



The Moderating Effects of Institutional Framing on Authentic Leadership-Physical Asset Management Practices Relationships in Local Governments in Uganda

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to explore the moderating effect of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and physical asset management (PAM) practices within Local Governments (LGs) in Uganda. Given the complexities introduced by resource scarcity and toxic leadership environments, this study seeks to understand how institutional framing can influence the effectiveness of authentic leadership in managing physical assets. The study employed a cross-sectional research design, collecting quantitative data through a structured questionnaire administered to 261 employees from four selected LGs in Acoliland, mid-northern Uganda. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) to assess the relationships between the variables. The findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between authentic leadership and institutional framing, as well as between institutional framing and PAM practices. Notably, institutional framing was found to fully mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices, suggesting that the effectiveness of authentic leadership in enhancing PAM practices is contingent upon the presence of positive institutional framing. In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role of institutional framing in amplifying the impact of authentic leadership on PAM practices within LGs. The findings imply that policymakers and practitioners should focus on fostering positive institutional framing to improve the management of physical assets. Future research could benefit from exploring the long-term effects of institutional framing and authentic leadership on PAM practices, possibly incorporating qualitative methods to deepen the understanding of the causal relationships among these variables. The study is the first of its kind to examine the moderating role of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM in a local government setting in a developing country.

Keywords: Health Status, Foreign Direct Investment, Governance, GMM Method, Sub-Saharan Africa, Togo

1. Introduction

The emergence of effective Physical Asset Management (PAM) practices gained prominence in the early 1990s as a result of governance and procurement reforms. PAM practices form the backbone of how physical assets are managed, their operational frameworks, foundational principles, and leadership approaches. In recent years, numerous scholars and researchers have highlighted the significant influence of leadership and institutional factors on PAM practices (Iyaye, 2022). Leadership shapes the values and beliefs shared by organizational actors, which are crucial in shaping desired PAM practices. However, the relationship between leadership and organizational actors is contingent upon the framing of issues, particularly in the execution of PAM practices. The role of institutional framing in this relationship has emerged as a critical area of inquiry, attracting significant attention from researchers. Institutional framing refers to the ability of actors to perceive and construct issues in a way that is coherent and explainable (Purdy et al., 2019).

In the context of organizations, the connection between individuals is realized through leadership, which essentially involves influencing a group of actors to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2015). Effective leadership is critical in determining outcomes when cognitive faculties are fully developed, and partnerships are established among various actors. However, leadership is not a straightforward process, as it can manifest in two forms: toxic and authentic leadership (Duarte et al., 2021). In some cases, actors may be motivated to engage in the organization's functioning, a phenomenon known as institutional framing.

Entman (1993) posited that institutional framing involves selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and emphasizing them to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or treatment recommendation. Bateson (1972) suggested that institutional framing guides the perception and representation of institutional reality. In other words, institutional framing serves as a

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powerful tool that influences how actors view issues or problems and can enhance public engagement (Mahon & Wartick, 2003). The ongoing debate in the literature about the value of institutional framing reflects its complexity (Brewer & Gross, 2005). Kilburn (2009) argued that institutional framing is inherently present in actor interactions and is tied to actors' values and sense-making. Meriläinen and Vos (2013) concurred, emphasizing that values, being motivational beliefs about outcomes or favorable behaviors, are key in agenda-setting and framing. However, when frames do not align with pre-existing values, issues may be disregarded, a scenario particularly precarious in the management of physical assets within Local Governments (LGs) in Uganda.

In today's globalized world, governments are increasingly involved in PAM practices, where leadership and institutional challenges often arise, affecting the promotion of effective PAM practices. It is imperative for leaders in government organizations to recognize framing differences and their potential impact on the successful execution of PAM practices. Beitelmal et al. (2017) noted that leadership and institutional factors are among the most challenging barriers to establishing an effective PAM system. In Uganda's LGs, the challenge lies in promoting positive institutional framing and its impact on PAM practices, particularly in the face of regulative, normative, and cognitive/cultural challenges. Such promotion requires a deep understanding of the factors that instigate positive framing.

Given the potential for institutional framing issues and leadership toxicity observed in the management of physical assets by LGs in Uganda, it is essential to investigate how institutional framing affects the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. Specifically, this study aims to examine the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices, and to explore the moderating effect of institutional framing on this relationship. As such, the study assesses the significance of institutional framing on authentic leadership and PAM practices within LGs in Uganda, with a particular focus on the Acoliland region.

The study is based on two main assumptions. First, authentic leadership negatively affects PAM practices; second, institutional framing exacerbates this negative relationship. The primary purpose of this study is to explore the second assumption, which forms the basis for the major hypothesis developed for this research.

In summary, this research is significant for several reasons: First, it examines the moderating effect of institutional framing on the authentic leadership-PAM practices relationship, thereby enriching our understanding of how authentic leadership influences effective PAM practices through institutional framing. Second, it adds valuable Ugandan insights to the global research on PAM practices. Third, it scrutinizes the impact of authentic leadership dimensions and institutional framing on the effectiveness of PAM practices. Lastly, it investigates the moderating impact of institutional framing on the authentic leadership-PAM practices relationship. Therefore, the study's purpose is to examine the moderating role of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices in Uganda's LGs.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: first, a review of the relevant literature on authentic leadership and PAM practices, and their causal relationship is presented. This is followed by a concise review of institutional theory to propose the moderating effect of institutional framing on the authentic leadership-PAM practices linkage. The study then introduces the contextual characteristics of LGs in Uganda and presents hypotheses regarding the impact of authentic leadership on PAM practices, as well as the role of institutional framing in this relationship. Subsequently, the research method and data collection process are detailed, followed by the presentation and discussion of research findings. Finally, the paper concludes with implications for academics and practitioners.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Institutional Theor

Institutional theory has emerged as a prominent framework in organizational studies, emphasizing the role of the external environment in shaping the formal structures and practices within organizations. According to this theory, organizations are not just technical entities but are also socially constructed systems influenced by broader socio-economic forces. This view is supported by Obicci (2019), who asserts that institutions play a critical role in either enhancing or hindering organizational performance. Institutional theory posits that organizations tend to adopt structures and practices that are legitimized by their environment, even when such practices do not necessarily contribute to efficiency or effectiveness (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Over time, institutional theory has evolved, with scholars like Meyer and Rowan (1977) introducing the idea that organizational structures and processes can acquire meaning and stability independently of their functional effectiveness. This concept has been further developed by researchers such as Greenwood (2011), who emphasize that social behaviors and associated resources within organizations are deeply rooted in institutional rules and schemas.

