspective recognises that individual perceptions and contextual factors shape the social realities of gender and career attainment. In practice, this means that the data collected through interviews, focus groups, and document reviews are understood as subjective accounts that reflect the unique experiences of Bakiga women in Kabale District.

Ontology, on the other hand, concerns the nature of reality, what exists and how these realities are constituted. For this study, a constructivist ontological perspective is embraced. This perspective asserts that realities are not fixed or singular; rather, they are multiple and constructed through social interactions and cultural practices. Scholars such as Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), Morrison (2007), Maxwell (2013), and Aliyu et al. (2015) support the view that understanding the lived experiences of individuals requires acknowledging that each person's reality is shaped by a

complex interplay of cultural, economic, social, and institutional factors. Consequently, the study interprets the phenomena of professional women's career attainment as socially constructed, where meanings and experiences are co-created between the respondents and the researcher.

By separating these two dimensions, the research clearly distinguishes between how knowledge is generated (epistemology) and the nature of the reality that is being studied (ontology). This dual approach provides a robust philosophical foundation for exploring the nuanced experiences of Bakiga women, ensuring that both the process of knowledge creation and the multifaceted nature of social reality are adequately addressed in the study.

3.2 Research Design

The research design discusses the plans and procedures for the research data sources, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative research approach that relies on inductive inquiry, beginning with a worldview and ending with data analysis that shows patterns or themes, was adopted in the study (Creswell, 2007). In the qualitative study, the methodological choices include: the use of either phenomenology, ethnography, exploratory study design or grounded theory. The phenomenology design among the four approaches was more appropriate to measure the research objectives of the study (Polit and Beck, 2010).

A phenomenology approach was chosen because it involves a collaborative process between the researcher and participants to explore and develop their understanding of the phenomenon being studied. It therefore facilitates easy interpretation and descriptions of people's experiences. The phenomenology approach is chosen because it resonates well with the constructivist paradigm.

In addition to understanding the experiences of women in their attempts to attain professional growth amid cultural values constraints. The intention is to gain an in-depth understanding of the

phenomenon, such as attitudes and responses towards career attainment, and the Kikiga culture was analysed. This approach further facilitated intensive exploration of a phenomenon using a variety of data sources (Holiday, 2009) such as primary and secondary sources. The main data sources were typically in-depth conversations with the women in different professional groups and key informant interviews. The study focused on only women who have progressed in their career development at all levels. The aim of the focus was to produce the results, which enrich the understanding of real experiences of women in that particular situation.

3.3 Area of the study

The study was conducted in Kabale District, focusing on different institutions and organisations like Kabale University, Uganda College of Commerce, Kabale Technical Institute, Kabale District Local Government, the Human Rights Office, Non-Governmental Organization (FAWODE) and key informants. These study units were purposively selected based on their unique contributions to understanding the cultural and career attainment dynamics based on gender in the region. Preliminary data collected from local radio broadcasts and discussions with community leaders confirmed a significant gender disparity in career attainment, which further justified the focus on this specific context.

3.4 Study population and sample

The study population comprised of a bigger list of all people in Kabale district that were within the study scope. From the population, a sample of 48 respondents was drawn from the selected institutions and organizations. The distribution was as follows: Kabale University (12 respondents), Uganda College of Commerce (10 respondents), Kabale Technical Institute (10 respondents), Kabale District Local Government (5 respondents), Human Rights Office (3 Respondents), and Non-Governmental Organizations (5 respondents) 2 Probation Officers and 3

Key informants. This diverse population was chosen to capture a wide range of perspectives on the influence of cultural norms on professional women's career attainment.

The study sample of 48 participants was intentionally selected to ensure comprehensive representation of diverse perspectives, aligning closely with the study's objectives of understanding how cultural norms influence professional women's career attainment. By including Bakiga women from academic institutions such as Kabale University, Uganda College of Commerce, and Kabale Technical Institute, the study captures insights from environments where educational and professional development are key. Simultaneously, the inclusion of respondents from Kabale District Local Government, the Human Rights Office, probation office and NGOs (FAWODE) ensures that policy, community, and administrative perspectives are also represented. This diverse mix of participants provides a robust foundation for examining the multifaceted influence of cultural practices on women's career pathways, thereby strengthening the validity and relevance of the study's findings.

3.5 Sampling method and sample size

Purposive sampling was employed to achieve a diverse and representative sample from the study population. Purposive sampling was used to select key individuals who possessed deep insights into the cultural and gender dynamics affecting Bakiga professional women's career attainment. These participants, drawn from academic institutions and relevant organizations, are directly involved in or impacted by the phenomena under investigation, ensuring that the core aspects of the study are thoroughly captured. Purposive sampling complemented this approach by identifying institutions and organizations and in these institutions key respondents were identified purposively.

The final sample of 48 participants was determined based on the principle of saturation, with data collection continuing until no new information emerged, as outlined by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006). In addition, the concept of theoretical sufficiency (Dey, 1999; LaDonna et al, 2021) was applied to ensure that the collected data meaningfully aligned with the research objectives and theoretical framework. This approach contributed not only to data saturation but also to the generation of significant theoretical insights, thereby enhancing the depth and rigor of the study's findings and underscoring its commitment to capturing the full complexity of cultural influences on professional women's career attainment.

3.6 Data collection methods

Data was collected using multiple methods to enhance the credibility and depth of the findings. Primary data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) The in-depth interviews guided by a predetermined topic framework yet allowing flexibility for emerging themes, were conducted with respondents from the tertiary institutions and other organizations. The interview and FGD guides are presented in list of appendices. FGDs were organized to facilitate interactive discussions among participants, thereby generating collective insights into the cultural influences on career attainment. FGDs were used to gather information from women in institutions because there were a large number of them, making it easier to collect information from them smoothly.

The in-depth interviews were used to get information from Bakiga women in institutions together with FGDs. These were used in order to get unique information from some key women whose information was needed and could not be left out yet they were not able to be present in FGDs. These methods were selected to triangulate the data and to provide a robust empirical basis for understanding the research phenomena.

3.7 Unit of investigation

The unit of investigation in this study is the individual Bakiga women, particularly those who are working in tertiary institutions and other organisations in Kabale District. This criterion was set to ensure that participants had a deep immersion of Kikiga culture, enabling a richer exploration of how cultural norms, values, and practices impact their career attainment.

3.8 Data quality checks for Validity and Reliability of Data

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, a rigorous two-pronged approach was adopted. For validity, three experts with relevant research experience, ensuring that they aligned closely with the study's objectives, reviewed the content of the research instruments including interview guides, FGD protocols, and document review checklists. Additionally, member checking was employed whereby participants were given the opportunity to review and verify their interview transcripts, ensuring that their intended meanings were accurately captured. Triangulation of data sources, including interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary reviews, further enhanced validity by cross-verifying findings across different methods.

For reliability, follow-up interviews were conducted with a subset of participants three weeks after the initial interviews. In particular, nine participants from the focus groups were re-interviewed, and their responses were paraphrased and compared with the original data to confirm consistency and accuracy. The researcher also maintained a detailed audit trail by documenting the data collection and analysis process, including field notes and reflexive journals, which provided transparency and allowed for subsequent verification of the findings. These combined practical measures ensured that the study's findings were both credible and dependable.

3.9 Reflection and reflexivity during data collection

Having stayed in Kabale for twenty-five years, and having seen the dynamics of culture based on gender the researcher put off her bias and got guided by a constructivist philosophy. The researcher also used objective principal of data collection by employing a reflexive approach to critically assess the researcher's role and potential biases in the data collection process (Polit & Beck, 2010; Berger, 2016). The researcher further maintained objectivity by continually assessing how personal biases and cultural preconceptions might influence the collection and interpretation of data. Additionally, efforts were made to create a supportive environment for participants by offering emotional support when needed, clarifying the academic and policy relevance of the study, and allowing sufficient time for participants to share their experiences. This reflexivity ensured that the data were interpreted in a manner faithful to the participants' perspectives.

3.10 Data Management and Analysis

An integrated methodological approach was employed in this study, with mixed methods, combining qualitative thematic analysis with quantitative-like summarization to provide a robust and comprehensive understanding of how Kikiga cultural norms influence professional women's career attainment in Kabale District, Uganda. The primary focus was mixed methods, the relatively large number of respondents allowed for the analysis and quantification of key themes into percentage counts and tables, thereby offering a structured and measurable representation of the data.

This dual approach was intentionally chosen to bridge the depth of narrative inquiry with the clarity of quantitative analysis, enabling the identification of trends and patterns within the data that speak directly to our research objectives. Data management commenced with the meticulous transcription of audio-recorded interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and field notes. Each

transcript was carefully reviewed and organized to ensure that all relevant information was accurately captured, which is critical for the subsequent coding process.

To further enhance the transparency and credibility of the findings, qualitative insights were quantified where applicable, converting narrative data into empirical evidence via numerical counts. This integration of qualitative and quantitative-like methods ensured that the study's findings are both contextually nuanced and robustly supported by measurable data, thereby offering a well-rounded analysis of the barriers and enablers of women's career advancement in the Bakiga women.

3.11 Ethical procedures

Ethical approval for this study was obtained at multiple levels to ensure that all research activities were conducted in full compliance with established ethical guidelines. Initially, the study was reviewed and approved by the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC), which provided a rigorous evaluation of the study's design, informed consent procedures, and data management plans. Following REC approval, the complete research proposal including all data collection tools, consent forms translated into local languages, and detailed ethical protocols was submitted to the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) for national clearance. Additionally, local authorities in Kabale District granted the necessary permissions to conduct fieldwork within their communities.

Participants were thoroughly informed about the study's objectives and procedures including the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained from every participant before the commencement of data collection, and extra care was taken to ensure that participants fully understood the purpose and

potential implications of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process; all data were securely stored on password-protected devices and used solely for academic purposes. These measures were implemented in accordance with the ethical standards set forth by the department, faculty, REC, UNCST, and the local governing bodies, underscoring the study's commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of all participants.

3.12 Conclusion

Chapter three outlines the research methodology adopted for this study on culture and professional women's career attainment. The chapter detailed the research design, tools, and procedures used to gather and analyse data, thereby providing a robust framework for addressing the study objectives.

Qualitative design was employed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the topic. This design was particularly suitable for capturing the nuanced influence of culture on women's career experiences as it allowed in-depth exploration of personal narratives. Data collection involved the use of focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews. The FGDs and In depth interviews yielded rich qualitative insights into the lived experiences, challenges, and strategies of women in navigating cultural influences on their careers. The area of study was Kabale District, chosen for its diverse institutional and cultural landscape. The study population included key institutions such as Kabale University, Uganda College of Commerce, and Kabale Technical Institute, as well as Kabale District Local Government, Human Rights offices, and NGOs. These settings provided a varied yet relevant context for exploring the intersection of culture and women's professional advancement. Majority respondents participated in the study, representing a cross-section of

stakeholders including academic staff, students, government officials, NGO workers, and key informants. This diversity enhanced the reliability and depth of the data collected.

Therefore, the methodology adopted in this study was carefully selected to ensure validity, reliability, and relevance to the research objectives. The combination of tools and participants provided a holistic view of the cultural factors influencing professional women's career attainment. The next chapter will present the findings and analysis, drawing directly from the data collected using this methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS ON BIO DATA AND CULTURAL COMPONENTS THAT INFLUENCE WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DISTRICT

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings on the cultural components of the Bakiga, focusing on gender roles, family structures, and child-rearing values that affect the professional trajectories of Bakiga women in Kabale District. It integrates perspectives from respondents across multiple institutions and organizations, including Kabale University, Uganda College of Commerce (UCC), Kabale Technical Institute, Kabale local government and probation offices, Human Rights offices, and Non-Governmental Organization (FOWODE). The findings are presented in a manner that captures both thematic analysis and the voices of the respondents to highlight the nuances of Kikiga cultural influences on women's professional career attainment.

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Category	Kabale University	Uganda College of Kabale	Technical	Kabale District Local	Probation Office	Human Rights Office	NGOs Staff	Key Informants	Total
Gender									
Males	05	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	0
Females	12	10	08	4	3	3	4	4	48

Age									
20-29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30-39	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
40-49	3	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	8
50-59	4	5	5	3	2	1	2	2	24
60-69	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
70+	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Education									
Diploma	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Bachelor's	2	6	5	3	3	2	3	2	26
Master's	6	4	3	1	0	1	1	1	17
PhD	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

(Researcher, 2023)

The study was conducted in various institutions and organizations in Kabale District, including Kabale University, Uganda College of Commerce (UCC), Kabale Technical Institute, the District Local Government Office, the Human Rights Office, the Probation Ofice, NGO office (FAWODE), and key informants. A total of Bakiga women were involved, providing information on their gender, age, highest level of education, marital status, and positions in the community. An

interview guide was specifically adapted for local government officials, probation and human rights office staff, and other key informants. Focus group discussions and questionnaires were tailored for Bakiga women in all institutions.

4.1.1 Gender Distribution

The gender distribution of respondents shows a notable trend within the institutions studied. In particular, all staff at Kabale University, Uganda College of Commerce, Kabale Technical College and other organizations mentioned above we were mainly women with a few men. The total number of respondents were 48. Other respondents from Kabale district probation office, Kabale district local government, the NGOs, Human Rights office and the Key informants indicated that women were still few. The total number of these respondents were 18, making a grand total of 48. This finding reflects the study's focus on gender impact on careers, particularly among women in educational and technical fields. The low representation of men in these institutions underscores the gendered nature of employment in these sectors and possibly points to systemic barriers or cultural norms influencing women's hiring practices and career advancement.

In contrast, five male respondents participated, contributing to the broader analysis of cultural perceptions toward women's professional career attainment. Among female respondents, four were from the Kabale District Local Government staff and three from the Human Rights Office, four from NGOs, and three were key informants. Overall, the total number of female respondents amounted to 43, allowing for a focused analysis of women's experiences, challenges, and achievements in professional roles within Kabale District.

4.1.2 Age Distribution

The age distribution of respondents revealed that the majority of respondents were between 40 and 59 years old, indicating that they were mid-career professionals actively working in their respective fields. This age group accounted for 32 of the 48 respondents, with those aged 50-59 representing the largest segment, totaling 24 women. This result suggests that women in this age category have already gained extensive experience and expertise in their professions, qualifying them for potential career advancement and leadership roles.

The data also shows that younger professionals were less represented, with only two respondents aged 30-39 and three aged 20-29. The absence of respondents below 20 years could indicate a gap in entry-level employment opportunities for younger women or reflect difficulties they face in accessing these positions within the institutions surveyed. Additionally, seven respondents were aged 60-69, and one respondent was 70 or older, suggesting that older professionals remain active in the workforce to some extent, albeit in smaller numbers.

4.1.3 Educational Attainment

The level of education among respondents varied from institution to institution, with a significant proportion attaining higher degrees. At Kabale University, six respondents had a Master's degree, while two had a PhD. The Uganda College of Commerce reported four respondents with a Master's degree and six with a Bachelor's degree. At Kabale Technical Institute, five respondents held a Bachelor's degree, while two had a diploma. Respondents from other organizations also fell in varying categories as reflected on the table. This trend toward higher educational attainment is particularly significant in academic and administrative sectors, where formal qualifications are crucial for employment and career progression.

Overall, the data showed that 20 respondents had a Master's degree, and two had a PhD. In addition, 23 respondents had a Bachelor's degree, and three had a diploma. This distribution highlights the commitment of women in Kabale District to pursuing higher education, which is critical for enhancing their professional skills and improving their career prospects. The emphasis on education as a means of empowerment is particularly relevant in analyzing the cultural factors that influence Bakiga professional women's career attainment.

These findings suggest that while educational attainment among women in Kabale District is improving, deep-seated cultural attitudes still influence decisions about women's education and career progression. These findings provide a strong foundation for understanding the background of the study participants and the cultural and systemic factors shaping professional women's career attainment in Kabale District.

4.2 Components of Kikiga culture

The analysis of the components of Kikiga culture reveals a rich web of elements that define the identity and practices of the Bakiga people. A total of 48 participants provided insights into the cultural components they associate with their community. The results show which show the frequency and percentage of responses to the various cultural elements. The most frequently mentioned components include values, beliefs, norms, customs, dress, sanctions, language, eating habits, dances, and taboos.

On the above table, values proved to be the most important component, where respondents stated that they play an essential role in Bakiga culture. This high percentage underscores the central importance of values in shaping the cultural landscape. Values are described as the guiding principles that govern individual and collective behavior within the community. Among the most important values highlighted by respondents were respect for elders, payment of bride price, early

marriages, and emphasis on virginity. These values reflect the moral and social framework that regulates interactions and relationships within Bakiga society. A respondent in a focus group discussion emphasized:

> *"Among the Bakiga, it is considered a mark of honor for a girl to marry early and uphold family dignity. Parents make girls drop out of school early to avoid them indulging in sexual affairs before marriage. In that regard they invest in their sons' education since the boys are expected to keep home, invest in the home, and their education become the pride of the family, yet the education of girls benefits the family of the man that she marries"* (Interview, 2023).

The importance of values in Kikiga culture is also reinforced by literary contributions from authors such as Paulo Ngoroza. His work, which deals with the origins and cultural identity of the Bakiga, emphasizes the importance of remembering one's roots despite changes in socio-economic status. Ngoroza's assertion that…" *individuals should not forget their origins, expressed in the proverb "Gatagata munonga gateebirwe wa beene mbeho,"* resonates strongly with the collective consciousness of the community. This perspective highlights the interplay between cultural continuity and evolving social norms, suggesting that values serve as a stabilizing force in the midst of change. In an focus group discussion one Mukiga woman noted;

> *...Culture stipulates values that shape a person's way of attaching importance to particular aspects of life. I had strong values from my grandmother who always told me about the importance of keep away from men and securing the value of my body. She told me to value people my clan, my people and the entire clan, she told to mind about other people before I took a decision. In so doing I kept in school in order to please my parents and relatives, that's how I attained a career..."* (Focus Group Discussion, 2023).

Values become relevance in women's career growth and attainment become most organizations consider employing people with defined origin and culture and this is the reason on the resumes aspects like tribe, and district of origin and language are asked. What a mukiga woman values actually defines her, defines her values and ability to do her professional work sustainable and also helps the fellow supervisors to define her, understand and relate with her accordingly.

In addition, beliefs were identified as the second most important component, with 40 respondents (83%) recognizing their role in Kikiga culture. Beliefs encompass the spiritual and metaphysical ideas that inform the worldview of the Bakiga people. Common beliefs include reverence for ancestors, the importance of communal harmony, and the connection between the physical and spiritual realms. These beliefs not only shape individual behavior but also reinforce social cohesion within the community. A respondent stated in an Interview;

> *"..We believe that our ancestors watch over us and that we act and live by our beliefs. I fear doing certain things and committing some crimes because our cultural beliefs do not allow me to act that way. I fear because acting centrally can bring misfortune to me and the whole lineage. In our culture we believe that the dead are not dead and that they watch over us. We not act or behave centrally to our society's expectation or else taboos could befall us and we get punished for wrong doing* (Interview, 2023).

