

RUNNING HEAD: Schemas on gender roles and equality

“You think about your children” - Understanding schemas on gender roles and gender equality of higher educated women in Uganda.

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August 2021

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## Table of contents

<b>List of Tables and Figures .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Problem statement .....	1
1.2 Objective and research questions .....	2
1.3 Societal and academic relevance .....	3
1.4 Structure of the master thesis .....	4
<b>2. Theoretical framework .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Gender Schema Theory .....	5
2.2 Literature review .....	5
Educational empowerment .....	5
Economic empowerment .....	6
Motivation to perform gender roles .....	7
2.3 Conceptual model .....	8
2.4 Expectations .....	9
<b>3. Method .....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Data and sample selection .....	10
3.2 Study context and population .....	12
3.3 Positionality .....	12
3.4 Data analysis .....	13
3.5 Ethical considerations .....	15
<b>4. Results .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 Schemas on gender equality .....	16
4.2 Schemas on gender roles .....	21
4.3 Motivation to perform gender roles and conflicts between schemas .....	25
<b>5. Discussion .....</b>	<b>28</b>
5.1 Implications .....	30
5.2 Limitations .....	31
5.3 Concluding .....	32
<b>References .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Appendix A .....	38

**List of Tables and Figures**

Figure 1: The conceptual model.....12  
Table 1: Characteristics of participants.....15  
Table A1: The Theme Codebook.....42

### Abstract

Traditional gender roles suppressing women, and gender inequality remain big concerns in Uganda, despite more women becoming employed and higher educated. The present study aimed to understand the schemas of higher educated Ugandan women regarding gender equality and gender roles, both at home and at work, and how these motivated them to perform gender roles. This was done by conducting a secondary analysis of 22 in-depth interviews with female Ugandan sexuality education teachers. The findings show that many of the women experience or describe the ongoing suppression due to feeling stuck in cultural practices and religious norms in Uganda, despite being empowered in the sense they are higher educated and employed. Several values and perceived negative consequences (e.g., fear of losing marriage and children or experiencing gender-based violence) often motivated them to remain to perform more traditional gender roles. Conflicting schemas indicated that their roles at home did sometimes differ from those at work, showing a sense of agency due to authoritative feelings at work. This could imply a sense of empowerment leading them to act more in line with how they wanted. It can be concluded that women's schemas on gender roles and gender equality can differ from the standard macro policy definitions. To further address the gender gap in Uganda, policies should look beyond existing macro indicators and integrate the subjective needs of women.

*Key words:* gender roles, gender equality, gender schema theory, women empowerment

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Problem statement

Despite many policies and strategies being developed and implemented in order to increase gender equality in Uganda, women continue to be disadvantaged and marginalized in several spheres (e.g., political, health, economic and everyday life; Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018). According to the UN Women (2001, p. 1), gender equality is defined as “the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female” and is seen as a human rights issue as well as a key factor in sustainable human development. However, the gender gap prevails in Uganda, based on the indicators economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, ranking Uganda as 65 out of 153 countries in the global gender gap index 2020 (World Economic Forum, 2020). The traditional gender roles which remain prevalent in Ugandan society, implying that men are the economic providers and women stay at home taking care of the household and the children, strongly contribute to this gender gap (Adams, Salazar, Lundgren, 2013; Guloba et al., 2018).

Uganda has been trying to close this gap for the past decades, through engaging in several local frameworks which aim to promote more gender equal opportunities, such as the National Development Plan and the Equal Opportunities Commission Act (2007; Ssali, 2019). Additionally, more international approaches have been implemented (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals), in which the UN’s definition of gender equality is also adopted and aimed for. Notably, many of the implementations fail to address gender inequality as they tend to solely focus on the legislation. The structural underlying causes of gender disadvantage, such as power dynamics at household level but also societal level, are overlooked (Ssali, 2019). The implications of gender inequality are not only applicable to women on an individual level (e.g., negative health outcomes, gender-based violence, decision-making imbalance, and economic dependency; Vu et al., 2017), but are also applicable to the general population well-being (Johnsson-Latham, 2007). For example, highly gender unequal societies experience negative influences on economic growth, general development, and population’s mental and physical well-being, due to limited personal development (Danylova & Kats, 2019).

Often looked at from a macro perspective, an important means to empower women is the provision of education. Women’s empowerment, in order to address gender equality, is defined as “the process of increasing women’s access to control over the strategic life choices that affect them and access to the opportunities that allow them fully to realize their capacities”

(Chen & Tanaka, 2014, p. 7154). However, within the Ugandan context, it is seen that traditional gender roles, often suppressing women, and gender inequality remain present, despite the fact that some of the women have an educational attainment and/or financial income (Sundaram, Shunmuga, Sekar & Subburaj, 2014; Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018). For women who do break existing gender norms by not only executing domestic work but also by generating income (i.e., pursuing a job), it is seen that their positions often remain subordinate to men. This is affected by several factors such as “religion, traditions and culture, law and customs as well as public opinion” (Nwosu, 2012, p. 1242). It is speculated that these factors are part of cultural norms and values, which transmit what people’s roles are based on their gender, often causing gender inequality to remain (Neculaesei, 2015). In Uganda, specifically, certain cultural norms which uphold gender inequality are related to polyamory, restricted reproductive choices, and unequal power dynamics between men and women in general (Ninsiima et al., 2017; Young et al., 2021). Education does help women to challenge certain social norms through the gain of agency (Davies, 2019). However, it is not enough to resolve gender inequality which is rooted in these cultural and religious norms and values.

On a micro level, these policies can even cause negative effects for women. For example, an increase in gender-based violence due to gender role conflicts within the household or suffering from a double work burden (Ratele, 2014; Guloba et al., 2018). This double burden refers to employed women continuing to carry out household tasks and unpaid care work next to their employment activities, whereas the man often does not carry out such extra tasks (Guloba et al., 2018). These consequences of gender-equality- promoting policies on a macro level, such as the provision of education and promoting employment opportunities for women, seem to overlook what effects these policies can have for Ugandan women on a micro level, but also what gender equality means for women themselves. These effects can be conflicting, as a higher participation in education and workforce by women does not necessarily imply that these women experience gender equality or a change in gender roles (Nwosu, 2012).

## **1.2 Objective and research questions**

It appears that Ugandan women continue to be disadvantaged, despite being considered more empowered due to their educational level. Therefore, the objective of this study is to gain better insights into the perceptions and experiences of Ugandan women on gender equality and gender roles. More specifically, the study population on which the focus lies are higher educated and employed Ugandan women living in an urban context. Through studying the experiences and perceptions (i.e., schemas) of these women, this thesis aims to obtain a more in-depth

understanding of how education as part of women empowerment plays a role at the micro level. The research question to which this research aims to get more insight in is:

“What are the schemas, in relation to gender equality and gender roles, of higher educated Ugandan women in an urban context; and how do these motivate them to perform gender roles at home and at work?”

In order to answer this question, the research will make use of qualitative data (i.e., in-depth interviews). This research will be a valuable addition to existing literature as it shall look into the *actual* perceptions and experiences of educated and employed women regarding gender roles and gender equality from a micro perspective. This objective looks beyond the macro perspective which mostly focuses on education provision as means to address gender inequality. These personal experiences can give more insight into how gender equality and gender roles are embedded in the Ugandan culture in different contexts (i.e., at work and at home). Women’s definitions and perceptions might differ from the universal definitions of gender equality, such as given by the UN and are commonly used throughout policies (Kurzman et al., 2019). Basing policies and development programs on such universal definitions of gender equality can be problematic as these women’s definition of gender equality can be accompanied with different needs. This could possibly create a mismatch between policy and practice. Through understanding how higher educated and employed Ugandan women experience and interpret gender equality and roles, policies that aim at enhancing female empowerment can be more culturally appropriate and effective.

### **1.3 Societal and academic relevance**

Since the gender gap remains prevalent in Uganda, causing negative consequences for women’s empowerment as well as the well-being of the population in general (Johnsson-Latham, 2007; Vu et al., 2017; Danylova & Kats, 2019), the aim of the present study is of societal relevance. As mentioned, understanding women’s schemas on gender roles and equality and how these motivate them to perform gender roles helps to create more tailored policies linking to their perceived needs. The outcomes of this study can help to improve existing implementations which aim to address gender inequality in Uganda, by also further investigating the possible negative consequences of education and employment for women (e.g., gender-based violence and double work burden; Ratele, 2014; Guloba et al., 2018).

