Theoretical and conceptual framework for gender analysis of the power gender dynamics that influence women’s participation in sports leadership in Uganda

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INTRODUCTION

The number of women involved in sports globally has continued to grow, women now participate in almost all sports activities (Pfister, 2010). Pfister further noted that the improvement in women’s involvement is attributed to both global and national policies and strategies that were in place to promote women’s participation in sports, and in sports leadership. For example, The International Olympic Committee (IOC) set a target of 20% women representation on national sports governing bodies and National Olympic Committees (NOCs) by 2005 (M’mbaha, 2012). All countries, including Uganda, were required and agreed to meet this target. On the domestic scene, the constitution of Uganda also affirmed the equality of all persons, and accorded full and equal dignity to women, promised to ensure balance and fair representation in all aspects. However, despite evidence of supportive regulations for
gender equality even in sports leadership plus increasing participation of women in sports, not many sportswomen have made it to become leaders on Boards of the different sports federations in Uganda (M’mbaha and Chepyator-Thomson, 2019). It is plausible that there could be hidden or obvious gender-related dynamics that hindered women from taking up sports leadership positions. If such gendered dynamics are not interrogated and addressed, women in general and, women in sports leadership in particular, would continue to be marginalized and excluded from sports leadership positions. It would also mean that decisions that affect women in sports were made by men with no input from women themselves. Sports would remain a masculine space (Scott, 2020). Women would not benefit from the advantages of participating in sports. Besides that, women who are in sports ought to take on leadership positions so as to make a contribution to matters that concern sportswomen and men. Further, women’s participation in sports leadership was said to contribute to a positive transformation of the previously only male space into one that accommodated both in participation and leadership (Leberman and Palmer, 2009).

Thus, the researchers in this paper interrogated the power gender dynamics that influenced women’s participation in sports leadership by reviewing the available literature on women in sports leadership in Africa. Therefore, any action to be taken to improve women’s participation in sports leadership could only be effective after examining how gender dynamics influence women’s participation in sports leadership, understanding the roles both gender play in the leadership of these sports organizations, and the existing strategies in promoting women’s effective participation in sports leadership. This required development of theoretical and conceptual frameworks for carrying out gender analysis. It was against this background that literature was reviewed to compile different concepts, theories, and frameworks that had so far been used in gender analysis, then came up with comprehensive theoretical and conceptual framework used for gender analysis of the gender dynamics that affected women’s participation in sports leadership. Concepts, theories and frameworks used in gender analysis were also reviewed.

**Objectives**

To analyze the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for gender analysis of the power gender dynamics that influence women in sports leadership.

To review the available literature on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for gender analysis of the power gender dynamics that influence women in sports leadership in Africa

**METHODOLOGY**

To conduct the gender analysis of the power gender dynamics that influenced women’s participation in sports leadership in Uganda, the researchers used the theoretical frameworks from reviewed literature to develop the conceptual framework. Information was first gathered about the realities of the influence of gender dynamics on women’s participation in sports leadership in Uganda with the help of advanced google search. Suitable theories and a conceptual framework that analyzed the gender dynamics in sports leadership were developed from the reviewed literature. Well-grounded theories and field-based research by other researchers were also reviewed and the most related and relevant information according to the researchers was analysed to help draft the paper (McCutcheon and Meredith, 1993).

We went through two popular journals in gender and sports leadership, based on their ranking using Scimago (https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=gender) which are American journal of Educational Research and Journal of Physical Activity Research, to see whether case study method was the most suitable method used as a dominant strategy in the sports leadership field. We used Google Scholars advanced search, searched in all of the words “gender, sports and leadership” anywhere in the article between 2015 and 2020 while looking at the methodologies used in each article. The results of our search showed a wide use of case study as a methodology in the gender and sports leadership field (Gender more than 96 papers, Sports more than 30 papers, leadership more than 53 papers). In this article, we tried to use the experiences of gender and sports leadership researchers. We tried to describe the theoretical frameworks in order to design and develop the conceptual framework. Therefore, this paper was structured in such a way that; First, we defined gender, then we give a brief background on women in sports leadership, we then explained the Gendered organizational and the Critical Feminist theories which guided us to come up with the conceptual framework. We finally gave an explanation for the conceptual framework which helped us conclude and give recommendations guided by our findings.