The consistency of beliefs and values creates a stable cultural framework that supports the transmission of traditions and practices across generations. The relevance of beliefs in our study is that it connects well to Bakiga Women with what they believe, that that has made them unique from other tribes. The beliefs they uphold to define them and what actually makes them who they are. With regard to career attainment, Bakiga women with a belief become easy to understand and

manage. Professional supervisors understand their staff and also try to understand their beliefs in addition to the appreciation of the company values and beliefs. To this regard, cultural beliefs become a good guide to professional supervision of professional career supervisors.

Further, the other component was Norms. Norms reflect unwritten rules for behavior within the community and these were appreciated during interviews. These norms dictate acceptable behavior in family interactions, community gatherings, and ceremonial events. Adherence to norms is critical to maintaining order and fostering a sense of belonging among community members. The interaction between norms and values is evident, as norms often emerge from underlying values that are important to the community.

> *"A woman should not eat eggs or chicken before marriage. It is believed that such indulgence may cause barrenness or difficulty in childbirth. But even in marriage a woman does not eat certain foods like eggs and fish or even goats meet or grass hopers depending of the society. Actually, at my family even beef was served by the husband to ensure that every member of the family got and equal share of the beef"*(Interview, 2023).

Norms are important in defining a person and understanding her deeply. The career woman is understood by the norms of her culture, some do not eat fish or chicken, others dress up in some way for particular functions and others define the way of living by the norms they uphold to. This is important in understanding a professional woman with regard to the culture she comes. Actually, the same norms help us to understand why some women attain professional career growth while others do not.

Further still, whose importance was recognized by established practices and rituals that characterize Kikiga culture, customs encompass a wide range of activities, including marriage ceremonies, burial rites, and traditional festivals. These customs hold significant historical importance and serve to preserve cultural heritage and strengthen community identity. The reason the customs become important is that they positive ways of letting women know that life lived is lived with some guidelines and that every organization has a custom that guides it. To this effect women used to customs find it easy to fit in a new organization because they easily appreciate their customs and by them. There is one thing have a profession and their keeping on the job. Actually, Sanctions are also components that guide the person's sense of action about doing what is right and fearing to do what is wrong. The wrong actions or behavior that are not supported by the social norms lead to punishments of the victims while the right deeds attract rewards like gifts and positive words like thank you or keep it up reflect the esthetic expressions and cultural identity of the Bakiga people. Furthermore, Sanctions, play a crucial role in enforcing norms and values in Kikiga culture. Sanctions can take various forms, including social ostracism, fines, or other forms of punishment for individuals who violate cultural norms. In a focus group, a participant said;

> *"...I grew in Kabale and we knew that if a girl was found pregnant before marriage, she would be harassed, would be ashamed, would hide and the worst of all is that some families decided to throw that girl on a cliff of a steep mountain then she would be thrown down, deep down to ensure that she dies. In addition in our society, if a girl got pregnant before marriage, she would be thrown in a cliff or thrown in Lake Bunyonyo as a sign of punishment "*(FGD, 2023).

The presence of sanctions underscores the community's commitment to upholding values and ensuring that members adhere to established norms. Sanctions still unfold in our day today running of our work. Women who respected sanctions through their culture as they grew become better career professional because the same sanctions prevail at the professional work places. They do warning, write disciplinary letters, and make employees face disciplinary committees. Those who do not comply are dismissed or punished through suspensions. Therefore, sanctions have a positive effect to women's professional growth.

Language

The other component of culture is Language. Different respondents who gave a fundamental component of Kikiga culture that facilitates communication and cultural identity mentioned this. The Kikiga language is not just a means of transmitting information but also a vessel for cultural narratives, proverbs, and oral traditions. Efforts to promote the use of the Kikiga language, particularly among younger generations, are crucial to ensuring that cultural knowledge is passed on. This was done through teaching of proverbs and sharing wise says that were meant to ensure that other important elements of culture like norms, values, beliefs, customs and sanctions were adhered to. The reason of communicating through the known cultural language was an emphasis of the culture, and one way making people love their culture. Therefore, language helped to ensure that women had a belonging and could be identified by their language. Therefore, language was a way of transmitting education to women. It became easy to education a woman to attain a career when she knows her local language that one who didn't know any other language, hence attaining a career becomes easy. Also, some of the careers in the field require knowledge of the local language, hence language remains an important element of culture.

A woman who was interviewed in an FGD, commented;

…"*while we grew with our parents speaking Rukiga, we had neighbors who spoke other languages and wished that we learn their language. However, because our parents emphasized our own language, they stopped us from using a strong language at home. However, this eventually contributed to my career growth because in my A level and university I studied Rukiga language and now I teach in a secondary school...* " (Interview, 2023).

In a focus group…" *Important topics were discussed including the expected values, beliefs and good behavior were discussed. At the eating places behaviors were also checked and counselling and further sanctions of children took place to ensure that they grew well and to the expectations our culture....* "(Focus Group, 2023).

Finally, taboos, were among the mentioned values which represent the prohibitions that govern behavior in Kikiga culture. Taboos often have their origins in deeply held beliefs and values and serve to protect the community from actions that are considered harmful or disrespectful. In Kikiga culture some of the forbidden deeds that attracted taboos included acts like incest and sleeping with relations or acts like seeing an elderly naked person, eating of some prohibited foods by women like chicken and fish and others like homosexuality and disrespect for alders. All the above were subjected to taboos. A respondent said;

"*...A person who impregnates his sister or mother, or one who goes ahead to sleep or have sex with his mother faces a taboo, and can sometimes be excommunicated from a given society. In our village a man and his family were chased away because who gives birth to only girls is sometimes mocked, as sons are traditionally seen as the ones who continue the family lineage...* " (Interview, 2023).

Although taboos may change over time, their presence illustrates the constant negotiation between tradition and modernity within the Bakiga women. It's important to understand the taboos that Bakiga women uphold too. The case in point is where in Kabale it was a taboo for a girl in a relationship and got pregnant would not keep at her parents' home, hence once caught, it meant her leaving school and getting married to the very man she slept with. This accounts for the reasons why some Bakiga women could not develop their career but ended up opting for keeping at home marriage without professional work.

On Values, majority respondents identified values as a key component. This suggests that values are highly regarded in Kikiga culture. In addition, beliefs, indicating a strong cultural foundation. The norms further reflect established behaviours and expectations within the community, which are important traditions that shape daily life. Further, dressing traditionally was mentioned as a key and highlighting its cultural significance, although it is less critical compared to values and beliefs. However, sanctions were identified among important things that enforce mechanisms for enforcing norms within the culture. On to that, language spoken was vital but less emphasized than other components. With taboos that are recognized in controlling discipline and community interaction and go further to suggest punishments for defiant. However, these do not abig role in as far as professional growth and attainment are concerned.

The insights of the study illustrate the High Importance of Core Values. It suggests that the dominance of values and beliefs suggests that Kikiga culture is heavily rooted in its moral and ethical frameworks. In addition, the role of norms and customs present a strong presence of norms and customs that indicate the structured society where traditions are upheld. Further, moderate emphasis on language indicates that while language is crucial for communication and cultural identity, it may not be prioritized as highly as values or norms. However, there is lower

focus on taboos because of the lower percentage which imply that they a more flexible cultu approach is upheld compared to more rigid societies.

4.3.1 Marriage and Bride Wealth in Kikiga Culture

Marriage is a cornerstone of Kikiga culture, serving as both a social institution and an econc arrangement that fosters familial alliances. Almost more than half of respondents emphasize centrality in defining social identity. One respondent elaborated:

> *"A Mukiga person was known as a man or a woman only when they got married. Th who remained unmarried were not respected in society. In fact, an unmarried person w traditionally buried with a banana stem, a symbolic act that reflected social disapprov Amukiga women or man was taken to be a child even if he grew old in age as long as did not get married, hence there was no respect and value to people who were not marri This influenced my sister who follows me the third time to get married before n* "(Interview, 2023).

Bride wealth is an integral component of marriage, with more than 36 respondents recognized it role in reinforcing societal values and economic expectations. The practice serves as compensatio for the bride's family for the loss of their daughter's labor and is viewed as a validation of the union. However, this practice can have unintended consequences, particularly for women's education and career growth. One informant noted:

> *"In Kikiga culture, a man who had many daughters was considered wealthy because he would receive bride wealth in the form of cows, goats, and money. This meant that girls were often seen as economic capital rather than individuals with personal aspirations". She went further to quote the story of her neighbor who turned down the request from her*

father to marry a wealthy neighbor who had money and animals. The father chased her away from home and all relatives disserted her. Where ever she went to the relatives they said she was such a bad child who refused to honor her father's request (Interviews from Key Informants in Kabale town, 2023).

The prioritization of bride wealth over education often leads to early marriages, cutting short girls' educational opportunities. Some parents believe that investing in girls' education is futile since their benefits will go to their husbands' families. As one elder put it:

"Educating girls is like working for another household. They marry and take everything to their husband's family, so why should we invest heavily in them?" (Interview with key informants, 2023).

This view underscores how cultural norms around bride wealth and marriage can limit professional women's career attainment by diverting resources from their education and professional development.

4.3.2 Gender Roles and Cultural Expectations

Kikiga culture is deeply patriarchal, with well-defined gender roles that dictate men's dominance in decision-making and women's subordination in the domestic sphere. While doing interviews, respondents identified gender roles as a defining characteristic of the community. Women are primarily responsible for domestic duties, child-rearing, and agricultural labor, while men engage in income-generating activities, public leadership, and decision-making. One woman narrated:

"In our family girls did more household chores than boys because culture parents, guardians and other extended members followed the norms and values of the cultural they always referred to the way my grandmother handled her children before she passed. For

instance, my uncle once saw us going to school and asked my mother, 'why are you making yourself suffer? These girls should stay home and help you with house chores, they are girls and is their work, what are they for?'" (Interview with local government officer, Kabale, 2023).

These expectations restrict women's ability to pursue education and professional careers, as they bear the greater burden of unpaid household labor. This was echoed in a focus group discussion where one participant noted:

"..A woman said that she does much work that sometimes she fails to excel in education. It's me that look after the sick members of the family, when some falls sick I stop going to school and sit and take care of them. Sometimes I reported back to school after a whole week and other times two weeks. This affected by performance and that's how I missed out the profession of Nursing which I always wished to have..." (Focus Group Discussion, 2023).

The cultural perception that women's primary role is within the household, coupled with the undervaluation of their education, and has led to few women attaining a career. On the same note, a participant noted:

"I struggled to get education because my father believed I would eventually be a housewife so he didn't want to educate me. He always said that educating a woman was like helping a stranger that passes your house while proceeding to another person's home. That it was unnecessary to waste money helping a woman to attain a career yet it will be the man or her future husband to benefit. (Interview, 2023).

These entrenched gender roles significantly influence career attainment, as women must constantly negotiate their cultural expectations with their professional aspirations.

4.3.3 Naming Practices and Gendered Identity

Naming is a cultural marker that reflects societal expectations. In Kikiga culture, names often reinforce gender roles, with boys receiving names that denote strength and prosperity, while girls' names reflect expectations of marriage and domesticity, almost a half women respondents acknowledged the significance of naming practices in shaping identity.

One participant explained:

> *"An interviewee mentioned that. This name portrayed frustration on the side of the parents and sometimes they did not love the baby till it later grew into an adult. Some of such children miss out on school because after all they were not planned" Boonabana was a common name given to girls in families that had no sons. It meant that the parent wished to have a baby boy but had no choice to the birth of the baby girls after all are children."* (Interview, 2023).

The naming practices were used as a way of giving someone an identification through the giving of a name, mostly the clan name or the tribe name.

Similarly, boys were often given names like Byabakama, meaning 'ruler,' to emphasize their expected dominance in society. These naming conventions contribute to the patriarchal structure by reinforcing societal attitudes toward gender roles from birth.

4.3.4 Informal Education and Socialization

Informal education plays a vital role in shaping Kikiga cultural identity. Twenty-five responses (52%) highlighted the significance of this cultural transmission, which occurs through family

interactions, proverbs, folktales, and role modeling. Women are often socialized into caregiving and domestic responsibilities, while men are taught leadership and economic management.

The study found that childhood experiences shape educational aspirations, as toys and responsibilities are gendered. Girls are given dolls and cooking sets, while boys receive toy cars and tools. One elder explained:

> *"One respondent noted... a girl is raised to know that her place is in the home. Even the games she plays as a child prepare her for motherhood and domestic life. When she grows, she does housework and prepares herself for marriage. My sister refused to study and dropped out in primary six but she did better domestic work than me. Actually, she married and became a good wife while for me I became a good secondary school teacher,* "(Interview, 2023).

This early socialization limits women's career expectations and professional ambitions, as they internalize traditional roles from childhood.

4.3.5 Religion and Cultural Morality

Religion plays a dual role in reinforcing and challenging traditional gender norms in Kikiga culture. Many respondents highlighted the influence of religious teachings on moral values and societal expectations. Christianity has blended with traditional beliefs, reinforcing both progressive and conservative gender ideals. While some most modernized religious denominations have adjusted and changed to positive teachings women's education and empowerment, the drive is still lacking. One respondent observed:

"Our church tells us that a woman's role is to support her husband, not to challenge him. This makes it difficult for women to pursue leadership positions. I refer to the bible in the book of Proverbs 31 that talks of a noble woman who works tireless, provides for the family, looks after her husband, keeps home, looks after the children, cultivates fields and gives a good name to her husband." (Interview, 2023).

This interplay between religious beliefs and cultural traditions influences attitudes toward women's career aspirations, as many are expected to prioritize family over professional ambitions.

4.3.6 Property Ownership and Inheritance

Inheritance laws in Kikiga culture favor male heirs, reinforcing economic disparities between men and women. Thirty-five responses (73%) indicated that land and property are traditionally passed down through the male lineage, limiting women's financial independence. One respondent lamented:

"My father left all the land with my two brothers. He said I would get land from my husband's family, but that never happened. I felt isolated, I cried and actually stopped loving my father. I got a job a house help made money and later when my dad fell sick I actually helped him and by the boys had sold all their land (Interview, 2023).

This cultural bias against female property ownership impacts women's ability to invest in businesses, access credit, or establish financial security, all of which are critical for career attainment.

The findings illustrate the deeply embedded cultural norms that influence professional women's career attainment in Kikiga society. Marriage, bride wealth, gender roles, religious beliefs, naming conventions, informal education, and property inheritance collectively shape women's

opportunities and challenges in professional life. While cultural traditions serve to maintain social cohesion, they also impose structural limitations on women's autonomy and career progression. However, shifts in attitudes particularly among younger generations suggest that cultural change is possible. Increased access to education, legal reforms on inheritance, and advocacy for gender equity are gradually transforming perceptions of women's roles in both family and professional settings. Nonetheless, overcoming these barriers requires sustained community dialogue and policy interventions to bridge the gap between cultural traditions and gender-inclusive development.

The characteristics of Kikiga culture and their implications for professional women's career attainment in Kabale District. The chapter is divided into two main sections: (1) Components of Bakiga Culture and (2) Characteristics of Kikiga Culture. These sections explore the cultural elements that define the identity and social structure of the Bakiga people, particularly in relation to gender roles, marriage, education, and economic participation.

The study identifies key cultural components that shape the lives and social experiences of the Bakiga people. Among these, values, beliefs, norms, and customs emerge as the most significant. Values such as respect for elders, bride price, early marriage, and emphasis on virginity are deeply ingrained and influence gender expectations. Beliefs, particularly in communal harmony and ancestral reverence, further reinforce traditional social structures. Norms and customs regulate behaviour within the community, dictating acceptable social roles and responsibilities.

Language, dress, eating habits, and traditional dances also play an essential role in cultural expression and identity. Sanctions are used to enforce compliance with these cultural norms, with social ostracism and penalties applied to those who deviate. The presence of taboos further establishes moral and behavioural boundaries, often reinforcing gender roles and limiting women's

opportunities. These cultural elements collectively shape the social environment within which Bakiga women navigate their personal and professional aspirations.

The chapter also goes deeper into specific characteristics of Kikiga culture that influence professional women's career attainment. The institution of marriage is central to social organization, with bride price serving as a key determinant of family alliances and social status. While marriage is highly valued and often considered a measure of respect and identity, it poses challenges for women's education and career attainment. Early marriages, often motivated by economic considerations, hinder women's ability to pursue higher education and professional careers.

Gender roles in Kikiga culture are distinctly defined, with men occupying positions of authority and women primarily engaged in domestic duties. This stratification extends beyond the household into education and employment, where men have greater access to resources and decision-making opportunities. Women face systemic barriers in advancing their careers due to cultural expectations that prioritize their roles as wives and mothers.

Religious beliefs and naming practices further reinforce gendered expectations. Names given to boys often signify strength and leadership, while those assigned to girls emphasize domesticity and marital expectations. Informal education, largely imparted through family and community socialization, shapes children's aspirations from an early age, often steering girls toward traditional roles while encouraging boys to pursue education and leadership.

The study also highlights the implications of property inheritance, which predominantly favors men. The exclusion of women from land ownership limits their economic independence and ability to accumulate wealth, further reinforcing patriarchal structures. However, the findings suggest that while these cultural norms remain deeply rooted, changing attitudes, particularly among younger

generations, indicate potential shifts toward greater gender equity in education and professional life.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates how cultural values and practices significantly shape the career trajectories of women in Kabale District. While traditions provide a strong sense of identity and community, they also present substantial barriers to women's professional growth. The findings suggest the need for a cultural transformation that balances tradition with the evolving aspirations of Bakiga women, enabling them to achieve their full potential in both personal and professional spheres.

Analysis of the values of Kikiga Culture

On high value on marriage and bride wealth, it is central to Kikiga culture. This suggests that social and economic stability is closely tied to marital practices, indicating a strong emphasis on family and tradition. Also, to the male children, it was indicated that value placed on boys reflects traditional gender preferences in many cultures, where Bakiga culture inclusive, male heirs are often prioritized for lineage and inheritance than females or women. This could influence family planning and societal roles. This could also influence a decision facilitating women to career attainment or not.

Further gender roles were defined and indicated a clear delineation of responsibilities between men and women. This could affect women's participation in various societal aspects, including education and employment. In addition, moderate importance of appreciated highly. The reason for this level of response was that religion plays a role in shaping women's behaviour and their way of life. However, as noted, religion is less emphasized compared to marriage and bride wealth.

This suggests that while spirituality is significant, cultural practices may take precedence in daily life.

In addition, naming and Inheritance of property of was importance and value and accrued responses reflected the cultural significance of lineage and the transmission of wealth. This impacts social structure and familial relationships. This influences professional women's career attainment in a way that parents and guardian's facilitation men to attain a career since it benefits the family unlike that of women that benefits her husband's family.

In addition to the above, education and women's position, indicate a growing recognition of the importance of education for women. However, the relatively few respondents suggests that there may still be barriers to achieving gender equality in education and social status. On the hand, this explains why some authors like Giddens 1996 attribute low professional attainment of women to cultural barriers.