Despite its widespread acceptance, institutional theory has faced criticism, particularly regarding its practical application. Critics argue that the theory overlooks the challenge of measuring institutional impacts accurately (Munir, 2019). However, proponents like Meyer and Höllerer (2014) argue that institutional theory has advanced beyond its initial limitations, moving from a static view of organizations as sedimented entities to recognizing them as dynamic systems capable of significant change. This perspective aligns with the idea that institutional

change, regardless of its magnitude, should be considered 'institutional,' and those driving such changes should be seen as institutional entrepreneurs (Hoogstraaten et al., 2020).

The theory's focus has also shifted towards understanding the processes through which organizations become institutionalized. Researchers such as Novotná et al. (2012) advocate for a greater emphasis on these processes rather than solely on the outcomes of institutionalization. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of PAM practices, where the interplay between institutional forces and organizational behaviour is critical to understanding how effective asset management practices are established and maintained.

2.2. Conceptual Review

The conceptual framework of this study seeks to explore the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices, with a particular focus on the moderating role of institutional framing. Authentic leadership, characterized by transparency, ethical conduct, and a focus on long-term objectives, has been identified as a significant determinant of organizational success, including in the domain of PAM practices. However, the effectiveness of authentic leadership in promoting robust PAM practices can be influenced by the institutional context in which it operates.

Institutional framing, which involves the selective emphasis of certain aspects of reality to shape perceptions and actions, plays a crucial role in this dynamic. According to Purdy et al. (2019), institutional framing allows leaders to create a sense of reality that aligns with organizational goals, thereby influencing how issues, including PAM practices, are perceived and addressed. In the context of local governments (LGs) in Uganda, where the management of physical assets occurs in a complex and often challenging environment, the role of institutional framing becomes even more critical.

The relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices has been explored in various studies, with researchers like Echelai (2013) developing frameworks aimed at maximizing the returns from physical assets while minimizing associated costs. However, these frameworks often overlook the institutional arrangements necessary for effective implementation. Novotná et al. (2012) highlight this gap, noting that institutional weaknesses can undermine the success of even the most well-designed asset management strategies.

Recent studies, such as those by Maletić et al. (2020), have begun to address this gap by examining the moderating role of institutional framing in the relationship between leadership and PAM practices. These studies suggest that the effectiveness of authentic leadership in promoting effective PAM practices is contingent upon the presence of supportive institutional frames. For instance, a positive institutional frame that emphasizes the importance of asset management can enhance the impact of authentic leadership, leading to better organizational outcomes.

The current study builds on this emerging body of literature by investigating how institutional framing moderates the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices in the specific context of Uganda's local governments. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the understanding of how institutional factors interact with leadership styles to influence the effectiveness of asset management practices in public sector organizations.

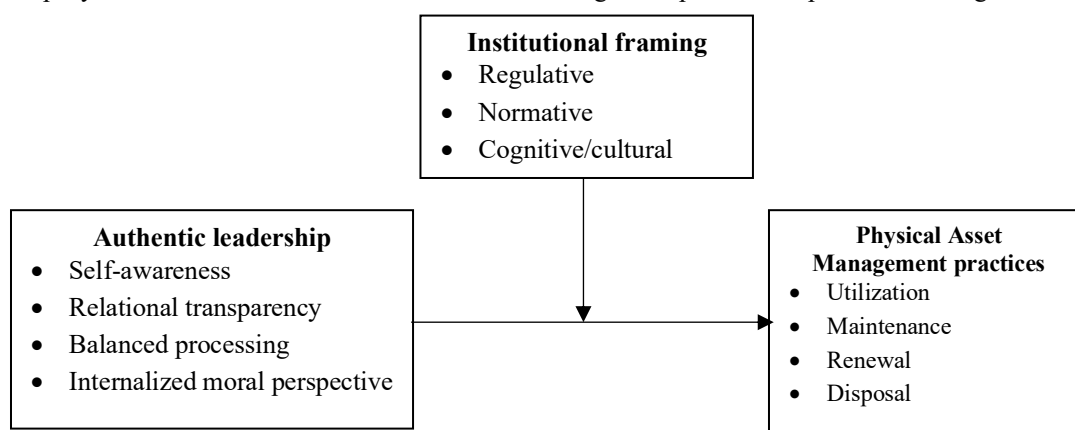


Figure 1: Model examining the moderator effect of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the variables of the study. Authentic leadership is conceived as the independent variable with the sub-variables of self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. PAM practices are conceived as the dependent variable with the sub-variables of utilization, maintenance, renewal, and disposal. Meanwhile, the institutional framing variable is conceived as the moderating variable with the sub-dimensions of regulative, normative, and cognitive/cultural.

2.3. Authentic Leadership

In all leadership styles, Feyisara and Fasuan (2018) assert there must be a certain morality in place to pursue a shared vision for every follower if any of the specific leadership styles is to succeed. Authentic leadership makes

a leader more virtuous and self-regulating, with the yearning for the utmost standards of moral leadership (May et al., 2003). In the midst of the complexity of PAM practices, shrouded with innumerable toxicities, authentic leadership is chosen for this study because it places much emphasis on the development of self-knowledge and self-awareness (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). These are required to recognize one's limitations as well as susceptibilities (Avolio et al., 2004). Authentic leadership acknowledges the importance of a moral compass and high ethical standards to guide leadership behavior (Garnder et al., 2005; Ilies et al., 2005).

