

Balancing Roles and Leading Performance: Examining the effect of organizational culture on work-Life balance and women's leadership performance in public organizations: A case study of Amhara National Regional State

By:

Fana Kinfe Gebreegziabher¹, Asemamaw Tilahun Debas²; Demis Alamirew Getahun³

Abstract

This study aims to explore how organizational culture influences the work-life balance and performance of women managers. Adopting an explanatory research design and employing quantitative approach, data were collected through a questionnaire survey among n = 416 randomly selected individuals working at various organizations within the Amhara National Regional State of Ethiopia. Once the data measurement instruments were established for validity and reliability, analysis of the data was carried out using STATA version 14. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was then employed to examine the pathways between variables. The empirical findings demonstrate that organizational culture exerts a direct impact on both female leadership performance and work-life balance. Furthermore, the analysis confirms a meaningful, positive correlation connecting organizational culture, personal-professional balance, and women's managerial effectiveness. By exploring these dynamics within public institutions, this paper addresses a critical deficiency in existing literature. Given these insights, the study advises executing comprehensive work-life balance frameworks throughout public institutions and calls for the formulation of policies that foster gender-responsive cultural environments across the broader national public sector.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Public Organizations, Women leadership performance, Work-life balance

1. Introduction

Female executives greatly influence workplace innovation to enable organizational success not only through the high level of their performance but also through the use of inclusive leadership and promoting knowledge sharing (Jing et al., 2022; Kong et al., 2024). In addition, they

¹ PhD Scholar in Management Studies, Department of Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Gondar, Ethiopia, fanikins@gmail.com, (Corresponding Author)

² Associate Professor, Department of Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Gondar, Gondar, Ethiopia. Email: ase2034@gmail.com

³ Associate Professor, Department of Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Gondar, Gondar, Ethiopia. Email: demisalamirew20@gmail.com

encourage flexible workplace structures to facilitate workers in aligning their personal and professional lives, which leads to enhancing the efficiency of organizations and improving the well-being of employees (Bebasari et al., 2024). The effectiveness of female managers in professional activities is determined by the availability of accommodating workplace environments, equality of relations between all people, and prospects for career development. According to the existing literature, gender-equal workplaces increase the extent of work-family enrichment and enhance the administrative performance of women at the same time (Yang & Kim, 2025). Therefore, organizations can become significant promoters of diversity through developing effective policies and mechanisms to promote female leadership (Padavic et al., 2020). Gender equality between professional and personal life of individuals is directly associated with the presence of successful female executives as accommodating workplace environment allows balancing various aspects of their lives.

However, research about systemic obstacles faced by women in public organizations, which can also be applied to institutions in Ethiopia, shows that discriminatory laws, lack of effective capacity building efforts, and gender stereotypes still constitute major impediments for women's career progression (Zhang & Basha, 2023). Among the obstacles identified are deeply rooted patriarchy, androcentric working environment, and socio-cultural pressure (Alemayehu, 2021).

Organizational culture has been conceptualized through various theoretical perspectives, highlighting its complex, dynamic, and multifaceted nature. As an example, Schein (2010) describes a stratified model of culture with deep-level assumptions, shared values, and artifacts as key elements, while Hofstede et al. (2010) emphasize the role of transnational indicators in shaping institutional behavior. Similarly, the systematic review carried out by Tadesse Bogale and Debela (2024) proves that the field of corporate culture analysis suffers from the existence of very different points of view on the subject matter, lacking a common understanding of the basic components of the phenomenon. However, empirical studies connecting the issue under consideration with certain professional outcomes remain inconsistent.

Researchers from different social sciences disciplines have examined various factors that influence effective leadership. The studies include factors such as individual qualities (Offermann & Foley, 2017), behavior (Almeida et al., 2020), cognitive processes (Dwivedi et al., 2020), and environment (Post, 2015). Even though all this research contributes significantly to the understanding of females as leaders, due to the abundance of literature, it is rather fragmented and complicated. While all these studies have brought knowledge on female leaders, they do not create a cohesive picture of the subject matter. Traditionally, studies in the sphere have either focused on investigating gender bias in performance evaluation (Brescoll, 2016) or the causes and consequences of gender ratios in company boards (Kirsch, 2018). Much less attention has been paid to the environment which enables women to be successful leaders in public institutions.

Public organizations increasingly require capable leaders who can respond to complex challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities to achieve institutional goals (Geerts et al., 2020). In Ethiopia, women leadership experiences are shaped by political, social, and cultural conditions that often limit advancement opportunities. Traditional gender expectations and the demands of balancing professional and family responsibilities continue to affect leadership experiences among women (UN Women, 2025).

Organizational culture implementation challenges and gaps between theory and practice in Ethiopian public organizations may hinder women's leadership effectiveness and limit their advancement into higher leadership positions (Deresso et al., 2024). In addition, evidence regarding the effectiveness of organizational culture varies across organizational settings. The majority of studies conducted in the area of organizational culture have been done on private sector organizations and business organizations, neglecting public sector organizations (Jabeen & Isakovic, 2018).