Gendered organizational (Kanter, 1977) and Critical Feminist (Coakley, 2008) theories were reviewed to explain a theoretical and conceptual frameworks analyzing the influence of the power gender dynamics to women’s participation in sports leadership (M’mbaha, 2012; Burton and Leberman, 2017). Stakeholder analysis was done to find out what had caused failure to bring in full participation of both genders so as to have effective participation. The findings of the stakeholder analysis were compared with what had been done according to the aforementioned literature. Gaps were identified, and the old theories and frameworks were improved to develop a fusion conceptual framework for gender analysis of the influence of power gender dynamics on women’s participation in sports leadership in Uganda.

In conclusion, case study method as proposed by Merriam (1998) was used by conducting a literature review which helped in constructing a theoretical framework that was used to design the conceptual framework.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gendered organizational and the Critical Feminist theories were reviewed to explain a theoretical and conceptual framework analyzing the influence of gender dynamics on women’s participation in sports leadership. According to Mansfield (2015) and WHO (2017), the concept of gender, refers to the socially constructed differences between men and women and the unequal power relationships that result. Gender is considered as a social construct that is not determined and fixed by biology. Its terms of construct can change with time, among cultural groupings, age, race within economic and political structures, within and among sexes, and changes with circumstances including leadership. Ottesen et al. (2010) define gender relations as the ways in which a culture or society define rights, responsibilities and the identities of men and women in relation to one another. Harel-Shalev et al. (2019) add that gender relations is a resource drawn daily, within the household and community to reinforce or redefine the rules, norms and practices which govern social institutions.

Since gender attributes are socially constructed, it means that they are also amenable to change in ways that can make a society more just and equitable. Therefore, gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men (United Nations Population Fund, 2005). United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) further added that to ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women’s historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Gender equity leads to gender equality which requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Where gender inequality exists, it is mostly women who are excluded or disadvantaged in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources (Makama, 2013). Therefore, a critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same. But it means access to opportunities and resources by both genders. Achieving gender equality requires women’s empowerment to ensure that decision-making at private and public levels, and access to resources are no longer weighted in men’s favour, so that both women and men can fully participate as equal partners in productive and reproductive life (Sundar, 2017).

Since there were differences between the roles of men and women, different approaches to sports leadership were required to avoid gender inequality which is a constraint to the progress of any society because it limits the opportunities of one-half of its population. When women are constrained from reaching their full potential, that potential is lost to society as a whole. There is a need to address the gender inequalities in sports leadership. Addressing these inequalities required gender mainstreaming which is a strategy for integrating gender concerns in the analysis, formulation and monitoring of policies, programmes and projects (United Nations Population Fund, 2005). The purpose of gender mainstreaming was to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in population and development activities. This required addressing both the condition as well as the position of women and men in society. Gender mainstreaming therefore aimed to strengthen the legitimacy of gender equality values by addressing known gender disparities and gaps in such areas as the division of labour between men and women, access to and control over resources, access to services, information, opportunities, and distribution of power and decision-making. UNFPA adopted the mainstreaming of gender concerns into all population and development activities as the primary means of achieving the commitments on gender equality, equity and empowerment of women stemming from the International Conference on Population and Development. Therefore, gender equality was concerned not only with the roles, responsibilities and needs of women and men, but also with the interrelationships between them, sports leadership not being an exception.

However, throughout history, women had been excluded from many institutional spheres and their participation circumscribed. They often have less bargaining power to affect change on how institutions operate (Baden, 2000). As a result, the influence of gender dynamics (relationships and interactions between and among girls, boys, women and men) may not be differentiated between men and women in sports leadership, authority, force and control levels depending on one’s’ bargaining power. The gender dynamics may influence women’s ability and capability to participate in the leadership of sports organizations. While most people are born either male or female, they are taught appropriate norms in society to be girls and boys who then grow into women and men (WHO, 2002).