2.4. Authentic Leadership And Physical Asset Management Practices

Since the last decade, the popularity of the authentic leadership construct is no doubt, as Gill and Caza (2018) claim. This is premised on the fact that an authentic leader behaves in such a manner of drawing upon and promoting positive psychological capabilities as well as a positive ethical climate in equal measures. It is outside contestation that an authentic leader fosters greater self-awareness, demonstrates internalized moral perspective, proven balanced processing of information, and tested relational transparency in unison with the followers (Walumbwa et al., 2008). In addition, an authentic leader fosters positive self-development of the self and the followers (Gardner et al., 2005). Literature affirms self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency as critical components of authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al. 2008).

Of the four components, self-awareness is believed by numerous authors to be the most important (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018). Probably, the belief is founded on the function of self-awareness, making leaders understand their strengths and weaknesses clearly, along with the observed self-image from the perspective of others. Being self-aware enables an authentic leader to openly and truly share information. In fact, the authentic leader puts thoughts into words with the expression of real feelings with no display of the distorted self (Gill & Caza, 2018). With this, the authentic leader is able to make no biased judgments, even decision-making backed up by careful and thorough analysis of all the relevant data. Thus, the authentic leader is always consistent with the ethical norms and actions of the self (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Obicci (2019) opines that the behaviours of authentic leaders are geared towards acting on the collective groups' values, preferences, and needs. Obicci (2019) over authentic leadership is a consideration leadership style where ethical consideration is of primary concern in decision-making. On top of this, Gardner et al. (2021) contend authentic leadership is fixated on authenticity, whereby self-awareness and being true to oneself distinguish the leader. As shown in previous research, an authentic leader is honest as such would, at all costs, avoids not uncertainty but allow subordinates to take risks which is itself creative (Walumbwa et al. 2008).

Evans and Price (2012) stated that leadership is one of the biggest passages in effective PAM practices. This viewpoint is supported by Kellick (2014), who equally proclaims that the missing PAM ingredient in many organizations is leadership. Specifically, to LGs, he asserts that PAM requires strong leadership to improve and maintain its position in integrated planning. He concludes by calling for improved leadership in PAM. Uppathampracha and Guoxin (2021) in their study found the relative importance of authentic leadership in enhancing organizational innovation. This seems appropriate for the actualization of ISO 55000, the first worldwide attempt to capture the generically applicable 'must do' items for the management of any asset type, worthy of serious study and application, as Ma et al. (2014) clinch in their study.

To achieve tangible results, Bakari et al. (2017), in their study on the implementation of planned change, determine that authentic leaders need to create employees' readiness for change (unfreezing) that, in turn, develops their commitment to change (moving) and behavioural support for change (refreezing). However, in their study, Fladerer and Braun (2020) resolved that only principled but not benevolent ethical organizational climates emerged as a contextual resource for authentic leadership. Albeit, Dixon (2014), in his study, rallies for the representation of all at the most senior levels of organizations. This, according to him, enables physical asset managers individually and collectively to strive to develop a multi-skilled, multi-agency, multi-layered networking culture and approaches. After all, as White (2011) discovered in his study, the attention of government changes, often reflecting straitened economic times, from influencing local authority PAM to highlighting the better use of the physical assets used by its departments.

Shinde's (2018) study results revealed a significant correlation between authentic leadership of the leaders and subordinates' well-being in the Petroleum industry. Similarly, Kim et al. (2022) in their study affirm that authentic self-enhancement had a positive indirect effect on job performance, whereas exaggerated self-enhancement had a negative indirect effect. In the same vein, Sainz et al. (2021) found that higher authentic leadership predicted lower organizational dehumanization and stress at work. The study also discovered; moreover, organizational dehumanization mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and stress at work. On the contrary, Kuranchie and Junior's (2021) study findings revealed that authentic leadership had an insignificant impact on organizational citizenship. Then again, a study by Mansur (2018) found that leadership commitment significantly influences the quality of financial statements and has a significant effect through physical asset optimization. Yet, in their study, Bish et al. (2014) discovered that Engineers need to be able to collaborate and influence others, complete objectives within organizational guidelines and be able to manage competency clusters effectively for success to be registered.

A study by Al Hassan et al. (2013) concluded on two fronts. First, authentic leadership help in creating an ethical work climate characterized by collective moral judgment. Secondly, the ethical work climate enhances the affective commitment among followers. This fits well with the aims of the family of Standards ISO 55000 on asset management that support a king of management oriented to obtaining value from physical assets (Parra et al., 2021). Consequentially, as Pudney et al. (2021) for example, found out in their study, the infrastructural projects had a positive net present value and a benefit-to-cash ratio greater than one, almost 60% of the planned expenditure was for projects for which real options analysis indicated the engineering being poor value for money. In all these, when published studies are examined, authentic leadership is seen as having a positive relationship with PAM practices. Looking at this situation in reverse, PAM practices can be expressed as a situation that can succeed when led by authentic leaders.

In spite of this probable occurrence, Brewer (2001) believes value-frame, a known practice in institutional framing, presents a position on an issue as being right (and others as wrong). It links the position to a specific core value. Obicci (2019) mentioned that framing is an ongoing process influenced by the surrounding environment and the involved members of the public. Although various studies have been presented on institutional framing (for example, Russell & Christie, 2021; Fred, 2020; Hazakis & Ioannidis, 2014), the area may be said to have been generally neglected in terms of published research on authentic leadership and PAM practices. Some researchers have associated institutional framing with authentic leadership (Fateh et al., 2021), while others linked institutional framing with PAM practices. Obicci (2019) concluded that institutional framing is also associated with authentic leadership and PAM practices. Although previous research on PAM practices focused on the content of leadership cooperation with the institutional arrangement, there is a lack of evidence on the interaction with the actors concerning institutional framing. This presents a gap in the literature. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the current study is as follows;

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices.

2.5. Moderating Role Of Institutional Framing

Literature suggests that PAM practices are improved by responsible leaders who acquire positive psychological states and an accommodating environment (Gardner et al., 2005). Since authentic leadership promotes fitting environments in an organization, it increases the transparency and intimate bond between the leaders and the followers, successively promoting the self-development of the followers. Literature attests that an authentic character in the leader makes the employees attracted to the leader trustfully (Nafula & Sasaka, 2019). In a similar vein, Ntayi et al. (2013) indicate a positive association between authentic leadership and the ratings of a safe environment in their study. Nguyen and Mohamed (2010) are convinced psychological factors like psychological states are the building blocks of the relationship between the employee and the organization as an implicit contract. Opoku and Ahmed (2014) contend that employees are willing to contribute to the organization unreservedly when they have a relational contract for which they execute it with loyalty and commitment in exchange for professional career development.