Despite previous studies on the relationship between the culture of the organization and the balance between the personal and professional life of the woman and the management effectiveness of women, there is very little empirical evidence on this topic in the Ethiopian setting, and almost none for the Amhara National Regional State in particular. In addition, current literature lacks adequate information on the effectiveness of female managers in public sector firms (Farhan, 2022). It is evident that these empirical gaps make it necessary to conduct academic research. This type of research is needed to create effective strategies and institutional guidelines for the specific setting of public institutions in this particular area.

Therefore, this study investigates the unique mechanisms by which institutional culture influences female managerial productivity and work-life balance in the public service sector of the Amhara region of Ethiopia. To guide this study, the research operates under two primary objectives. These are

- To analyze the specific effect that organizational culture exerts on the work-life balance of employees.
- To investigate how organizational culture affects the overall leadership performance of women.

2. Literature review

Theoretical Consideration

Organizational culture theory Denison

Theoretical perspectives on organizational culture, leadership, and leadership performance are strongly linked and together play a significant role in strengthening women's leadership performance when considered together (Abawari et al., 2024; Bass, 1985; Denison, 1990; Naveed et al., 2022; Schein, 2010). Grounded in a key conceptually and empirically supported framework, Denison's organizational culture theory is a framework that outlines how organizational values and managerial practice affect the effectiveness of leadership (Nasir et al., 2022; Naveed et al., 2022). The theory highlights the dimensions of involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission organizational culture dimensions that influence employee behavior and organizational performance and improve leadership effectiveness in different contexts (Lartey & Ampofo, 2025). This theoretical framework is very useful in explaining the direct impact of organizational culture on leadership of women because the theory operates at the organizational level. Empowerment, flexibility, fairness, and strategic alignment are the elements from the model's key dimensions. Such criteria are perfectly suitable for the analysis of the

administrative performance of female executives and the personal and professional balance of such individuals.

Work-life balance theory

The personal-Professional Balance Theory considers different means by which individuals cope with the contradictions between personal and professional roles, specifically the mechanisms through which this helps individuals to be more efficient in both areas (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The personal-Professional Balance Theory is aimed at reducing the degree of role conflict and increasing role enrichment, thus helping people find a proper balance between professional and personal activities. Work-life balance offers a valuable framework for understanding how employees and leaders manage competing responsibilities across personal and professional domains. It is particularly relevant in situations where people are expected to fulfill challenging duties in their profession alongside personal and family commitments (Haar et al., 2014). In this case, therefore, the theory becomes a suitable framework for exploring work-life balance in women leaders within public organizations.

Social role theory

The current study used Social Role Theory in order to understand how culturally defined gender roles and societal expectations impact leadership experience and performance among women. According to Social Role Theory, socially defined roles have an effect on the leadership chances of individuals as well as the evaluation of their leadership effectiveness (Eagly & Wood, 2012). In organizations, according to the Social Role Theory, culturally defined gender roles define the behavior of women and men. Women in leadership positions often experience the dual demands of organizational responsibilities and family caregiving which may influence their leadership experience as well as their prospect for career advancement (Bebasari et al., 2024). Hence, social role theory is an appropriate theoretical perspective for examining the factors that shape women's leadership in public organizations.

The current study establishes the theoretical framework for studying organizational culture, work-life balance and the performance of woman leaders, taking into consideration the theories of organizational culture by Denison, work-life balance theory, and social role theory. These theories support the development of the study hypothesis and provide a framework for interpreting the findings.

Organizational culture and women leadership performance

The above discussion clearly indicates that there is a strong relationship between the corporate environment and the administrative efficiency of women executives. The fact of the matter is that the culture of any organization based on involvement, commitment, and efficiency results in success in the long run (Denison et al., 2014; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Schein, 2010). From the theoretical perspective, corporate culture refers to a collection of beliefs, values, and practices determining how people work together in making strategic decisions and managing changes (Ouellette et al., 2020; Yip et al., 2020). A motivating and equalizing corporate culture enable women to control their strategic decisions, manage organizational change effectively, and cope with changing outside pressures (Eagly & Heilman, 2016; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2024). Such work environment builds psychological safety, fosters collaborative approach, and paves way for female governance officials to assert themselves and increase organizational effectiveness

(Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). On the other hand, skilled female management contributes to improving decision-making processes, increasing flexibility of organizations, and implementing systemic changes in uncertain working environment (Rao & Tilt, 2016; Shaukat et al., 2021). Exploring such relationships helps to gain an overall insight into how internal corporate culture shapes the outcome of female management work, thus ensuring organizational sustainability. Based on the above theory and research findings, this study will test the following hypothesis.