Currently, with the exception of some Scandinavian countries, women remain underrepresented on boards of national sport organizations (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2014). A growing number of studies have emerged to examine and understand women’s under-representation. Researchers have examined this issue in a range of countries, for example, in Australia, currently; women make up only 22 percent of board chairs, 13 percent of chief executives and 15 percent of high-performance coaches despite more than 24,000 women having been supported by a leader in sport program established back in 2002 (Vodden-McKay and “Beez,” 2010; Sibson, 2010). In Canada, at present, 29% of the senior leadership positions are occupied by women within the Canadian Football League, while there is not a single woman working in a senior leadership position within the National Hockey League (NHL) (Schull et al., 2013; Karaçam and Koca, 2015). In Germany, not a single one of the 30 German companies reach a proportion of at least 30 percent female representation on its management board. In fact, more than one-third of the German companies don’t have a single woman on their board at all while just 16.7 percent have at least two women on the board (Pfister, 2010).

In the case of Africa, (Njou and Orchardson-mazrui,
gender relations and leadership in major social institutions, especially the state and its administrative apparatus. Basically they agreed that such institutions do not simply reflect gender relations and inequalities that originate elsewhere. Rather, they are actively created within their own organisations albeit usually in relation to those that prevail outside them (Walby, 1990; Yeatman, 1990). Further, such processes do not simply advance a monolithic patriarchal interest and affect all women in the same way; they are gendered in uneven and nuanced ways. This work developed alongside sociological study of work and organisations that produced similar conclusions: workplaces and organisations were themselves gendered as Dana Britton, (2016) found in relation to the North-American context.

In Australia this sociological investigation of work and organisation had already produced similar findings in a range of large organisations including many within the state (Burton, 1987). Burton (1987), introduced the concept of the mobilisation of masculine bias. She argued that 'ideas of masculinity and femininity are embedded in organisational arrangements. The opportunity to accumulate merit and the attribution of merit appear to be structured along gender lines' (p. 424). As a consequence, she concluded that male domination in institutions is sustained due to selection and promotion processes which favour men through the criteria and processes that are being used. Further studies have shown the gendered nature of promotion opportunities within public sector agencies in the US (Newman, 1995), the variety of gendered patterns of management in the UK public sector (Whitehead and Moodley, 1999) and how Scandinavian public sector organisations’ adjustment to change is inherently gendered (Jensen, 1998).

In relation to the transnational context, based on a study of managers, men and women, in high-technology, multinational companies in the UK, Wajcman (2009) concluded that despite women’s entry into senior management, the male model of management still prevails. Men’s behaviour remains the norm or standard against which women’s are measured. She significantly departed from Kanter’s (1977) that saw the job or position as operating according to organisational power. If that were the case, Wajcman reasoned, when women obtained management positions, gender inequality would end. She found, however, that women coming into senior management did not bring a more consultative, cooperative and caring style to the position; they were pressured to ‘manage like a man’. In fact, MacKenzie and Wajcman, discovered that ‘many women managers adapt and survive by being more male than the men’ (1999, p. 76). Women managers not only conformed to the male model to succeed in the workplace but they often adopted masculine patterns of (non) participation in households by hiring domestic services for cleaning, gardening and child care. According to Wajcman, women managers face a significant challenge, since they need to redefine and negotiate their gender identity. On the one hand they are

Gendered organizational theory

The pioneering work of Rosabeth Kanter, entitled Men and Women of the Corporation (1977), heralded the beginning of a range of studies investigating gender dynamics in organisations. Kanter’s way of thinking was ground-breaking and in the following decade, two streams of researchers further developed the concept of gender dynamics in organisational leadership. By the early 1990s, feminist theorists had achieved a broad consensus on
required to manage like a man, adopting a ‘rational
approach’ and working long hours, but on the other hand,
they are expected to present and preserve their femininity
in terms of appearance, sexuality and emotional behaviour.
However, as Wajcman (1999) explained, it is not only
women who face the challenge of negotiating a gender
identity; some men do not endorse the dominant male
model of management either. Managerial masculinities
originate from hegemonic masculinity and some men feel
alienated from the macho corporate culture, thus adopting
the prevailing styles of leadership can be confronting for
both men and women.

Kvande (2007) proposed that gender is dynamic and
flexible as we constantly create and accomplish it in
response to the social environment. By contrast to
understanding gender as inherited and/or comprised of
learned individual qualities, Kvande emphasised its
dynamic interactive pattern. She proposed, ‘I see gender
for men, as well as for women, as a social construction
created within specific social and historical locations that
both constrain and also contain the potential for radical
change. This implies that we can “do” gender in ways that
maintain existing gender relations, or we can challenge
them’ (Kvande, 2007, p. 61). Further, Kvande suggested
that the ‘doing gender’ perspective allows for identifying
patterns of gendered practices which are created not only
by individuals but also, importantly, by institutions and
organisations.