Present study adds to existing literature and thus is of academic relevance in two key ways. First, this study makes use of qualitative data (i.e., in-depth interviews) in order to identify the personal schemas of higher educated Ugandan women on gender roles and gender equality. Some studies have adopted qualitative approaches when studying perceptions of African or Ugandan women on gender roles (Nwosu, 2012; Guloba et al., 2018), but not specifically focused on higher educated women. The added value of specifically their perceptions is a deeper understanding of why the gender-gap prevails in Uganda, despite women being more educated (Kurzman et al., 2019). Secondly, this study allows us to investigate the role of different settings (i.e., at home versus at work) when it comes to the schemas on gender roles and gender equality. Similar studies have looked at this in more Western countries, but not in the African or specifically Ugandan context (Doucet, 2004; Perrone, Wright & Jackson, 2009).

#### **1.4 Structure of the master thesis**

The current study is divided in the chapters introduction, theoretical framework, methods, results, and discussion. The theoretical framework entails a review on literature focusing on perceived gender roles and gender equality. This is specifically linking to the Ugandan or similar contexts and focusing on the underlying mechanisms which motivate to perform gender roles. Based on this review, a conceptual model and expectations are derived which determine the methodological approach. Thereafter, the methods chapter discusses the data and data analysis approach which aim to answer the objective of the study, of which the findings will be discussed in the results chapter. Finally, the results are discussed by comparing it to other literature, leading to policy implications and a conclusion answering the research question.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Gender Schema Theory**

Gender roles and gender equality have been approached by various theories and perspectives, such as structural-functional theory, biological determinism, feminism perspectives, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, gender schema theory and cultural determinism (Bem, 1981, 1983; Stryker, 2001; Nwosu, 2012). Based on the importance of the culturally related gender norms that are observed within Uganda (Vu et al., 2017; Farago, Eggum-Wilkens & Zhang, 2019), the gender schema theory provides a useful framework to understand which important factors play a role in the perception of gender roles and inequality.

In the gender schema theory, cultural and societal influences have a central role when explaining gendered behaviours and roles that could result in gender inequality. It combines both cognitive-developmental aspects as well as the social learning theory. Schemas are anticipatory cognitive structures that organize and guide individuals' perceptions and help the processing of newly incoming information according to a person's pre-existing schemas (Bem, 1981). Gender schema theory states that gender-specific behaviour of an individual is formed by society's beliefs about male and female traits, starting already at a young age, which triggers a certain gender schema on how to behave, think and process information according to these gender schemas (Bem, 1981, 1983).

The schemas can include norms, values, beliefs and experiences of an individual (i.e., individual schemas) but also those of a group which can be internalized by a person (i.e., cultural schemas; D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992; Holland & Cole, 1995; de Haas, 2017). Through the comparison of one's own behaviour to the schemas of a culture or society on gender-typed behaviour, self-esteem can function as an internalized motivational factor to adjust individual behaviour to the norm or not. Gender schemas become a prescriptive guide in this internal consideration (Kagan, 1964; Kohlberg, 1966; Bem, 198). In this way individuals can become motivated to perform according to gender roles, by internally outweighing their own schemas on gender equality and roles, to schemas of their culture. The outcome of this weighing process depends on how important certain schemas are to a person (Quinn, 1992).

### **2.2 Literature review**

#### **Educational empowerment**

Many studies state the importance of educational attainment and economic empowerment for women as the basis to overcome the gender gap and allow women and society to flourish (Sundaram et al., 2015; Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018; Okoroafor & Obinna, 2019). This did to

a certain extent led to some decreasing of the gender gap in Uganda when comparing it to previous years (World Economic Forum, 2020). As depicted in many policy frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the provision of education especially to women is the main pointer for sustainable development in many global South countries, including Uganda. Women with education are found to have enhanced cognitive abilities which help them to question, reflect and act on information in everyday life (Kabeer, 2005). These skills can create positive impacts for them; for example, better understanding about diseases and prevention, accessing contraception, and it also can help them create economic opportunities. This enhances their independence to overcome certain obstacles, such as poverty, early marriage, restrictions by family, and violence (Kabeer, 2005; Shetty & Hans, 2015). Consequently, these positive impacts for women on the individual level can trigger development of a country's society (e.g., increase economic growth, lower fertility rates, health gains and more successful agricultural practices; UN 2001).

On the contrary, an important study by Kurzam and colleagues (2019) provides an extensive overview of how women worldwide perceive gender equality from a subjective perspective. This is compared to the definition of gender equality that is often adopted in measurable indices (e.g., education, health, political representation). Their comparison shows that there is a mismatch with what is understood as gender equality adopted in indices as compared to women's perceptions. For example, women from highly gender unequal countries did not perceive their life-satisfaction worse off than women from gender equal countries (Kurzam et al., 2019). This shows how the factor of women being employed or educated does not necessarily influence their subjective perception of gender equality. It is important to note that in this study, the subjective experiences of women were limited to surveys.

### **Economic empowerment**

Another important result of education and employment for women is the development of agency, which is seen as the ability to define and reach personal goals based on motivation and purpose (Kabeer, 2001; Boudet, Petesch & Turk, 2013). This sense of agency is seen as an important part of women empowerment (Mishra & Tripathi, 2011). It is speculated that through being employed, women's agency rises due to obtaining more decision-making power, both at work and at home (Doss, 2005; Alkire et al., 2013; Acosta et al., 2019). For example, employed women had increased decision-making power in expenditure on education and healthcare for children, as well as household nutrition (Anderson et al., 2017). This increase could be explained by training they receive at work or being exposed to different worldviews at work (Krumbiegel, Maertens & Wollni, 2020). However, a study focused on Ghanaian women did not

find this immediate transfer of agency at work to more decision-making at home (Krumbiegel et al., 2020).

On the contrary, when looking at women that do find economic opportunities, it is still seen that an unfair division of labour within the household remains. Women are now generating income but continue to carry out the majority of care and domestic work (Guloba et al., 2018). Additionally, intimate partner violence remains prevalent which still shows the gendered power dynamics between men and women (Ratele, 2014). Additionally, a study in Tanzania (having a comparable cultural context to Uganda) shows that young girls engaging in education also still have to fulfil care and domestic work, creating a double burden for them, whereas this is not the case for boys (Hedges, Sear, Todd, Urassa & Lawson, 2018). In general, both Ugandan women and men have been found to consider gender-based violence, unpaid care and domestic work appropriate for women. Additionally, when men did engage in unpaid care work, they would get mocked and shamed by their family and community (Guloba et al., 2018). This shows how more traditional gender roles, and gender inequality (i.e., power dynamic between men and women) prevails at home, despite women being empowered in the sense that they have found employment.

#### **Motivation to perform gender roles**

A study by Vu and colleagues (2017) finds how Ugandan youth, at already a very early age (i.e., 10 to 14 years old), internalize gender norms about sexual and intimate relationships, as well as violence. Their norms regarding gender are more unequal than the norms of older adolescents, aged 15 to 24. It is speculated that these views on gender roles are already incorporated in young people's worldview, even before adolescence, through socialization processes (Hill & Lynch, 1983; Vu et al., 2017). This could be interpreted as the earlier mentioned internalization process of schemas, during which the schemas of a society or culture are accepted and internalized as one's personal schemas on gender (D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992; Holland & Cole, 1995; de Haas, 2017). The consideration between personal and cultural schemas regarding gender could then determine one's view on gender equality and motivation to perform according to gender roles. A similar study found that Ugandan youth held more traditional views on gender norms for domains such as marriage or domestic activities, and less for norms regarding recreational activities (e.g., sports and spending time with friends; Farago et al., 2019). This might be explained by the variety in an individual's stereotyped knowledge on recreational activities, or simply that these activities are less stereotyped by Ugandan youth than domestic activities (Farago et al., 2019).

These findings sketch the complexity of achieving gender equality, but also stresses the fact that the schemas of a culture regarding gender roles and equality play a great role in the personal schemas of higher educated Ugandan women. Being educated and employed as a Ugandan woman can indirectly change cultural values regarding gender roles (Sundaram et al., 2015; Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018; Okoroafor & Obinna, 2019). However, these two assets alone might not be enough to stimulate gender equality. For example, employed Ugandan women sometimes also agree with specific gender roles, not wanting men to help them in care and domestic work (Guloba et al., 2018). The participants of this study, however, were not higher educated. In order to understand the roles of employment and higher education as means to women empowerment, it is necessary to capture the schemas of higher educated and employed women on gender roles and gender equality.

### 2.3 Conceptual model

The conceptual model in figure 1 shows the important concepts in this study, which are identified based on the gender schema theory and the literature review. The gender schemas of higher educated Ugandan women contain the sub-concepts norms, values, beliefs, and experiences. By looking at these gender schemas, it can be investigated how women perceive gender equality and are motivated to perform gender roles. Additionally, it will be looked at what role the settings (i.e., at home and at work) will have on these perceptions of gender equality and motivation to perform gender roles.