H₁: Organizational culture shares a positive relationship with the leadership performance of women within public institutions.

Organizational Culture and Work-Life Balance

Organizational culture plays a critical role in determining how well individuals manage the interface between professional commitments and their personal lives by establishing values, ethical behavior, and practices inside the organization. As far as an organizational setting fosters flexibility, adaptability, cooperation, and unity in vision for its employees, it is able to offer them necessary assistance in dealing with the contradictions between professional and personal demands (Denison et al., 2014; Hartnell et al., 2016; Kapoor & Pandey, 2024). This idea is consistent with Schein's (2010) concept according to which business culture is expressed through shared assumptions and ethical beliefs guiding members' behavior and decision-making. Similarly (Kotter, 2008) argues that organizational success depends on aligning employees' behaviors with the organization's cultural values and strategic objectives. For women leaders, supportive organizational cultures that help flexibility, inclusiveness, and innovation can promote work-life balance and leadership effectiveness (Kossek et al., 2023). In the contrary, organizational environments characterized by rigid structures and limited flexibility may increase work-family conflict and restrict women's opportunities to perform effectively in leadership roles. Furthermore, an integrated supportive organizational cultures with gender sensitive strategies can strengthen women's capacity to balance professional and personal responsibilities (Baba et al., 2025). The theoretical foundation provided by Schein offers an excellent approach to analyzing the relationship between the organizational culture and the governance of women along with personal-professional balance. Although the extant literature has focused mainly on the analysis of these factors in private organizations and corporate settings, there are very few empirical studies that have considered the public sector organizations. As public organizations operate in a distinct bureaucracy, regulatory environment and administration system, insights obtained from the empirical studies of business organizations cannot easily be applied to public service organizations. This study aims at filling this gap in the literature through investigating the relationship between the corporate culture and work-life balance in state-controlled organizations. In view of the above, the following hypothesis can be advanced.

H₂: Organizational culture maintains a positive relationship with work-life balance within public organizations.

Using the theories discussed above as the foundation for this study, this research puts forward a conceptual framework that seeks to explore the interconnections between organizational culture, work - life balance, and women leadership performance in public organizations. The framework illustrates the expected relationships among these variables and serves as the foundation for testing the study's hypotheses. It also explains how organizational culture may influence

employees' ability to balance work and personal responsibilities. This relationship depicted below on figure 1.

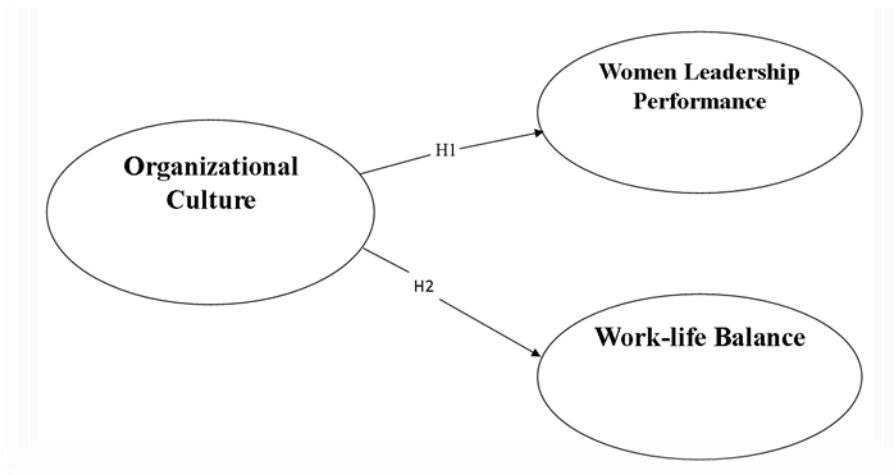


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study

Source: Authors own development, 2025

3. Materials and Methods

Research setting, Design and Temporal Scope

In this study, a descriptive and explanatory research design is adopted, which is implemented by applying structured quantitative approaches. The data were collected using a cross-sectional research design at a particular moment in time. Regarding geography, this study focuses on public service institutions located in 22 Zonal administrations and urban areas of the Amhara National Regional State.

The data were collected over a period of three months, which falls between June 2025 and August 2025. As far as methodology is concerned, this study focuses on investigating how the institutional culture affects the balance between personal and professional life of female executives as well as their administrative performance. In order to collect the data systematically, standardized questionnaires were used.

Target Population and Sampling Strategy

For this research study, the target population includes all the women managers who work in the government organizations under Amhara National Regional State. For assessing the impacts of organizational culture on professional-personal balance and managerial performance, a simple random sampling approach was used in selecting participants. For sample size determination Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1973) were used. To estimate the sample size, a 95% confidence interval, the population size (N=2280), and margin of error (4.5%) was considered. Therefore, n is calculated as

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2} = 406$$

and with a 10% for contingency, the final sample size became 447. During the entire process of field administration, there were 24 non-responding questionnaires, as well as 7 surveys that were thrown out for incompleteness. In the end, 416 successfully filled-out surveys were obtained, amounting to a solid 93% response rate, and furthered to data analysis.