4.4 Conclusion

Chapter Four has presented and discussed the findings from the field data, focusing on the components and characteristics of culture and how this influence professional women's career attainment in the context of Kabale District. Through the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, key patterns and insights emerged that illuminate the deep-rooted relationship between cultural systems and women's professional advancement. The analysis revealed that the core components of culture, including beliefs, norms, values, traditions, language, and religion, play a significant role in shaping gender roles and expectations. These cultural components often reinforce patriarchal ideologies that prioritize male leadership and female domesticity, thereby limiting women's access to education, decision-making roles, and career opportunities. The

characteristics of culture such as its learned nature, shared values, transmission across generations, and adaptability further explain how cultural norms persist and continue to influence societal attitudes toward women's roles. In many cases, these characteristics have contributed to the internalization of gendered limitations, even among women themselves, thereby affecting their confidence and aspirations. The data also revealed that cultural perceptions impact career choices, with women often directed toward "acceptable" professions deemed culturally appropriate, typically those in caregiving, teaching, or administrative support. Moreover, cultural expectations related to marriage, motherhood, and caregiving responsibilities frequently conflict with career advancement, leading to career breaks, part-time employment, or abandonment of career goals altogether.

Despite these challenges, the chapter also highlighted evidence of cultural shifts, especially among younger generations and educated communities, where women are increasingly challenging traditional norms and asserting their career ambitions. Institutional support, gender equality policies, and education were cited as key factors driving these changes. Therefore, the chapter demonstrates that culture remains a powerful force in influencing professional women's career attainment, both as a barrier and, in some contexts, as a vehicle for change. The findings affirm that to improve women's professional outcomes, there must be deliberate efforts to question, reform, and transform cultural beliefs and practices that hinder gender equity. The next chapter will summarize these findings, present conclusions, and offer recommendations for policy, practice, and further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE INFLUENCE OF KIKIGA CULTURE ON WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DISTRICT

5.0 Introduction

The second study objective was to investigate how Kikiga culture influence women's professional career attainment. Varying responses were given by different categories of people like Bakiga women, lecturers, administrators.

5.1 How Kikiga culture influences professional women's career attainment in Kabale district

In the analysis of that the influence of Kikiga culture on women's professional career attainment, respondents said the influence was both positive and negative. They started by explaining the positive influence of culture.

One of the roles of culture in enhancing career attainment is imparting good behavior. The analysis from the focus group discussion revealed that culture imparts good behavior. Through cultural norms and sanctions, parents teach the required behavior to their children. Respondents said that cultural norms influence one's behavior that are good and expected of a given a community. They said that this good behavior influences a woman to work and perform better in the execution of her career. Giddens (1995) who says that people's behavior is determined by the way they were socialized by their parents and elders in their homes support this argument. This helps in enhancing a woman's ability to do her career well. In addition, Museveni, et all (2012) looks at the positive value of culture. It has in an element of language that gives power and belonging to the person. One can introduce himself or herself well in the language of her kinsmen. This in a way gives indirect power and a sense of cohesion and belongingness.

Further to the above, other respondents said that culture helps in teaching good social values. They said that this involves when to do what, how to it and to whom to do it and the time and place to do it. This involves respect for the elders, manners of greeting, talking to elders, asking or requesting for help and ways of handling social issues. It was said that a good employee or employer is the one that is able to handle individual and social issues as they arise, hence enhancing positive career attainment. A sociologist Moore, (1995) when he wrote that a society without a strong culture takes long to harmonize, settle and develop, explained this. In agreement to the above, Murindwa (2002) writes on how people struggle for their rights especially for independence to attain a career. He says that it becomes easy to do it when you about yourself and can claim a belonging to a certain specified society.

Further to the above, respondents explained that culture enhances development. They said that to some extend culture enables a person to work hard, develop their career and in the end develop sustainably. In one of the focus group discussions, some respondents said that they work hard because the cultural values were imparted in them by their parents, elders, and relatives, hence realized social development. The example that was given was that husbands are culturally supposed to support their families with the basics of life hence the only option they are left with is to work hard and provide for the families.

Mothers are also expected to provide food and others basics of life. As a result, each category is forced to enhance their career and work hard, hence realized social development. This view is supported by Gells (1995) who looks at development as people centered and that it starts with people at the family level. He says development cannot take place without stakeholders at the social level combining effort to enhance it. According to Narayan (2002), women get a higher

voice when they are empowered and in position to defend their rights. When conducting a focus group discussion with Bakiga women, at the Human rights office, one of them said;

> *".....helping a woman to attain a career is the most important thing apparent or a guardian can offer. My mother was a nurse in the village; she had that qualification and actually served the people. What helped me to study was the salary she was earning from a health unit where she was working. When a woman attains a career she helps the entire family to jump out poverty... (*Interviewee, 2023).

In another development discipline influences women's professional career attainment other factor that connects culture to professional women's career attainment is discipline. Respondents said that good discipline influences a person to work better and excel. Career attainment without good discipline would be chaotic. Therefore, culture shapes a person's discipline through the known sanctions of a given society. The positive sanctions like hard work are rewarded while the negative ones like dodging work, bad behavior and immorality are disciplined heavily. A given cultural sanction depends on the heaviness of the violated sanction they noted that culture promotes family and marriage, and these institutions discipline is imparted. Through the process of socialization, children are taught the expected behavior in society, and in a way, they tend to be good disciplined, especially those who want to be appreciated by society. In a way, good discipline is rewarded while bad discipline is punished. This is done through instilling of sanctions that are negative or positive. The positive sanctions encourage good practices and behavior. They include rewards like gifts and appreciative words like thank you, well-done, good boy, a smile, a clap, a hug and others. The negative sanctions include warning words like I will beat you, bad boy or girl, watch out, and stop it and others. Physical rewards like gifts may be given while physical punishments like denial of food, beatings and abuses may be employed to discipline a child or an adult.

Besides, some respondents said culture enhances social harmony and respect for others. The aspect of social harmony was to one of the factors that result in development. It was said that where there is social harmony there is peace, care and togetherness. According Giddens (1995) social harmony is seen as tool for social cohesion. He says that social harmony influences social justice and, in the end, influences social development.

Culture describes people's beliefs in society and in so doing it prevents social clashes and conflicts; instead, it instills social harmony and cohesion. Respondents said that culture enhances good disciple, through the practice of strict social sanctions that some result in disciplinary actions when expected social behavior is not enhanced. However, this was looked at positively by Linda (2013) who says that for rural and urban development to be realized people must adhere to the social sanctions that result in good discipline.

One of the important ways of parenting is instilling what is required in a person through information. A woman could be taught how dig, how to make porridge, how to manage a home or how to do certain pieces of work. In the discussion of the related issue, Burkey attributes Excellency in career development to the initial informal education a person gets from her home. He says such employees tend to be better than those who get a professional career but lacking on the informal knowledge as illustrated above.

In one of the interviews carried out with a respondent in one of the institutions, she said that parents teach their children various roles depending their age and sex. Girls are taught how to cook, clean the house, look after children, peel, wash clothes, dig, fetch firewood, fetch water, and other basic roles. Boys are also taught how to build, fetch water, cut the bush, split firewood, hunt, grazed and other duties. However, to emphasize the above, in a focus group discussion respondents said that

the roles taught to girls and boys as they grow determine their personality and behavior. They also determine who they become in future, what they do in future and their life aspirations.

However, culture has negative attributes that affect professional women's career attainment. Different respondents gave in varying responses on the negative influence of culture on professional women's career attainment.

One of the responses that were given on the factors that affect women' career attainment was that culture promotes gender inequality. They illustrated that most of the cultural norms, values, taboos, and customs favor men other than women and in the end, women are suppressed. In a focus group discussion, most members also said that women are not supported to work far from their homes, work till late hours or even to stay away from their homes. As a result of this, their career attainment is affected because employers do not compromise with quality and quantity of the results from their staff. On the same issue, in one of the interviews, respondents said that women do double work. Culture stipulates women to do house work like cleaning, washing clothes and cooking. In addition, some men do not allow maids or other people to cook for them. As a result, women work for many hours because they all house work at the same time do professional work. This leads to poor performance and a decline in professional women's career attainment.

Another form of gender inequality discussed by respondents was access to resources that include inheritance of property from parents and access to formal education. They noted that it's the boys that inherit their parents' property and enjoy other rights like having freedom of expression, play and relaxation while girls are doing house work. While this restricts may be good they said they limit women's ability to explorer more in their career. However, with the current situation and the modern society, some of these aspects do not affect some women. The Uganda National Bureau

decisions. However there has been some improvement in some modern homes and families that have given women chance to women to choose courses of study and to decide on the careers they wish to do (Gerhad, 2001).

Further to the above, while women strive to place themselves in the higher social ladder with their effort, society also places them in some stratum that they find hard to jump out. Respondents said that respondents said that culture defines the position of women and this poses a hindrance in attaining career attainment. According to Veronica, at el (1998), the position of women is influences by culture; it tends to be lower than that of men. According to World Development Report (2005), women are hindered by lack of basic resources because culture allows men to own resources and not women.

On the question of how Kikiga culture affects professional women's career attainment, respondents said that cultural practices like forcing a woman into marriage by lifting her forcefully "okuterura" affect professional women's career attainment. Women are carried off for marriage forcefully, is forced to marry while young, and as a result their career attainment stagnates. They said that while this practice has minimized due to strict laws and heavy punishment, it still exists in some rural areas. However, according to Matembe (2002) this problem is attributed to poverty of parents and the ignorance about the women's careers. In her writing she encourages women to know their rights in order to fight for them, she says you cannot claim for what you do not know. Related to her views, Nduhukire (2018) says that training and career attainment should be extensively done to women in order to fight poverty. She notes that unless women attain a career they will keep poor and will have no voice in society. However, on the note Mulindwa (2002) notes that some categories of people still struggle for their rights to career attainment because they

have kept in the vicious cycle of poverty, ignorance and powerlessness. In his writing he proposes that people need to know their rights through furthering their education.

Further to the above, early marriages influence professional women's career attainment negatively. Women who marry early tend to produce children early and to drop out of school early. In the end they do not complete the studies, fail to compete in the job market and lose out on their career development. In addition, there are respondents that said that women feared to delay to get married because of because of cultural pressure and social expectations. Women are expected to marry young and to have children while young.

Respondents said that it was believed to be a bad omen for a girl to delay to marry and luck for a woman to find a man early in her life. She would rather delay education or work than marriage, they noted. This issue view was discussed by Horton and Hunt (1995) who described taboos as a major hindrance to women's attainment. They noted that taboos are feared and respected to the extent that even those who know the truth of the matter still fear and respect them. The views of Oyeronke (2005) are similar to that Horton and Hunt. He says that gender equity and equity should be the answer for women's vulnerability. He noted that cultural practices that hinder women from attaining a career should be discouraged. In his writing he brings out the African gender issues like culture that have strained women's progress in development.

5.2 Analysis of how Kikiga Culture Influences on women's professional career attainment

Imparting good behaviours was highlighted to be one of the factors that influence professional women's career attainment, with a percentage of 98. The overwhelming majority indicates that Kikiga culture strongly emphasizes instilling positive behaviours in women, which likely supports their professional conduct and ethics. Teaching values through informal education attracted a

percentage of 94, this high percentage suggests that cultural teachings plays a crucial role in shaping women's values, which can directly influence their career choices and aspirations.

In addition, many respondents said that culture enhances development, this kid of development could be social, political and cultural development and this made a percentage of 90. A significant belief that culture contributes to personal and community development highlights the potential for cultural practices to foster environments conducive to career advancement.

Further, culture defines ones Identity as to whether one is a Mukiga or a Mutoro or Muganda. In so doing, one gets a belonging and feels a member of given society. While the percentage was 81, a big percentage as observed, other responds gave different responses like, reflecting on the importance of cultural identity, which can empower women in their professional journeys by providing a sense of belonging and purpose.

Further to the above, culture describes people's beliefs (67%) and defines them accordingly. Majorly this is what makes direct, act different and behaves differently. Understanding cultural beliefs can shape women's perspectives on career opportunities and societal roles, influencing their ambitions and choices. The other way into which culture enhances social harmony (65%): and promotes a supportive network for women in their careers, encouraging collaboration and mutual assistance. People's social statuses are defined (58%), acknowledging social hierarchies and explains how it can impact on women's career paths, as societal expectations may dictate the roles deemed appropriate for women.

Customs of a Culture Are Defined (50%), and this suggests that awareness of cultural customs can influence career decisions, as women navigate the balance between tradition and modernity. In

addition, it defines one's Language (40%), and as a matter of fact, language as a cultural eleme plays a role in communication skills and professional interactions, although it is viewed as le influential than other factors.

5.3 Conclusion

Chapter examined the influence of culture on professional women's career attainment in Kaba District based on the data collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions, and in-dept interviews. The chapter has brought to light how cultural values, beliefs, and practices continue t shape and, in many cases, limit women's participation and advancement in professional career within the district.

The findings revealed that patriarchal norms, deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the community, still dictate traditional gender roles, assigning domestic and caregiving responsibilities to women while associating leadership and decision-making roles with men. These cultural norms often discourage women from pursuing higher education or leadership positions, contributing to underrepresentation in influential careers.

Moreover, the study showed that social expectations, such as early marriage, pressure to prioritize family over work, and societal judgment of career-driven women, create psychological and practical barriers to career growth. Cultural perceptions that label ambitious women as disrespectful or non-conforming also affect women's confidence and motivation.

Despite these constraints, the chapter also identified emerging changes in attitudes, especially among the younger and more educated populations. There is increasing awareness of gender equality, and some women are actively challenging cultural barriers to claim space in professional

and leadership domains. Institutions such as universities, NGOs, and local government agencies in Kabale are also playing a growing role in promoting gender-sensitive programs and policies.

In conclusion, Chapter five has affirmed that culture remains a powerful determinant in shaping women's career paths in Kabale District. While it continues to impose limitations through traditional gender roles and expectations, there are signs of gradual transformation driven by education, policy interventions, and advocacy. These findings lay the foundation for the next chapter, which will provide the overall conclusions of the study and offer actionable recommendations for overcoming cultural barriers to professional women's career attainment.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW BAKIGA WOMEN BALANCE THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY WITH THEIR CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH IN KABALE DISTRICT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the analysis and interpretation of results on exploring how Bakiga women balance their cultural identity with their career aspiration and their professional growth. It will discuss the interconnection by indication the three aspects relate with each other and how they unfold to influence professional women's career attainment.

Women acknowledging Social Expectations. Where majority of respondents indicated that they are aware of the cultural and societal expectations placed on them as Bakiga women. These expectations often include fulfilling traditional roles such as being obedient daughters, wives, and mothers, while prioritizing family over career. Acknowledging these norms does not always mean submission, but rather indicates that women are consciously navigating these pressures as they make career decisions. This awareness forms the first step in balancing both identities.

In addition, the other response was women reflecting on personal values that attracted more than half of the respondents who noted that most of them reflect on their own internal values when making career choices. This suggests that women are not simply shaped by external cultural norms but are engaging in personal agency, weighing their aspirations against cultural teachings. These reflections may lead to the integration of cultural pride with ambition, or even rejecting certain restrictive norms when they conflict with individual goals.

Further, there was a response of advocating for inclusive workplaces that support both cultural expression and professional advancement. An overwhelming majority of respondents emphasized the need for inclusive work environments. This finding shows that Bakiga women recognize the workplace as a space where cultural and professional identities can be harmonized. Inclusive

workplaces may provide flexibility, respect for cultural practices (e.g., dress, language, family obligations), and opportunities for leadership without forcing assimilation into dominant (often male-centered or urban) cultural models.

Value for Change in which a number of women expressed appreciation for positive cultural change. This does not imply rejecting tradition, but rather supporting evolution within the culture that promotes gender equality and recognizes women's capabilities. For example, valuing education and women's employment are seen as progressive cultural shifts that align with modern career demands.

Women also respected balancing culture and modern styles of Life with professional career attainment. More than half of the respondents reported that they actively try to balance their cultural upbringing with modern lifestyles. This includes adopting new ways of thinking, dressing, working, or networking while still maintaining traditional identity markers. This balancing act often requires negotiation and can cause internal and external tension, particularly when modern career demands clash with traditional expectations.

Consideration of the good attributes of culture, where women respondents acknowledged that there are positive aspects of Bakiga culture worth preserving. These include values such as hard work, resilience, community support, and respect for elders. Many women view these attributes as strengths that can support their professional growth rather than hinder it. This selective cultural retention allows women to root themselves in identity while adapting to career environments.

In conclusion, this data indicates that Bakiga women are not passive participants in either culture or career. Instead, they are actively engaged in a reflective process acknowledging societal expectations, advocating for inclusivity, valuing progressive change, and preserving cultural

strengths all while striving for professional development. The findings support the broader argument that career success and cultural identity can coexist, especially when societal institutions and workplaces support this dual identity.

From the above, data reflects how Bakiga women perceive the interplay between their cultural identity and career aspirations through various dimensions. The percentages indicate the level of agreement or acknowledgment of each aspect.

One of the key responses was advocating for inclusive workplaces and this attracted. This high percentage suggests a strong consensus among Bakiga women on the need for workplaces that support cultural expression. It highlights a desire for environments where they can thrive both professionally and personally, indicating a progressive attitude towards integrating culture in the workplace.

Furthermore, value for Change was also pointed out be one of the major responses that brought in responses and consideration of cultural attributes fetches responses. Both these aspects reflect a commitment to recognizing the strengths and positive aspects of their culture. The equal percentages indicate that Bakiga women value their cultural heritage while also being open to change, suggesting a dynamic approach to their identity. The majority who noted that it influences social expectations on women's career paths and determines their expectation of attaining a career acknowledged social expectations which indicates that cultural norms still play a crucial role in shaping their professional aspirations, potentially impacting their career choices and opportunities.

Reflecting on Personal Values fetched a lower percentage highlighting that while personal values are important, they may not be as strong a guiding force as social expectations or the desire for

inclusive workplaces. This could suggest that many women feel pressured by external factors more than their intrinsic values.

Balancing culture and modern styles of life indicate that the equal split is a more contentious issue. Some women may struggle to reconcile traditional cultural practices with the demands of modern life, which could indicate a tension between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to contemporary work environments. The data reveals a nuanced perspective among Bakiga women regarding cultural identity and career aspirations. While there is a strong desire for inclusive workplaces and recognition of cultural values, social expectations significantly influence their career choices. The challenge remains in balancing traditional cultural practices with modern professional demands.

6.2 Conclusion

Chapter Six provides a detailed analysis and discussion of how Bakiga women in Kabale District navigate the tension between cultural identity and career aspirations. Drawing from rich qualitative data, this chapter explored the lived experiences of women as they strive to maintain their cultural values while pursuing professional growth.

The findings reveal that Bakiga culture, which emphasizes respect for elders, modesty, obedience, family loyalty, and gendered roles, continues to shape women's self-perception and life choices. Many women expressed pride in their cultural identity, yet acknowledged that certain expectations such as prioritizing marriage, caregiving, and subservience to male authority often conflict with the demands and ambitions of a professional career.

Despite these challenges, the data also highlighted the resilience and adaptability of Bakiga women. Many have developed strategies to reconcile cultural expectations with career pursuits. These include seeking spousal or family support, leveraging education as a tool for empowerment, and selectively challenging harmful cultural norms while preserving positive cultural values such as hard work, discipline, and community solidarity.

Moreover, a growing number of women are reinterpreting cultural identity in ways that affirm both tradition and progress. Rather than abandoning their heritage, they are redefining what it means to be a modern Bakiga woman one who respects her roots while actively participating in the workforce, leadership, and decision-making spaces.

