

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND A RIGHT TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN
UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN FULFILLMENT
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

I, Abuk Malith Jal, declare that this research, titled "Women empowerment and a right to university education in Uganda: A case study of Uganda Christian University" is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other institution for academic credit. Any sources that have been consulted have been properly cited and acknowledged.

Signature 

Date: 22/09/2024

APPROVAL

This research report titled " Women empowerment and a right to university education in Uganda: A case study of Uganda Christian University " has been carried out and submitted with my approval as the supervisor.

Signature: 

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Date: 20/09/2024

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to all women who have overcome barriers to pursue higher education and strive to empower themselves and their communities. Special dedication to my family, whose unwavering support has been the backbone of my educational journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Madam Ellen Kasoma, for her valuable guidance, encouragement, and support throughout the research. I also extend my appreciation to the academic staff and female students of Uganda Christian University for their willingness to participate in this study. Finally, I am deeply grateful to my family and friends for their constant support and encouragement throughout my academic endeavors.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFA: Education for All

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

UCU: Uganda Christian University

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

World Bank: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses "Women Empowerment and the Right to University Education in Uganda: A Case Study of Uganda Christian University." It aims to assess the impact of university education on women's empowerment, identify barriers to access and completion, and evaluate current policies and programs. Data was collected using questionnaires from students, academic, and administrative staff at UCU. The findings show that university education enhances women's job prospects, economic independence, and confidence in political participation. However, barriers like financial constraints, cultural norms, and early marriages persist. Recommendations include increasing scholarships, addressing cultural challenges, and strengthening affirmative action and NGO programs to support women's education.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter comprises of the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose, research objectives, research questions, scope, significance, organization and conceptual framework of the study.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Conceptual background

Women empowerment is “the process of empowering women to be equal partners in development and to have control over their own lives (UNDP, 2020). This process, requires higher education which helps women acquire skills and credentials that are crucial for better job opportunities and increased societal influence (World Bank, 2021; UN Women, 2020).

Higher education plays a vital role in empowering women by providing them with major skills and credentials that can improve their economic prospects, social status, as well as political participation significantly. It enables access to more lucrative jobs, higher incomes, and economic autonomy (World Bank 2021). Education provides women with knowledge and confidence which will enable them to participate effectively in society and politics so that they can gain more influence on important community issues (UN Women 2020).

Dimensions of empowerment linked to higher education.

Economic empowerment. Higher level learning increased employment chances and earning potential for female people. According to a report by the World Bank (2021), generally females holding undergraduate diplomas earn more and get promoted than those in career fields requiring lower qualifications.

Social empowerment. Educated females are in better position to influence societal norms and take part in community decisions making processes. According to UN Women (2020), education

increases the potential for women to contribute and shape social and family dynamics leading to further changes in the whole society.

Political empowerment. Higher education is related with increased political knowledge as well as engagement. UNESCO (2019) states that women who have gone through university education are likely to engage themselves into politics hence advocate for gender equality thereby causing systemic transformation at both local area and national levels.

1.1.2 Historical background

Historically, education for women in Uganda has faced restrictions due to different socio-cultural and economic factors. During both pre-colonial and colonial times, women had very little access to education. Commonly, women would remain in homes where they belonged as per traditional roles and thus remained uneducated since educational institutions were mostly meant for men (Baker, 2008). However, there were some efforts made towards ending such inequalities post-independence. The government put forth various initiatives including affirmative action policies and scholarships for girls' students to help improve gender equity in education. Introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 was meant to extend primary schooling opportunities to all kids including females (Ministry of Education and Sports,2015).

Women's access to higher education was restricted by cultural norms, poverty and gender biases. Research indicates that compared to men, there are fewer women in Uganda who pursue university education and for those who do, they sometimes face other challenges like early marriages, lack of money or household chores among others (UNESCO, 2021). Recently the Ugandan government has made advances to address these issues through policies and programs aimed at advancing gender equity in higher education. For example, "the Gender Policy for the Education Sector" seeks to remove disparities in education opportunities and results within genders (Government of Uganda, 2020). In addition, different NGOs and global agencies have supported projects which aim at improving female enrolment rates as well as maintaining them in universities (World Bank, 2021).

1.1.3 Uganda Christian University

The Anglican Church of Uganda established Uganda Christian University in 1997 in response to the pressing need for a university that is built on Christian faith integrated with learning. The institution was founded on Bishop Tucker Theological College, which had been producing clergymen and educators since 1913. In 2004, UCU was chartered by the Ugandan government becoming one of the first private universities to receive such recognition.