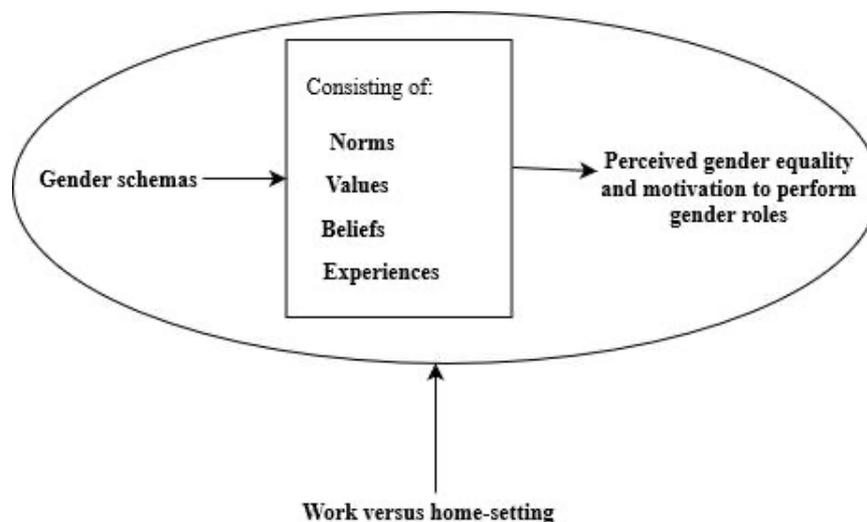


Figure 1: The conceptual model.

## **2.4 Expectations**

Based on the literature review, it is expected that the schemas of higher educated Ugandan women on gender roles will still contain traditional views on these gender roles, due to the strong rootedness of these views (Ratele, 2014; Guloba et al., 2018). Women could face certain negative consequences, such as a double work burden or intimate partner violence, caused by them being empowered (i.e., educated and employed). This means that their subjective experience of gender equality can be differing from the universal definition that is captured in indices (Kurzam et al., 2019). Additionally, their schemas could differ in the two settings home and work, due to a feeling of agency that is created at work, possibly allowing them to act how they wish to act (Anderson et al., 2017; Krumbiegel et al., 2020).

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Data and sample selection

This study adopted a qualitative research design, using in-depth interview data based on its objectives and underlying paradigm. The aim of this study is to gain insight into the schemas on gender roles and gender equality of higher-educated Ugandan women. As mentioned, these schemas contain the norms, values, beliefs, and personal experiences of this specific study population. The narratives of the participants are highly personal and sensitive and allowed to understand and explain their views and behaviours as well as the underlying reasoning processes. Specifically linking to this study's question, gaining deeper insights in the personal views of specifically these Ugandan women allowed to understand what their opinions and interpretations are of gender roles and gender equality. Additionally, by capturing these schemas, it helped to investigate *how* these higher educated women are motivated to perform gender roles. According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2020), these research objectives can best be covered through applying qualitative research.

The underlying interpretive paradigm that is taken throughout this research is the feminist tradition, which includes liberal feminism, women's voice/experience feminism, radical feminism and poststructural feminism (Prasad, 2017). Liberal feminism is mostly focused on improving women's legal status, promoting more equal pay levels, and changing institutions to create more equal job opportunities. On the other hand, women's voice/experience feminism focuses on the experience of women when explaining social dynamics. The radical feminist tradition aims for reshaping social structures based on women's experiences and with the help of institutions. Lastly, the poststructural feminist tradition holds a skeptical stance of universal claims regarding gender and mainly sees knowledge production as a product power which disadvantages women (Prasad, 2017). Based on the differing assumptions regarding epistemology and ontology that these sub traditions hold, women's voice/experience feminism is adopted for this study. This specific paradigm, as the name itself implies, gives voice to the experiences of women, which are personal and differing from men's experiences, stressing that it is wrong to extend "assumptions and experiences of one social identity group to all of humanity" (Prasad, 2017, p. 162; Gilligan, 1977). Following this paradigm and research objectives, in-depth interviews are a useful method to gain an answer to our research question as these allow us to deeply understand the visions and interpretations women hold regarding gender roles and gender equality.

A secondary analysis of 22 in-depth interviews will be conducted using the 9<sup>th</sup> version of the qualitative research software package, Atlas.ti. These interviews have previously been

conducted in a study on the personal experiences and cultural schemas of female Ugandan teachers on teaching sexuality education at secondary schools in Kampala, capital of Uganda (de Haas & Hutter, 2017). The total sample consisted of 40 sexuality education teachers in Uganda, of which 22 were female, their data being collected between September and December 2011 (Table 1). The women participating in these interviews often taught sexual education as part of their own lessons, which were on other subjects, such as Biology or Christian Religious Education, or as school counsellor. Practising this kind of vocation means that these women had completed a bachelor's program which, especially in the Ugandan setting, can be considered as higher education. Therefore, their narratives function as suitable data to the objective of this study. The interviews were collected by de Haas (2017) through using a semi-structured interview guide which in general covered topics such as receiving and teaching sexuality education, HIV and AIDS, personal experiences, as well as gender roles and equality. These topics were selected to cover the research objective held by de Haas and Hutter (2017). The interviews on average lasted 2 hours and were already transcribed verbatim, including the expression of emotions.

Table 1: Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym Participant	Age	Religion	Relationship status	Children
Olivia	40	Christianity	Married	Yes
Emma	40	Christianity	Married	Yes
Charlotte	53	Christianity	Married	Yes
Sophia	37	Christianity	Married	Yes
Mia	39	Islam	Married	Yes
Nora	26	Islam	Single	No
Grace	31	Christianity	Boyfriend	No
Hannah	31	Christianity	Married	Yes
Victoria	23	Christianity	Boyfriend	Yes
Elizabeth	22	Catholic	Widow	Yes
Leah	29	Islam	Married	Yes
Lucy	31	Christianity	Married	Yes
Mary	47	Christianity	Single	Yes
Ivy	32	Christianity	Unofficially separated	Yes
Hailey	46	Christianity	Married	Yes
Isabelle	35	Christianity	Married	Yes
Katherine	28	Christianity	Single	No
Taylor	44	Christianity	Married	Yes
Maeve	37	Christianity	Married	Yes
June	43	Christianity	Married	Yes
Millie	23	Christianity	Boyfriend	Yes
Margot	26	Christianity	Single	No

### **3.2 Study context and population**

Kampala being Uganda's capital, is the largest city with approximately 1.35 million inhabitants out of a total population of 47.12 million in 2021 (World Population Review, 2021). The majority of the total population (i.e., 84%) resides in rural areas, although currently its urbanization rate is among the highest worldwide (Mukwaya, Sengendo, & Lwasa, 2010). In 2016, most Ugandans had either no, or some primary education as compared to completing primary, secondary or higher education (Demographic Health Survey Uganda, 2016). The percentage of women completing these levels of education are lower for women than for men, however, in Kampala women spend longer in school than rural women (7.4 years and 2.9 years respectively). In Kampala, 16.4% of the women have completed more than secondary education as compared to 20.5% of the men, and around 63.1% of the women were employed in 2016 as compared to 67.1% of the urban female average (Demographic Health Survey Uganda, 2016). Around 63.1% of the women in Kampala were employed in 2016, mostly working in sales and service or educational sectors, which is linked to higher educational attainment. The most prominent religion in Uganda is Christianity, followed by Anglican and Islam (38.8%, 32.5% and 13.6% respectively). Looking at the relevant indicator gender-based violence in the Demographic Health Survey (2016), 38% of women in Kampala have ever experienced spousal violence, which includes physical, emotional, and sexual violence. It was seen that this percentage decreased with education level. In whole Uganda, 15.7% of women often or recently faced gender-based violence in the forms of physical or sexual violence (Demographic Health Survey Uganda, 2016)

In Uganda, gender-based violence is a great concern which is trying to be addressed through several legislative means and developmental frameworks (e.g., The Domestic Violence Act, the National Policy on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence, and the National Action Plan; Demographic Health Survey Uganda, 2016). However, there remain certain laws and practices in Uganda which negatively influence women. Women are not allowed to request a divorce, nor will they have rights on land ownership or child custody after divorce (Ssali, 2019). These laws which are conflicting with efforts that do try to address gender-based violence and enhance national gender equality.

### **3.3 Positionality**

Given the topic of the research and the feministic paradigm that I adopted, it is important to reflect on my own positionality within this study as well as that of the study from which the

data has been used (de Haas, 2017; de Haas & Hutter, 2017), as it can influence the data and interpretations of it. De Haas (2017), for example, reflects on being quite young herself at the time of collecting the data whereas a part of the teachers whom she interviewed were relatively older. Due to the sensitivity of the topics, she sometimes felt uneasy asking certain sexual-related questions to teachers who were the same age as her parents. Additionally, she mentions that being a white and foreign person in a way also helped during the data collection, as the participants more explicitly elaborated on their answers for her to better understand the Ugandan culture.