Therefore, while cultural identity poses both opportunities and constraints, Bakiga women are not passive recipients of tradition. Instead, they are active agents of cultural negotiation, finding creative ways to balance their heritage with their career goals. This chapter underscores the importance of culturally responsive approaches to gender equality, where women's empowerment is pursued not in opposition to culture, but in dialogue with it. The final chapter will synthesize these findings and provide conclusions and recommendations for policy, practice, and further research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHALLENGES FACED BY BAKIGA WOMEN IN A BID TO ENHANCE THEIR PROFESSIONAL CAREER IN KABALE DISTRICT

7.0 Introduction

Despite efforts by various stakeholders including the government, women activists, the Ministry of Education, NGOs, and individual advocates to promote women's professional career attainment, progress has been slow and uneven. Although more women are enrolling in tertiary education to attain a career, many still face structural, financial, and cultural barriers that prevent them from advancing in their careers. This chapter explores challenges, as highlighted by respondents and discussants.

7.1 Challenges in faced by Bakiga women in a bid to attainment a career in Kabale District

The findings of the study reveal that economic constraints, cultural expectations, systemic barriers, and personal challenges are among the key obstacles limiting professional women's career attainment.

7.1.1 Economic Constraints

Economic challenges emerged as a major obstacle to enabling women to attain a career, with the poor family background, education costs prevent many women from pursuing higher qualifications and fail to attain a career. Families often prioritize educating male children, leaving women with limited financial support. Many women struggle to pay tuition fees, leading to delays, academic interruptions, or complete dropout. Limited access to credit also prevents women from starting businesses or furthering their education or sponsoring their daughters or relatives who wish to attain a career, reinforcing economic dependence on male family members.

One of the most critical barriers to professional women's career attainment is economic constraints. Many respondents emphasized that financial difficulties often prevent women from accessing higher education and professional training. More than half of participants highlighted the need for universal tertiary education, citing tuition fees as one of the primary deterrents to career attainment.

In an interview, a woman who had struggled with tuition fees recounted her experience:

> *"I recall how I delayed attaining career.., had two dead semesters because I could not pay tuition fees. I thought about dropping out of college altogether, but I persevered. I recall the struggle I had right from primary, I was in school but dropped out and went back quite often because of school fees. One time I dropped off to first dig for money so that I could go back to School. Later one of our relatives appreciated by love for school and decided to pay my school fees. At the university I applied for work and study program where I was digging and cleaning the university gardens and compound in order to get tuition"* (Interview, 2023).

From the illustration of woman, it indicated that with tuition fees and fees for other necessities, one would not attain a career. By implication, for a government to enhance that its population attains a career, then it must get close to the family unit because it's the beginning of failing or succeeding. Such families that fail or such women that fail to sail through, could get government help through scholarships.

Closely related to tuition concerns is the issue of wage disparities. Women reported that in private institutions, men are paid significantly higher wages than women in similar roles. This limits

women's ability to save for further education or invest in professional development. A female teacher in a primary school lamented:

> *"At first, I wanted to leave the job and go back home and look after my children, but I couldn't because I needed that money to take care of me and children. I kept on the job, I make that money but it is not enough for my further studies, and I cannot acquire a reasonable loan. It's when I met agood Samaritan organization and worn a funding to study a science course at the university to upgrade my studies. This university paid my full tuition through a funding of SMI (Science, Mathematics and Technology at Kabale University* (Interview, 2023).

These economic constraints fuel the problem of financial dependency of women on men. Women often rely on male relatives for financial support, which in some cases restricts their decision-making and financial independency. Dependency on men restrain women from making important decisions that concern them and those that would develop them. On that note, one respondent shared and noted;

> *"...I completed senior four and did not continue with studies with my parents shifted to another village that did not have a secondary school with A; Level. I wish to stay in a boarding school but my parents refused saying that I was supposed to keep around home, our cultural expectations were that a woman was protected easily while she stayed around home. However, my dream was to study up to university and do an administrative course so that I become an administrator. That chance failed at that. Later I got married, but my husband kept saying the education I have is good for a woman. He said there were other priorities and no money for my tuition and that's how I missed attaining my career. It was*

until five years back when I did a short course in civil engineering, sponsored by the government, and now that my career…." (Interview, 2023).

This statement highlights how economic dependence on family, husband and other relatives' limits women's ability attain a career. The prioritization of men's financial needs over women's education reflects deep-seated cultural biases that hinder women from achieving economic independence and professional growth. Without financial autonomy, women are often forced to conform to societal expectations that view their education and careers as secondary, reinforcing cycles of economic dependency and restricting their full potential.

7.1.2 Cultural Expectations and Early Marriages

Traditional Kikiga cultural norms place a higher value on marriage than education for women. Many respondents shared that family and community pressures to marry early forced them to abandon their educational and career aspirations.

A female executive officer in the Human Rights Commission narrated her struggles:

"My aunt brought a man to marry me when I was 19. I refused and threatened to disappear if they didn't leave me alone. Since then, my aunt hated me and still calls me 'submissiveless' and 'uncultured.' But I did not like it so I rejected it, I explained to her that I valued education than early marriage. At first, she did not understand but after completing school and starting working, I started helping her and giving some money and this is when she understood the importance of studying and attaining a career..." (Interview, Kabale, 2023).

This is the reason all stake holders should come to explain to the society on the importance of women attaining a career. The challenge of the fear of the unknown would then be no more or minimized.

Similarly, another woman recalled how cultural expectations delayed her entry into tertiary education, with 36responses that made a percentage of seventy-five. She narrated her experience;

"I missed out on having a career because it took me a long time to go to college. My mother didn't believe in higher education for me since I was a girl hoping to get married soon. I sat home for two years after my O, level, later got married to an educated man who allowed me to enroll for a course in Library at Certificate level and later did a diploma and then a bachelor's degree. I was lucky to have marry an understanding man, she narrated..." (Interview, 2023).

Focus group discussions at Uganda College of Commerce reinforced this reality. Some two ladies stood out to give their life experience in describing the reason of them delaying to attain a career. One of them gave her story below;

"...it's not easy to be a woman in African setting, oh I recall how I was told that my education was not of any value to the family because I was a woman, I was referred to as a prostitute most of the time because I had grown a bit old at twenty-four and had not gotten married and was home. My parents got fed up and requested that I go find a job, I so doing I went to Kabale town to look for a job. I got one at the hotel to work as receptionist. There I found a white lady who offered to pay my tuition till I completed my studies "(Focus Group Discussion, 2023).

These experiences underscore the societal prioritization of marriage over education, often forcing women to choose between academic aspirations and family expectations.

7.1.3 Institutional Infrastructure and Systemic Barriers

Many respondents pointed to inadequate work infrastructure and weak support systems as barriers to career attainment. Lack of female-friendly facilities, such as sanitary amenities, forced many women not to like the professional work environment and hence preferred keeping home. There were 32 responses that made a percentage of 62 with regard to this view.

A career woman at Kabale District local government narrated her experience that almost failed her career.

> *"I almost failed to work well because at my work place they did not water born toilets. This caused me shame and fear since sometimes the situation got out of hand. As a result, decided to always stay home when for my monthly periods approached because I felt uncomfortable while I was in that situation. Sometimes there was no water at all, and there were no bath room for ladies. This teased me and opted out of the professional world. It's not until three year back when I got another job and the conditions there were good* (Interviewee, 2023).

Traditionally, Bakiga culture discourages women from walking long distances alone, restricting their mobility and .education or employment. The responses to this effect were 22 and the percentage to it was 48.

A woman working an NGO explained how cultural inability to walk long distances affect her career goal;

> *"I started school at the age of 10 on the condition that I had to walk with my older cousin. I drop out level after level because had to give chance to my siblings to have some level of*

education as well. Today, at 48, I'm still upgrading because of the delays that I encountered. However at least I got where to start from unlike my friend Medias who was denied chance to step in any class and cannot even write her name, just because her parents told her that they did not see any reason of her going to school yet she was a girl" (Interview, 2023).

This illustration calls for parents, husbands and other stake holders to create favorable work environment for women and where need be to make it mandatory for children to go school so that no one missed chance. The government policy of university primary education and secondary education caters for it but there is need to strengthen it up more.

7.1.4 Lack of Female Role Models and Mentorship

A lack of visible female role models discourages many women from pursuing leadership roles. This response was cited as one of the major challenge, emphasizing that mentorship is crucial in shaping young women's ambitions.

One university student remarked:

"I always wanted to study engineering, but I had never seen a woman engineer in my community. I kept thinking it wasn't a career for women. Every time I mentioned, my parents shouted at me that career was meant for men not women unless I didn't want to get married and have children "(Interview, 2023).

Additionally, peer pressure and societal influence impact women's career decisions. Many young women are encouraged to prioritize quick financial gain over long-term career development. A significant twenty seven responses were give and this resulted in 56%. To this effect, it was noted that Bakiga career choices had been shaped by social expectations

7.1.5 Government Policies and Legal Frameworks

While government policies have aimed to support women's attainment of career with the hope of them contributing to social and economic development, implementation gaps and weak enforcement remain barriers. Many respondents called for stricter laws against segregation at work and availing equal opportunities for both genders.

The administrator in one the tertiary institutions narrated…

> *"That segregation at the workplace almost made her resign from her job. That she felt empty and helpless when male workers always contorted her wondering what she always did in her office yet, did not see results, as they claimed. They told her that the best thing for her would have been keeping home and cooking for her husband, this swept off her esteem and desire to keep on working"* (Interview, 2023).

This example underscores the urgent need for stronger legal protections and stricter penalties against child marriage.

7.2 Cultural and Institutional Barriers

Beyond economic challenges, qualitative findings from this study reveal deep-rooted cultural, institutional, and systemic barriers that hinder professional women's career attainment in Kabale District. These barriers are embedded in traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and institutional biases that limit women's access to education, professional opportunities, and leadership roles. The narratives from women in education, the workforce, and community discussions shed light on how these structural and cultural factors shape professional women's career attainment

7.2.1 Lack of support from other women

One of the more complex challenges identified was the lack of solidarity among women themselves, which exacerbates the struggle for career attainment. They found that instead of supporting one another, some women reinforce traditional gender roles by facilitating early marriages or directing young girls toward domestic labor rather than education. In addition, at the professional work places, some women fight fellow women, lie against them, demine them and in case of elections or nominations for higher positions they support men instead of fellow women. This has hindered the progress of women and has affected their sustainability in career advancement and attainment.

One woman lamented this reality:

> *"Some women hide their true colors before their fellow women professionals. They beat them hard before their supervisors and sometimes treat them maliciously. They report on them wrongly and other times hate them for nothing. Women have competition that is not good unlike men. Women keep anger unlike men, some women get men for their neighbors' children or their own daughters. Others send them to work as maids or in shops instead of encouraging them to study. She narrated...the biggest challenge is that some women do not support their daughters to keep on school, they prefer house labor to their studies. Some mothers entice their daughters to marrying at a young age, while others harass daughters when they stay home after a certain age..."* (Interview, 2023).

This sentiment highlights the persistence of cultural norms that place marriage and caregiving above education and career aspirations. The lack of mentorship and peer support further isolates young women who wish to break away from these expectations and pursue professional success.

7.2.2 Institutional and Cultural Prejudices

Professional organizations in Kabale district continue to reflect broader gender biases that shape career opportunities for women. Reports them such as Kabale district local government and the NGO of FOWODE, illustrate how cultural expectations restrict women to traditionally female-dominated fields. More men were found to be enrolled in high-paying professions like technical fields, while women were largely directed toward secretarial work and simple administrative work. These findings align with broader observations that gender-based career steering continues to limit women's access to lucrative fields, reinforcing existing inequalities in professional advancement.

7.2.3 Structural and Political Challenges

Structural and political factors further compound the challenges women face in career progression. Women in Kabale district continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions due to limited enforcement of gender equality laws and policies. Weak anti-discrimination measures, insufficient maternity protections, and a lack of workplace diversity initiatives contribute to women's exclusion from decision-making roles.

A key informant highlighted the contradictions in cultural perceptions of gender roles:

> *"It is wrong to think that culture is bad and that it hinders women's careers. Culture is good and favors women. In traditional African society, they were much better off in terms of respect, appreciation, and recognition."* (Interview, 2023).

While this perspective acknowledges the value of cultural heritage, it also reveals the resistance to gender equality in contemporary career attainment. Traditional structures that once provided stability are now misaligned with modern aspirations, restricting women's professional mobility.

7.2.4 Cultural Pressure and Early Marriage

The expectation that women should marry early remains one of the most significant obstacles to their career advancement. Many families continue to prioritize marriage over education, fearing that prolonged schooling will reduce a girl's chances of securing a good bride wealth.

One woman narrated how cultural expectations dictated the course of her life:

> *"My paternal aunt warned me that I should marry early while I was still good-looking, otherwise my family would get less bride wealth. She even found a rich man who married me. I am lucky that he pays my school fees; if I were unlucky, I would never have continued with my studies."* (Focus Group Discussion, 2023).

This testimony illustrates how financial and cultural considerations often outweigh the long-term benefits of education for women, reinforcing the cycle of early marriage and limited career opportunities.

7.2.5 Systemic Inequalities in Education and Career attainment

Gender-based inequalities remain entrenched in educational and career pathways, particularly in fields such as science, technology, and leadership. Women who enter these professions often face skepticism and societal resistance.

A woman-nursing officer described the struggle of working in a field dominated by men:

> *"For instance, I am a mother and a wife, yet I am required to work night shifts as a nurse. Many people keep questioning what kind of Mukiga wife I am, as if my career is incompatible with my role as a wife and mother."* (Interview, 2023).

Such cultural biases discourage women from pursuing careers that demand significant time commitments or non-traditional work schedules. The stigma surrounding working women,

particularly those in leadership or high-earning roles, further marginalizes them in professional settings.

7.2.6 Lack of Support Networks and Sensitization on Higher Education

Another recurring challenge highlighted in focus group discussions was the need for community sensitization on the value of higher education for women. Cultural norms continue to discourage families from investing in girls' education, reinforcing the idea that women's primary role is within the home.

A local leader explained the difficulty of breaking these entrenched beliefs:

> *"There is a parish in Kabale district where parents do not take their girls to school beyond primary seven because of ingrained social beliefs. That is where we, as leaders, have put our energy. Maybe soon we shall get a graduate from that area"* (Key informant, 2023).

This statement underscores the urgent need for sensitization campaigns that challenge harmful gender norms and promote education as a tool for empowerment.

7.2.7 Resistance to Women in High-Earning Fields

Despite increasing awareness of gender equality, societal prejudices continue to bar women from entering male-dominated fields. The perception that certain professions are inappropriate for women discourages many from pursuing careers in engineering, mechanics, and other technical fields.

One respondent at Kabale Technical Institute expressed this sentiment:

> *"No man would feel comfortable seeing his wife lying under a car to fix it. That would take away her respect as a woman. If I have to wear jeans and a hat for work, I would rather forego that money."* (Interview, 2023).

This reflects the broader societal discomfort with women taking on roles that contradict traditional gender expectations, reinforcing occupational segregation.

7.2.8 Property Rights and Economic Independence

Another key issue is the reluctance of society to grant women equal property rights. Many still believe that women should not own land or assets independently, as this challenges the traditional economic structure in which men control resources.

A male interviewee articulated this perspective:

> *"If women owned property in their parental home, they would have double ownership—at their father's house and at their husband's. When she marries, she owns her husband's property and when he dies, she takes it over. Why should she also own property at her parents' home?"* (Interview, 2023).

Such views perpetuate economic dependence and limit women's ability to accumulate wealth or invest in their own career development.

The above findings underscore the complex interplay between cultural norms, institutional biases, and systemic barriers that limit women's career advancement in Kabale district. While traditional values provide social cohesion, they often conflict with contemporary aspirations for gender equality in education and employment.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach, including policy reforms, community sensitization, and investment in mentorship programs. It is crucial to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, ensuring that cultural heritage does not become a barrier to women's empowerment. By promoting education, encouraging women in leadership, and

advocating for economic independence, society can create a more inclusive and equitable environment where women can pursue their professional aspirations without constraint.

Institutional barriers also play a significant role in limiting women's career choices. The study found that educational institutions reinforce gender stereotypes by directing women into traditionally female-dominated fields such as teaching, social work, and secretarial studies, while men are encouraged to pursue technical and high-paying careers such as engineering and carpentry. These gendered career pathways limit women's access to high-paying and influential professions. Workplace discrimination remains prevalent, with women being excluded from leadership positions and decision-making processes. Women in managerial roles often face skepticism from male colleagues, and cultural biases continue to discourage female authority in professional settings.

A significant challenge identified was the lack of female role models and mentorship programs, which negatively affects young women's career aspirations. Many young women lack professional female figures to look up to, reinforcing the perception that high-ranking positions are for men. Social circles also influence career choices, as peer pressure discourages young women from pursuing non-traditional professions or higher education. In some cases, women themselves internalize these cultural limitations, adopting self-limiting attitudes about their capabilities and career potential. The study found that limited community sensitization on the value of educating girls continues to discourage families from supporting their daughters' education, contributing to the persistence of gender inequality.

Structural and political challenges further compound the barriers to professional women's career attainment. Weak enforcement of gender equality laws, limited representation of women in

political leadership, and inadequate government support for working women reinforce existing disparities. Cultural beliefs dictate that men should lead, while women take on supportive roles, limiting women's representation in governance and policy-making. Without strong legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms, discrimination against women in employment, education, and leadership continues. Women's exclusion from land and property ownership also emerged as a critical barrier. Traditional customs dictate that women should inherit property through their husbands rather than independently, leaving many financially vulnerable and dependent. This lack of ownership limits women's ability to access credit, invest in businesses, or secure financial stability, ultimately affecting their career growth.

The findings emphasize the need for policy reforms, community sensitization, and mentorship programs to address these barriers. Expanding access to free or subsidized tertiary education, enforcing workplace gender equality policies, and promoting women's representation in leadership roles are crucial steps toward breaking systemic gender inequalities. Encouraging families and communities to support women's education and career aspirations is essential for fostering a more inclusive society where women have equal opportunities to advance professionally. For lasting change to occur, there must be a shift in cultural attitudes and institutional practices. Women should not have to choose between family responsibilities and career ambitions. By integrating traditional values with modern gender equity principles, society can create an environment where women thrive both personally and professionally.

This chapter underscores the complex interplay between financial constraints, cultural traditions, institutional biases, and systemic inequalities that hinder professional women's career attainment in Kabale District. Overcoming these barriers requires collective efforts from government bodies,

educational institutions, communities, and women themselves to create an enabling environment for gender equality in education and employment.

7.3 Analysis of challenges faced by Bakiga women in career attainment

Universal Education at Tertiary Level was identified to be a significant barrier, indicating that access to higher education is limited, which can hinder career progression for women. The more the number of women that access tertiary institutions, the chances that they attain a career there after will become professionals. In addition, lack of Tuition is a as a result of Financial constraints that poise major obstacles and prevent many women from pursuing or completing their education. Without women completing their education, implies that chances of them attain a career are minimal.

Further to the above, cultural practices that include traditional beliefs and practices may restrict women's opportunities, emphasizing the need for cultural change to support gender equality in careers. The way improved women's attainment of a career cultural change where the rigid cultures are removed and the flexible ones are maintained. In so doing, the gap in access opportunities for professional growth between men and women minimises.