UCU is a private, faith-based institution that emphasizes holistic education combined with Christian values alongside academic excellence. It offers numerous undergraduate and postgraduate programs from different fields like theology, law, business, social sciences, education as well as health sciences. The university aims at molding its graduates into ethical individuals who possess knowledge and are ready to make positive contributions to their respective societies.

UCU is owned and governed by the Church of Uganda which is a province of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The government structure of the university has a university council that is the supreme governing body with representatives from Church of Uganda, academic community and other stakeholders. This ownership ensures that there is alignment between the university's mission and values with those espoused by the Anglican Church, which are Christian in nature.

Uganda Christian University Mukono main campus is located linguistically at Mukono, a town that is about twenty-three kilometers eastwards from Kampala which is Uganda's capital city. This hilltop-location creates an ideal learning environment for scholars since it is calm and quiet. Besides its main campus, UCU has many regional campuses and study centers across Uganda including Kampala, Arua, Mbale, and Kabale to enhance educational access to various populations within this nation.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In Uganda, the pursuit of university education by women remains undesirable with persistent barriers despite ongoing gender equality initiatives. Economic constraints, such as the inability to afford tuition and associated costs, significantly hinder women's ability to access and complete higher education (UNESCO, 2021). Cultural norms and practices, including early marriages and traditional gender roles, further exacerbate these challenges by creating an environment that undermines women's academic aspirations and opportunities (UN Women, 2020). While affirmative action and scholarship programs have been implemented to address these issues, their impact has been limited, leaving fundamental disparities in educational attainment and completion rates largely unaddressed (Government of Uganda, 2020).

Current research lacks a clear examination of how these barriers affect various aspects of women's empowerment, such as economic self-sufficiency, social influence, and political engagement. Evaluations of existing interventions frequently overlook their effectiveness in directly addressing these challenges and fostering tangible improvements in women's empowerment (World Bank, 2021; UNESCO, 2019). This study aims to provide a detailed analysis of how university education influences women empowerment in Uganda, to identify the barriers women face in accessing and completing higher education, and to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and programs aimed at enhancing women's educational opportunities and empowerment.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine how university education influences women empowerment in Uganda, to identify the barriers women face in accessing and completing higher education, and to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and programs aimed at enhancing women's educational opportunities and empowerment.

1.4 Research objectives

- I. To assess the impact of university education on women empowerment in Uganda.
- II. To identify and analyze the specific barriers that Ugandan women face in accessing and completing university education.
- III. To evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and programs in enhancing women's access to higher education and promoting their empowerment in Uganda.

1.5 Research questions

- I. How does university education influence empowerment of women in Uganda?
- II. What are the main barriers that Ugandan women encounter in accessing and completing university education?
- III. How effective are the current policies and programs designed to support women's access to higher education in Uganda, and how do they contribute to women's empowerment?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Content scope.

This study investigates the relationship between university education and women's empowerment, focusing on the impact of higher education on women empowerment specifically on political social and economic empowerment.

1.6.2 Time scope.

The research was conducted in August and September 2024.

1.6.3 Geographical scope.

The study was carried out at Uganda Christian University (UCU) in Mukono District, Uganda.