Reflecting on my own positionality as a Dutch young woman who focuses on the promotion women's well-being in society but also people in general, it is important to be aware of not mixing my own ideals with the interpretation of the data. Within my work at the international NGO Oxfam, I focus on youth empowerment, and especially on young women. Within this work, colleagues and I often take an activist approach to directly promoting gender equality. Because of this, I need to be aware that the foremost aim of this research is to not directly fight gender equality through handling, but through understanding what gender roles and gender equality actually mean for Ugandan women in their own locality. This could also provide opportunities to find perspectives in the data which are contrasting to my own perceptions, as their schemas might differ from my own.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

After weighing off between several options of data analysis which are applicable to qualitative research, I have concluded that the method of analysis that is most suitable for the aim of the research as well as the data (i.e., in-depth interviews) is a Thematic Analysis. As described by Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun (2017), thematic analysis allows for finding collective meaning and experiences across all data, by identifying several themes which capture central underlying concepts, resulting in a deeper understanding of the data. This identification of data can be done both inductively and deductively. Braun and Clarke (2020) specifically acknowledge the analysis to be interpretive by the researcher instead of a passive process. They distinguish between three approaches within Thematic Analysis, which can be chosen based on the objective of the study.

The most common approach is reflexive Thematic Analysis, wherein the data analysis is seen as a highly engaging process between the researcher and the data, in which the product mainly displays the researchers' interpretations of the participants' voices. This could be a suitable approach; however, this data process remains mainly inductive as deductively

identifying themes is seen as restricting. Taking into mind the importance of the concepts in the conceptual model, it would leave out a lot of important information which is needed to answer the research question if these concepts would not be treated as deductive themes. Secondly, Coding Reliability Thematic Analysis aims for objective and unbiased coding, often applied to ensure reliable coding when working on the data with multiple researchers (e.g., inter-coding reliability). This approach, however, does not fit the aim of this study, as some sort of subjectivity when interpreting the data can be very insightful, instead of aiming for high reliability. The last approach, which is selected for this study, is Codebook Thematic Analysis. This approach is considered most suitable as it allows for the identification of pre-set themes based on the crucial concepts in the conceptual model, e.g., schemas on gender equality and gender roles (Braun & Clarke, 2020). The main objective within Codebook Thematic Analysis is a structured coding framework, based on which themes are “developed early on”, but also inductively new themes can be developed in the analytic process (Braun & Clarke, 2020. p. 6). This approach also avoids the urge to create domain summaries which are seen as solely a topic summary, surpassing the purpose of deeper analysing the data (Terry et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2020). To deepen the analysis, a comparative analysis also was carried out based on deductively derived sub-groups; younger aged (below the age of 40) versus older aged (above the age of 40) and married versus unmarried women (Hennink et al., 2020).

Following the steps to carrying out a Thematic Analysis, as described by Terry and colleagues (2017), the process started with familiarizing with the data, through thoroughly reading the transcripts and making notes on optional inductive codes. Adding to the deductively formed codes, such as ‘schemas on gender roles’ or ‘double burden’, inductively new codes were formed, including in-vivo codes (e.g., ‘man feels like having sex’ and ‘African Traditional Society’). Some smaller inductive codes have been merged with larger deductive codes (e.g., ‘women being vulnerable’ under ‘schema on gender equality’). By actively engaging with the data and using memos to write down possible theme names, themes were formed and finally put together. These were based on combinations of relevant codes. The final themes which were created both deductively and inductively are; (1) schemas on gender equality, (2) schemas on gender roles, (3) motivation to perform gender roles and (4) conflicting schemas on gender equality and gender roles. These themes and the underlying codes can be found in the codebook (Appendix A). Using a matrix display of the data helped in comparing the gender schemas across the characteristics of participants (e.g., marital status, having children).

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

The study by de Haas & Hutter (2017) was approved by both the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology and the ethical clearance committee of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen. The participants gave their written consent, participated voluntarily, and were told that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. Taking into mind that the topic of the research is very sensitive, these ethical considerations are especially important to note. A referral list was distributed among the participants, in case they would feel emotional distress caused by the research (de Haas, 2017). The names of the women have been pseudonymised to ensure anonymity. The anonymised data had only been saved on the computer drive from The University of Groningen, only accessible for the researchers. In this way, the data is stored safely and therefore the data will not be vulnerable in case my laptop would have gotten stolen.

#### 4. Results

The main themes which were created deductively were ‘schemas on gender equality’, ‘schemas on gender roles’ and ‘motivation to perform gender roles’, based on the conceptual model. Inductively, the theme ‘conflicting schemas’ was identified. The two themes, schemas on gender roles and schemas on gender equality, were important to understanding women's motivation to perform gender roles. These schemas were different at home than at work, which led to different motivations to perform gender roles. The theme, conflicting schemas, captures the conflict between schemas that is experienced by women. This chapter discusses each of the themes, as well as the most important underlying concepts.

##### 4.1 Schemas on gender equality

The findings show that *submissiveness* and *vulnerability of women* are crucial elements for understanding the participants’ schemas on gender equality. These elements displayed how the participants perceived the role of women in society. Their schemas were strongly embedded in contextual aspects such as religion, culture, family and community. Also, topics related to *bodily autonomy*, such as *gender based violence*, pulling and polyamory were parts of their schemas. Lastly, several in-vivo elements as part of the schemas on gender equality were identified; ‘*African Traditional Society*’, and ‘*man feels like having sex*’.

The participants interpreted gender equality in relation to several aspects. Some of the women directly defined gender equality by using descriptive terms such as ‘equal(ity)’, ‘submissiveness’ or ‘suppression’. A few of these women explicitly mentioned and agreed that in Uganda, there is a difference between men and women and that the woman is supposed to be submissive. Ivy explains how women are taught at an early age to be submissive to their husbands:

Ah, women have to be submissive, like now.. take an example, when these aunties are talking to us when we are entering into marriage, they tell us for instance, if a man begins quarrelling, you're not supposed to utter any word in response to him. You're supposed to be humble at all times. At all times! Whether something is a situation that is very painful to you, you're supposed to be humble. You're not supposed to be rude at your husband, you're not supposed to respond to him anyhow, and so on. You're supposed to submit at all times, and in all ways  
(Ivy, age 32).

These women perceived submissiveness of a woman to be part of the dynamics between husband and wife but felt that the woman should also be respected by her husband and feel comfortable with this dynamic. However, most importantly it was mentioned that this submissiveness had beneficial effects for the family, as having a man as a leader of the house was seen to be good for everyone in the household. These schemas on submissiveness were mostly shaped by the acceptance of the so-called '*African Traditional Society*' norms which are at play in Uganda, stating the power imbalance between men and women. Also, some women mentioned religious norms, which according to them state that the man is the head of the household and women have to serve them. According to them, African Traditional norms and religious norms prescribe that men and women have different roles in a family and work better together when only one is the leader. One participant described how this imbalance in power dynamics is important to maintain marriage, as it is otherwise seen that loss of respect for the husband may lead to marriage failure:

Although there is this eh... equality that we talk about, today. The... the superiority among men is still there, they are superior. That's why you find that eh... many married couples, especially with the, say a woman, eh, said of position of high status and the man is to the lower status, you will find that their marriages have been instable, breaking or separation, some of that kind. Because there, the woman becomes superior... hm? So in many cases, there are few families that you find stable through that kind of... or that the woman has... is of higher status than the man (Sophia, age 37).

Contrary to Sophia's perspective, most women in the study observed and experienced the power imbalance between men and women present in the Ugandan culture but they did not agree with this. Emma explains how women in Africa suffer due to these cultural norms regarding unequal power relations between men and women, as contrary to the previous participant:

Submissiveness... eh, I don't think I am comfortable with it. Because men take advantage of it. There is submissiveness that goes beyond the comfort of a woman. Like for instance, if a man goes out, if a man is living a promiscuous life, and goes out to love other... women, it... that thing calls for a woman to... to accept that condition because she is supposed to be submissive. So you find that the submissiveness, that the African people ask a woman to have... makes life for a woman uncomfortable. Makes her live an uncomfortable life because... all that she does

is, she does it at the expense of her... happiness, just because she has been told to be submissive. And the men use that advantage... to mistreat their women, because they are... they are looked at as superiors... as superior to the women  
(Emma, age 40).