The critical feminist theory

Feminism began with the concern for the status of women
in the family and the right for women to vote. Modern
feminist theory (1960’s-1970) focused on reproductive
rights, economic freedom that resulted in the Equal Pay Act
of 1963 and the U.S. Title IX of 1972. Diverse forms of
feminism propose different ways of fighting for social
injustice including liberal feminism, which champions
personal autonomy and individual rights. It advocates for
equal opportunity, sharing power and transforming
institutions (Hartzell, 2003). Marxist feminist, on the other
hand, views power in terms of capitalism and focuses on
complete dismantling of oppressive structures. While
radical feminism views patriarchy as contaminating the
social structure and advocates for complete dismantling
and rebuilding of all structures so as to establish some form
of gender equality.

Geisinger (2011) was largely responsible for the
development of the critical feminist perspective, though she
often received criticism for not paying enough attention to
the intersections of women’s identities (Coleman, 2015).
Scholarships from critical feminist theory summarize the
theory as having the following underlying assumptions
(Geisinger, 2011): 1. Focus on cultural production, power
relations and ideological struggles. 2. Sports are social
constructions that change as power relations change and as
narratives and discourses change. 3. Research focuses the
meaning and organizations of sports, and on sports as sites
for cultural transformation. 4. Those who use them assume
that sports are more than reflections of society, and they
study; the ways people struggle over the organization &
meanings of sports. The discourses and images people use
to construct sports. Whose voices and perspectives are
used in discourses about sports in society? How dominant
discourses and power relations might be disrupted to
promote progressive changes (Coakley, 2008).

Using critical theories to take social action means using
sports to challenge and transform exploitive and oppressive
practices. It also means increasing the number and
diversity of sport participation opportunities. It questions
the ideological implications of the stories told about sports
in a culture. Finally, challenges the voices and perspectives
of those with power in society (Coakley, 2001). The critical
theory has weaknesses that include no clear guidelines for
identifying and assessing forms of resistance and strategies
for producing transformation. It also does not show unified
strategies for dealing with social problems, conflicts, and
injustice. It was therefore not adequate to describe the
study fully, hence it was blended with the feminist theories
which state that social life is pervasively gendered and
sports are gendered activities grounded primarily in the
values and experiences of men with power and influence.
Research focuses on how sports reproduce gendered ideas
and practices related to physicality, sexuality, and the body.
Those who use feminist theories study how sports are
involved in the production of ideas about masculinity and
femininity, strategies used by women to resist or challenge
dominant gender logic and the gendered dimensions of
sports and sport organizations.

Using feminist theories helps challenge aspects of sports
that systematically privilege men over women. It also
Exposes and transforms oppressive forms of sexism and
homophobia in sports. Feminists use sports as sites to
empower women and promote the notion of partnership
and competition with others. Feminist critical inquiry is
attributed to Karl Marx’s theories, and it is critical of the
use of knowledge by power elites to control others (Crotty,
1998). The critical ideological paradigm focuses on the way
in which power is structured by race, class, gender and
other systems of domination and oppression. Critical
perspectives not only aim at drawing attention to the
existing oppressive structures brought about by historical,
social and political factors, but they also seek to challenge
and transform those structures and to emancipate the
marginalized (Haverkamp and Young, 2007). As one of the
theories that utilize the critical perspective, feminism views
the world within the oppressive lens and reality as it is
related to power (Crotty, 1998; Sabo and Messner, 2001;
inquiry concerns finding facts, and highlighting the existing
inequalities in order to challenge the existing power
structures. Through feminism, females are given a voice to
bring their issues to the forefront (Kay and Jeans, 2008).

Previous research studies on leadership as well as
leadership theories placed women in subordinate position,
where men are perceived as having inherent leadership
Figure 1: Conceptual framework for gender analysis of the influence of power gender dynamics on women’s participation in sports leadership.