Literature often views PAM practices as a lengthy process consisting of four phases: (i) utilization, that is, the installation, testing, as well as commissioning, and use of the newly acquired or repaired physical assets; (ii) maintenance, that is effectively sustaining the physical asset for optimum availability, capability, and longevity in order to achieve performance objectives; (iii) renewal, that is returning the physical asset to its “as-new” condition; and (iv) disposal, that is derecognizing a physical asset that has touched the wind-up of its valuable life once not at all prospect economic benefits or service possible is extra predictable from its use (Nafula & Sasaka, 2019). Employees are more likely to curiously participate in PAM practices within the precinct of well-set institutional arrangements under the guidance of a responsible leader (Horlings et al., 2018).

Using institutional theory, Ntayi et al. (2013) found that leadership significantly promotes effective PAM practices. They found that the principles for responsible investment can be used by the physical asset owners as a collective industry in substituting mandatory legislation. Otherwise, PAM practices may go shattered. Therefore, as Biesenthal et al. (2018) conclude in their study, this problem stretches beyond technical issues; it must be considered socio-technical endeavours embedded in complex institutional frames. In their study, Purdy et al. (2017) found that frames as cognitive structures provide resources for actors and shape what they see as possible. The study further found that framing as an interactive process is a source of agency that is embedded in the everyday activities of individuals, groups, and organizations. Zieba and Schivinski's (2015) empirical analysis has shown that knowledge management-driven leadership directly influences culture and that culture positively influences innovation success. However, in another study, Azanza et al. (2013) found that authentic leadership partially mediates the positive relationship between flexibility-oriented organizational cultures and employees' job satisfaction. In their study, Bernardes et al. (2020) found that quality improvement through accreditation is related to organizational culture and authentic leadership. The study also found that participants who reported working in a more flexible culture also reported greater quality improvement implementation and authentic leadership practice.

Komljenovic (2021) avers the complex business nature coupled with an operational environment composed of closely interdependent systems is the environment in which contemporary organizations function. He illustrates the complexity is not only the nature of the internal structure but also management and deployed modern

technologies. In the midst of such an environment, there is a call for a new way to think, plan and act globally. To remain economically viable, organizations have to cope with reality. He opines that putting together the concepts of structured PAM and resilience through authentic leadership may provide a way out. Rasmussen et al. (2017) resolve that strategically motivated actors are able to frame policy problems in ways that disclose the mixture of motives, interests, and institutional mechanisms at play in the change process. As typified by two renowned PAM authors, John Hardwick and J.R. Lafraia (Lafraia et al. 2013) must as the management system standards, PAS 55 or ISO 55000 is vital, of course, but without the context of leadership and organizational culture, it is certain that not a derivation of maximum benefit can be attained from implementing PAM practices. Syaifudin et al. (2020) support this viewpoint. In fact, their study indicates the effectiveness of the performance of PAM can be influenced by the commitment of the leadership, the competence of goods management employees, internal control, application of regional PAM information systems.

Komljenovic et al. (2021) advocate for new methodologies and ways of thinking necessary to elaborate models which adequately support decision-making as organizations aim to maximize the value of their physical assets, optimize resources and ensure overall sustainability and resilience of the physical assets. They believe this goes a long way to alleviate organizations from the complex business and operational environment they find themselves in. In support of the improvement of the existing tools and provision of a strong scientific and technical basis for rigorous decision-making, they recommend having a highly skilled team involved in the management process, a multidisciplinary approach, and a long-term vision of the organization. Yet, as Abdul-Nour et al. (2021) found out, many challenges await PAM practices, including maintenance and updating and new market development. In their study, Kuusk and Gao (2021) found that the challenges can be overcome by people becoming second-point decision-makers who own the process and beneficiaries at the end.

Just like the trunk and branches of a tree, physical assets and management systems are visible and tangible (Lafraia et al., 2013). Although leadership, emotions, culture, and behaviors are invisible and intangible, they are essential to an organization. According to Lafraia et al. (2013), physical assets and management systems are visible and tangible, like the trunk and branches of a tree. Leadership, emotions, culture, and behaviors are invisible and intangible. Yet, they are essential to an organization. Just as a tree is not merely a collection of trunks, branches, and leaves, neither is an organization merely a collection of assets and their plans and processes. Without the right leadership, culture, and behaviors, an organization cannot produce its desired outcomes, just as without the right soil, nutrients, environment, and gardeners, a tree cannot produce its fruit. Leadership and culture in asset management are absolutely critical to its success. Leadership has got to provide the direction and the way forward for the organization, and with that leadership, it will help create the culture by doing what you say you're going to do and providing some strategic direction around the activities that you are going to undertake.

Panegossi and da Silva (2021) found a PAM policy integrated into organizational planning to guide and ensure the critical physical assets have a performance assured to deliver value to the organization until their replacement. In a similar study, Ekayanti et al. (2018) result showed that the variables of human resource quality local apparatus, PAM information system, and internal control system of government have a positive and significant effect on the variable effectiveness of management of fixed assets and organizational commitment has a positive effect but not significant to the effectiveness of fixed asset management. Molomo-Mphephu and Amadi-Echendu (2016) concluded that engineering AM performance depends on how well the employees execute their duties as they implement policy guidelines for managing such engineered assets. In spite of this, Phelps (2011) found a weak but discernable link between rationale and practice, but the link between practice and outcomes was unproven. Conversely, Evans and Price (2012) discovered that executive-level managers acknowledge the existence and importance of information assets in the organization but that hardly any mechanisms are in place to manage and govern these valuable physical assets. In their study, Alegere et al. (2020) conclude that strategically managing physical assets is fundamental to sustainable societies. They recommend that countries have sound public policies that enable PAM practices. Leky et al. (2020) found organizational culture positively affects PAM. At the same time, the study also found that organizational culture and leadership style variables do not affect PAM. Khadir-Poggi et al. (2015) found where there are recurring challenges in a highly competitive PAM industry; organizations rely heavily on their staff expertise in order to generate innovation while trying to downplay at the same time their dependency on their human assets. Valsania et al. (2012) found authentic leadership is a better predictor of employees' organizational citizenship behavior when these behaviors are impersonal and directed towards the organization than when they are directed towards other people. As a form of warning, Campanaro and Masic (2018) in their study found that key deficiencies in the data availability and reporting, governance, capacity, and financial management indicate increased risk for LG finance and the delivery of public services. From the premises, the researcher derived the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Institutional framework moderates the relationship between authentic leadership and physical asset management practices.