Aside from the strongly rooted cultural norms that many women felt suppresses them inevitably, a few women explicitly mentioned that religion caused the same. Contrary to what these women said, a few actually described how in their religion, men and women are actually supposed to be equal, such as Margot:

Because... we are all created in God's image and we're all equal despite the fact that... ehm, we are got from a man's rib, but even that man's rib doesn't mean... that... they have to always be superior to us. It means you have to be side by side with each other. You have to help each other. You know? No one is superior, no one is, no? So I don't like it and I'm a very strong advocate for gender inequality, equality.  
(Margot, age 26).

In general, slightly younger women were more often indicating current power dynamics between men and women as unequal and did not agree with this situation. Consequently, these women more often said that they taught their own children as well as children in class that this imbalance was not correct, nor were traditional gender roles. Slightly older women (i.e., approximately aged 40 and up) were more often acknowledging this imbalance to be part of culture and marriage and seemed to comply with this more. Additionally, almost all participating women who were unmarried, either because of not having a partner yet or being divorced, more strongly stated that in their future marriage, they would want to have equal dynamics and roles.

In addition, certain topics which sometimes were more implicitly related to gender equality according to macro policy definitions were also identified. In their narratives, most of the time these topics were not explicitly defined as gender equality by the participants. One topic which was mentioned by almost all participants is the perception that women are more vulnerable than men. This was often described as girls 'falling as a prey' or 'being deceived/fooled' by boys or men who look for sexual interaction. Some women also mentioned the sense of reciprocity that was expected from girls when a boy would support her financially or pay for her. They said that sexual interaction was expected by the boy, as a form of compensation. Lucy described how especially young girls are often fooled by older men:

At times... as being a day school, where they pass... there are boda boda men [these men are motorcycle taxi drivers], [...] and these people tend to actually deceive... these young girls, and most of the young girls have actually fallen what? Victim of them. They just give them just something very, maybe giving them even a ride in the morning as they come, or in the afternoon as they are going back, and give them maybe something like 1,000 shillings, now you can have breakfast for this.

(Lucy, age 31)

Linked to this was the experience and perception that if girls fell pregnant in school, they were often forced to drop-out, whereas boys could remain in school by denying having had sexual intercourse with the girl. None of the participants mentioned the negative effects a pregnancy could have for boys, implicitly showing that in their interpretation only girls suffer from a pregnancy when still in school. The participants explained that especially being shamed by peers, family and community held a big role in the inability for girls to finish school as well as lack of financial aid. In the next quote, Mia shared that men will probably not want to marry when they impregnate a young girl:

Eh, what I fear most..., what I fear most, is one: the kind of children in our community here. If she gets pregnant, that means she is dropping out of school. She gets pregnant, what type of man is that? Will this man accept her at her age as a wife? Definitely no.

(Mia, 39)

Also based on their personal experiences, views, religion, cultural values or lessons they taught in class; the findings showed that some sense of inequality between genders was acknowledged on several topics. For example, polyamory being allowed for men but not for women, men having higher sex-drives and tendencies to give in to these drives, as well as the incidence of Gender-Based Violence (e.g., intramarital rape). A few women mentioned that in order to maintain the marriage and avoid shame or not being taken seriously by the community, women chose to keep silent about coerced sex, such as explained by Ivy:

So that is what happens. And you know, for us, we hear, we fear getting ashamed in public, that I reported a man that he raped me, and that's why you find that, that else, even the man beats you up and you cannot report, you just keep quiet. You even begin to tell lies, maybe people see bruises on your face, you say: Ey, I was bitten by a bee. You see? ETC. Because

they usually counsel, these women when they enter into marriage, you're not supposed to disclose any information pertaining your family to the public. That is what is taught to every woman. So now they, women are... are... they, they experience different forms of violence in homes, and they keep quiet. By the time, maybe you find that maybe the man beats her to death, only the neighbours can tell that he has always been beating her.

(Ivy, age 32)

Most of the participating women did display their discontent with these kinds of inequality, when they acknowledged them to be unequal. Some women mentioned these differences to be due to how they called it '*African Traditional Society*', which cannot be done much about, despite accepting that women suffer from it.

The last important identified topic displaying schemas on gender equality in a more implicit manner was the umbrella term 'bodily autonomy', which relates to the choices women could make regarding their own body. One of these choices included 'pulling', a traditional act of a young girl undergoing the elongation of the inner labia, which is a common tradition in Central Uganda (i.e., Buganda). The objective of this ritual was explained differently among the participants, for some it functioned at enhancing giving birth or increasing pleasure during intercourse for men and sometimes also for women. By some it was described as a painful act and was seen as something that is forced upon girls by culture; whereas others mention it being a positive part of the culture as it enhances the prosperity of their marriage. This latter could also be seen as a sign of oppression but is not perceived in such a way by all women. The following example shows how Nora describes pulling being beneficial for both parties in marriage, but more implicitly says that it is about feeling quicker aroused in order to please the man:

Is it the man or the woman? I think both parties. It's all the same thing there, so it helps you the woman to get started quickly and even the man erects very fast and instead of taking how long? Like sometimes women, we have tendencies whereby you don't feel like having sex, but a man can get, eh, get to you and at least within the shortest time possible, you get started (Nora, age 26)

The largest contextual factor here is culture, which is translated in the concept of '*ssenga*', which is a paternal aunt who teaches youngsters on sexual education and marital behaviours, often linked by the participants to the '*African Traditional Society*'.

Other topics that were linked to bodily autonomy related to how women can dress or contraceptive choices. Most women were quite strict, mentioning that women should not dress provocatively, as this could tempt men to act according to their sexual urges. Some participants however felt that women are free to wear what they want, and men should contain their urges. These women often held quite modern schemas on gender equality in general, such as Leah regarding her opinion on a woman's reproductive autonomy:

But again... when I look at it, people have, should have a choice at... what happens to their body and when it happens. Because the woman is the one who is going to carry it [baby] for nine months, it's no joke. (Leah, age 29)

For most women, their schemas on gender equality were also translated in how they educated their children at school and at home on gender equality. This even occurred when these women were not experiencing gender equality themselves but want to prevent the negative effects they are experiencing in younger generations:

So even money power... so to me, I intend to train my boys that you know, do not look... at a wife as a slave... she's not your property. In any case, if you people are saying women are weaker, than you should do most of the work in the home. (Maeve, age 37)

Linked to this, it is notable that this kind of behaviour where women teach children on more gender equal norms, despite the fact of not directly experiencing it, nor explicitly agreeing to it, could be influenced by the fact that they are higher educated and employed. This same participant, for example, explicitly states how she is influenced in her thinking as she is higher educated:

And also, the education I have, exposure of education, I told you I have a Master's right now, because of my exposure to education, I look at things differently. Yes. And eh... the trainings I've had, I think women should also be treasured, they should be looked at differently. Yeah (Maeve, age 37)

#### **4.2 Schemas on gender roles**

The women's schemas on gender roles were related to a double burden which women experienced as a consequence of being employed, for which a house maid was often a solution mentioned to this burden. A related in-vivo finding which was 'children being left alone at

home' relating to a negative feeling or perception women held regarding themselves or other women being employed leading to children being alone, which could be followed by the children being more vulnerable to negative influences. This finding is especially related to their schemas on gender roles at home versus roles at work. Additionally, an important distinction was made by the participants between gender roles in '*African Traditional Society*' and 'modernised' gender roles. Similar to the schemas on gender equality, several relevant context factors played a role: religion, culture, family and community.

The female sexuality education teachers distinguished between '*African Traditional Society*' gender roles and more '*modernised*' gender roles. These perceived traditional roles implied that women mainly carried out housework, cooked, and cared for the children and her husband, whereas the men are responsible for generating income in order to maintain his family. The modernised gender roles entailed how these tasks are more divided by both men and women, as explained by one of the participants:

Then when it comes to, to educating the children, formally, it is the, the role is basically supposed to be for, for the man. But these days, because we both work, we contribute. But [money for the household] basically, they look at the man. Then the feeding is also supposed to be done by the man, but because we both work, we contribute, we sit down and say: maybe I can support you, I can... pay (Sophia, age 37).

In general, mostly younger women and women who explicitly mentioned the importance of gender equality in the study prioritized these modern gender roles over the Traditional African roles. These women more often stressed the fact that they are also busy with working, are financially independent and have less time to also take care of the household. Therefore, in their opinion this led to sharing tasks at home with their husband. Only a few women described that their husbands could be shamed by community or family for doing household work, but neither them nor their husband felt affected by this. An important experience which contributed to this is how these women, and often their partners, also grew up in such environments as children in which their own parents would also divide tasks at home, in line with these modern gender roles. Their views on these more equal gender roles are also displayed in how they said that they educate on gender roles at school and also at home to their own children:

I have more boys than girls, I did have one child, but other ones, two are girls, three are boys. But they all do the same work, they all cook, they all wash plates, they all... because that's

what my mother brought me up, all of us will do the same work. Boys will cook, wash plates, girls would cook, girls would fetch water, we would do all across (June, age 43).