Variables and Measurement

Organizational culture was measured using a structured questionnaire developed from established organizational culture frameworks (Denison et al., 2014; Denison, 2000; Schein, 2010) and adapted to suit the context of Ethiopian public sector organizations. The instrument consisted of 20 items representing four dimensions: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. Each dimension was measured using five statements that captured respondents' perceptions of the values, norms, and practices reflected in their organizations. The responses provide insight into how women leaders perceive the organizational environment and how those cultural characteristics may influence their leadership performance. In this case, the dependent variable is the performance of the female leaders and this was done using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass & Avolio (2004). MLQ is an extremely popular scale for assessing the management behavior of people. Under the theoretical framework of Transformational Leadership, this study measures the four dimensions of managerial outcomes of the women that include Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, and Inspirational Motivation. Every dimension has five measurement items which result in a total number of twenty items. All of these dimensions combined measure the leadership behavior of women.

The study uses a multidimensional scale to measure the various aspects of the Personal Professional Balance of female executives that has been developed by Avadhani & B Menon (2022). This scale contains 34 items in total distributed into six broad categories which include Work Nature, Workload, Job Flexibility, Compensation, Organizational Support, and Personal Life with between five to seven items in each category. Respondents evaluated all survey items using a five-point Likert scale that spanned from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To manage a large number of items and improve the efficiency of the measurement model, item parceling helps to simplify complex statistical models while maintaining acceptable levels of reliability and validity and reducing potential measurement error. This measurement approach enables a robust assessment of work-life balance within the study framework.

Model Estimation

This approach supports both reflective and formative measurement models by estimating the measurement model before the structural model and is appropriate for examining complex relationships in social & administrative research (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2023; StataCorp, 2015).

The measurement model was evaluated to determine whether it adequately represented the relationship among the study constructs prior to testing the proposed hypothesis. This process included assessing model fit and construct validity to ensure that the measures were suitable for subsequent structural analysis. Having established that the measurement model satisfies the

necessary evaluation criteria, To evaluate how organizational culture impacts personal-professional harmony and the managerial execution of women within public institutions, the study applied structural equation modeling. SEM was chosen since it helps to test several relationships among the latent variables simultaneously, while taking care of the measurement error, making well suited to the conceptual framework of the study.

To make sure the adequacy of the predicted model, the study evaluated its goodness of fit using SEM. The evaluation consisted of the Chi-square (X^2) statistic, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSA < 0.05), Goodness-of-Fit Index (CFI > 0.90), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI > 0.90), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI > 0.95) (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2023), indicating a good fit. When the obtained values are greater than the recommended threshold values, confirming that the estimated SEM model fits the data and is appropriate for answering the research questions along with the study objectives.

Prior literature indicates that reflective measurement models consistently demonstrate robust reliability alongside strong discriminant and convergent validity. The assessment of reliability is conducted through multiple criteria, specifically factor loadings, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). To evaluate discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was applied, where a value below 0.85 indicates adequate distinctiveness between constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). Lastly, convergent validity was determined via the Average Variance Extracted (AVE); an AVE value exceeding 0.50 confirms that the underlying construct accounts for a sufficient proportion of the variance in its corresponding items.

Reliability and validity

Before fitting the final model, reliability test was used to determine the reliability, appropriateness, and practicality of the research instrument. Both the stability and internal consistency of the research instrument were measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and Composite Reliability (CR). Construct validity of the instrument was also confirmed through the calculation of Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Values above 0.7 for both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) indicate reliability and stability of the measures. Meanwhile, an AVE score higher than 0.5 confirms that the latent variables account for an acceptable amount of variance captured from their respective items.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principle guided every stage of this research. The Institutional Research Ethics Review Committee (IRERC) of the University of Gondar (UoG) officially granted ethics approval on May 13, 2025. Prior to the process of collecting information, all respondents were thoroughly informed about the objective of the study and the voluntary nature of their participation in it. Moreover, it was ensured that participants had the option to pull out of the research at any point without any repercussions. The questionnaires were administered after the consent of the participant has been obtained. To confidentiality of the participants was ensured by anonymizing their responses. Throughout the study, the researcher adhered to accepted standards of research integrity by ensuring that all data were collected, analyzed, and reported honestly, without fabrication, falsification, or misinterpretation of findings. Particular attention was also given to the cultural and organizational context of Ethiopian public sector institutions, especially when

engaging women leaders. These ethical procedures were implemented to safeguard participants' rights and to strengthen the credibility, integrity, and trustworthiness of the study findings (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

4. Results

Demographic characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the 416 women leaders who were part of the study, showing the categories of demographic characteristics (expressed in frequencies and percentages) as well as the background characteristics (expressed in mean and standard deviation).