1.7 Significance of the study

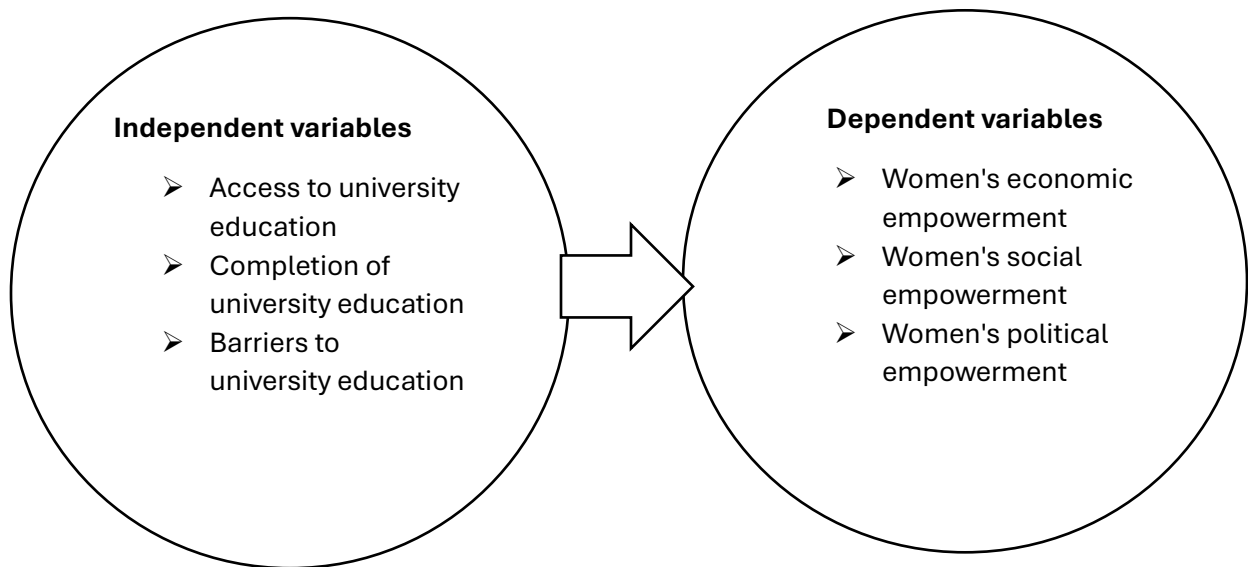
Policy making. Provide understandings into barriers that hinder women from accessing and finishing university education in order to help policy makers to formulate targeted interventions.

Promote empowerment. Illustrate what higher education has done for women's economic, social and political empowerment; advocate for women's investment in education.

Fill the research gap. Identify gaps in the literature related to female empowerment and higher education in Uganda using this case study as a base for similar research.

1.8 Conceptual framework

Fig 1.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews theoretical and empirical research on the impact of higher education on women's empowerment, focusing on the Ugandan context and identifying gaps in current

2.1 Theoretical review.

The theoretical framework comprises theories related to women's empowerment and higher education for example the Human capital theory, empowerment theory and social reproduction theory as discussed below.

Women empowerment and higher education

Women empowerment

Women empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of women to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Kabeer, 1999). Empowerment involves several dimensions, including economic independence, social influence, and political participation (UNDP, 2020). As women gain more control over their lives and become active participants in the decision-making processes that affect them, they contribute to broader societal changes.

Higher education and women empowerment

Higher education plays a crucial role in women empowerment by providing women with the knowledge, skills, and credentials necessary for achieving better job opportunities, higher incomes, and increased social and political influence (World Bank, 2021). Education equips women with the tools to challenge societal norms and engage more actively in community decision-making processes (UN Women, 2020). According to UN Women (2020), higher education contributes to women's economic empowerment by increasing their employment opportunities and earning potential. It also fosters social empowerment by enhancing women's ability to influence family dynamics and community development (UN Women, 2020).

Why higher education?

Higher education is essential for women empowerment because it provides women with the resources needed to achieve economic independence, gain social respect, and participate in

political processes (UNESCO, 2019). The World Bank (2021) emphasizes that women with university degrees are more likely to secure well-paying jobs, attain promotions, and achieve financial stability. Education also equips women with the confidence to challenge traditional gender roles and advocate for their rights, leading to systemic changes in society (UNESCO, 2021). Moreover, educated women are more likely to engage in politics and advocate for gender equality, which contributes to the creation of more equitable societies (UNESCO, 2019).

Human capital theory. This theory suggests investments made in education help to build an individual's skills, knowledge and effectiveness thus resulting in better economic outcomes. Becker (1964) argued that investing in education is essential for enhancing human capital which directly affects labor market outcomes through improvements in the level of employment opportunities. This idea has been supported by the assertion that higher learning leads to financial independence as well as career growth for women.

Empowerment theory. This theory emphasizes methods and results of obtaining control of one's life and surroundings. According to Kaber (1999), empowerment means the enabling of individuals to increase their capacity in making choices and exercising a sense of agency in relation to their lives. Within the framework of education, this theory posits that tertiary education bestows women with abilities and self-assurance, which are essential for impacting social and political dimensions.

Social reproduction theory. According to Bourdieu (1986), who first expressed it, this theory maintains that educational systems replicate existing social structures, thereby prolonging social inequalities. It demonstrates the role of socio-economic and cultural factors in determining educational opportunities and outcomes. This perspective is crucial for understanding how higher education inequalities are maintained by gender differences.