Inadequate Scholastic Materials in Schools poise a challenge in schools especially among women. When women lack basics of life, they tend to fear and loose morale in studies, they drop out and opt for marriage and other options like doing house work or digging in case of villages. The lack of necessary educational resources affects learning outcomes, which can deter women from continuing their education.

Another challenge is value for marriage where marriage is prioritized over education and as a result early marriages comes in and later impacts on women's career aspirations.

Government Policy on School Dropout poses a challenge to women's attainment of a career. Policies may not adequately support women who drop out of school, limiting their opportunities for re-entry into the education system. Further, Inadequate Supervision by School Inspectors result into lack of oversight which can later lead to poor educational quality, affecting women's' motivation and retention. The concern is that education at the institutional becomes the gate way to women's professional attainment of career, hence any compromise to it hinders them from advancing in their career.

Inadequate Basic Necessities when not met can result into women getting distracted from educational pursuits and career attainment, creating additional challenges. When women lack clothing's, books, sanitary pads and schools fees, pocket money and other items like food, they become vulnerable and seek help from men, who may use them for their personal benefits.

Few Female Role Models affect the morale of potential women who would yearn to attain a career. Women need to see their fellow as good examples for them to admire. Even the sponsors of women depend mostly on the outside world stories and talks about women who have excelled or those who are good role models, who do good, who have good jobs, who are developed and show a good example to other women. The scarcity of successful female figures in the community can limit inspiration and mentorship for aspiring women professionals.

Value for Children prioritizing child-rearing may discourage women from pursuing careers, as societal expectations often place family responsibilities above professional ambitions. In addition, need for quick wealth a focus on immediate financial gain may lead women to forgo long-term career goals for short-term employment opportunities. This could be coupled by peer group

influence where social circles can affect women's decisions about education and career paths, either positively or negatively.

Pregnancies especially those unplanned can disrupt education and career plans, presenting significant challenges. In addition, limited involvement in decision making, may affect the processes of women attaining a career and their ability to pursue further education to upgrade. Another response was lack of support from fellow women. this also involves lack of solidarity and support among women which hinder collective advancement in career attainment.

Long Distance: Traveling long distances to access educational institutions can be a deterrent, particularly in rural areas. Ignorance. A lack of awareness about opportunities and rights may prevent women from pursuing education and careers. Poverty: Economic hardship directly impacts access to education and career opportunities, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage, and lastly political instabilities: Unstable political environments can disrupt educational systems and career opportunities, further complicating women's paths.

7.4 Conclusion

The study highlights that professional women's career attainment in Kabale District is shaped by a complex interplay of cultural norms, institutional barriers, financial constraints, and systemic inequalities. Deeply entrenched gender stereotypes continue to discourage women from entering high-earning and male-dominated professions, while discriminatory attitudes toward women's property rights sustain economic dependence and limit financial independence. These cultural and institutional barriers are compounded by inadequate access to tertiary education, lack of scholastic materials, and prioritization of marriage over education, which further reduce women's opportunities to build sustainable careers.

Equally important are the structural and political challenges including weak enforcement of gender equality policies, underrepresentation of women in leadership, and limited government support for working women. Educational institutions often reinforce occupational segregation, steering women into traditionally female-dominated, low-paying fields. The lack of mentorship, female role models, and supportive community networks creates a vacuum that undermines the aspirations of young women. Financial hardships, poverty, and lack of necessities exacerbate dropout rates and force many women to make short-term survival choices at the expense of long-term career goals. Despite these barriers, the findings also reveal opportunities for transformation. Policy reforms that strengthen enforcement of gender equality laws, promote women's property rights, and expand access to affordable tertiary education are critical. Community sensitization and cultural dialogue can help shift entrenched beliefs that restrict women's roles, while mentorship programs and increased female representation in leadership can inspire and guide young women. Addressing financial challenges through scholarships, provision of scholastic materials, and government support can reduce dropout rates and expand career opportunities.

CHAPTER EIGHT

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING WOMEN'S PORFESSIONAL CAREER ATTAINMENT

8.0 Introduction

Despite the various challenges hindering women's professional career attainment in Kabale District, multiple strategies have been implemented to address these barriers and promote gender equality in education and professional development. These interventions aim to address economic, social, cultural, and institutional barriers that limit women's career progression.

This chapter presents findings from both quantitative data and qualitative narratives from responses, highlighting key strategies essential for creating an enabling environment for women's career growth. The strategies identified focus on awareness and education reforms, economic empowerment, legal and policy protections, affirmative action and institutional support, and shifting societal attitudes. Each of these thematic areas represents a critical pillar in ensuring women's successful participation in education and the workforce.

A notable finding is that sensitization of the masses is the most widely supported strategy for promoting professional women's career attainment, according to the respondents. They emphasized the need for community wide engagement to challenge traditional biases that prioritize marriage over education. Education reforms, particularly making science curricula more female-friendly and ensuring universal access to tertiary education were also identified as key strategies. Furthermore, targeted financial support including scholarships and policies allowing young mothers to return to school after childbirth was highlighted as crucial for ensuring women's educational continuity.

Economic empowerment of Bakiga women was recognized as vital, as respondents advocating for income generating initiatives to increase women's financial independence. Skill-based education and increased formal employment opportunities were also seen as essential.

Addressing gender-based violence and workplace discrimination was another major concern of responses citing violence against women as a substantial stale to career progression. Responses emphasized the need for stricter legal frameworks, stronger laws against school dropouts due to early marriage and affirmative action policies to ensure women's equal representation in leadership and decision-making positions.

Finally, shifting societal attitudes and mentorship programs were recognized as key cultural interventions to normalize women's participation in leadership and non-traditional career paths. Expanding media representation and increasing the visibility of women in leadership were also suggested as means of fostering long-term attitudinal change.

8.1 Pathways for women's professional career attainment

The findings indicate that no single strategy can address the systemic barriers hindering professional women's career attainment. Instead, a multi-dimensional approach combining awareness campaigns, education reforms, economic empowerment, legal protections, and cultural shifts is essential for fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for women's professional growth.

The following sections provide an in-depth analysis of key strategies identified by respondents.

8.1.1 Enhancing Awareness and Education Access

One of the most significant strategies emphasized by respondents was sensitization of the masses as a priority. This would increase, raising awareness about the importance of women's education

and career progression is viewed as a necessary first step in addressing cultural biases and societal attitudes that discourage women from pursuing higher education. Most respondents argued that community engagement programs should actively challenge stereotypes that prioritize marriage over education for women.

A female student upgrading to a Bachelor's degree at Kabale University shared her experience:

> *"I missed joining tertiary education after A-level because my mother was not sensitized on the importance of tertiary education. She told me that I had acquired enough education since I could read and write. However, I joined later after making savings from my small business. This derailed my career attainment."* (Focus Group Discussion, 2020).

This testimony illustrates how a lack of awareness within families can hinder women's education, forcing them to navigate additional challenges to re-enter the academic system. Respondents advocated for community-wide sensitization efforts to ensure that both parents and young women understand the long-term benefits of higher education.

The introduction of a female-friendly curriculum, particularly in science and technical subjects, was another key recommendation. Most interviewed women expressed concern that existing curricula tend to be male-dominated and fail to encourage female participation in fields like engineering, information technology, and the sciences. Adapting educational materials and teaching methodologies to make them more inclusive can significantly boost female representation in technical careers.

Furthermore, universal tertiary education was identified as a major factor in ensuring career progression for women, where majority respondents advocating for policies that make higher education more accessible. The findings show that financial constraints remain a major obstacle

for women's education, necessitating interventions such as tuition subsidies, government scholarships, and work-study programs.

A respondent emphasized this need, stating:

"I am in my third year, but I have had two dead semesters because of lack of tuition. I thought of dropping out completely, but I persisted. The influence of men who wanted to pay my tuition, but with the intention of using me for sex, was also much." (Interview, 2023).

This account highlights the vulnerability of female students who struggle with financial constraints and predatory offers, further underscoring the importance of free or subsidized tertiary education for women.

8.1.2 Economic Empowerment and Poverty Reduction

Another critical strategy for advancing women's careers in Kabale District is economic empowerment, with 75% of respondents emphasizing the need to increase women's income as a means of breaking the cycle of dependency and poverty. Many women indicated that financial independence gives them greater autonomy to make decisions about their education and career aspirations.

One respondent shared a powerful example of how economic success can shift gendered perceptions within families:

"My father educated our elder sister up to university. She later got a job with Centenary Bank and supported the family. Our father got excited and vowed to pay for the education of his other daughters." (Interview, 2023).

This finding suggests that economic success stories can serve as powerful motivators for families to invest in their daughters' education, challenging the traditional notion that women should primarily rely on their husbands for financial stability.

Additionally, providing women with better access to financial resources, loans, and skill-based education was seen as an effective way to support career development. Respondents argued that skill-based education should be promoted alongside academic learning, allowing women to develop practical skills that enhance their employability and entrepreneurship potential.

8.1.3 Addressing Violence and Discrimination

The findings indicate that reducing violence against women and eliminating discrimination at all levels are fundamental in ensuring women's career success. Gender-based violence and workplace harassment were frequently cited as deterrents to career progression, making it crucial to implement strict legal protections for women. One female key informant shared the story of a young girl forced into marriage at an early age:

"Our maid at home told us that a man forcefully carried her to his home for marriage when she was in primary six, even before she went into her periods. She got an opportunity and escaped and went to her parents. However, they told her that she could not be accepted home because she had become a woman." (Interview, 2023).

This narrative illustrates the urgency of enforcing laws against early marriage and school dropout. Many respondents called for stricter legal frameworks to protect young girls and women from forced marriages and ensure that those who drop out due to pregnancy or financial constraints are given the opportunity to return to school.

8.1.4 Affirmative Action and Institutional Support

Affirmative action was identified as an important tool for leveling the playing field, with 50% of respondents supporting gender mainstreaming and affirmative action policies. Respondents argued that deliberate efforts should be made to increase the number of women in leadership positions, particularly in public service and professional sectors.

A female student narrated how affirmative action helped her secure university admission:

> *"I did my A-level in a semi-rural school, and I was lucky to score 17 points. However, I benefited from affirmative action because boys who had applied for my course and had the same points were not taken. If it were not for that, I would have dropped out because my parents could not afford to sponsor me at the university."* (Interview, 2023).

Despite the benefits of affirmative action, the findings show mixed support for structural reforms such as gender mainstreaming and policy changes, with some respondents expressing skepticism about their effectiveness. However, those who supported these initiatives emphasized that increasing women's representation in politics, business, and education would provide role models for younger generations and challenge discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion.

8.1.5 Shifting Societal Attitudes and Support Systems

Changing attitudes toward women's education and employment was another dominant theme. Many respondents argued that cultural norms must shift to recognize the value of women's education. One student recalled how her relatives discouraged her from attending university:

"My relatives wanted me to join a grade three teacher training college, yet I had done well at A-level. My paternal aunt whispered to my mother, '*Why take her to a private university to waste*

money? Let her do a certificate; her future husband will pay for her diploma.' However, my mother insisted and took me to the university." (Interview, 2023)

This account highlights the persistent belief that women's education is secondary to marriage, reinforcing the need for social change campaigns that promote gender equality.

Additionally, respondents emphasized the role of mentorship programs, guidance and counseling services, and support from religious institutions in promoting women's education and career aspirations. One participant stated,

> *"There is too much freedom in university; students need to know why they went there and must remember that there is tomorrow after university."* (Focus Group Discussion, 2023).

Guidance services and mentorship networks were identified as essential for helping women navigate academic challenges, build confidence, and access professional opportunities.

Expanding skill-based education & vocational training

Another strategy to professional women's career attainment is expanding skill-based education and vocational training. Skill based training involves training women in institutions that involves providing skills while imparting knowledge. This would prepare them for hands on work and eventually when they attain a career they would work effectively. This implies that there would be sustainability in facilitating women to attain career attainment, hence more of them would train and keep on the job. In additional vocational training helps in ensuring that women attain skills and later end up as better employees after attaining a career.

The other strategy is change of attitude

It's of great importance that women and all stakeholders concerned with professional women's career attainment change their attitude towards women attaining a career. This involves unfolding a new message to the world that women need to attain a career and that when they do, the whole nation benefits. This follows the responses got on challenges referring poor attitude to be one of the challenges that hindered women from attaining a career. Therefore, change of mindset with regard to women attaining a career would be of great help.

The other strategy is increasing the visibility of women in leadership positions in the country at large and Kabale in particular. When women are given chance to lead in big leadership positions in different organizations and institutions, and in political arena plus the social structures like the church and the community, this could motivate sponsors of women in career attainment to proceed for further with help.

In addition, the mass media should change the way it reports on women who have careers, who work and have professional jobs. Sometimes these women are harassed by media, they are reported on negatively and sometimes there is an exaggeration when it comes to women. While men face similar challenges with regard to media, when it comes to men, the reporting style changes and personalizing statements start to emerge. These cause stigma to women and other times because of the need to protect ones name, some women opt out of the open world.

Further, there is need of strengthening laws against marriage. This strategy is hoped to ensure that women who face domestic violence that results in men stopping them from working and sometimes they are beaten, abused and harassed, this discourage them from attaining a career and even those who attain it end up not making good use of it because of fear to be harassed by men.

Lastly there is need to stop eliminating discrimination against women in places and other leadership positions like political positions, church positions and the cultural or positions. Some women are paid less than men they work much more than men. Others are treated like children at the work place they are big ladies, while also others are taken to be of less value because they provide less extra hours compared to their male counter parts.

8.1.6 Analysis of Strategies for enhancing women's professional career attainment

Women emphasised sensitisation activities and highlighted that sensitization involved speaking to people on radio stations, on televisions, through newspapers and other means like use of posters or worshipping institutions like churches and mosques. High support for community-wide engagement indicates a strong belief in the importance of raising awareness about women's education and career opportunities.

The other response that attracted a big percentage was making the Science Curriculum More Female-Friendly, the suggested option in this was the adoption of the use of simplified text books and making the curriculum practical and people centred involving hands on exercises and use of usual daily examples. This suggests a recognition that educational content should be inclusive to encourage more women to pursue STEM fields. The STEM fields include those in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. This attribute is encouraged and promoted by the government of Uganda, to ensure that many women participate in STEM.

Universal Access to Tertiary Education yielded much responses emphasizing universal access highlights the importance of removing barriers to higher education for women. Barriers include aspects like access to institution, lack of tuition, insufficient time to concentrate and revise and even attend classes, family pressure due to less resources and a favourable environment created by

parents or spouses of women who study. Higher education is encouraged because it's one way through when women attain a career. It's also one of the empowerment weapons to women transition to development.

Strengthening Gender Equality in the Education System, a focus on gender equality within education indicates a need for systemic changes to promote fairness. Providing Scholarships and Financial Aid for Women, financial support is crucial for enabling women to pursue their studies, though it received a lower endorsement compared to other strategies.

Economic Empowerment & Employment involves increasing women's incomes to reduce poverty. Addressing economic disparities is vital for empowering women and enhancing their career prospects. It would be motivating for women to see their fellow educated women successful and economically doing well. It becomes a demoting factor when women study and they still remain economically low with nothing to be admired from them,

Expanding Skill-based Education & Vocational Training, this reflects the necessity for practical training that aligns with job market needs, helping women gain relevant skills. Vocational training exposes women to skills of which they try do and become self-employed and also employ others.

Promoting women's participation in formal employment could enhance women's ability to attain a career. Strategies to encourage formal employment are essential for increasing women's economic contributions and career growth.

8.1.7 Legal & Policy Protections

Another strategy is reducing gender-based violence & harassment or even eliminating it completely, a significant concern, addressing violence and harassment is crucial for creating safe

environments for women in the workplace. Eliminating discrimination against women in workplaces & leadership, tackling discrimination is vital for fostering an equitable work environment and ensuring women can access leadership roles.

Strengthening laws against early marriage, Legal measures to combat early marriages are important for allowing girls to complete their education and pursue careers. Affirmative action in education and employment (50%): This strategy suggests a proactive approach to ensuring women have equal opportunities in education and the workforce.

Change of Attitude towards Women's Education and Employment (46%), Shifting societal attitudes is fundamental for long-term change, promoting acceptance of women's roles in education and careers. Expanding Mentorship Programs and Role Model Initiatives (42%), Mentorship is crucial for providing support and guidance, helping women navigate their career paths.

Increasing the visibility of women in leadership and public service (38%), enhancing visibility can inspire future generations and normalize women in leadership roles. Leveraging media to promote positive narratives on women's careers (50%), Media can play a powerful role in shaping perceptions and encouraging positive views of women in various careers.

8.2 Conclusion

The data reveals a comprehensive range of strategies aimed at enhancing women's professional career attainment, emphasizing the importance of awareness, education reforms, economic empowerment, and legal protections. A multifaceted approach that includes community engagement, supportive policies, and cultural changes is essential for fostering an environment

where women can thrive in their careers. Implementing these strategies could significantly improve women's opportunities and outcomes in the workforce.

The chapter provides an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the data related to the challenges faced by Bakiga women in their pursuit of career attainment in Kabale District. The findings clearly reveal that cultural, social, economic, and institutional factors continue to pose significant barriers to women's professional advancement.

One of the most prominent challenges identified is the persistent influence of patriarchal cultural norms, which prioritize women's roles in the domestic sphere and often discourage or even stigmatize career ambitions. These cultural constraints are reinforced by family and community expectations, limiting women's time, mobility, and decision-making autonomy.

Additionally, limited access to resources and opportunities, such as higher education, capital for entrepreneurship, mentorship, and leadership training, further restrict women's career development. The data also revealed that gender discrimination in the workplace, lack of support systems such as childcare and flexible working conditions, and inadequate implementation of gender-sensitive policies are critical institutional barriers.

Psychological and emotional challenges, including low self-esteem, fear of cultural judgment, and internalized gender roles, also emerged as subtle yet powerful deterrents to career growth. These are often overlooked but have deep impacts on women's willingness to pursue and sustain professional advancement.

Despite these challenges, the chapter also highlighted signs of resilience, agency, and growing awareness among Bakiga women, many of whom are finding ways to challenge norms, access education, and assert their right to a professional life.

The chapter seven has demonstrated that the journey toward career attainment for Bakiga women is marked by multiple, intersecting challenges, most of which are rooted in cultural traditions, socio-economic constraints, and institutional gaps. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach one that involves cultural re-education, policy reforms, community support, and inclusive institutional practices. The next and final chapter will synthesize these insights and offer practical recommendations and conclusions to support the empowerment of Bakiga women in their professional journeys.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

The findings of this study reveal that the Kikiga cultural framework plays a central role in shaping women's professional career aspirations, opportunities, and challenges. Cultural expectations around marriage, domestic responsibilities, and economic roles strongly influence how women navigate their professional aspirations. The prioritization of family obligations over education and career advancement continues to create significant barriers to women's career progression. These findings resonate with existing research that highlights the ways in which traditional norms, gender stereotypes, and patriarchal expectation's structure women's career pathways.