As far as the categorical characteristics are concerned, the greatest number of respondents were those who possessed the first degree, comprising 287 women (69.0%), followed by those who had the master's degree, consisting of 127 women (30.5%). The fewest respondents with regards to educational qualifications were the two respondents (0.5%) who had the diploma as their highest level of qualification, and no respondents had the PhD, showing that the sample comprised mostly of those leaders who have attained at least the bachelor degree level education. As far as marital status is concerned, married women comprised the greatest number of respondents, totaling 303 respondents (72.8%), followed by single women with 59 respondents (14.2%).

Regarding the continuous background characteristics, the mean age of the respondents was 35 years ($SD = 5$), implying that the participants are relatively young females who occupy managerial positions. In terms of the span of control, the mean number of employees per respondent was 46 ($SD = 182$); however, the large value of the standard deviation suggests that there is much variability in the span of control among respondents; that is, some female managers supervise more subordinates than others do. In terms of family background, the mean number of family members per respondent was 4 ($SD = 2$). Regarding the professional background, the respondents reported having a mean of 13.95 years ($SD = 5.91$) of work experience in total, of which 6.29 years ($SD = 3.69$) had been served in a managerial position.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n = 416)

Variable	Category	n		Mean (SD)	%
Educational level	Diploma	2		–	0.5
	Degree	287		–	69.0
	Masters	127		–	30.5
	PhD	0		–	0.0
Marital status	Married	303		–	72.8
	Single	59		–	14.2
	Divorced	40		–	9.6
	Widowed	14		–	3.4

Age (years)	–	416		35 (5)	–
Employees supervised (number)	–	416		46 (182)	–
Family size (number)	–	416		4 (2)	–
Total work experience (years)	–	416		13.95 (5.91)	–
Leadership experience (years)	–	416		6.29 (3.69)	–

Source: Survey, 2025

Assessment of reflective measurement model

Before analyzing the structural model, it was decided to analyze the measurement model to confirm whether it was up to the required criteria of reliability and validity. During this first stage of assessment, items and dimensions, which did not meet all the necessary psychometric criteria, were deleted from the analysis in order to improve the validity of the latent constructs. In particular, the mission dimension of organizational culture as well as the workload, compensation, and organizational support dimensions of work-life balance were excluded owing to low factor loadings and weak influence on construct validity. These items were deleted following the criteria of structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2023).

This research study was done with the help of STATA statistical software. This software package includes advanced data management features and econometric analysis (StataCorp, 2015). STATA was used to conduct the study using robust estimation methods like mediation analysis, bootstrapping, and analysis of complex survey data.

Figure 2 indicates the result of the SEM test. Here are shown the results of measurement and structure tests of the model proposed. Measurement model is characterized by the relationship between latent variable and its indicators, while structural model is characterized by the relationship between the latent variables. In total, the final model has a great fitness and good statistical values ($\chi^2/df=2.14$, $p<0.001$, $RMSEA=0.052$, $TLI=0.945$, $CFI=0.957$, and $SRMR=0.043$).

It can be seen from the results that organizational culture plays an important role as a determinant of both work-life balance and leadership performance of women. In particular, organizational culture significantly positively affected work-life balance ($\beta =0.85$, $p<0.001$), meaning that the organizational support in terms of values, norms and work-related practices helps to deal with work and personal life better. Organizational culture had a positive effect on women's leadership performance ($\beta =0.70$, $p<0.001$), implying that supportive organizational culture allows women to perform their leadership activities more effectively. The residual term related to each endogenous variable shows the part of variance that could not be explained by organizational culture and is affected by other variables that were not considered in the analysis. In general, the obtained empirical results confirm the hypothesis about the positive impact of organizational culture on work-life balance and women's leadership performance.