2.2 Empirical review

2.2.1 Assessing the impact of university education on women's empowerment

Economic empowerment. Empirical studies demonstrate that higher education significantly boosts women's economic outcomes. Women with university degrees generally earn more and have better job prospects than those with less education. Research by the World Bank (2021) confirms that higher qualifications correlate with higher income levels and improved job stability, highlighting how education can lead to economic independence and career advancement for women.

Social empowerment. Higher education enhances women's ability to influence social and family dynamics. Educated women are more likely to challenge traditional gender roles and contribute to community decision-making processes. According to UN Women (2020), education equips women with the skills and confidence necessary to advocate for social change and shape societal norms, thereby promoting broader social progress.

Political empowerment. University education is linked to increased political participation among women. UNESCO (2019) found that women who attain higher education are more likely to engage in politics and advocate for gender equality. Education provides women with the knowledge and platform needed for political involvement, contributing to systemic changes at local and national levels.

2.2.2 Identifying and analyzing barriers faced by Ugandan women in accessing and completing university education

Cultural and socioeconomic barriers. Uganda there are many women who do not have access to higher education due to cultural norms which uphold traditional roles at the expense of education. Findings from studies suggest that poverty among other gender-based factors limit female students' chances of pursuing university degrees (UNESCO, 2021). Early marriages for girls, domestic chores assigned to them at home as well as lack of financial resources constitute hindrances to their educational progression.

Gender biases and institutional challenges. As a result of these gender biases, women face lower enrollment and retention rates in higher learning institutions. Despite affirmative action policies

and scholarships that aim at encouraging girls into these institutions, it has been observed that they still encounter this problem hence they cannot access or perform better in tertiary institutions (Government of Uganda, 2020).

2.2.3 Evaluating the effectiveness of current policies and programs in enhancing women's access to higher education and promoting empowerment

Policy impact. Policies aimed at improving gender equity in education, such as affirmative action and scholarships, have had mixed results. While they have increased female enrollment in some cases, the overall impact on reducing educational disparities and improving retention rates has been limited. Evaluations often highlight gaps in policy implementation and effectiveness (World Bank, 2021).

Program effectiveness. Programs supported by NGOs and global agencies have made strides in improving female enrollment and retention in universities. However, there is evidence that these programs need further refinement to address persistent barriers effectively. Research suggests that a more comprehensive approach, addressing both systemic issues and direct support for women, is needed to enhance the impact of these initiatives (UNESCO, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology, including the design, study area, population, sampling methods, data collection, and analysis procedures used to examine the impact of university education on women's empowerment at Uganda Christian University.

3.1 Research design

This study employed a descriptive research design to provide a detailed analysis of the relationship between university education and women's empowerment in Uganda. The descriptive research design is chosen because it allows a detailed examination of the characteristics of the variables being studied.

3.2 Study area

The study shall be carried out at the Uganda Christian University, Mukono District, Uganda. UCU was chosen because of its vital role in the field of higher learning as well as its varied student population which shed light on issues and chances for women within this framework.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Population.

The target population for this study includes female students currently enrolled in undergraduate programs at UCU, as well as academic and administrative staff involved in supporting female students.

3.3.2 Sample size and sampling technique.

Sampling technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who meet the criteria related to the study. This method is useful because it allows the selection of people with direct experience in the topic, ensuring that the data collected is relevant and detailed.

Sample size

The sample consisted of.

- I. 20 female undergraduate students, chosen to represent various disciplines.

- II. 10 academic staff members involved in teaching and mentoring female students.

Students

The study sample included 20 female undergraduate students, students were chosen from five different faculties at UCU, with four students selected each School. The faculties to be considered are: School of social sciences, School of Law, School of Education, School of Business Administration and the School of science and technology. These faculties were chosen to ensure diverse academic disciplines, helping to provide an overview of how university education across different fields affects women's empowerment.

Academic staff

10 staff members were chosen based on their involvement in teaching and mentoring female staff members, two staff member were selected from each of the five faculties. The selected academic staff offered insights into the support available for female students and how education contributes to their empowerment.

3.4 Data collection methods

Questionnaire. Close ended structured questionnaires was distributed to the respondents to gather data on their experiences, barriers, and perceived impacts of higher education on their empowerment. The questionnaire method is chosen because it allows for the efficient collection of quantitative data from a large number of participants.

3.5 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, was used to identify patterns, correlations, and trends related to the impact of higher education on women's economic empowerment.