The summary of these findings is guided by the study's central research questions. The first inquiry examined the key components of Kikiga culture in Kabale District, and the characteristics of the Kikiga culture that shape women's way of life. The study found that cultural components such as values, beliefs, customs, norms and sanctions result in what defines Kikiga culture that includes bride price, early marriage, work, customs, sanction, beliefs and values reinforce traditional gender roles that prioritize domesticity over professional aspirations. Many women in the study reported that cultural attitudes shaped their career decisions from an early age, as they were encouraged to pursue roles centered on caregiving and household management rather than leadership or professional growth. These findings align with literature that emphasizes how cultural norms influence educational and occupational trajectories by reinforcing rigid gender expectations.

The second research question explored how Kikiga culture influences women's professional career attainment. The study found that while communal values and family networks can provide social support, they also impose constraints on women's independence and career mobility. Women who

defy traditional expectations by prioritizing education and professional ambitions often face resistance from family and community members who view career attainment as secondary to marriage and child-rearing. This tension between cultural obligations and professional aspirations reflects broader societal patterns where women are expected to make career sacrifices for the sake of family responsibilities. The findings suggest that while some women navigate these expectations by delaying marriage or seeking alternative career pathways, the pressure to conform remains a significant obstacle.

The third research question examined specific cultural practices that impact women's career progression. The study found that bride price functions as both a cultural institution and an economic transaction that shapes women's opportunities and constraints. Bride price reinforces the idea that a woman's primary value lies in her ability to fulfill marital and domestic duties, rather than in her intellectual or professional capabilities. Many respondents expressed that once bride price is paid; societal expectations dictate that women should prioritize their husband's needs over their own career ambitions. This aligns with research showing that bride price systems contribute to gender inequalities by positioning women as economic assets within marriage, limiting their autonomy in decision-making regarding education and employment.

The study also found that gender preferences in education investment further disadvantage women. Many respondents reported that boys were given preferential access to education, as families viewed sons as future breadwinners while daughters were expected to focus on household responsibilities. This cultural bias in educational investment exacerbates gender disparities in career attainment, as women are systematically denied the resources and encouragement needed to pursue higher education and professional opportunities. These findings reflect a broader trend

in patriarchal societies, where women's educational and career pursuits are deprioritized in favor of familial and reproductive roles.

The fourth research question explored how women navigate their cultural identity while pursuing career goals. The findings indicate that women employ various strategies to balance cultural expectations with career ambitions. Some women delay marriage to complete their education, while others negotiate supportive relationships that allow them to work while managing family responsibilities. Women from more progressive family backgrounds or those with access to mentorship programs reported greater flexibility in challenging traditional norms. However, many women who sought careers outside of traditional gender roles faced criticism and resistance from their families and communities, reinforcing the need for broader cultural shifts to support women's career advancement.

The study also revealed that while Kikiga culture creates barriers, it also has elements that can facilitate women's career progression. The communal structure of Bakiga society provides a support network that can be leveraged to promote women's education and professional development. Women who received encouragement from family members or community mentors were more likely to persist in their educational and career pursuits. However, the overall impact of cultural norms remains largely restrictive, reinforcing traditional roles that limit women's participation in leadership and high-earning professions.

5.1.1 Cultural Values, Beliefs, and Norms among the Bakiga

Findings from this study reveal that deeply entrenched cultural values and societal expectations within Bakiga women significantly influence women's career trajectories. The key cultural elements such as early marriage, bride price, respect for elders, and gendered expectations serve to reinforce traditional gender roles that prioritize domestic duties over professional ambitions.

These cultural norms, deeply embedded in social structures and inter-generationally transmitted, shape women's aspirations, access to opportunities, and autonomy in career-related decision-making. The Bakiga women, like many other patriarchal societies, operates within a framework that delineates clear roles for men and women. Women are primarily expected to focus on household responsibilities, caregiving, and child-rearing, while men assume the role of providers and decision-makers. These expectations are socially enforced through mechanisms such as informal community pressure, family expectations, and marriage-related cultural obligations. The findings of this study align with previous research on traditional societies, which has demonstrated that deeply embedded gender roles often serve as structural barriers to women's career advancement (Domenico & Jones, 2007; Ismail & Ibrahim, 2008).

One of the most significant cultural constraints identified in this study is the stigmatization of unmarried pregnant women. In Bakiga society, premarital pregnancy is viewed as a source of shame for both the woman and her family, leading to strict societal punishments such as exclusion from educational and employment opportunities. Many respondents expressed that unmarried women who become pregnant face a high risk of being disowned or forced into early marriages, thus limiting their ability to continue with formal education or pursue professional goals. This finding supports research by Wijewardhana & Dias (2021), who argue that cultural expectations around female chastity and reproductive roles disproportionately hinder women's educational and career trajectories, particularly in rural settings.

Another deeply entrenched cultural practice that hinders women's career progression is the institution of bride price. This study found that the payment of bride price functions not only as a marriage custom but also as an economic transaction that often reduces women's autonomy in making independent career and educational choices. Many respondents reported that once bride

price is paid, women are expected to conform to societal roles that prioritize their responsibilities as wives and mothers over personal aspirations. This aligns with studies by Jamshaid (2020) and Hashmi et al. (2008), who argue that bride price systems in many cultures reinforce the perception of women as economic assets, positioning them within the family structure in ways that limit their agency in career decision-making. The practice discourages women from seeking higher education or employment outside the home, as their primary obligation shifts to fulfilling the expectations of their husband and his family.

The influence of socialization processes on career choices was also evident in the findings. From a young age, Bakiga women are socialized into gendered roles that prioritize submissiveness, caregiving, and domestic responsibility. Girls are often given tasks and responsibilities that prepare them for future household duties, while boys are encouraged to explore leadership, independence, and career aspirations. This pattern of early gendered socialization restricts women's professional mobility and discourages them from pursuing leadership positions. These findings are consistent with research by Taylor-Abdulai et al. (2014) and Dicke et al. (2019), which highlight how traditional socialization processes reinforce career disparities by discouraging women from engaging in male-dominated professions and leadership roles.

Additionally, the study found that language and cultural symbols play an essential role in reinforcing gender roles. In Bakiga society, language is used as a medium to transmit cultural expectations and assign specific gender roles. Many respondents reported that common sayings and proverbs emphasize male authority, female submissiveness, and the importance of women's roles as caregivers. This finding aligns with Markus & Kitayama's (1991) theory of cultural schemas, which explains how language encodes and perpetuates societal norms, shaping individual self-perception and life choices. Similarly, Lubaale (2022) argues that the symbolic representation

of men as leaders and protectors while women are portrayed as nurturers contributes to the entrenchment of gender disparities in decision-making and career attainment.

The cumulative impact of these cultural expectations constrains women's career mobility by discouraging ambition and reinforcing the idea that a woman's primary role is within the household. Many women who attempt to break these cultural norms by pursuing professional careers face resistance from both family and society. This societal discouragement manifests in several ways, including reduced financial support for girls' education, community pressure to prioritize marriage over career advancement, and workplace discrimination against women in leadership roles. The findings suggest that, while cultural values provide a sense of identity and structure within Bakiga society, they also serve as significant barriers to gender equality in professional spaces.

9.1.2 Kikiga Culture and Its Impact on women's professional Career Attainment

Findings from this study highlight how specific cultural element including gender preferences in education, informal learning structures, and marriage customs serve as key determinants of Bakiga women's career opportunities in Kabale district. These cultural factors contribute to persistent gender disparities in education and employment, reinforcing social structures that limit women's professional career attainment. The ways in which these cultural components shape women's educational and professional prospects are discussed below.

One of the most significant findings of this study is the widespread preference for investing in boys' education over that of girls. Many respondents noted that families often prioritize their sons' education, assuming that boys are future breadwinners while girls will eventually marry and depend on their husbands for financial support. This traditional mindset reflects broader trends in patriarchal societies where boys are seen as long-term investments, while girls are viewed

primarily through the lens of marriageability and domestic responsibilities. This gendered allocation of educational resources leads to significant disparities in career opportunities for women. Studies by Hashmi et al (2008) and Yewande & Olawunmi (2023), confirm that in many traditional societies, the systemic underinvestment in girls' education directly limits their ability to access high-paying jobs, leadership roles, and professional fields that require advanced qualifications.

This gender bias in education manifests in several ways. First, girls often receive less encouragement to pursue subjects that are deemed more challenging or career-oriented, particularly in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Many respondents expressed that within Kikiga culture, girls are subtly (or explicitly) discouraged from excelling in subjects that are traditionally associated with male dominance. This discouragement can stem from teachers, parents, or community expectations, leading to a lack of confidence and motivation among young women to pursue careers in these fields. Research by Lubaale (2022) and Dicke et al. (2019) supports this finding, emphasizing that educational disparities in STEM fields result not from a lack of ability among women, but from long-standing cultural biases that steer girls toward less competitive, lower-paying professions.

Another cultural factor that limits women's professional career attainment is the emphasis on gender-specific learning paths. The study found that while formal education is available to both boys and girls, informal education such as home-based learning and vocational skills training tends to focus on domestic skills rather than career-oriented knowledge for women. Many respondents reported that girls are expected to learn household management skills from an early age, while boys are encouraged to develop problem-solving skills, leadership abilities, and technical expertise. This division reinforces a gendered career trajectory where women are prepared for

domestic roles rather than professional success. Research by Taylor-Abdulai et al, (2014) highlights how informal education structures can entrench traditional gender norms by limiting girls' exposure to career-building opportunities. In societies where informal education is a key component of socialization, women often find themselves restricted to jobs that align with their traditional roles, such as caregiving, teaching, and hospitality work, rather than entering competitive fields with greater earning potential.

Marriage customs in Kikiga culture further exacerbate these challenges, particularly by prioritizing marriage over career attainment. This study found that many young women are either forced into early marriage or pressured to marry at a young age, which significantly disrupts their educational and professional aspirations. Cultural expectations dictate that a woman's primary role is to build and maintain a family, with career ambitions taking a secondary position, if considered at all. Many respondents shared personal experiences of being encouraged to leave school to get married or being discouraged from pursuing higher education for fear that they would become "too independent" and struggle to find a husband.

The pressure to marry early often results in women abandoning their career ambitions altogether. Once married, many women face additional cultural expectations that reinforce their dependency on their husbands. They are expected to dedicate their time and energy to raising children, managing household affairs, and supporting their husbands' careers, leaving little room for personal growth or professional aspirations. This finding aligns with studies by Jamshaid (2020) and Ismail & Ibrahim (2008), which show that in cultures where marriage is highly prioritized, women's career potential is often sacrificed in favor of their roles as wives and mothers.

Beyond individual marriages, broader societal attitudes reinforce this expectation. Communities tend to judge a woman's success not by her professional achievements, but by her ability to maintain a stable home and fulfill traditional gender roles. Women who prioritize their careers over marriage often face stigma, criticism, or even social exclusion. Respondents reported that women who remain unmarried or delay marriage in pursuit of higher education or professional advancement are often perceived as having failed to fulfill their traditional responsibilities. This societal pressure discourages women from pursuing long-term careers, particularly in fields that require extensive training, travel, or commitment.

These cultural attitudes not only limit women's personal aspirations but also contribute to systemic gender disparities in the workforce. Women who are pushed into early marriage or denied access to higher education often find themselves confined to low-income, informal-sector jobs with little opportunity for advancement. Even those who manage to obtain formal employment may struggle with workplace discrimination and limited career mobility due to deeply ingrained gender biases. Employers, influenced by the same cultural norms that prioritize marriage and domesticity for women, may be hesitant to promote female employees to leadership positions, assuming they will eventually leave the workforce to focus on family life.

Despite these challenges, the study also found that some women are actively resisting these cultural constraints and pursuing education and careers despite societal pressures. Some families, particularly those with exposure to more progressive gender norms through education or urban influence, are beginning to support their daughters' professional ambitions. Women who succeed in breaking cultural barriers often become role models for younger generations, inspiring gradual shifts in societal attitudes. However, these cases remain exceptions rather than the norm, indicating

that significant structural and cultural changes are still needed to ensure equal career opportunities for women in Kikiga society.

The study highlights several key cultural characteristics that significantly impact professional women's career attainment in Kikiga society. One of the most prominent findings is the persistent gender disparity in educational investment, where families prioritize boys' education over that of girls. This reflects a widespread belief that boys are future breadwinners, while girls are expected to marry and depend on their husbands. As a result, many women are denied equal access to higher education and professional development opportunities, limiting their career advancement.

Additionally, the study found that even when girls are allowed to pursue education, they often receive less encouragement to explore fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), which are perceived as male-dominated. This discouragement contributes to the continued underrepresentation of women in high-paying, competitive careers. Another major cultural barrier is the emphasis on informal education, which reinforces gendered career trajectories. Women are often trained in domestic skills from an early age, preparing them for household responsibilities rather than professional success. This form of education limits their exposure to career-building opportunities and steers them towards traditionally female-dominated, lower-paying professions.

Furthermore, the expectation that women should prioritize marriage over their careers further compounds these challenges. Many young women face immense social pressure to marry early, and in many cases, marriage interrupts their education or prevents them from pursuing long-term professional goals. Once married, women are expected to focus on family responsibilities, leaving little room for personal or professional growth. The cultural norm that measures a woman's success by her ability to maintain a household rather than by her achievements in education or employment

reinforces gender inequality and restricts women's participation in the workforce. Moreover, societal attitudes continue to stigmatize women who defy these cultural expectations. Women who delay marriage or prioritize their careers often face criticism, exclusion, or diminished marriage prospects. These attitudes are deeply ingrained in the community and discourage many women from pursuing professional success.

Workplace discrimination further reflects these cultural biases, as women who manage to enter formal employment often encounter limited career mobility due to assumptions that they will eventually abandon their jobs to fulfill family obligations. Despite these challenges, the study also found that some women are actively resisting cultural constraints by pursuing higher education and professional careers. These women serve as role models and catalysts for gradual change in societal attitudes. However, their success remains the exception rather than the norm, indicating that broader structural and cultural reforms are necessary to ensure equal career opportunities for women in Kikiga society.

Overall, the study demonstrates that while education has the potential to empower women and break entrenched gender norms, its full impact remains restricted by cultural barriers that continue to prioritize marriage, domestic responsibilities, and male economic dominance. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach that includes shifting societal perceptions, implementing supportive policies, and expanding educational opportunities to create a more equitable environment for professional women's career attainment. These findings indicate that the cultural landscape in Kabale District presents significant structural and attitudinal barriers to professional women's career attainment. While education has been recognized as a powerful tool for breaking gender norms, its full potential remains unrealized due to the prioritization of male education, the reinforcement of domestic roles for women, and the expectation that women should

marry young and dedicate themselves to family life. Overcoming these challenges will require a multi-dimensional approach that includes cultural re-evaluation, policy interventions, and targeted educational reforms to ensure that all women have equal access to career-building opportunities.

9.1.3 The Influence of Kikiga Culture on Women's professional Career attainment

The study finds that Kikiga culture exerts both enabling and restrictive influences on women's career progression. While certain cultural values provide women with supportive networks that can facilitate education and career attainment, deeply ingrained gender norms simultaneously create barriers that limit women's professional aspirations. The interaction between these opposing forces shapes the opportunities available to women in Kabale District and determines their ability to navigate career pathways.

One of the primary ways in which Kikiga culture supports women's career advancement is through its strong communal support systems. The collective nature of Bakiga society ensures that individuals, including women, can rely on family and community networks for emotional, financial, and logistical support. Respondents in this study reported that extended family members often play an active role in helping young women pursue education, particularly in situations where a father or immediate guardian is unable or unwilling to provide financial assistance. In cases where a woman demonstrates exceptional academic potential, relatives may step in to fund her education, ensuring that she is not entirely dependent on her nuclear family's economic status. This finding aligns with research by May and Edel (1996), which emphasizes the role of extended family structures in mitigating economic barriers to education for women in traditional societies.

Additionally, some respondents highlighted how community recognition of educational achievements can serve as an incentive for families to invest in their daughters' schooling. Families that witness the career success of other women within their community may be more willing to

support their own daughters' education, hoping for similar outcomes. The presence of educated female role models within the community was found to have a positive influence on younger generations, subtly challenging long-standing gender norms by demonstrating that women can successfully balance career and family responsibilities. Women who secure stable employment and contribute financially to their households often alter perceptions about the value of educating girls, leading to gradual cultural shifts that support women's professional aspirations.

Despite these facilitating factors, the study also highlights several restrictive aspects of Kikiga culture that continue to limit women's career prospects. Rigid gender norms dictate that women's primary responsibilities lie within the domestic sphere, with professional ambitions seen as secondary or even incompatible with traditional female roles. Many respondents reported that women are often discouraged from seeking leadership positions or pursuing careers that require extensive education, as these are perceived to conflict with their expected duties as wives and mothers. Research by Raburu (2010) and Maume (2006) supports this finding, emphasizing how entrenched gender expectations restrict women's participation in decision-making roles, both in the household and in professional settings.

Another major barrier identified in this study is the persistent glass ceiling effect in male-dominated industries. Even when women acquire the necessary education and skills to compete in the workforce, they often find themselves overlooked for leadership roles, facing implicit biases that favor male candidates. Respondents shared experiences of being passed over for promotions, encountering skepticism about their abilities, or being expected to take on more caregiving responsibilities even within professional environments. This aligns with findings by Eagly and Carli (2008), who describe how systemic biases and workplace cultures reinforce the exclusion of women from senior-level positions, particularly in societies with strong patriarchal traditions.

Additionally, internalized cultural expectations act as a psychological barrier to women's career ambitions. Many respondents expressed feelings of guilt or hesitation when considering career paths that might require them to prioritize professional growth over traditional family roles. Women who have been raised to view domestic duties as their primary purpose may struggle with self-doubt when seeking employment outside of traditionally female-dominated sectors. Research by Warsito et al. (2023) suggests that such internalized gender roles significantly influence women's career choices, leading many to self-select into lower-paying, flexible jobs that allow them to conform to cultural expectations while still contributing to household income.

The study further finds that while communal support structures can be beneficial, they often come with implicit expectations that reinforce traditional gender roles. In many cases, families are willing to support a woman's education only if her career choices align with culturally acceptable professions, such as teaching, nursing, or social work fields that are perceived as extensions of women's caregiving roles. Women who express interest in pursuing careers in law, engineering, politics, or business frequently encounter resistance, as these fields are associated with leadership, authority, and extensive public engagement qualities traditionally reserved for men in Bakiga society.

In conclusion, Kikiga culture presents a complex duality in its influence on women's professional career attainment. On one hand, strong communal ties provide financial and emotional support for education, helping some women overcome economic obstacles to professional development. On the other hand, rigid gender norms, workplace discrimination, and internalized cultural expectations continue to act as formidable barriers that discourage women from pursuing ambitious career goals. This interplay between enabling and restrictive cultural forces suggests

that while progress is being made, significant structural and attitudinal changes are still required to create a more equitable environment for women's professional career attainment in Kabale District. Overcoming these cultural limitations will require targeted interventions that challenge traditional gender roles, encourage the promotion of women into leadership positions, and foster cultural attitudes that recognize women's potential beyond domestic responsibilities.