2.6. Critique Of The Literature Review

PAM practices are understood to benefit the locals by getting value for money, provision of quality services, and on-time provision of the same services as well as items. The benefits and effectiveness of PAM practices have been evaluated in various studies. In spite of this, the mere execution of PAM practices does not ensure the effective performance of local governments because of numerous challenges in translating PAM practices into a

collaborative and integrative practice capability within a properly arranged and managed institutional environment. This affirms that most LGs executing PAM practices may even suffer from delayed implementation of authentically made decisions due to misinterpretation and misplacement of institutional arrangement. Masdjojo and Dewi (2018) have analyzed why some government organizations successfully execute PAM practices while others fail. Achieving effective PAM practices fit relies on the leadership style and the framing of institutional settings. However, some research should be conducted on PAM practices and the success of LG's performance.

In the context of Uganda, no study has investigated the impacts of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. Only Ntayi et al. (2013) concluded that the legal and regulatory framework in Uganda is biased against SMEs in their quest to develop capital for their business. The study per se falls sort of tackling operational physical assets as the subject matter of this study. This calls for some more research to be conducted on PAM practices in view of authentic leadership and institutional arrangement for effective performance and success.

Thus, this study aims to resolve a gap in the literature by examining the moderating effect of institutional framing as a variable on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices using LGs as case studies. While some previous studies have examined authentic leadership and PAM practices (Kellick, 2014), not many have examined the role of institutional framing in the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices, more so in LG sets. Additionally, no research appears to exist in the published literature on how institutional framing affects this relationship. Therefore, this current study aims to examine the moderating effect of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. Thus, the effects of institutional framing on both authentic leadership and PAM practices are revealed.

2 Methodology

3.1. Research Model

In determining the moderator effect of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices, the researcher used Hayes' (2018) analysis. This kind of study is a relational survey research study which, according to Cresswell and Cresswell (2018), is a model that defines and determines the relationship between two or more variables. He asserts that this kind of research examines the degree of the relationship between the variables. He went on to claim that the research also examines the state and change of the variables affecting each other. This kind of research falls exactly within the realm of the current study.

Indeed, the research examined the variables of authentic leadership, institutional framing, and PAM practices. First, the researcher tested the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices, followed by the moderating effect of institutional framing on this first relationship.

3.2. Participants

The population for this research was comprised of employees working in the four districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, and Amuru in Acoliland, mid-north, Uganda. The research sample was comprised of 261 LG employees through purposive and simple random sampling according to their accessibility. Respectively, purposive sampling was used because of its flexibility to squeeze a lot of information out of the collected data from the known potential respondents, whereas simple random sampling was chosen for the possibility of each of the potential respondents having a chance to participate in the study.

3.3. Instruments

The researcher used the following scales to collect data during the study: PAM practices scale, ALQ scale, institutional framing scale, and stakeholder engagement scale. These tools were developed and used by their respective developers/researchers. They were adapted and modified to suit the purpose of this study on a 5-point Likert scale.

The researcher used two different scales to measure PAM practices. The first was the utilization, renewal, and disposal scale, which was developed by Maletić et al.'s (2019) to explore the relationship between PAM practices and sustainability performance. The second was the maintenance scale developed by Ntayi et al. (2013) to measure the impact of perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange on organizational culture within asset management organizations in Australia. The scale is made up of six items that the researcher modified to suit the purpose of the current study. The ALQ scale was developed by Walumbwa et al. (2008) with different dimensions of authentic leadership- self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. This is an original tool developed by the author to measure authentic leadership. The researcher adopted this scale and used it in the current study without modification. The institutional framing scale with five items for the regulative pillar, three for the normative pillar, and four for the cognitive/cultural pillar was adopted from the works of Ntayi et al. (2013). The items were reworded to reflect the context they are applied in, that is, LG instead of entrepreneurship. Lastly, the stakeholder engagement scale adopted by Cheung et al. (2011), 7, 7, and 6 for vigour, determination, and absorption, respectively. The researcher reworded these items to suit the purpose of the study. All these scales were empirically tested before and found suitable. The modified scales used in this study were also tested and found to be suitable for the study.

3.4. Procedure

The researcher first sought permission from the relevant LG authorities to conduct a type of research study. The researcher then collected data from LG employees in the four districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, and Amuru from May to August 2021. Each of the LG employees was informed about the nature of the study. The researcher then requested them to participate voluntarily in the study. The researcher then collected written informed consent forms from each of the LG employees who participated in the study. Although each was included in the study purpose, the researcher gave them assurance of confidentiality so that anyone could withdraw at any point, just like joining, which was voluntary. With the self-administered form of a questionnaire, the survey researcher was able to have a high response rate of 92.2% due to personal conferment with the respondents. There were two follow-ups with the respondents every week to remind them and ensure that the respondents filled out the questionnaire. Essentially, the current study was of the nature of cross-sectional design, a correlation and simple mediator model which the researcher used.

3.5. Data Analysis

Having collected the quantitative data, the researcher checked for potential errors, which indeed were found. The researcher then performed the missing value and extreme value analysis to eradicate the errors. The researcher eliminated any missing data on each scale. The researcher also determined data with missing values wherein the average scores of these data were determined according to the serial average method. The researcher used the Z scores to determine outliers for each continuous variable. Once the researcher deemed the data to be ready, the processed data were then analyzed using t-tests. The research also used correlation analysis to determine the relationship between the variables via the SPSS version 23.0 program. Lastly, the researcher, with the help of Hayes' process, performed an analysis of the model with the purpose of testing the moderator effect.