3.6 Ethical considerations

- I. Informed consent. All participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose and procedures before data collection begins.

- II. Confidentiality. Participants' privacy was protected by ensuring that all responses are anonymized and securely stored. Personal identifiers were not be included in the reports.
- III. Voluntary participation. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

3.7 Limitations

- I. Time constraints. The research was conducted over a short period from August to September 2024, which limited the depth of data collection and analysis.
- II. Response bias. There were potential biases in self-reported data from survey. Efforts were made to mitigate this by ensuring anonymity and encouraging honest responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

Chapter four includes demographic information, impact of university education on women's empowerment, barriers, policy effectiveness, and overall perceptions.

4.1 Table 1: Demographic information

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	24	80
Male	6	20
Total	30	100

Table 1 presents the gender distribution of the study's respondents, showing that out of 30 participants, 24 (80%) are female, and 6 (20%) are male. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are women, which is significant given the study's focus on women empowerment and access to university education. The high proportion of female participants ensures that the findings are representative of women's perspectives and experiences, while the inclusion of male respondents allows for a comparative understanding of gender-related views on the topic.

4.2 Table 2: Age distribution of the respondents

Age range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-24	18	60
24-34	5	16.7
34-44	2	6.7
45 and above	5	16.7
Total	30	100

Table 2 illustrates the age distribution of the respondents, with the majority (60%) falling within the 18-24 age range. This suggests that most participants are young adults, likely at a stage where access to university education is highly relevant. The 24-34 and 45 and above age ranges each account for 16.7% of the respondents, while the 34-44 age range is the least represented, with only

6.7%. The diverse age distribution provides a broad perspective on how different age groups perceive women empowerment and access to university education, with a notable emphasis on younger respondents.

4.3 Table 3: Role at UCU

Role	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	20	66.6
Academic staff	5	16.7
Administrative staff	5	16.7
Total	30	100

Table 3 presents the roles of the respondents at UCU, showing that the majority, 66.6%, are students, while both academic staff and administrative staff each make up 16.7% of the respondents. This distribution highlights that most participants are directly involved in the education system as students, offering valuable insights into the perceptions of women empowerment and access to university education from a student perspective. Meanwhile, input from academic and administrative staff provides additional context from those involved in the governance and operational aspects of the university.

4.4 Table 4: Department of affiliation

Department	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School of social sciences	6	20
School of Law	6	20
School of Education	6	20
School of Business Administration	6	20
School of science and technology	6	20
Total	30	100

Table 4 displays the distribution of respondents across different departments at UCU. Each department: School of Social Sciences, School of Law, School of Education, School of Business Administration, and School of Science and Technology, has an equal representation of 6

respondents, constituting 20% of the total sample each. This even distribution ensures that insights into women empowerment and access to university education are gathered from a diverse range of academic disciplines, providing a comprehensive understanding of the issue across various fields of study.

4.5 Table 5: Impact of university education on women’s empowerment

Impact of university Education on women empowerment					
statement	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	strongly disagree
University education has improved my/our ability to secure better jobs	21	8	1	0	0
	70%	26.70%	3.30%	0.00%	0.00%
Higher education has contributed to greater economic independence of women	23	7	0	0	0
	76.70%	23.30%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
University education has enhanced women's confidence in community participation	23	7	0	0	0
	76.70%	23.30%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Higher education has increased women's political engagement and advocacy for gender equality	21	8	1	0	0
	70%	26.70%	3.30%	0.00%	0.00%

University education has improved my/our ability to secure better jobs. Most respondents, 70%, strongly agree that going to university has helped them get better jobs. An additional 26.7% agree with this statement, showing that higher education is widely seen as improving job prospects. Only 3.3% are neutral, and no one disagrees, indicating a strong belief that university education is beneficial for career advancement.

Higher education has contributed to greater economic independence of women. Most respondents, 76.7%, strongly agree that higher education has helped women become more financially independent. Another 23.3% agree, confirming that university education is important for financial self-sufficiency. There are no neutral or negative responses, which shows a strong agreement on the role of education in achieving economic independence for women.

University education has enhanced women's confidence in community participation. A majority, 76.7%, strongly agree that university education has made women more confident in taking part in community activities. An additional 23.3% also agree, showing that higher education helps women feel more capable in their community roles. The lack of neutral or negative responses highlights a clear view that university education boosts confidence in community involvement.