9.1.4 Challenges Faced by Women in a bit to attain their professional Career

The study identifies multiple challenges that hinder women's professional career attainment in Kabale District, with both structural and cultural factors playing significant roles. These barriers range from early marriage and rigid gender norms to workplace discrimination and the absence of policies that support women's professional growth. The interplay of these factors limits women's access to educational opportunities, career attainment, and long-term job retention, ultimately reinforcing gender disparities in employment and leadership positions.

One of the most profound challenges highlighted in this study is the impact of early marriage on women's education and career aspirations. Many respondents reported that young women are often pressured to marry at an early age, which significantly disrupts their pursuit of higher education and professional ambitions. Cultural norms dictate that a woman's primary role is to be a wife and mother, and as such, many families prioritize marriage over education for their daughters. This aligns with the findings of Tietcheu (2005), who notes that in many patriarchal societies, early marriage is seen as a form of social security for women, but in reality, it limits their ability to pursue long-term professional success. Once married, women are expected to dedicate their time to domestic responsibilities, leaving little room for further education or career growth. In cases where married women attempt to return to school or enter the workforce, they often face resistance

from their spouses, families, and communities, which further restricts their ability to build independent careers.

Beyond early marriage, women in Kabale District also encounter significant structural barriers in the workplace. Workplace discrimination remains a persistent issue, with many respondents noting that women are often overlooked for promotions, excluded from decision-making processes, and subject to biases that favor male employees. Women in leadership positions frequently face additional scrutiny, with their competencies being questioned more rigorously than those of their male counterparts. Research by Dicke et al. (2019) supports this finding, emphasizing that gender biases in professional environments contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles. This phenomenon is further reinforced by the work of Elvitigalage et al. (2006), who argue that male-dominated industries and traditional workplace hierarchies create systemic barriers that prevent women from advancing to higher managerial and executive positions.

A key factor contributing to workplace discrimination is the perception that women are less committed to their careers due to family obligations. Many employers assume that women will eventually prioritize marriage, childcare, and household responsibilities over their jobs, making them less likely to be considered for long-term professional growth opportunities. This leads to a cycle in which women are often assigned fewer demanding tasks, denied access to career-enhancing projects, or discouraged from applying for leadership positions. As a result, many women remain confined to lower-paying, less stable jobs with limited prospects for advancement. Even when women are able to secure professional employment, they frequently experience what researchers refer to as the "glass ceiling" effect, where they encounter invisible barriers that prevent them from progressing beyond a certain level in their careers.

Another significant challenge identified in the study is the lack of family-friendly workplace policies, which greatly affects women's ability to sustain long-term careers. Many workplaces in Kabale District lack policies that accommodate the dual responsibilities of career and family life, such as maternity leave, childcare support, or flexible working hours. This makes it difficult for women to balance work and household responsibilities, often forcing them to choose between career attainment and family obligations. Research by Eagly and Carli (2008) highlights that the absence of family-friendly policies disproportionately affects women, as they are still expected to take on the majority of caregiving roles in the household. Without adequate support structures, many women either exit the workforce entirely or reduce their working hours, which limits their career progression and economic independence.

The societal expectation that women must prioritize family over career further exacerbates these challenges. Many respondents indicated that women who pursue ambitious careers often face stigma and criticism from their communities, particularly if they delay marriage or remain unmarried to focus on their professions. This creates a psychological burden for women who wish to advance in their careers but fear social backlash. As a result, many women self-select into jobs that allow them to maintain traditional gender roles while still earning an income, often at the expense of professional growth and financial stability.

In addition to these challenges, limited access to professional networks and mentorship opportunities also hinders professional women's career attainment. Many respondents expressed that because leadership and high-paying professions are still predominantly male-dominated, women have fewer opportunities to connect with influential mentors who can guide them toward career attainment. Without strong professional networks, women are at a disadvantage in terms of gaining industry insights, securing promotions, or accessing resources that can enhance their career

growth. This finding is supported by studies showing that mentorship and sponsorship play a crucial role in professional success, particularly in male-dominated industries.

The study also highlights how gender-based violence, including workplace harassment and discriminatory practices, further discourages women from actively participating in the workforce. Respondents shared experiences of sexual harassment in their workplaces, with some reporting that they were forced to leave their jobs due to unsafe working conditions. The fear of harassment not only discourages women from pursuing certain career paths but also limits their ability to assert themselves in professional environments. The lack of effective legal protections and reporting mechanisms means that many cases of workplace harassment go unaddressed, further marginalizing women in the workforce.

Overall, the challenges faced by women in career attainment in Kabale District stem from a combination of structural inequalities and deeply entrenched cultural beliefs. Early marriage remains a major obstacle that disrupts educational and career trajectories, while workplace discrimination and exclusion from leadership roles limit women's professional mobility. The absence of family-friendly workplace policies forces many women to compromise between career aspirations and family responsibilities, while societal expectations continue to place pressure on women to conform to traditional gender roles. Additionally, limited mentorship opportunities, gender-based workplace violence, and psychological barriers further restrict women's ability to achieve career success. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes legal reforms, workplace policy changes, cultural shifts, and the promotion of gender-inclusive career attainment programs.

9.1.5 Strategies for Enhancing women's professional career attainment

The study identifies several key strategies that can be implemented to improve professional women's professional career attainment in Kabale District. These strategies address structural, educational, economic, and legal barriers that have historically limited women's access to professional growth opportunities. A multi-dimensional approach that combines awareness programs, educational reforms, economic empowerment initiatives, and legal protections is necessary to create an inclusive and equitable work environment where women can thrive.

Awareness Programs

One of the most effective strategies for enhancing women's career opportunities is the implementation of awareness programs that challenge entrenched gender stereotypes. Gender norms in Kikiga culture continue to prioritize domestic responsibilities over professional aspirations for women, making it necessary to engage key stakeholders, such as community leaders, educators, religious figures, and families in discussions that promote gender equality. Community-wide sensitization campaigns can help challenge deep-seated biases that discourage women's participation in higher education and professional fields.

These programs should focus on changing the perception that women's primary role is in the home while emphasizing the broader economic and social benefits of women's participation in the workforce. Encouraging families to view daughters as equally capable as sons in terms of career aspirations can help shift attitudes over time. Research by Eagly and Carli (2008) highlights that awareness campaigns that engage multiple social actors including men and boys tend to be more effective in fostering cultural change. By incorporating local cultural and religious leaders into these initiatives, awareness programs can gain credibility and influence community attitudes toward women's career progression.

Public awareness initiatives should also include media campaigns that highlight the success stories of professional women in various sectors. Showcasing role models who have successfully balanced careers and family responsibilities can serve as inspiration for young girls and challenge the notion that marriage and career attainment are mutually exclusive. School-based awareness programs can further reinforce these ideas by integrating gender equality discussions into curricula, allowing students to critically engage with the concept of career aspirations beyond traditional gender roles.

Educational Reforms

Ensuring equal access to education at all levels and access equal scholarship opportunities is another critical intervention for improving professional women's career attainment. Findings from this study indicate that many families prioritize boys' education over that of girls, leading to persistent gender disparities in career-oriented fields.

One way to address this challenge is by introducing scholarship programs specifically designed to support female students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many respondents in this study reported that financial constraints were a significant barrier to their educational attainment, forcing some women to abandon their studies. Government and private sector scholarships, tuition subsidies, and financial aid programs can help bridge this gap and provide women with the necessary resources to complete their education. Research by Dicke et al. (2019) underscores the importance of financial support in closing the gender gap in higher education and ensuring that women have equal opportunities to pursue careers in high-paying professions.

Additionally, mentorship programs that connect young women with experienced professionals in their fields of interest can play a crucial role in career attainment. Mentorship provides guidance, encouragement, and practical strategies for overcoming challenges in male-dominated industries.

Establishing structured mentorship networks in universities, professional associations, and workplaces can help women navigate career pathways and access leadership opportunities. Women who have successfully built careers despite societal constraints can serve as mentors to the younger generation, offering support and motivation for aspiring professionals.

Educational institutions should also incorporate gender-sensitive curricula that encourage female participation in STEM based courses and in academic leadership. Schools and universities can create inclusive learning environments by promoting female representation in academic leadership and ensuring that teaching materials do not reinforce traditional gender biases. Encouraging young girls to develop confidence in their academic abilities and career aspirations from an early age can help shift societal attitudes and create a more supportive environment for women's professional growth.

Economic Empowerment Initiatives

The government should expand economic empowerment initiatives is another crucial strategy for enhancing professional women's career attainment. Many women in Kabale District face financial dependency on their spouses or male family members, limiting their ability to make independent career decisions. To address this issue, microfinance programs, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support should be expanded to provide women with the financial resources and skills necessary for self-sufficiency.

Access to microfinance services can empower women by providing them with capital to start or expand businesses, enabling them to generate income and gain financial independence. Women who own businesses are better positioned to invest in their education, support their families, and make long-term career choices without being constrained by economic dependency. Studies by

Kwesiga (2002) highlight the effectiveness of microfinance in promoting women's economic empowerment and increasing their participation in entrepreneurial activities.

Vocational training programs can equip women with practical skills that enhance their employability in both formal and informal sectors. Many respondents in this study reported that they had limited access to technical training, which restricted their career options. Providing women with training in diverse fields such as information technology, business management, and skilled trades can help them secure stable employment and compete in the job market. Additionally, initiatives that encourage women to pursue careers in non-traditional fields, such as construction or mechanical work, can help break gender stereotypes and expand career opportunities.

Entrepreneurship programs tailored to women's needs can also create pathways for financial independence. These programs should offer business development training, financial literacy education, and access to startup capital. Women entrepreneurs can benefit from networks that connect them with mentors, investors, and industry experts who can provide guidance and support. Creating female-led business hubs and cooperatives can further foster economic collaboration and strengthen women's participation in key industries.

9.2 Legal Reforms and Policy Interventions

Strengthening legal frameworks to combat gender discrimination and workplace inequality is essential for ensuring that women have equal career opportunities. Many respondents in this study highlighted experiences of workplace discrimination, limited career mobility, and exclusion from leadership positions. Addressing these challenges requires the enforcement of laws that promote gender equality in employment, protect women from workplace harassment, and encourage affirmative action in leadership appointments.

Anti-discrimination policies designed by government must be reinforced to ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work, have access to promotions based on merit, and are protected from gender-based harassment in the workplace. Eagly and Carli (2008) emphasize that strong legal protections are critical for creating an inclusive work environment where women can advance without facing systemic biases. Governments and employers must work together to implement strict penalties for workplace discrimination and establish reporting mechanisms that allow women to seek justice in cases of unfair treatment.

Workplace protections should also include policies that support work-life balance, such as parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and affordable childcare services. These could be implemented by the government and other non-governmental organizations that do related tasks. Many women in this study reported that balancing career responsibilities with family obligations was a significant challenge. Providing institutional support through maternity leave, workplace daycare centers, and flexible work hours can help women remain in the workforce and pursue long-term career goals without being forced to choose between family and profession.

Affirmative action policies by the government that encourage the inclusion of women in leadership positions can help break the cycle of male dominance in managerial and executive roles. Many organizations continue to favor men for leadership positions due to longstanding cultural biases. Establishing quotas for female representation in decision-making bodies and leadership teams can help level the playing field and ensure that women have equal opportunities to contribute to institutional growth.

Legal reforms by government should also target harmful cultural practices such as early marriage and gender-based violence, which continue to hinder women's professional career attainment.

Enforcing strict penalties against child marriage and ensuring that girls remain in school until them. Governments, civil society organizations, and community leaders must collaborate to implement policies that protect young girls from forced marriages and promote educational attainment as a fundamental right.

9.3 Areas for further research

i. Impact of early marriage on career success: Future research should investigate the impact of early marriage on women's long-term career success. As highlighted in this study, early marriage often leads to fewer educational opportunities and limited career prospects. Exploring interventions such as policy reforms and community engagement aimed at delaying marriage could shed light on how to improve women's professional career attainment and empowerment in Kabale District and beyond.

ii. Influence of parenting practices on career attainment: Further research should address how different parenting styles and family structures influence women's career aspirations and success. Since cultural expectations often reinforce gendered roles through domestic socialization, understanding the role of parents could provide insight into fostering more progressive attitudes toward women's education and professional careers.

iii. The role of individual attitudes in career success: a focused examination of the psychological and socio-cultural factors that shape women's attitudes towards education and careers would provide valuable insights. Individual beliefs, societal expectations and the internalization of cultural norms play a crucial role in shaping career aspirations. Future research could investigate interventions that promote women's confidence and ambition and reduce internal barriers to career advancement.

iv. Impact of career advancement on women's empowerment: A broader study across Uganda examining how career attainment affects women's socio-economic status would provide a comprehensive overview of the impact of career success. This research should examine how career advancement changes societal roles, family dynamics and community perceptions, contributing to broader gender equality and development goals in Uganda. By addressing these areas, future research can build on the findings of this study to further explore and understand the nuanced factors that influence professional women's career attainment in culturally specific contexts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGOs) (FAWODE) IN KABALE DISTRICT

CULTURE AND WOMENS CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DISTRICT

MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INSTITUTE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

P.O.BOX, 1410, MBARARA

Interview Date	Place	Interview Time	Number	

SECTION A: BASIC DATA

INITIAL/NO	GENDER	POSITION	UNIT OF PLACEMENT	PERIOD SERVED IN THE UNIVERSITY

OBJECTIVE ONE

The key components of Bakiga Culture, particularly those related to gender roles, family structures, and educational values that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women

1. What is your position in this organization
2. To your understanding can you tell me how you understand the meaning of culture

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMI... UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND ... P.O. BOX 1410, MB...

3. What are the key things that you know which help us to define culture

4. Analyze the effect of these components to professional women's career attainment or instance their values, norms and beliefs.

   The effects

   i.

   ii

   iii

   iv

   v

   Others.....

   .....

5. Do you know about the culture of Bakiga people (Yes or no)

   If yes briefly explain it in detail

   If not why haven't you known it?

6. What is the family structure (family set up) of the Bakiga tribe

   i

   ii

   iii



iv

v

7. Does family set up influence professional women's career attainment? Yes / No

   If yes explain how.....

   .....

   If not explain why.....

   .....

8. According to Bakiga culture are women allowed to freedom of expression? Yes/No

   If yes how? If not why?

9. Who is responsible for the career attainment of a girl child? Is it related to Bakiga culture in any way? How and why?

10. How do Bakiga in your community perceive women /girl who further in education career?

11. How do thrive through the cultural attachment in work issue handling of cases against women's freedom to attain a career.

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OBJECTIVE TWO

To analyse how Bakiga culture influences professional women's career attainment

1. Which dreams do women have in your early age with regard to career attainment being a mukiga woman and having interacted with Bakiga women in your office?
2. How did you get to this level amidst cultural demands?
3. Do you know any other woman in higher position and she managed to reach this level.
4. Do you think in relation to Bakiga culture, it is of any use for a woman to attain a career and take a lead in some sectors?
5. Where did you get support to reach this level?
6. In your view does culture play a positive role towards professional women's career attainment?
7. If yes explain the role it plays
8. If not explain the reasons why you think culture has not played much role
9. In your view is it easy for a mukiga woman to attain a career in different sectors?
10. If yes explain why
11. If not explain why
12. What do you recommend to Bakiga women in the process of career attainment and those that are already in positions of responsibility in relation to cultural elements

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Objective three:

How do women in Kabale District negotiate their Kikiga cultural identity with their career aspirations and professional growth?

1. Do you think more women could attain a career in Kabale district if all factors were favorable, including cultural factors?
2. What are the specific means that women use to attain career in Kabale?
3. What do you think could be done to enhance women's attainment of a career in Kabale district
4. What can the government do to enhance professional women's career attainment in Kabale District
5. Propose possible strategies to enhance professional women's career attainment in Kabale district

Objective four

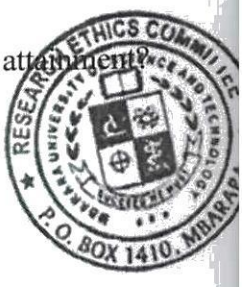
How do Bakiga women benefit after attaining a career

Objective five:

What challenges do Bakiga women face in a bid to attain a career?

Objective six

What strategies have been proposed to enhance professional women's career attainment?



THANK YOU

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DITSRICT

FDG Interview Date	Place	FDG Interview Time	Number of participants	

SECTION A: BASIC DATA

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	POSITION	UNIT OF PLACEMENT	PERIOD STAYED THE UNIVERSITY



OBJECTIVE ONE

The key components of Kikiga Culture, particularly those related to gender roles, family structures, and educational values that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women.

1. What is your position in the university
2. To your understanding can you tell me how you understand the meaning of culture?
3. What are the key components that you know which help us to define culture
4. Analyze the effect of these components to professional women's career attainment

   The effects

   i.

   ii

   iii

5. Do you know about the culture of Bakiga people (Yes or no)

   If yes briefly explain it in detail

   If not why haven't you known it?

6. What is the family structure (family set up) of the Bakiga tribe

   i

   ii

   iii

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

i

7. Does family set up influence professional women's career attainment? Yes / No

   If yes explain how.....

   If not explain why.....

   .....

8. According to Kikiga culture are women allowed to freely have education? Yes/No

9. Who is responsible for the career attainment of a girl child? Is it related to Kikiga culture in any way? How and why?

10. How do Bakiga in your community perceive women /girl who further in education career?

11. How did you thrive through the cultural attachment and at what level did you get interrupted in your schooling because of culture norms.

OBJECTIVE TWO

To analyse how Kikiga culture influences professional women's career attainment

13. Which dreams did you have in your early age with regard to career attainment being a Mukai woman?

14. How did get to this level amidst cultural demands?

15. Do you know any other woman in higher position and she managed to reach this level



16. Do you think in relation to Kikiga culture, it is of any use for a woman to attain a career and take a lead in some sectors?

17. Where did you get support to reach this level?

18. In your view does culture play a positive role towards career attainment?

19. If yes explain the role it plays

20. If not explain the reasons why you think culture has not played much role

Objective three:

How do women in Kabale District negotiate their Kikiga cultural identity with their career aspirations and professional growth?

21. Do you think more women could attain a career in Kabale district? What are the specific means that women use to attain career in Kabale?

22. How do Bakiga women negotiate their career identity with career aspirations and their professional growth

Objective four:

The challenges to professional women's career attainment

23. What do you think could be done to enhance women's attainment of a career

24. What can the government do to enhance professional women's career attainment

Objective five: Strategies to professional women's career attainment

25. Propose possible strategies to professional women's career attainment



26. In your view is it easy for a mukiga woman to attain a career in different sectors?

27. If yes explain why

28. If not explain why

29. What do you recommend to Bakiga women in the process of career attainment and those that are already in positions of responsibility about culture?

THANK YOU



APPENDIX C: A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR STAFF OF KABALE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

TOPIC: CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DITSRICT

FDG Interview Date	Place	FDG Interview Time	Number of participants	

SECTION A: BASIC DATA

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	POSITION	UNIT OF PLACEMENT	PERIOD STAYED THE UNIVERSITY



OBJECTIVE ONE

The key components of Kikiga Culture, that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women

. What is your position in the university

2. To your understanding can you tell me how you understand the meaning of culture?

3. What are the key components that you know which help us to define culture

4. Analyze the effect of these components to professional women's career attainment

The effects

i.

ii

iii

iv

v

Others.....

.....