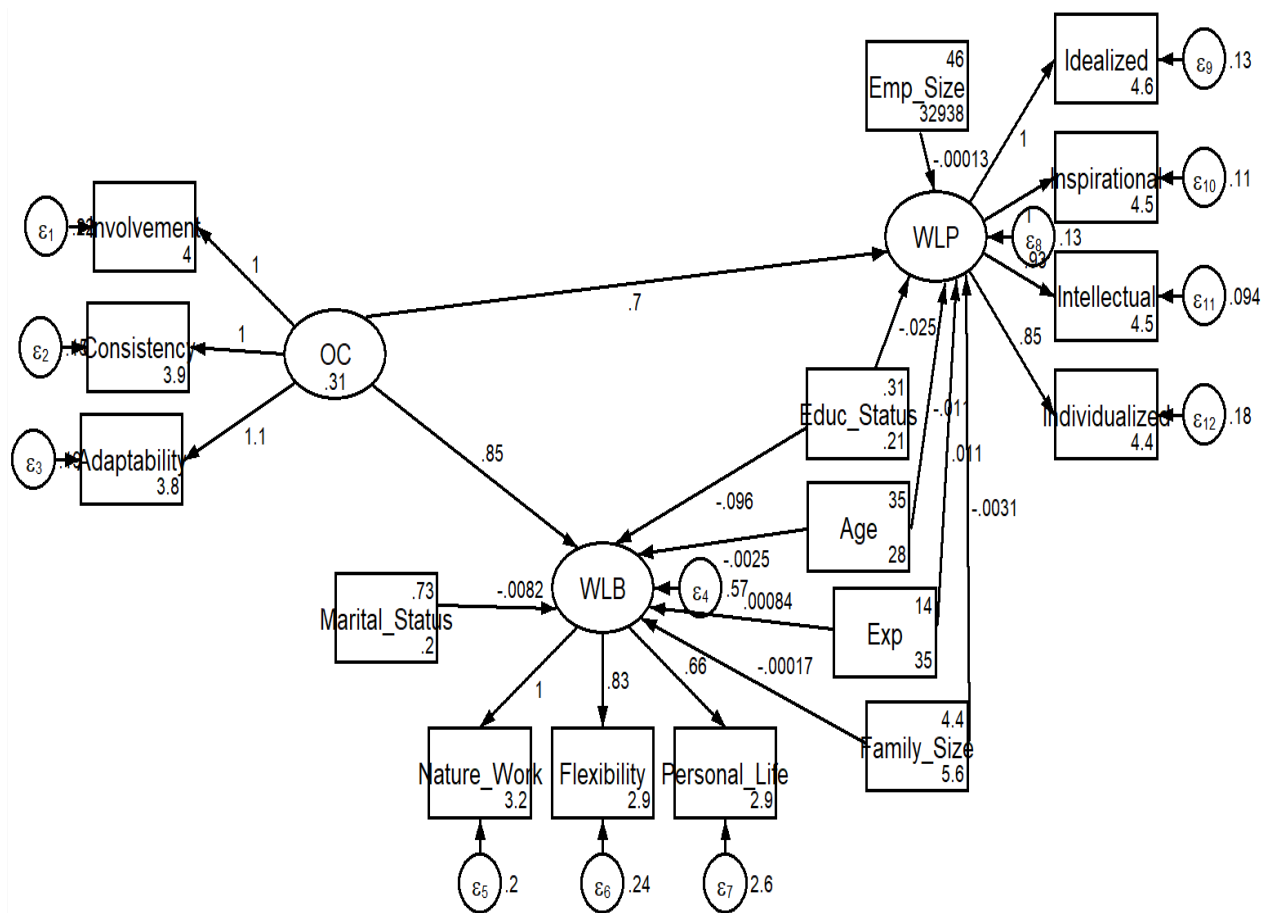


Figure 2 . SEM diagram

The results that have been derived from evaluating the reliability and convergent validity of the proposed measurement model are shown in the following Table 2 below. The level of internal consistency between the latent variables has been evaluated based on the Cronbach's alpha values of 0.82 for work-life balance, 0.81 for organizational culture, and 0.87 for leadership performance of women. As all of these values exceed the required value of 0.70, the internal consistency is very high. In addition, since the AVE values of each construct are above 0.50, convergent validity has been proved.

Table 2: Reliability and validity

Construct	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's	CR	AVE
Organizational Culture			0.862	0.906693	0.708513
	Involvement	0.861	0.811		
	Consistency	0.858	0.815		
	Adaptability	0.835	0.829		
Work-life balance			0.777	0.876827	0.548584
	Nature of Work	0.814	0.715		
	Work Flexibility	0.863	0.707		
	Personal Life	0.501	0.843		
Women Leadership Performance			0.887	0.922798	0.749468
	Idealized Influence	0.864	0.856		
	Inspirational Motivation	0.881	0.846		
	Intellectual Stimulation	0.896	0.838		
	Individualized Consideration	0.82	0.879		

Source: Survey, 2025

These ratios of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) are shown in Table 3 and were used to assess the discriminant validity of the three major constructs of this study – organizational culture, work-life balance, and female leadership efficiency. Based on the collected information, it is possible to conclude that all HTMT ratios are lower than 0.90.

Table 3: Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Construct	HTMT
OC < - > WLB	0.69
OC < - > WLP	0.83
OC= Organizational culture, WLB= Work-life balance, WLP= Women leadership performance	

Source: Survey, 2025

Table 4: Hypotheses result

Hypothesis	Paths	B	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	OC ->WLB	0.85	0.93	9.02	0.000	Accept
H2	OC ->WLP	0.7	0.056	12.41	0.000	Accept

OC= Organizational Culture, WLB= Work life balance, WLP= Women leadership performance

Source: Survey, 2025

The empirical results provide evidence in favor of the validity of the research hypotheses. First, the organization culture positively and significantly affects the work-life balance ($\beta = 0.85$, $t = 9.02$, $p < 0.001$). It means that H_1 is valid. Second, organizational culture has a significant positive effect on women's leadership performance ($\beta = 0.70$, $t = 12.41$, $p = 0.000$). In other words, H_2 is confirmed by the empirical data.