Some women also explicitly mentioned the role that education had for them to have certain perspectives, showing the impact of education on empowerment, like Ivy:

But you see, the education it has helped so much the women, it has helped so much the women. They can earn some income, they can sustain their families, some men, after he has got into another relationship, he ignores even the family, looking after the children and so on, but women these days, because they are educated, they earn some income, some good income, they can be able even to look after their children, even without the help of their husbands. (Ivy, age 32)

This woman expressed the importance of education and employment for women, that even though men are not taking care of them and their children, she still manages to sustain herself. The role of financial independence was especially important here.

On the contrary, a few women, especially those agreeing to the man being the provider of the family, stressed the importance of following more traditional gender roles. Here the man is acknowledged to be superior to the woman, which they explained is a functional way of maintaining their family. According to these women, men were supposed to generate income, whereas women had to take care of the children and household (e.g., sharing the tasks to maintain the family). They perceived this division of tasks as a good balance between man and woman. However, due to experiencing more workload due to being employed themselves, they mentioned men can assist them in certain occasions, such as explained by Emma:

I do the house, household chores, except, except when I am... when I am sick or when I am... when he sees that I am very busy, he comes and helps out [...] There is also supposed to be somebody who is ahead of the other, when the man gives me orders, which orders are supposed to help me, and my children, and him, I wouldn't feel bad. I would not feel bad. Because I look at him as my boss, okay? Because he is the man who built the house, the man who... earns the bread, I do earn the bread too, but then, he is superior, you get the point? That superiority... I am supposed to all... hm, but that [submissiveness] would be very comfortable because it is for the good of everybody around. (Emma, age 40)

Two important factors shaping this more traditional schema on gender roles, were culture and upbringing. This was often done according to the cultural practices of receiving counselling from the ssenga's or by learning from the gender roles of the parents, as Nora explains:

The auntie [ssenga] had specific roles to teach to the girls for you to become good future wife. Like how you could relate with your husband, how to prepare food, how to cook, how to, to, to respect, to accord respect to your husband, and even the, the, the bed roles [sexual relations] were taught by the, the ssengas, the aunties. (Nora, age 26)

An important topic which was deduced from the women's experiences was the double burden of work which was caused by them being educated and employed. Some women did describe the multiple roles they had but did not acknowledge them to be burdening, whereas some other women indicated that this double burden was heavy and could cause them suffering. Leah described this double burden which women experience, but importantly also why she remains in this situation (i.e., wanting remain marriage):

It's so sad in Uganda. Men act as the bread winners but then they are not the bread winners. [...] You find the woman is sticking there just because she wants to be married, that people see that she's married. But when actually she is doing the, the man's role, she is the one paying the school fees... she is the one looking after the kids... she is the one who, who goes out to check if there are really thieves at the door because the man is never in, you know? (Leah, age 29).

The main explanations that were given as to why men were not doing their role (i.e., as breadwinner, taking care of his family), was that they simply cared less about their family than women did. It was mentioned that a way of dealing with this double burden of their job, taking care of the children and the household was to hire a maid who took up such tasks at home (e.g., cooking and cleaning). They mentioned that this was especially prevalent among working class families that lived in the urban areas. These maids are often younger women, which in a way also showed how the gender roles remain in the sense that mainly girls carried out such kinds of jobs at home.

Relating to differing schemas of gender roles at home and work, some women noted the importance of remaining to take care of their children, even though they were working. Additionally, a few women noted how they adopted a more motherly role at work, in order for

getting closer to their pupils, making it seem like their feeling of motherhood remains very important. This woman shows how despite being an employed woman, it is also important to be a mother and take care of your children:

And you don't expect someone after, eh, qualifying for a particular job, to sit at home. So after qualifying, someone will be busy looking for a job somewhere. So I think, much as you are working, you should at least prepare some time for your kids and... even your husband. To see what is going on the ground, what is in place, like if you are at home, you, you at least sometimes you cook, you interact with your kids, don't devote most of your time to work. [...] at least spare some time. But you cannot say, we are going to get such wives or women who are house wives from Monday to Sunday, non, that one is... we can't even talk about it because people have gone to school and they have papers, they have to look for something to eat. (Nora, aged 26).

#### **4.3 Motivation to perform gender roles and conflicts between schemas**

Several negative consequences which followed from not adhering to traditional gender roles were observed in the data. Some of these were explicitly mentioned by women whereas others were found to be more implicit drivers. The consequence that played an important role in this theme was the experienced pressure of reciprocity regarding certain actions (e.g., financially or sexually). Additionally, women feared losing their marriage, experiencing gender-based violence or catching HIV due to their husband cheating.

Implicitly, the findings showed that the women perceived a sense of reciprocity between men and women regarding their actions. For example, a man provided money and remained loyal if the woman took care of the household and had sexual intercourse with him frequently. In general, the women discussed that they act according to more traditional gender roles to mitigate possible negative consequences if they would not live up to this reciprocity. Some of these consequences were losing their marriage, becoming a victim of gender-based violence or being shamed by her community for being a bad wife, as explained by Sophia:

Although there is this eh... equality that we talk about, today. The... the superiority among men is still there, they are superior. That's why you find that eh... many married couples, especially with the, say a woman, eh, said of position of high status and the man is to the lower status, you will find that their marriages have been instable, breaking or separation, some of that kind. Because there, the woman becomes superior... hm? So in many cases, there are few families that you find stable through that kind of... or that the woman has... is of higher status than the

man. (Sophia, age 37).

It was also mentioned that women feared if they would not be at home often, to cook and care for her husband and family, the husband might cheat on her. In some cases, this would be with the maid, which they associated with a higher risk of catching HIV. This motivated some women to encounter the double work burden that employment brings them or to have sex against their will:

My bedroom. Now the man begins to claim, you see the woman doesn't have even time for me, she cannot even clean the bedroom, so now when this man gets... into an adulterous affair with this housemaid, he says, it is the woman who tempts me, how can she leave the house girl to clean the bedroom, to lay my bed? (Ivy, age 32)

This internal conflict between schemas and motivations became apparent for some women who directly encountered the negative consequences. In a way, this could mean that women experienced conflicting schemas, leading to a considered motivation to perform gender roles. Olivia importantly portrayed how her role at home is different from her role at work, which are conflicting with each other. However, she feels forced to perform different behaviour than how she would like to act, due to the negative consequences she faces:

When you talk to my husband, he will slap you. So... I just keep quiet. I'm like a big fool. Billie [interviewer], you know a stupid woman... a fool! Yes... yes... I don't like to be stupid, I'm not, we are not stupid! [sounds like she is crying] Huh? Huh? I ask myself, maybe... I wish this man married a stupid woman who didn't go to school maybe (Olivia, age 40)

The analysis showed that multiple women experienced a conflict in schemas, based on the answers they provided for several questions. Some of these conflicting schemas were derived more implicitly, such as suffering under the current gender role distribution while still agreeing that men and women being unequal and adhering to this unequal power dynamics. Some mentioned that women should be submissive whereas the same woman taught her pupils to treat each other equally based on their gender. Here it is important to be aware of the fact that this could be a difference in how the participants perceived gender equality and gender roles. It also could be more of an internal conflict on which participants had not yet reflected on. This conflict could also be a sign of empowerment, showing that women feel more agency at work to live up to certain behaviour that they wish to perform, as they have a more authoritative role

at work. This feeling of agency could be absent at home, where their main role remains to be a wife and mother. A few women acknowledged the conflict between their preferred situation and current situation, describing it as 'being stuck in culture' or 'how much can be done about it', such as Ivy:

Even us, even if you are educated, we have been educated to some level, but you find that again culture still suppresses us, in our families, in our homes, and so on. [...] I separated with my husband but he stayed in the house, the piece of land, I came with nothing! Nothing at all. Nothing. So culture still suppresses us (Ivy, age 32).

Here it is again seen that cultural norms and religion play important roles to how schemes are shaped but also seem to be differing in the settings of home and work. For this participant as well as for others, marriage is very important in Ugandan culture. Especially losing a marriage has negative consequences for women, such as receiving shame, but also losing your land and children due to legislation. This leads women to adjusting to certain norms and behaviours to maintain this, despite having bad experiences with marriage. This again could link to agency, in the sense that they do not have the capabilities to change these negative consequences, leading them to compromise. Deduced from their narratives, it seemed that at school they could adopt a different role and more freedom to act how they wanted.

## 5. Discussion

Present study aimed to investigate the schemas regarding gender equality and gender roles for higher educated Ugandan women, both at home and at work, and how these played a role in their motivation to perform gender roles. The main results show that a majority of the women acknowledged or experienced the pre-existing suppression of women in Ugandan society. This was shaped either through cultural or religious norms, despite being empowered according to macro policy definitions in the sense of having a job and being higher educated. The findings highlight the importance of qualitative research in the sense that it allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the underlying mechanisms.