4. Results / Analysis

Provide In this section; the researcher presents the results of the study in terms of the response rate,

4.1. Response Rate

The questionnaire for this study was self-administered to the LG employees of the selected districts in Acoliland, with the details of the response rate summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Response rate

Response items	Rate
Questionnaire dispensed	283
Questionnaires reverted	282
Questionnaire (s) not reverted	1
Questionnaires reverted but unsuitable for inclusion	21
Returned suitable questionnaires	261
Unsuitable Response rate	99.6%
Suitable response rate	92.2%

Source: Calculated by the author

Table 1 shows that the final usable questionnaire is 261, which is 92.2% of the specified sample. It can be supposed that the response rate of 92.2% in this study reveals the degree of study relevance to respondents and keenly follows up with the respondents.

4.2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics Of The Respondents

In Table 2 below, the researcher presents the information regarding the socio-demographic data on all the participants of the study.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of the participants' socio-demographic variables.

Socio-demographic items	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Sex of respondents	Male	149	59.9
	Female	100	40.1
Age of respondents	42-52 years	116	46.6
	31-41 years	87	34.9
	53-64 years	21	8.4
	20-30 years	21	8.4
	65 years	4	1.6
Academic qualifications of respondents	Postgraduate Diplomas	105	42
	Bachelor's degrees	70	28
	Masters' degrees	42	17
	Diplomas	25	10
	Others	07	3
	11 to 16 years	106	42.6

Experience of service with local governments	6 to 11 years	57	22.9
	17 to 22 years	33	13.3
	0 to 5 years	31	12.4
Number of years in this current local government	11 years and above	65	26.1
	6 to 11 years	121	48.6
	0 to 5 years	63	25.3
	23+ years	22	8.8
Duration in the current position in this local government	5 to 19 years	102	41.0
	0 to 4 years	88	35.3
	11 years and above	59	23.7

Source: Calculated by the Author

Table 2 indicates that of the participants LG employees, 149 (59.9%) were male, whilst 100 (40.1%) were female. This shows that there was gender disparity among the employees in the selected LGs. As many as 116 of the respondents were in the age bracket of 42-52 making 46.6% of the surveyed respondents. This is not a good finding since many of the respondents were about to clock the retirement age with probably less concentration on their work. With 105 respondents having a postgraduate qualification, 42% of the surveyed respondents is a good indicator that a fairly good number of the respondents were educated. More respondents (106) had the experience of 11-16 years in 42 revealing the potential benefits of the institutional memory of working with LG so being enjoyed in the selected LGs. A total of 121 respondents (68.6%) had worked in their current LGs for 6 to 11 years, demonstrating that the respondents had a fairly good knowledge of the working environment in their LGs. 102 (41%) of the respondents being in their current position for between 5 and 19 years shows that they were well acquainted with what they were doing.

4.3. Kurtosis And Skewness Test

After conducting the outliers, the researcher applied skewness and kurtosis to identify the shape of the distribution. Hair et al. (2010) proclaim a positive skewness denotes the distribution is moved towards the left and the tails toward the right. Meanwhile, negative skewness is when the distribution is moved toward the right and the tail to the left. Table 3 presents the skewness and kurtosis values for every one of the items of this study.

TABLE 3: Kurtosis and Skewness

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	St.	St.	St.	St.	St.	St.	S.E	St.	S.E
PAM	261	1.79	4.53	3.580	.62654	-.799	.151	-.180	.300
practices				2					
Authentic	261	1.63	4.88	3.862	.59474	-1.012	.151	.906	.300
Leadership				5					
Institutiona	261	1.78	4.67	3.686	.65937	-.870	.151	.002	.300
l Framing				8					
Valid N	261								
(listwise)									

Source: Calculate by the author

The results in Table 3 indicate all the study variables stand inside the normal range of skewness and kurtosis (that is ≤ 2.58), showing both positive and negative (right- and left-skewed data). Since this study employs more than 200 cases, the sample size is large enough. It means, therefore, that the researcher can avoid the incidence of little non-normal univariate distribution.

4.4. Reliability Of Measurement Scale

The researcher used Cronbach alpha found in SPSS ver. 23.0 to measure the reliability of the measurement instruments with the results presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Measure The Reliability Of The Measurement Instruments

Constructs	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
Physical asset management practices	108	0.972
Utilization	30	0.922
Maintenance	18	0.907
Renewal	30	0.925
Disposal	30	0.933
Authentic leadership	16	0.838
Self-awareness	4	0.870
Relational transparency	4	0.837
Internalized moral perspective	4	0.821
Balanced processing	4	0.790
Institutional framing	36	0.936

Regulative	15	0.909
Normative	9	0.867
Cognitive	12	0.900

Source: Calculate by the author

From Table 4 above, the scales of PAM practices, AL, and institutional framing each boast Cronbach's Alpha scores above 0.80, signifying excellent reliability.

4.5. Factor Loading of The Variables

4.5.1. Authentic Leadership Variable

The researcher performed a factor analysis procedure to decide the psychometric properties of the authentic leadership scale. An analysis of 16 items identified 4 dimensions with eigenvalues greater than 1.00. The eigenvalues were 4.788, 2.895, 2.403, and 1.337. The measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure) produced was found to be 0.738, which exceeds the commendable value of 0.8 (Hair et al., 2010). However, none of them was dropped since each of them contributed to one of the four factors, with factor loading oscillating from the lowest of .507 to the highest of .898. The researcher also obtained the Cronbach alpha for five factors of the authentic leadership scale, as displayed in Table 5.

Table 5: Reliability Analysis of the Authentic Leadership Factors

Factor	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1	5	0.865
Factor 2	5	0.843
Factor 3	5	0.815
Factor 4	4	0.790

Source: Calculate by the author

From Table 5 above, the four factors can separately explain the variance of 29.9%, 18.1%, 15.0%, and 8.4% obtained. Further, the KMO, which measures the sampling adequacy, was found to be 0.738 significant at .000, as shown in Table 7.26 above.