The information mentioned above shows that developing an improved institutional culture is associated with higher levels of individual balance and managerial performance in female leaders in the public sector organizations. In addition, the findings are consistent with the literature in terms of the importance of having a good environment for employee welfare and management effectiveness.

Work-life balance is recognized as a valuable resource that supports employees' ability to manage work and personal responsibilities effectively, contributing to better work experiences in organizations. It is an important outcome in this study influenced by organizational culture and is associated with women's leadership experiences in the public sector.

5. Discussion

The current research aimed at investigating the interrelated effects of organizational culture, work-life balance, and leadership performance among women managers in public organizations in the Amhara National Regional State of Ethiopia. It turns out that organizational culture has a strong positive predictive effect on work-life balance and the leadership performance of women, which confirms the hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the research. Such findings, based on the analysis of data collected from 416 women leaders in public organizations, expand the scarce knowledge about this issue in the context of the Ethiopian public sector.

The fact that organizational culture has a highly significant positive influence on work-life balance ($\beta = 0.85$, $p < 0.001$) is in full agreement with the findings of Groner (2018), Kapoor and Pandey (2024), and Vasumathi et al. (2025). All of these researchers found that the organizational environment in which the flexibility of rules, supportive supervision, and positive managerial behavior prevail help avoid work-life conflicts and increase the well-being of employees. The strength of the relationship in this particular case indicates that in the context of Ethiopian public sector, the factors of culture at work place can play an even more critical role in the well-being of female managers than was usually observed in Western countries or private sector. Such a pattern can be explained by the structural realities described by Zhang and Basha (2023) and Alemayehu (2021). They claim that due to patriarchal values and bureaucratic organization of public organizations, female workers depend heavily on the organizational culture in order to combine their professional and family responsibilities successfully.

This finding is also in line with the definition of work-family conflict advanced by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) where pressures from one sphere of life can affect another sphere of life, as well as the elaboration of this definition by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) where the authors note that organizations that can create the conditions under which there will be less role conflict but role enrichment will take place allow their employees to achieve true balance in their lives. The current results show that such mechanisms of role enrichment include involvement, consistency, and adaptability, measured in the study using the model developed by Denison (1990). Women leaders feel more prepared to cope with role conflicts when they believe that their organization appreciates their views, applies consistent approaches, and can adjust to changes. This finding is in line with the results obtained by Hartnell et al. (2016) who find positive relationships between the cultural dimensions and employee outcomes in various organizations and with the theory advanced by Denison et al. (2014) that forms the core of the culture construct in the current study.

Regarding the second hypothesis, organizational culture emerged as having a highly significant positive impact on women's leadership performance ($\beta = 0.70$, $p < 0.001$) in terms of four leadership dimensions (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) of Bass and Avolio's (2004) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. This finding is consistent with Eagly and Carli (2007) and Eagly and Heilman (2016), who posit that women's greater freedom in making strategy-related decisions and managing changes in organizations leads to better results in terms of leadership. Furthermore, it corroborates the findings of Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014, 2024), who note that organizations with a culture of psychological safety and collaboration give women in managerial positions a chance to demonstrate their authority and improve organizational efficiency. The current study shows that such relationship is applicable to the case of the Ethiopian public sector, too, where, according to Jabeen and Isakovic (2018) and Farhan (2022), the topic of organizational culture has traditionally attracted less attention among researchers than the case of private companies.

The cultural-leadership relationship highlighted in this research may also be viewed in terms of the social role theory proposed by Eagly and Wood (2012). In case organizational culture successfully combats the narrow cultural stereotypes of what a woman's role in an organization should be like, thus emphasizing participation, consistency, and adaptability, such culture seems to foster the environment where women leaders are assessed based on their competency rather than role-consistent stereotypes. This finding aligns with Bebasari et al.'s (2024) observation about the double burden of being a responsible organizational leader and a caring family member that culturally adaptive organizations help women bear. Moreover, this research is in line with Rao and Tilt's (2016) and Shaukat et al.'s (2021) views that suggest that the existence of competent women leaders positively affects organizational decision-making and adaptability during uncertain situations.

In addition to the main hypotheses, the characteristics of the respondents provide further insight into how the above results should be interpreted. The majority of participants in this study were married women (72.8%) who had accumulated an average of about 14 years of work experience overall but only 6 years of experience as a leader, indicating that advancement to a leadership position usually takes place later in a woman's career in this case. Such a tendency appears to align quite well with the systemic obstacles identified by Zhang and Basha (2023) – discrimination, lack of opportunity for professional development, and stereotyping based on gender – and Geerts et al. (2020) – growing expectations from public sector leaders to deal with the complexity of the institutional environment. Another factor that might contribute to the above result would be the average number of years spent at work prior to becoming a leader because the relatively high number of years involved may shed light on the powerful influence of organizational culture on the dependent variables.