Women's interpretation of gender equality in present study were seen to not always be in line with the definition that is often adopted in macro policy indicators, wherein the focus lies upon educational attainment and employment (World Economic Forum, 2020; Kurzam et al., 2019). The main findings of this study confirm findings from other studies which state that culture and religion are the salient mechanisms in the upholding of gender inequality and traditional gender roles (Nwosu, 2012; Ratele, 2014; Neculaesei, 2015; Vu et al., 2017; Guloba et al., 2018). Women in present study acknowledged these contextual factors, most of them suffering under this despite being employed and educated. This shows how culture, religion, as well as legislation in Uganda tend to be overlooked in macro policies (Ssali, 2019). Importantly, the women did explicitly mention this problematic power dynamic between men and women to be related to 'African Traditional Society' and contrasted this against the so-called modern values relating to gender equality. This could indirectly show the effect of education and employment, often associated with living in urban areas due to the ability of increased reflection and exposure to different worldviews (Kabeer, 2005; Krumbiegel et al., 2020). On the other hand, the women in present study often showed or mentioned that they would sacrifice themselves for the wellbeing of the children and marriage, continuing to live in a power unequal household. Similar to the findings of Akujobi (2011), this is a well-known phenomenon in African culture in general, wherein women prioritize their families. This showed how aiming for gender equality is not necessarily the main priority of the women participating in this study, which is overlooked in macro policy definitions (Kurzam et al., 2019; Ssali, 2019).

Similar to the schemas on gender equality, the participant's perceptions of gender roles were strongly shaped by several contextual factors, such as culture, religion and upbringing. The study by Guloba and colleagues (2018) found, in line with present study, how women remained to do most of the household work and caretaking, despite being employed. In our study, some women experienced a double burden of work, which was also found in Tanzania,

a comparable context to Uganda (Hedges et al., 2018). Some of the women were against this unequal division of traditional gender roles by actively mentioning that is unfair and they had less time for carrying out all tasks at home due to being employed themselves. The gender roles their parents followed strongly influences their own schemas regarding gender roles; if their father also would carry out tasks at home, making the division more equal, then often their schema on gender roles would be similar (i.e., men should help in the household). Often, these women would again teach such gender roles to their children and pupils as well. This is in line with gender schema theory and findings from other studies which display that schemas on gender roles are developed at early stages of life, through external influences, such as family (Bem, 1981, 1983; Chinen et al., 2017; Ninsiima et al., 2018; Farago et al., 2019).

The main reasons which motivated women in present study to perform according to gender roles, were the risk of negative consequences if they would not behave according to traditional gender roles. This was also found in a qualitative study in the rural areas of Uganda, gender-based violence (e.g., intimate partner violence) similarly being one of the negative consequences (Sengupta & Calo, 2015). The underlying mechanism that could lead them to acting out violently was to restore the culturally appropriate power dynamics (Dolan, 2011). This was mechanism, however, not found in present study. The women in present study often mentioned this to be due to the unequal relation between men and women, rooted in 'African Traditional Society'. Next to Gender-Based Violence being a consequence of breaking the traditional gender roles, other studies focusing on African and Bangladeshi cultures, similarly acknowledge the conflicts which can arise from adopting more modern roles. Their findings support present study that this conflict could lead to separation, divorce or abandonment (Silberschmidt, 2005; Hashemi et al., 1996; Wrigley-Asante, 2011). However, the importance of maintaining marriage and caring for their children was seen to be a more important reason for women in the present study to avoid conflict from breaking traditional gender roles. The fear of them, or their partner being shamed by community was not such a motivating factor in present study, as compared to the findings in other studies (Sengupta & Calo, 2015; Guloba et al., 2018).

The comparison of the participants' schemas on gender equality and roles at home versus at work were often seen to be conflicting. Interestingly, almost all participating women taught their children and pupils about the importance of mutual respect and more equal roles between boys and girls. This was even the case when they explicitly mentioned in the interviews to be agreeing with power dynamics and traditional gender roles in marriage. This could be explained by these women having an increase in their agency at work, due to them being

employed, higher educated, having more authority, and living in an urban context (Doss, 2005; Alkire et al., 2013; Acosta et al., 2019). Similar to the findings of this study, Krumbiegel and colleagues (2020) found that for Ghanaian women this increase at agency at work did not immediately transfer to more decision-making power at home. This could explain why the schemas of some of the participating women, as well as their motivation to act accordingly were more traditional at home versus more modern at work. Additionally, Farago and colleagues (2019) also stress the rigidity of traditional patriarchal values which are stronger at home. These stronger traditional barriers could lead to why the women in this study were more able to think and act more modern at work than at home.

### **5.1 Implications**

The findings in the current study stress the importance of looking beyond the macro lens when it comes to closing the gender gap in Uganda. These often focus on looking at indicators relevant for women empowerment, including employment and educational attainment. However, this study showed that women's interpretations can differ from these macro definitions of gender equality. Based on higher educated and employed women's gender schemas it is important for policies and programs to focus on the barriers that could withhold women from living up to their definition of gender equality. More specifically, attention should be paid more to the sensitization of men, starting at a young age in which gender schemas are already shaped (Vu et al., 2017). Additionally, the role of upbringing should not be overlooked, parents and their gendered behaviour being important role models to children. This could also be further addressed in sexuality education, more actively including parents in certain sensitization sessions on gendered behaviour. On a larger scale, it is important to re-evaluate the structural barriers in Ugandan society which continue to hold women back. Certain laws that are effective in Uganda, such as divorce and its negative consequences (e.g., land-rights and guardianship) are currently still putting women in an inferior position, forcing them to adjust to behaviours to which they often not agree (Ssali, 2019).

These recommendations could also be relevant beyond Uganda. When looking at SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality by ending discrimination and violence against women in all spheres the outcomes of this study could offer important insights. It is crucial to understand that the interpretation of gender equality can differ for women, creating different needs. By integrating these more subjective views on gender equality within the standard indicators from the macro perspective, women empowerment can be better understood and achieved.

## 5.2 Limitations

This study does have some limitations which have to be taken into account when interpreting the results. First, the most important limitation is that the data was collected in 2011 and the results could be outdated. A recent analysis of implemented policies and laws which focus on enhancing gender equality in Uganda display several new initiatives in the past years, focusing explicitly on issues such as Gender-Based Violence, sociocultural issues, and reproductive rights (Ssali, 2019). However, it was noted that despite many of these newly implemented laws and policies, the patriarchal system which is strongly rooted in Ugandan society remains to uphold inequality between men and women, due to failure of implementation and strong social cultural norms which suppress women (Ssali, 2019). Based on this, findings of the present study remain more than relevant. However, it is important to stress the qualitative nature of this study, implying that the findings are not generalizable, but they do give direction for future research.

Secondly, the study by de Haas and Hutter (2017), for which the data was collected and was re-analysed in this study, held a different objective than present study which can be seen as a disadvantage to secondary analysis (Szabo & Strang, 1997). The focus in their study lay upon understanding the schemas which influenced Ugandan teachers to teaching sexuality education, in which the topics gender equality and gender roles were also touched upon. These topics, however, were not as extensively covered as to when a separate interview guide would have been developed, fitting the objective of the current study better. A few participants did not go into depth about their perceptions on gender equality or gender roles, nor was this always followed up by the interviewer. This resulted in some of the data being interpreted by looking more into their implicit statements, which also held valuable information. Especially, the identification of the differences in schemas in the two settings (i.e., at home and at work), was not as exposed as the present study aimed for. As the results do hint at the conflict between these different settings, it would be interesting to investigate this further.

Finally, this study only looked at the gender schemas of higher educated Ugandan women. As discussed and found in the present study, the patriarchal system is salient in Africa in general. This shows the importance of the role which men, but also society hold with regard to the suppression of women (Bassegy & Bubu, 2019; Krumbiegel et al., 2020). For this reason, it would have been valuable to also include men in the study design. This could more understanding into their perceptions on gender roles and gender equality, and the underlying mechanisms which motivate their schemas and behaviours. Additionally, it also could have been insightful to look at the gender schemas of lower educated Ugandan women. This could have offered a more direct analysis of the role of education in women empowerment. However,

including more participants was beyond the scope of the present thesis, but would be relevant for future research.