4.5.2. Institutional Framing Variable

The researcher performed a factor analysis procedure to determine the psychometric properties of the institutional framing scale. An analysis of 36 items identified 7 dimensions with eigenvalues > 1.00. The eigenvalues ranged between 11.323 and 1.567. The measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure) generated was found to be 0.844, which exceeds the commendable value of 0.8 (Hair et al., 2010). None of the 36 items used to measure institutional framing is dropped since each of them aided one of the seven factors. Besides, the researcher obtained the Cronbach alpha for the seven institutional framing factors, as displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Reliability of the Institutional Framing Factors

Factor	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1	36	0.936
Factor 2	7	0.873
Factor 3	5	0.895
Factor 4	3	0.953
Factor 5	3	0.922
Factor 6	3	0.946
Factor 7	2	0.833

Source: Calculate by the author

From Table 6 above, the seven factors can explain the variance between 31.5% and 4.4% gotten. Further, the KMO, which measures the sampling adequacy, was found to be 0.844 significant at .000, as shown in Table 6 above.

4.5.3. PAM Practices Variable

The researcher performed the factor analysis procedure to determine the psychometric properties of the PAM practices scale. An analysis of 108 items identified 26 dimensions with eigenvalues > 1.00. The eigenvalues ranged from 27.573 to 1.088. The measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure) produced stayed to be .852, which exceeds the commendable value of 0.8 (Hair et al., 2010). The researcher then utilized the Cronbach alpha approximate to ascertain the reliability of the PAM practices scale and other scales used in the study. The Cronbach alpha for the five factors of the PAM practices is shown in Table 7.

Table 5: Reliability of PAM practices Factors

Factor	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1	102	0.972
Factor 2	6	0.776

Factor 3	3	0.777
Factor 4	2	0.930
Factor 5	5	0.826

Source: Calculate by the author

From Table 7 the five factors can, correspondingly, explain the variance of 25.5%, 6.0%, 4.3%, 3.8%, and 3.4% gotten. Further, the KMO, which measures the sampling adequacy, was discovered to be 0.892 significant at .000, as shown in Table 5 above.

4.6. Descriptive Statistics Results

At the outset of data analysis for the current study, the researcher conducted certain prerequisite analyses to assess the reliability of the instrument used in the study. Specifically, in this context, the researcher obtained the average, standard deviation, kurtosis skewness, Cronbach alpha's value, and correlation analysis results. The researcher obtained these from the study respondents according to the aforementioned three scales, which are presented in Table 8.

In Table 8, as can be seen, the researcher examines the reliability of the scales according to their Cronbach's alpha values. The obtained results show that the scales and their respective sub-dimensions present sufficient reliability values (Taber, 2018).

Table 8: Interveriable correlation, arithmetic averages, and internal consistency coefficients of variables

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach Alpha (α)	Skewness	Kurtosis	Correlation		
						PAM	AL	IF
PAM practices	3.643	.566	0.972	-.799	-.180	(0.972)		
AL	3.902	.540	0.838	-1.012	.906	.546**	(0.838)	
IF	3.749	.596	0.936	-.870	.002	.808**	.525**	(0.936)

Note: (1). PAM: Physical Asset Management; (2). AL: Authentic Leadership; (3). IF: Institutional Framing; (4). Cronbach's reliability coefficients for the scales are in parentheses along the diagonal; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Source: Calculate by the author

The researcher performed the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to determine the correlation values and the direction of the relationship between the variables within the scope of this study. Table 2 presents the results of the analysis. When Table 2 is examined, a positive and significant relationship is found to exist between PAM practices and authentic leadership ($r = .546$, $p < .01$), institutional framing ($r = .808$, $p < .01$). And it can also be seen that authentic leadership is positively and significantly related to institutional framing ($r = .525$, $p < .01$). In essence, the researcher interpreted the correlation values shown in Table 2 in line with the direction given by Cohen and Cohen (1983). These authors state that variables or variables considered for moderator effect are expected to either strengthen or weaken the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

In addition, the researcher used the analysis technique developed by Hayes (2018) to test the moderator effect, which, incidentally, is the main purpose of the current study. So, in order to perform the moderator effect analyses of institutional framing, which is the main purpose of this study, the researcher considered the correlation values appropriate. Accordingly, a look at the relationship between authentic leadership, institutional framing, and PAM practices, as shown in Table 2 indicate that all the variables are in a meaningful relationship. Therefore, the researcher carried out subsequent analyses to examine the moderator effect of the institutional framing variable, which is considered the moderator variable and is the next process. Therefore, in the context of these data, the researcher tested the model, and the findings regarding the model are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

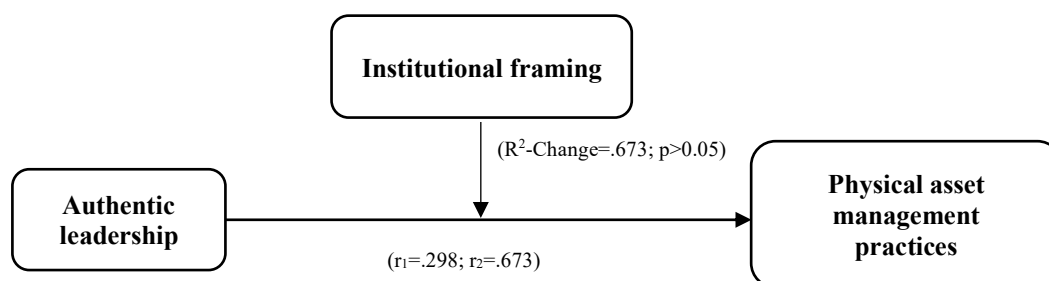


Figure 2: Investigation of the moderator effect of institutional framing variable on the relationship between authentic leadership and physical asset management practices.