5. Do you know about the culture of Bakiga people (Yes or no)

If yes briefly explain it in detail

If not, why haven't you known it?

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

6. What is the family structure (family set up) of the Bakiga tribe

i

ii

iii

iv

v

7. Does family set up influence professional women's career attainment? Yes / No

If yes explain how.....

.....

If not explain why.....

.....

8. According to Bakiga culture are women allowed to freely have education? Yes/No

9. Who is responsible for the career attainment of a girl child? Is it related to Bakiga culture in any way? How and why?

10. How do Bakiga in your community perceive women /girl who further in education career?

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

11. How did you thrive through the cultural attachment and at what level did you get interrupted in your schooling because of culture norms.

OBJECTIVE TWO

To analyse how Kikiga culture influences professional women's career attainment

30. Which dreams did you have in your early age with regard to career attainment being a mukiga woman?

31. How did get to this level amidst cultural demands?

32. Do you know any other woman in higher position and she managed to reach this level.

33. Do you think in relation to Kikiga culture, it is of any use for a woman to attain a career and take a lead in some sectors?

34. Where did you get support to reach this level?

35. In your view does culture play a positive role towards career attainment?

36. If yes explain the role it plays

37. If not explain the reasons why you think culture has not played much role

Objective three:

How do women in Kabale District negotiate their Kikiga cultural identity with their career aspirations and professional growth?

38. Do you think more women could attain a career in Kabale district? What are the specific means that women use to attain career in Kabale?

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P. O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

39. How do Bakiga women negotiate their career identity with career aspirations and their professional growth

Objective four:

The challenges to professional women's career attainment

40. What do you think could be done to enhance women's attainment of a career

41. What can the government do to enhance professional women's career attainment

Objective five: Strategies to professional women's career attainment

42. Propose possible strategies to professional women's career attainment

43. In your view is it easy for a mukiga woman to attain a career in different sectors?

44. If yes explain why

45. If not explain why

46. What do you recommend to Bakiga women in the process of career attainment and those that are already in positions of responsibility about culture?

THANK YOU



APPENDIX D: A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR STAFF OF UGANDA COLLEGE OF COMMERCE

CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DITSRICT

FDG Interview Date	Place	FDG Interview Time	Number of participants	

SECTION A: BASIC DATA

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	POSITION	UNIT OF PLACEMENT	PERIOD STAYED THE UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

OBJECTIVE ONE

The key components of Kikiga Culture, particularly those related to gender roles, family structures, and educational values that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women

1. What is your position in the university
2. To your understanding can you tell me how you understand the meaning of culture?
3. What are the key components that you know which help us to define culture
4. Analyze the effect of these components to professional women's career attainment

   The effects

   i.

   ii

   iii

   iv

   v

   Others.....

   .....

5. Do you know about the culture of Bakiga people (Yes or no)

   If yes briefly explain it in detail

   If not, why haven't you known it?



6. What is the family structure (family set up) of the Bakiga tribe

i

ii

iii

iv

v

7. Does family set up influence professional women's career attainment? Yes / No

If yes explain how.....

.....

If not explain why.....

.....

8. According to Bakiga culture are women allowed to freely have education? Yes/No

9. Who is responsible for the career attainment of a girl child? Is it related to Bakiga culture in any way? How and why?

10. How do Bakiga in your community perceive women /girl who further in education career?



11. How did you thrive through the cultural attachment and at what level did you get interrupted in your schooling because of culture norms.

OBJECTIVE TWO

To analyse how Kikiga culture influences women's professional career attainment

47. Which dreams did you have in your early age with regard to career attainment being a Mukiga woman?

48. How did get to this level amidst cultural demands?

49. Do you know any other woman in higher position and she managed to reach this level.

50. Do you think in relation to Kikiga culture, it is of any use for a woman to attain a career and take a lead in some sectors?

51. Where did you get support to reach this level?

52. In your view does culture play a positive role towards career attainment?

53. If yes explain the role it plays

54. If not explain the reasons why you think culture has not played much role

Objective three:

How do women in Kabale District negotiate their Kikiga cultural identity with their career aspirations and professional growth?

55. Do you think more women could attain a career in Kabale district? What are the specific means that women use to attain career in Kabale?

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

56. How do Bakiga women negotiate their career identity with career aspirations and their professional growth

Objective four:

The challenges to professional women's career attainment

57. What do you think could be done to enhance women's attainment of a career

58. What can the government do to enhance professional women's career attainment

Objective five: Strategies to professional women's career attainment

59. Propose possible strategies to professional women's career attainment

60. In your view is it easy for a mukiga woman to attain a career in different sectors?

61. If yes explain why

62. If not explain why

63. What do you recommend to Bakiga women in the process of career attainment and those that are already in positions of responsibility about culture?

THANK YOU

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

APPENDIX E: AN INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KABALE DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF

TOPIC: CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DITSRICT

FDG Interview Date	Place	FDG Interview Time	Number of participants	

SECTION A: BASIC DATA

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	POSITION	UNIT OF PLACEMENT	PERIOD STAYED THE UNIVERSITY

OBJECTIVE ONE

The key components of Bakiga Culture, particularly those related to gender roles, family structures, and educational values that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

1. What is your position at the district local government

2. To your understanding can you tell me how you explain the meaning of culture?

3. What are the key components that you know which help us to define culture

4. Analyze the effect of these components to professional women's career attainment

   The effects

   i.

   ii

   iii

   iv

   v

   Others.....

   .....

5. Do you know about the culture of Bakiga people (Yes or no)

   If yes briefly explain it in detail

   If not, why haven't you known it?

6. What is the family structure (family set up) of the Bakiga tribe

   i

   ii



iii

7. Does family set up influence professional women's career attainment? Yes / No

If yes explain how.....

.....

If not explain why.....

.....

8. According to Bakiga culture are women allowed to freely have education? Yes/No

9. Who is responsible for the career attainment of a girl child? Is it related to Bakiga culture in any way? How and why?

10. How do Bakiga in your community perceive women /girl who further in education career?

11. How did you thrive through the cultural attachment and at what level did you get interrupted in your schooling because of culture norms.

OBJECTIVE TWO

To analyse how Kikiga culture influences professional women's career attainment

64. Which dreams did you have in your early age with regard to career attainment being a mukiga woman?

65. How did get to this level amidst cultural demands?

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

66. Do you know any other woman in higher position and she managed to reach this level.

67. Do you think in relation to Kikiga culture, it is of any use for a woman to attain a career and take a lead in some sectors?

68. Where did you get support to reach this level?

69. In your view does culture play a positive role towards career attainment?

70. If yes explain the role it plays

71. If not explain the reasons why you think culture has not played much role

Objective three:

How do women in Kabale District negotiate their Kikiga cultural identity with their career aspirations and professional growth?

72. Do you think more women could attain a career in Kabale district? What are the specific means that women use to attain career in Kabale?

73. How do Bakiga women negotiate their career identity with career aspirations and their professional growth

Objective four:

The challenges to professional women's career attainment

74. What do you think could be done to enhance women's attainment of a career

75. What can the government do to enhance professional women's career attainment

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

Objective five: Strategies to professional women's career attainment

76. Propose possible strategies to professional women's career attainment

77. In your view is it easy for a mukiga woman to attain a career in different sectors?

78. If yes explain why

79. If not explain why

Objective 6: What do you recommend to Bakiga women in the process of career attainment and those that are already in positions of responsibility about culture?

THANK YOU

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

APPENDIX F: AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PROBATION OFFICERS AT KABALE DISTRICT

TOPIC: CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DITSRICT

FDG Interview Date	Place	FDG Interview Time	Number of participants	

SECTION A: BASIC DATA

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	POSITION	UNIT OF PLACEMENT	PERIOD STAYED THE UNIVERSITY



OBJECTIVE ONE

The key components of Kikiga Culture, particularly those related to gender roles, family structures, and educational values that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women

1. What is your role in the probation office with regard to professional women's career attainment
2. Explain the meaning of culture in your own understanding?
3. What are the key components that you know that help people define culture
4. Analyze the effect of these components to professional women's career attainment

   The effects

   i.

   ii

   iii

5. What do you know about the culture of Bakiga people (Yes or no)
6. What is the family structure (family set up) of the Bakiga tribe

   i

   ii

   iii

   iv

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
BOKRA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

7. Does family set up influence professional women's career attainment? Yes / No

If yes explain how.....

.....

If not explain why.....

.....

8. How does Bakiga culture facilitate women's education?

9. Who is responsible for the career attainment of a girl child in Kabale District? Is it related to Bakiga culture in any way? How and why?

10. How do Bakiga in your community perceive women /girl who further or upgrade in education career?

11. How did you thrive through the cultural attachment and at what level did you get interrupted in your schooling because of culture norms.

OBJECTIVE TWO

To analyse how Kikiga culture influences professional women's career attainment

80. Which dreams did you have in your early age with regard to career attainment being a mukiga woman?

81. How did get to this level amidst cultural demands?

82. Do you know any other woman in higher position and she managed to reach this level

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 1410, MBARARA

83. Do you think in relation to Kikiga culture, it is of any use for a woman to attain a career and take a lead in some sectors?

84. Where did you get support to reach this level?

85. In your view does culture play a positive role towards career attainment?

86. If yes explain the role it plays

87. If not explain the reasons why you think culture has not played much role

Objective three:

How do women in Kabale District negotiate their Kikiga cultural identity with their career aspirations and professional growth?

Do you think more women could attain a career in Kabale district? What are the specific means that women use to attain career in Kabale?

88. How do Bakiga women negotiate their career identity with career aspirations and their professional growth

Objective four:

How do Bakiga benefit when they attain a career

Objective 5:

The challenges to professional women's career attainment

89. What do you think could be done to enhance women's attainment of a career



What can the government do to enhance professional women's career attainment?

Objective six: Strategies to professional women's career attainment

90. Propose possible strategies to professional women's career attainment

91. In your view is it easy for a mukiga woman to attain a career in different sectors?

92. If yes explain why

93. If not explain why

94. What do you recommend to Bakiga women in the process of career attainment and those that are already in positions of responsibility about culture?

THANK YOU



APPENDIX G: AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OFFFICERS AT KABALE DISTRCT

TOPIC: CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CAREER ATTAINMENT IN KABALE DITSRICT

FDG Interview Date	Agency	Interview Time	Period Served	Position

SECTION A: BASIC DATA

Date	GENDER	POSITION	UNIT OF PLACEMENT	PERIOD served

OBJECTIVE ONE

The key components of Kikiga Culture, particularly those related to gender roles, family structures, and educational values that influence the professional lives of Bakiga women

1. What is your position in the human rights office of Kabale District
2. Explain the meaning of culture in your understanding?
3. What are the key components that you know which help us to define culture
4. Analyze the effect of these components to professional women's career attainment

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The effects

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5. Do you know about the culture of Bakiga people (Yes or no)

If yes briefly explain it in detail

If not, why haven't you known it?

6. What is the family structure (family set up) of the Bakiga tribe

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7. Does family set up influence professional women's career attainment? Yes / No

If yes explain how.....

If not explain why.....

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8. According to Bakiga culture are women allowed to freely have education? Yes/No

9. Who is responsible for the career attainment of a girl child? Is it related to Bakiga culture in any way? How and why?

10. How do Bakiga in your community perceive women /girl who further in education career?

11. How did you thrive through the cultural attachment and at what level did you get interrupted in your schooling because of culture norms.

OBJECTIVE TWO: To analyse how Kikiga culture influences professional women's career attainment

1. Which dreams did you have in your early age with regard to career attainment being a mukiga woman?

2. How did get to this level amidst cultural demands?

3. Do you know any other woman in higher position and she managed to reach this level.

4. Do you think in relation to Kikiga culture, it is of any use for a woman to attain a career and take a lead in some sectors?

5. Where did you get support to reach this level?

6. In your view does culture play a positive role towards career attainment?

7. If yes explain the role it plays

8. If not explain the reasons why you think culture has not played much role

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Objective three:

How do women in Kabale District negotiate their Kikiga cultural identity with their career aspirations and professional growth?

9. Do you think more women could attain a career in Kabale district? What are the specific means that women use to attain career in Kabale?

10. How do Bakiga women negotiate their career identity with career aspirations and their professional growth

Objective four:

The challenges to professional women's career attainment

11. What do you think could be done to enhance women's attainment of a career

12. What can the government do to enhance professional women's career attainment

Objective five: Strategies to professional women's career attainment

13. Propose possible strategies to professional women's career attainment

14. In your view is it easy for a mukiga woman to attain a career in different sectors?

15. If yes explain why

16. If not explain why

17. What do you recommend to Bakiga women in the process of career attainment and those that are already in positions of responsibility about culture?

THANK YOU

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APPENDIX H: REC APPROVAL LETTER

MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 1410, Mbarara, Uganda. Tel: +256 4854 33795, Fax: +256 4854 20782

Our Ref: MUIRC 1/7 **Date:** March 19, 2015

MS Betty Mategeko N
PhD Student
MUST

Re: SUBMITTED PROTOCOL ON "INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF KABALE DISTRICT." 05/09-14

Reference is made to the above protocol which was resubmitted to the Research Ethics Committee for reconsideration and approval.

It is noted that you have addressed all the concerns earlier raised by the Committee.

I am glad to inform you that your study has been approved for a period of one year up to March 19, 2016.

The following documents have been approved with the application:

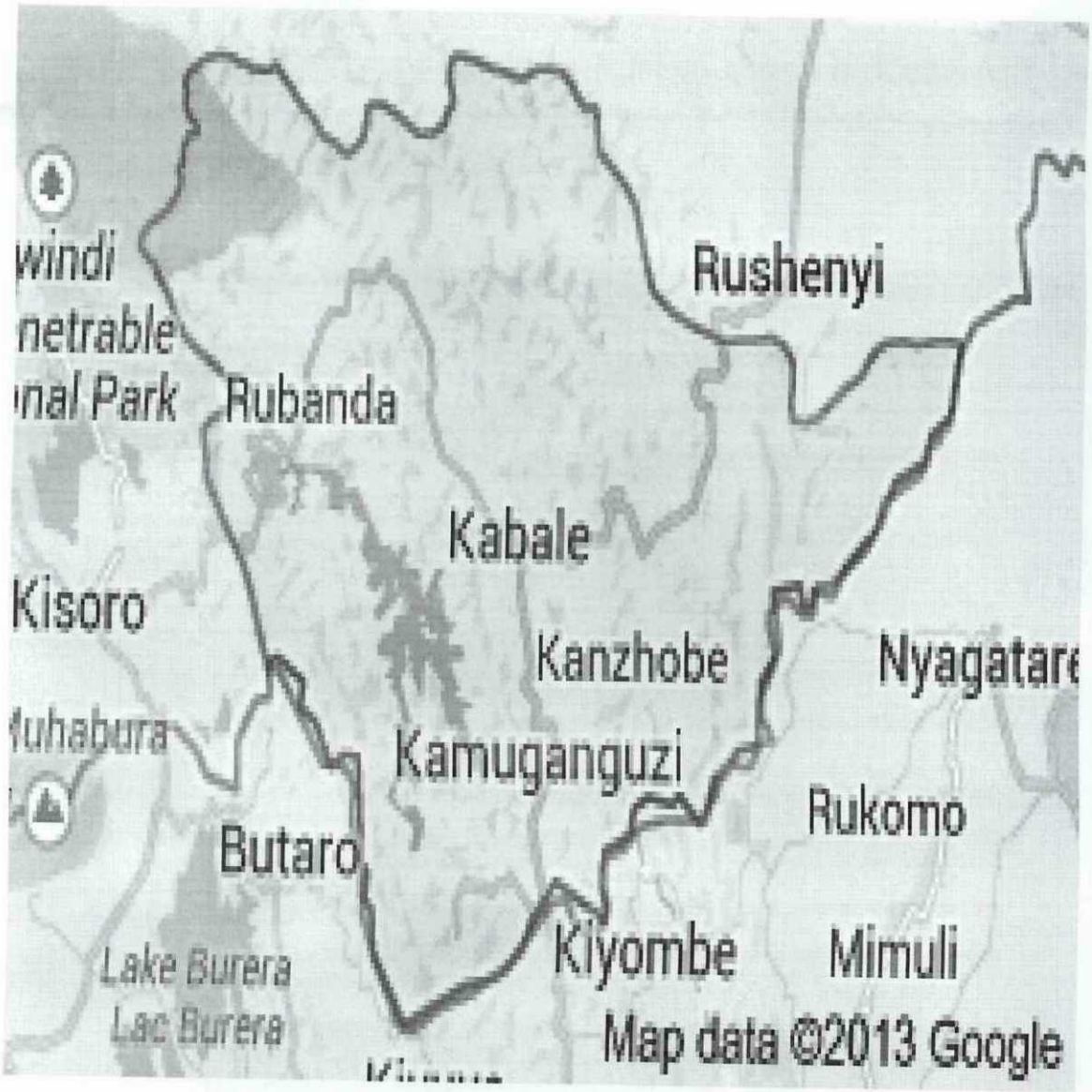
Document	Language	Version
Proposal	English	Version 2
Protocol form	English	Version 2
Data Collection tool	English	Version 1
Consent form	English	Version Mar 15

You are required to register the study with Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, and submit progress and end of study reports to MUST REC.

You can now proceed with the rest of the research activities after getting permission from Uganda National Council for Science and Technology.

I wish you all the best.

Assoc. Prof. Simon K. Anguma, PhD
CHAIR RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE


Rushenyi
Rubanda
Kabale
Kisoro
Kanzhobe
Nyagatare
Kamuganguzi
Rukomo
Butaro
Kiyombe
Mimuli
Lake Burera
Lac Burera
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APPENDIX I: UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

Our Ref: SS 3776 **24th August 2015**

Betty Mategeko
MRC/UVRI Uganda Research Unit on AIDS
Uganda Virus Research Institute
Entebbe

Re: Research Approval: **Bakiga Culture and women's right to tertiary education in Uganda: The case study of Kabale District**

I am pleased to inform you that on **05/05/2015**, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above referenced research project. The Approval of the research project is for the period of **05/05/2015** to **05/05/2019.**

Your research registration number with the UNCST is **SS 3776.** Please, cite this number in all your future correspondences with UNCST in respect of the above research project.

As Principal Investigator of the research project, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the research protocol or the consent form (where applicable) must be submitted to the designated local Institutional Review Committee (IRC) or Lead Agency for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. UNCST must be notified of the approved changes within five working days.
3. For clinical trials, all serious adverse events must be reported promptly to the designated local IRC for review with copies to the National Drug Authority.
4. Unanticipated problems involving risks to research subjects/participants or other must be reported promptly to the UNCST. New information that becomes available which could change the risk/benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for UNCST review.
5. Only approved study procedures are to be implemented. The UNCST may conduct impromptu audits of all study records.
6. A progress report must be submitted electronically to UNCST within four weeks after every 12 months. Failure to do so may result in termination of the research project.

Below is a list of documents approved with this application:

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1	Research Proposal	English	N/A	June 2013
2	Questionnaire	English and Rukiga	N/A	N/A
3	Interview Guide	English and Rukiga	N/A	N/A
4	Informed Consent documents	English and Rukiga	N/A	March 2015

Yours sincerely,

Helen N. Opolot
for: Executive Secretary
UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

cc Chair, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Research Ethics Committee

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