Higher education has increased women's political engagement and advocacy for gender equality. A significant 70% of respondents strongly agree that higher education has led to more women getting involved in politics and advocating for gender equality. Another 26.7% agree with this, indicating that education plays a key role in increasing political participation and gender advocacy. The few neutral responses and no disagreements show strong support for the idea that higher education helps women engage in political and gender equality issues.

4.6 Table 6: Barriers to accessing and completing university education

Barriers to accessing and completing university education					
statement	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	strongly disagree
Financial constraints are a significant barrier	28	2	0	0	0
	93.30%	6.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Cultural norms and traditional roles discourage women from pursuing education	21	8	1	0	0
	70%	26.70%	3.30%	0.00%	0.00%
Early marriages and domestic responsibilities hinder education completion	28	2	0	0	0
	93.30%	6.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Gender biases in academic environments negatively affect women's experience	10	8	1	11	0
	33.30%	26.70%	3.30%	36.70%	0.00%

Financial constraints are a significant barrier. A large majority, 93.3%, strongly agree that financial constraints are a major barrier to accessing and completing university education. An additional 6.7% agree, indicating that financial issues are widely recognized as a significant obstacle for women in higher education. There are no neutral or negative responses, reflecting a strong agreement on the impact of financial difficulties.

Cultural norms and traditional roles discourage women from pursuing education. 70% of respondents strongly agree that cultural norms and traditional roles discourage women from pursuing higher education. Another 26.7% agree, showing that societal expectations and gender roles are seen as barriers to women's educational pursuits. The presence of a few neutral responses highlights that while many acknowledge these challenges, some may not see them as major issues.

Early marriages and domestic responsibilities hinder education completion. 93.3% of respondents strongly agree that early marriages and domestic responsibilities are significant

barriers to completing university education. An additional 6.7% agree, emphasizing the widespread belief that these factors severely affect women's ability to finish their studies. There are no neutral or negative responses, indicating a strong agreement on the impact of these obstacles.

Gender biases in academic environments negatively affect women's experience. 33.3% of respondents strongly agree that gender biases in academic environments negatively impact women's experiences, while 26.7% agree. However, 36.7% disagree with this statement, suggesting that there is some disagreement about the extent of gender biases in academic settings. The remaining 3.3% are neutral, showing mixed views on whether gender biases are a significant issue in education.

4.7 Table 7: Effectiveness of current policies and programs

Effectiveness of current policies and programs					
statement	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	strongly disagree
Affirmative action policies have been effective in increasing enrollment	2 6.70%	8 26.70%	10 33.30%	10 33.30%	0 0.00%
Scholarships and financial aid programs support women education	4 13.30%	13 43.30%	8 26.70%	5 16.70%	0 0.00%
University policies adequately address women's educational challenges	28 93.30%	2 6.70%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
NGO programs effectively support retention and completion	10 33.30%	8 26.70%	1 3.30%	11 36.70%	0 0.00%

Affirmative action policies have been effective in increasing enrollment. 6.7% of respondents strongly agree that affirmative action policies have effectively increased enrollment, while 26.7% agree. A significant portion, 33.3%, are neutral, and another 33.3% disagree. This suggests a mixed opinion on the effectiveness of these policies. The high percentage of neutral and disagree responses indicates that while some acknowledge the efforts made by affirmative action policies, there is considerable skepticism about their overall impact on increasing enrollment.

Scholarships and financial aid programs support women's education. 13.3% of respondents strongly agree that scholarships and financial aid programs support women's education, with 43.3% agreeing, 26.7% are neutral, and 16.7% disagree. This indicates a generally positive view of these programs, suggesting that many respondents believe these financial supports are beneficial. However, the presence of neutral and disagree responses indicates that there is some uncertainty about the effectiveness of these programs in supporting women's education.

University policies adequately address women's educational challenges. 93.3% of respondents strongly agree that university policies effectively address women's educational challenges, with 6.7% agreeing. There are no neutral or negative responses, indicating a strong belief in the adequacy of current university policies. This suggests that the majority of respondents feel confident that university policies are successfully addressing the challenges women face in education.

NGO programs effectively support retention and completion. 33.3% of respondents strongly agree that NGO programs effectively support retention and completion, and 26.7% agree. 3.3% are neutral, while 36.7% disagree. This indicates that while some respondents see the value in NGO programs, there is considerable skepticism about their effectiveness. The high percentage of disagreement suggests that a significant number of respondents feel these programs may not be sufficiently effective in supporting retention and completion.