Figure 2 illustrates the results of the analyses the researcher performed to examine the moderating effect of the institutional framing variable on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. Accordingly, the results show that the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices can be seen as positive and significant ($r = .298$; $p < .001$). This situation shows the first effect result. When the researcher

examines the moderating effect of institutional framing between authentic leadership and PAM practices, it is seen that this variable positively increases the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices ($r^1=.298^{**}$; $r^2=.673^{**}$). This result further increased the positive relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. In other words, as institutional framing increases authentic leadership, the PAM practices increase. Again, the researcher presents the results regarding the model in Table 9.

Table 9: Moderator effect analysis results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.546 ^a	.298	.295	.47503	.298	104.662	1	247	.000
2	.820 ^b	.673	.670	.32472	.376	282.600	1	246	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ethical Leadership

b. Predictors: (Constant), Ethical Leadership, Institutional Framing

Source: Calculate by the author

Upon examination of Table 3, it can be seen that the moderator effect of institutional framing is significant in the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices ($p=0.000$). As further shown, the moderator variable led to a statistically significant increase in $R=820$, $R\text{ Square} = 0.673$, $R\text{ Square Change} = 0.376$, $F\text{ Change} = 282.600$, $p < .001$ ($=0.000$). According to this result, institutional framing made a unique statistically significant effect or contribution of 0.376 to PAM practices. In view of that, institutional framing increases authentic leadership, and this situation increases PAM practices as a result. Institutional framing, especially in the LG employees, increases their sense of authentic leadership, and this situation causes great improvement in their PAM practices. To put it more clearly, institutional framing significantly affects the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. As a result of all these analyses, the following results highlights may be stated:

- There is a positive relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. Therefore, as authentic leadership increases, PAM practices increase
- Institutional framing improves the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. In other words, institutional framing increases authentic leadership as a way of leading, whilst PAM practices increase.

5. Discussion

The main goal of this study was to examine the moderating effect of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. The results have shown that institutional framing fully moderates the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. Besides, authentic leadership significantly affected institutional framing. These results are similar to those obtained by Chandima Ratnayake (2013) because their study indicated institutional framing is related to authentic leadership and PAM practices. This study corroborates earlier findings on the increasing role institutional framing can play in moderating the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. This result supports other studies which investigated the positive aspects of the institutional framing of PAM practices (Leky et al., 2020). In most studies conducted on the LGs' functioning, the positive effects of institutional framing have generally been mentioned (Valdivieso et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2019; Teles, 2012). In addition, with other studies on PAM practices considered, it can be understood that institutional framing has positively affected the practices and other related areas.

Much as previous studies seeking to establish the moderating effect of institutional framing received mixed results, Tarigan and Purba (2022) established that the analysis of the effects has not been effective, as seen from the incompatibility of timeliness and the accuracy of cost calculations against applicable regulations. Tabesh et al. (2019) investigated the framing effect, whose findings showed that framing interacts with decision makers' general risk-taking propensity and domain-specific expertise to shape choice. Similarly, Candraningrat et al. (2018) examined the framing information, disposition effect, and interaction made by investors by predicting stock prices. They found that information framing is one factor that determines investor behavior in decision-making in investment.

Although literature relating to the moderating effect of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices is limited, it has been argued that institutional framing reinforces or determines the success of PAM practices execution. A study by Gavikova et al. (2020) posit that organizational strategy determines the level of success of PAM practices. Cognitive or physical properties or social behaviors of an individual, as discovered by Chandima Ratnayake (2013), influence the functioning of technological systems and human-environment equilibrium as well execution of PAM practices. Government internal control systems exert a significant positive effect on the effectiveness of fixed asset management, as revealed in a study by Juliadi et al. (2017). Specifically, while investigating why institutions delegate assets to active managers, Gerakos et al. (2021) found institutions earning positive alphas on the assets that they delegated to active strategies. It also found that asset managers with large clients display more skills than those with small clients. The study concludes that nothing would have been done better to manage passive strategies in-house.

In their study, Graham et al. (2015) examined the impact of leadership and promotion regulatory focus on employees' willingness to engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior followers. They found that the promotion regulatory focus moderated this relationship. They further discovered this moderation is such that the effect held for followers with a low promotion focus but not for individuals with high promotion focus. Emami et al. (2019) investigated the judgment and decision-making of the entrepreneur in the face of decision anomalies. They found that the effects of cognitive bias, task framing, endowment, and the integration of information did not affect the entrepreneur's decision-making. In a study, Phuong and Takahashi (2020) examined the impact of authentic leadership on the creativity of employees. The study revealed a positive impact of authentic leadership on employee creativity.

From the literature and the empirical evidence uncovered in this study, it is clear that studies on the moderating effect of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices are conclusive. The utmost finding of this study is that a significant relationship exists between the variables and that institutional framing actually plays a moderator role in the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices in the LGs in Uganda.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the moderating effect of institutional framing on authentic leadership and PAM practices. The results have shown that institutional framing positively affects the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices. However, the researcher found that authentic leadership increase PAM practices. Additionally, the researcher concluded that institutional framing positively affects PAM practices. Therefore, this study, which emphasizes the importance of various studies that support the authenticity of the leaders and aim to promote positive institutional framing, may be considered as a guide in solving PAM practices problem issues.

7. Limitations And Future Recommendations

The researcher disclaims that certain limitations must be considered when the results of this study are to be interpreted. Firstly, given that the current study is quantitative, it stifles causal inferences from being drawn regarding the results, which are revealed in connection to the relationship between the studied variables. In this circumstance, it is useful to conduct qualitative studies as an additional. Secondly, the obtained data of this study are limited only to LG employees working in the four selected districts in Acoliland in mid-north Uganda; therefore, it may prove beneficial to conduct similar studies with different districts with varying LGs. Thirdly, this study examined the moderating effect of institutional framing on the relationship between authentic leadership and PAM practices; however, future studies could be designed according to different variables. Whilst this quantitative study presents the positive effects of institutional framing in general, conducting qualitative studies to examine the reasons behind such findings could take these results to a different dimension. Lastly, this study has shown that institutional framing increases authentic leadership, which in turn increases PAM practices; a qualitative study questioning the reasons for this finding could prove very useful to the overall literature in this area of research.

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