### **5.3 Concluding**

The present study aimed to understand the schemas regarding gender equality and gender roles for higher educated Ugandan women, and how these played a role in their motivation to perform gender roles, both at home and at work. This was investigated by analysing in-depth interviews with Ugandan female sexuality education teachers. The findings showed that the interpretations of gender equality of the participating women were not always in line with the definition that is often adopted in macro policy indicators (i.e., educational attainment and employment). Most women often continued to experience negative effects based on their gender, mostly due to strong cultural and religious practices that are deeply rooted in Ugandan society. Women tended to put their children and family's well-being first, while suffering by trying to live up to these rigid gendered norms (e.g., a double work burden, gender-based violence, fearing to catch HIV from an unfaithful husband). This shows their priority for their children and marriage rather than aiming for gender equal roles at home, differing from the macro definition of gender equality. Their differing schemas at home versus at work, which sometimes were conflicting, could be related to different levels of agency due to being educated and employed.

It can be concluded that women's schemas on gender roles and gender equality can differ from the standard macro definitions. These schemas motivate them perform certain gender roles differently at home versus at work, based on complex considerations. To further address the gender gap in Uganda, policies should look beyond existing macro indicators and integrate the subjective needs of women.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Table A1  
*The Theme Codebook*

Theme	Theme description	Underlying codes	Strategy used for code	Code description
Schemas on gender equality (Deductive)	Describes the perceptions, norms values and beliefs regarding gender equality. This schema is shaped by several factors.			
		Schema on gender equality	Deductive	Use when the participant explicitly or implicitly talks about gender dynamics.
		Religion influence	Deductive	Describes how religion gives context to schemas on gender equality. This can be related to one's own religion or to those of others.
		Cultural influence	Deductive	Describes how culture gives context to schemas. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
		Family influence	Deductive	Describes how family influences one's schemas on

			gender equality. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
	Community influence	Deductive	Describes how community influences one's schemas on gender equality. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
	Home setting	Deductive	Use when a schema relates to a home setting.
	Work setting	Deductive	Use when a schema relates to a work setting.
	Gender based violence	Deductive	Use when a participant describes physical, sexual or emotional violence towards women. This includes inter-partner violence.
	Urban context	Deductive	Use when the urban context is relevant for shaping the schema on gender equality.
	Power dynamics	Inductive	Use when a participant explicitly or implicitly refers to a hierarchy between men and women.
	Bodily autonomy	Inductive	Describes that women make choices about their

			own body. This includes when they want to have sex, what they wear and their reproductive choices.
	Financial dependence	Inductive	Use when a participant mentions (not) being financially dependent upon their partner; or when she applies this to women in general.
	Opinion on pulling	Inductive	Capture women's own opinion on pulling, as part of cultural tradition.
	Women being vulnerable	Inductive	Use when participants describe women to be weak and vulnerable in society.
	Husband cheating	Inductive	Use when participants share experiences or views on a cheating husband.
	Modern times	Inductive	Use when participants explicitly mention modern times in relation to gender equality.
	Opinion on sex before marriage	Inductive	Captures a participant's own perspective of having sex before marriage.
	Opinion on homosexuality	Inductive	Captures a participant's own perspective on homosexuality in

			Ugandan society.
	Opinion on masturbation	Inductive	Captures a participant's own perspective on masturbation. This could be related to herself, women in general, or what she teaches her pupils.
	Shame	Inductive	Refers to shame women or experience when not adhering to certain standards on gender equality.
	Influence of education	Inductive	Use when a woman implicitly or explicitly refers to the role of her educational level in relation to her schema on gender equality.
	Man feels like having sex	In-vivo	Describes the power dynamic between man and woman, related to their sexual relationship. Use when a participant applies this to herself or women in general.
	African Traditional Society	In-vivo	Refers to traditional norms and values in Uganda. Use when this is explicitly mentioned and in relation to gender equality.
Schemas on gender roles (Deductive)	Describes the perceptions, norms values and beliefs regarding		

<p>gender roles. This schema is shaped by several factors</p>			
	Schemas on gender roles	Deductive	Use when the participant explicitly or implicitly talks about roles specifically related to men or women
	Double burden	Deductive	Use when women explicitly or implicitly mention to be burdened more due to being employed and carrying out work at home
	Cultural influence	Deductive	Describes how culture gives context to schemas. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
	Religion influence	Deductive	Describes how religion gives context to schemas on gender roles. This can be related to one's own religion or to those of others.
	Family influence	Deductive	Describes how family influences one's schemas on gender equality. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
	Community influence	Deductive	Describes how community

			influences one's schemas on gender roles Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
	Home setting	Deductive	Use when a schema relates to a home setting.
	Work setting	Deductive	Use when a schema relates to a work setting.
	Gender based violence	Deductive	Use when a participant describes physical, sexual, or emotional violence towards women. This includes inter-partner violence.
	Urban context	Deductive	Use when the urban context is relevant for shaping the schema on gender equality.
	Gender roles of parents	Inductive	Use when a participant describes the gender roles her parents have or had.
	Gender roles taught to own children	Inductive	Use when a participant implicitly or explicitly describes the roles she teaches her own children or pupils at school.
	Financial dependence	Inductive	Use when a participant mentions (not) being financially dependent upon their partner; or when she applies this to women in

			general.
	House maid	Inductive	Use when participant describes own experience of those of women in general regarding house maids.
	Modern times	Inductive	Use when participants explicitly mention modern times in relation to gender roles.
	Shame	Inductive	Refers to shame women or experience when not adhering to certain standards on gender roles.
	Influence of education	Inductive	Use when a woman implicitly or explicitly refers to the role of her educational level in relation to her schema on gender roles.
	African Traditional Society	In-vivo	Refers to traditional norms and values in Uganda. Use when this is explicitly mentioned and in relation to gender roles.
	Children are left alone at home	In-vivo	Refers to children being alone now that the women are employment. This could be related to own experience or of those of women in general.

Motivation to perform gender roles (Deductive)	Describes the perceptions, norms values and beliefs regarding gender roles. This schema is shaped by several factors.		
	Schemas on gender equality	Deductive	Use when the participant explicitly or implicitly talks about gender dynamics.
	Schemas on gender roles	Deductive	Use when the participant explicitly or implicitly talks about roles specifically related to men or women
	Cultural influence	Deductive	Describes how culture gives context to schemas. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
	Religion influence	Deductive	Describes how religion gives context to schemas on gender roles. This can be related to one's own religion or to those of others.
	Family influence	Deductive	Describes how family influences one's schemas on gender equality. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.

Community influence	Deductive	Describes how community influences one's schemas on gender roles. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
Home setting	Deductive	Use when a schema relates to a home setting.
Work setting	Deductive	Use when a schema relates to a work setting.
Gender based violence	Deductive	Use when a participant describes physical, sexual or emotional violence towards women. This includes inter-partner violence.
Urban context	Deductive	Use when the urban context is relevant for shaping the schema on gender equality.
Bodily autonomy	Inductive	Describes that women make choices about their own body. This includes when they want to have sex, what they wear and their reproductive choices. Specifically relates to their motivation to perform gender roles.
Reciprocity	Inductive	Use when participants implicitly or explicitly mention they or women in

			general, perceive the actions of women to contain a sense of reciprocity in relation to those of men.
	House maid	Inductive	Use when participant describes own experience of those of women in general regarding house maids. More specifically, in relation to their own motivation to perform gender roles.
	Fear to Catch HIV	Inductive	Use when participants mention they or women in general, act according to certain roles out of fear to catch HIV. This is often related to their husband cheating.
	Shame	Inductive	Refers to shame women or experience when not adhering to certain standards on gender roles or equality. This is specifically linked to their motivation to perform gender roles.
	Fear to lose marriage	Inductive	Use when women mention their fear of losing marriage, if they do not act according to certain gender roles.
	You think about your children	In-vivo	This relates to women being motivated to act

				according to certain roles, out of care for their children.
	Children are left alone at home	In-vivo		Refers to children being alone now that the women are employment. This could be related to own experience or of those of women in general.
Conflict in schemas (Inductive)	Describes the conflict between schemas. These schemas are contradicting each other and shows the experienced conflict between a person's own schemas.			
	Schemas on gender equality	Deductive		Use when the participant explicitly or implicitly talks about gender dynamics.
	Schemas on gender roles	Deductive		Use when the participant explicitly or implicitly talks about roles specifically related to men or women
	Cultural influence	Deductive		Describes how culture gives context to schemas. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
	Religion	Deductive		Describes how

influence		religion gives context to schemas on gender roles. This can be related to one's own religion or to those of others.
Family influence	Deductive	Describes how family influences one's schemas on gender equality. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
Community influence	Deductive	Describes how community influences one's schemas on gender roles. Participants can refer to this explicitly, or it can be deduced more implicitly.
Home setting	Deductive	Use when a schema relates to a home setting.
Work setting	Deductive	Use when a schema relates to a work setting.
Contradiction	Inductive	Use to mark a contradiction in their schemas.