4.8 Table 8: Overall perception

Overall perception					
statement	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	strongly disagree
university education has been a key factor in empowering women	23	7	0	0	0
	76.70%	23.30%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

A significant majority, 76.7%, strongly agree that university education is essential for empowering women, and 23.3% agree. No respondents chose neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. This shows that most participants believe university education greatly contributes to women’s empowerment.

4.9 Summary of findings.

The findings from the study reveal important insights into women’s empowerment and access to university education. The gender distribution of the 30 respondents indicates a predominance of female participants (80%), providing a strong focus on women’s perspectives. The majority of respondents are young adults aged 18-24 (60%), reflecting the relevance of university education for this age group. Most participants are students (66.6%), with a balanced representation from different departments, ensuring a comprehensive view across various academic fields.

Regarding the impact of university education, a majority of respondents believe it significantly enhances job prospects (70%), economic independence (76.7%), confidence in community involvement (76.7%), and political engagement (70%). These findings highlight the crucial role of higher education in empowering women.

Barriers to accessing and completing university education include financial constraints and early marriages, both widely recognized as major obstacles (93.3%). Cultural norms also discourage women from pursuing education (70%), while opinions on gender biases in academic environments are mixed.

The effectiveness of current policies and programs shows varied opinions. While a strong majority feel that university policies adequately address educational challenges for women (93.3%), opinions on the effectiveness of affirmative action policies and NGO programs are more divided,

with significant skepticism about their impact on enrollment and support for retention and completion.

Overall, 76.7% of respondents strongly agree that university education is a key factor in empowering women, emphasizing the critical role of higher education in enhancing women's opportunities and capabilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

Chapter five conclusions on the impact of education, barriers, policy effectiveness, recommendations, and areas for further research.

5.1 Conclusion

5.1.1 The impact of university education on women empowerment in Uganda.

The study finds that university education significantly impacts women's empowerment in Uganda. Majority of the respondents believe that higher education enhances women's ability to secure better jobs, achieve greater economic independence, and increase their confidence in community participation and political engagement. These findings emphasize the crucial role of university education in advancing women's socio-economic status and facilitating their full participation in societal activities (Mason & Khandker, 2021; UNESCO, 2022).

5.1.2 Barriers that Ugandan women face in accessing and completing university education.

The study identifies key barriers that hinder Ugandan women from accessing and completing higher education. Financial constraints and cultural norms are major obstacles, with a significant number of respondents highlighting these as primary issues. Early marriages and domestic responsibilities further impede educational attainment. These results are consistent with existing literature that points to economic and cultural challenges as major impediments to women's educational success (World Bank, 2020; UN Women, 2021).

5.1.3 The effectiveness of current policies and programs in enhancing women's access to higher education and promoting their empowerment in Uganda.

The evaluation of current policies and programs reveals integrated effectiveness. University policies are generally perceived as effective in addressing women's educational challenges, while opinions on affirmative action policies and NGO programs are more divided. While some respondents acknowledge the progress made, there is significant skepticism regarding the overall impact of these interventions. This suggests a need for more targeted and effective measures to

improve educational access and support for women (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2019; OECD, 2022).

5.2 Recommendations

Enhance financial support. Given the major role of financial constraints, increasing scholarships and financial aid specifically for women could help overcome economic barriers to higher education (World Bank, 2020).

Address cultural norms. Programs aimed at challenging and changing cultural norms and traditional roles that discourage women from pursuing higher education are needed. Community-based initiatives and awareness campaigns can help shift societal attitudes and support women's educational goals (UNESCO, 2022).

Strengthen affirmative action and NGO Programs. Policymakers should review and enhance affirmative action policies to improve their effectiveness in increasing enrollment and retention rates. Additionally, NGO programs should be evaluated and improved to better support women's educational needs (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2019; OECD, 2022).

Implementing these recommendations can help create a more inclusive educational environment that empowers women and promotes their full participation in higher education.

5.3 Areas of further research

The role of community-based support systems in women's higher education. This study would examine how local networks, such as community groups, mentorship programs, and family support, impact women's educational experiences and outcomes. It would aim to identify effective community strategies that contribute to overcoming barriers and promoting the educational advancement of women in Uganda.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research introduction letter



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
A Centre of Excellence In the Heart of Africa
September 4th, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

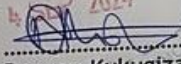
Dear Sir/Madam

Re: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

This is to introduce to you **ABUK Malith Jal** Registration number **S21B56/065**, a student of Uganda Christian University, pursuing Bachelor's degree in Governance and International Relations. She is expected to carry out research in the final year under the guidance of a university supervisor in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the above mentioned award.