Qualities that were lacking in women such as intelligence, confidence, dominance and masculinity that make a leader effective (Sperandio, 2010). The leadership theories conceptualized leadership as a male preserve thus effectively locked out women from leadership positions. Although the second wave of feminism helped to provide equal access, resulting in a tremendous number of women entering into the male dominated spaces including participation in sports (Hanis-martin, 2006), women remain underrepresented in sports leadership positions. Sadly, the entry of women into male dominated areas was seen as a challenge to the traditional image of men and women, and those misconceptions of women in leadership positions still reign today especially in sports. For this reason, critical feminism becomes a relevant theory through which to explore gender dynamics and explicate how sport is considered as a sexist and male dominated institute (Sabo and Messner, 2001). As a postmodern feminist, I am opposed to the radical feminist notion of fighting men, rather I am cognizant of the important roles that both men and women play in society as promoted by the African traditional Societies in which "no sex was considered as being complete in itself." Further, researchers and various organizations propose that both men and women work together to promote women.

The critical feminist theory therefore creates a better understanding of the workplace experiences of women sports leaders in a predominantly male environment (Higgins et al., 2010). Burns (1987) aimed at developing a feminist theory that was used in studies on women in
leadership. Noting that previous studies on women leadership were conducted by men and framed within the male theoretical frameworks, it is imperative that a feminist perspective be developed and used for studies on participation of women in sports leadership. The gendered organizational theory provides investigations for the gender dynamics in sports organisations. Hence, because each person is able to narrate their experiences on participation in sports leadership from their own perspectives and construct meanings of those experiences and how they are influenced by the gender dynamics, critical feminist theory and gendered organizational theory seem to be appropriate theoretical perspectives for the influence of gender dynamics on women's participation in sports leadership.

Based on the concepts, theories and frameworks used in gender analysis reviewed above, a conceptual framework for gender analysis of the influence of gender dynamics on women’s participation in sports leadership shown in Figure 1 has been proposed.

From the above conceptual model, the demographic characteristics (Age, Gender, Level of education, Religion, Marital status, No. of years in sports, Kind of sports) and leadership characteristics (Power, Control, Authority, Force) of a leader determine the ability of an individual to make decisions. An individual is seen as being able to make decisions when they are able to transform exploitative and oppressive practices so as to increase participation in sports leadership. However, human beings have different perspectives of those with power in society. For instance, production of ideas is based on masculinity and femininity of a leader to be able to expose and transform oppression. All these are affected by gender dynamics which are reflected by gender relations and inequalities among men and women.

Effective participation of both men and women in sports leadership can be measured by investigating the representation and competence level of women and men in sports leadership of sports organizations. Occupying an executive position and being competent to manage the roles associated with that position, having the power of signature, having internal management and being able to communicate and coordinate organizational activities meant that individuals are good leaders. For one to obtain a leadership position, they go through a process. Different sports organizations have different structures, regulations, governing bodies, democratic processes, decision making processes, conflict of interest and duration of term of office. Once men and women obtain these sports leadership positions and perform effectively with competence, gender equity would be achieved and there would be gender focused governing bodies, equal participation of both men and women in sports leadership, equal representation of both men and women on the executive boards of these sports federations and finally, gender focused regulation bodies.

However, the independent variable (power) and the dependent variables (representation, competence and process) are intervened by the education level of women or the ability of women to interact with one another and with men. Policies and affirmative actions that have been put in place to encourage women to participate in sports leadership could also overcome men's domination of leadership positions. Finally, the identity of some women can enable them dominate over men.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Due to the desire to have effective participation of both gender, institutions need to work out strategies with communities on how to respond to the effects of gender dynamics on women’s participation in sports leadership. Additionally, effective participation hinges on different gender roles which define both genders hence creating gender stereotypes which affect women due to multiple roles they play. For Uganda, concerned institutions like Ministry of Education and sports, National Council of Sports, Uganda Olympic Committee, Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development, Local Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should work with communities to extend sports leadership training. There are chances of improvement where men and women gain and retain access to resources, opportunities that deal with sports leadership, negotiation of social relationships within families and sports organizations, and manage social networks when men and women respond positively to the sports leadership opportunities offered. Once men and women attitudes towards sports leadership is positive, effective participation of both genders would easily be achieved. It was therefore recommended that the aforementioned proposed conceptual framework for gender analysis of the power gender dynamics that influence women in sports leadership in Uganda and the rest of Africa should be adopted.

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