Topic: "Women Empowerment and a Right to University Education in Uganda: A Case Study of Uganda Christian University (UCU)."

The purpose of this communication is to request your office to allow her collect data from your organization. Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Doreen Kukugiza
Coordinator, Research & Fieldwork Programmes
Tel: 0773395349
Email: dkukugiza@ucu.ac.ug

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

P.O. Box 4, Mukono, Uganda (East Africa), Plot 67-173, Bishop Tucker Road, Mukono Hill, Tel: +256 (0) 31 235 0800, www.ucu.ac.ug
Ugandachristianuniversity @UCUniversity. Founded by the Province of Church of Uganda, Chartered by the Government of Uganda.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire used

QUESTIONNAIRE ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this survey on women's empowerment and university education in Uganda. Your input is important in understanding the impact of higher education on women's lives and the challenges they face.

Instruction: Please tick the most appropriate answer.

Section A. Demographic information

1. Gender.

Female

Male

2. Age.

18-24

25-34

35-44

45 and above

3. Role at UCU.

Student

Academic staff

Administrative staff

4. Department you belong to.

- School of social sciences
- School of Law
- School of Education
- School of Business Administration
- School of science and technology

Section B. Impact of university education on women's empowerment

1. University education has improved my/our ability to secure better job opportunities.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. Higher education has contributed to greater economic independence for women.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. University education has enhanced women's confidence in participating in community decision-making processes.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. I believe that higher education has increased women's political engagement and advocacy for gender equality.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section C. Barriers to accessing and completing university education

1. Financial constraints are a significant barrier for women in accessing and completing university education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. Cultural norms and traditional roles discourage women from pursuing higher education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. Early marriages and domestic responsibilities hinder women's ability to complete university education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. Gender biases in academic environments negatively affect women's educational experiences.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section D. Effectiveness of current policies and programs

1. Affirmative action policies have been effective in increasing female enrollment in university education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. Scholarships and financial aid programs have significantly supported women in accessing higher education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. Current university policies adequately address the challenges faced by women in completing their education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. Programs and initiatives by NGOs have effectively supported women's retention and completion of university education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section E. Overall perception

1. Overall, university education has been a key factor in empowering women in Uganda.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Thank you for your time and insights. Your feedback will contribute to shaping better policies and programs for women's education and empowerment in Uganda.

Appendix 3: Answered questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this survey on women's empowerment and university education in Uganda. Your input is important in understanding the impact of higher education on women's lives and the challenges they face.

Instruction: Please tick the most appropriate answer.

Section A. Demographic information

1. Gender.

Female

Male

2. Age.

18-24

25-34

35-44

45 and above

Instruction: Please tick the most appropriate answer.

Section A. Demographic information

3. Role at UCU.

Student

Female

Academic staff

Male

Administrative staff

18-24

25-34

35-44

45 and above

1

4. Department you belong to.

- Faculty of social sciences
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Business Administration
- Faculty of science and technology

Section B. Impact of university education on women's empowerment

1. University education has improved my/our ability to secure better job opportunities.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. Higher education has contributed to greater economic independence for women.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section C. Barriers to accessing and completing university education

1. Financial constraints are a significant barrier for women in accessing and completing university education.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

2. Cultural norms and traditional roles discourage women from pursuing higher education.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

3. Early marriages and domestic responsibilities hinder women's ability to complete university education.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

4. Gender biases in academic environments negatively affect women's educational experiences.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section D. Effectiveness of current policies and programs

1. Affirmative action policies have been effective in increasing female enrollment in university education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. Scholarships and financial aid programs have significantly supported women in accessing higher education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. Current university policies adequately address the challenges faced by women in completing their education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. Programs and initiatives by NGOs have effectively supported women's retention and completion of university education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section E. Overall perception

1. Overall, university education has been a key factor in empowering women in Uganda.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Thank you for your time and insights. Your feedback will contribute to shaping better policies and programs for women's education and empowerment in Uganda.

Overall, university education has been

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Thank you for your time and insights. Your feedback will contribute to shaping better policies and programs for women's education and empowerment in Uganda.

Appendix 4: Approval from the supervisor