It is also important to add that, in the process of refining the measurement model, the mission aspect of organizational culture and the workload, compensation, and organizational support aspects of work-life balance were discarded as a result of poor factor loading. This is already valuable to understand on its own. This is because the results imply that, for this particular sample, the perception of work-life balance among Ethiopian female public sector leaders is more influenced by the practicality and flexibility of work and life rather than by structural factors such as compensation or organization-based programs, and to some degree agrees with Kossek et al. (2023), who claim that flexibility and inclusion, rather than organizational policies,

affect the perception of balance in leaders. Furthermore, the preservation of involvement, consistency, and adaptability as the dimensions of organizational culture but not mission is indicative of the fact that, for this particular group, practical organizational life and activities are more significant than mission aspects for this group, and future research employing Denison's (1990) framework in this context should consider this aspect.

Collectively, these results highlight the proposition by Schein (2010) and later reiterated by Kotter (2008), whereby the organizational culture is seen as a fundamental tool affecting the well-being of individuals as well as the functioning of organizations. Moreover, this paper adds further support to the above view through the illustration of its applicability in the context of leadership and work-life balance of women in public bureaucracies, where, as noted by Tadesse Bogale and Debela (2024) in their review of the culture literature, conceptual fragmentation has been the barrier to the emergence of coherent, contextual evidence. Thus, through the use of the same theoretical lens that encompasses the organizational culture theory by Denison (1990), the work-life balance theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and the social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), this research reveals the process of leveraging of institutional culture in the Amhara National Regional State.

6. Implications of the Study

Theoretical Implications

The paper advances theory through simultaneous testing of the Denison (1990) organizational culture model, work-life balance theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) in a single structural model in the public organization context – an approach that has received limited attention in the current literature where, according to Jabeen and Isakovic (2018) and Farhan (2022), focus has mainly been on corporate/private sectors. By showing that involvement, consistency, and adaptability, and not mission, are the relevant cultural dimensions impacting on the results of women in this particular setting, the study provides a refined application of Denison's theory and addresses Tadesse Bogale and Debela (2024)'s appeal for empirical work that will help clarify the conceptual fragmentation surrounding organizational culture studies. Furthermore, the study extends social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) in that it shows empirically how supportive organizational culture acts as a buffer against the double demands resulting from culturally prescribed gender roles among female leaders as discussed by Bebasari et al. (2024).

Practical and Managerial Implications

For those working in the area of public sector management and human resource management within the Amhara National Regional State and comparable environments, the findings indicate that organizational investments made in terms of organizational culture, including activities aimed at enhancing the level of employee involvement in decision-making, consistency and fairness in administration, and adaptation to the situation, will likely bring about positive results concerning the performance of women as leaders as well as their balancing of work and family responsibilities. In accordance with Kossek et al. (2023), this means that the development of flexible and inclusive organizational culture is preferable for those organizations which intend to

promote women into leadership positions compared to structural changes like adjustment in pay because the latter factor was found to be less relevant for the issue in question. Following the ideas expressed by Baba et al. (2025), it would be advisable to consider integrating gender-sensitive policies into the organizational culture and human resources practice in order to support women's ability to cope with conflicting priorities related to their professional and personal lives.

Policy Implications

In terms of policy recommendations, the study findings lend weight to the arguments made by UN Women (2025) and Zhang & Basha (2023) for the development of gender-responsive institutions within the public sector, and they provide regional evidence to support the same in the case of the Amhara National Regional State. The regional and federal policymakers who are working toward reforming the public sector may want to explore the option of incorporating an assessment of organizational culture in terms of participation, consistency, and adaptability in general capacity development and leadership training initiatives within the civil service, rather than limiting themselves to numbers or quotas. This is because the obstacles highlighted by Alemayehu (2021) and Deresso et al. (2024) – patriarchy and mismatch between cultural policies and institutional practice – limit the progress of women in their careers.

7. Conclusion

The present research focused on assessing the influence of organizational culture on work-life balance and women's leadership effectiveness in a sample of 416 women leaders in public organizations in the Amhara National Regional State of Ethiopia through a cross-sectional design and structural equation modeling approach. According to the findings of this research, organizational culture is found to have a highly significant positive influence on both work-life balance and women's leadership effectiveness, thereby supporting both hypotheses put forth in this research. Concerning the dimensions analyzed, involvement, consistency, and adaptability turned out to be the cultural dimensions that had the strongest association with the dependent variables, while nature of work, work flexibility, and personal life were the key dimensions of work-life balance.

This is in contrast with a clear gap in the existing literature, considering the dearth of empirical studies on the influence of organizational culture, work-life balance, and women's leadership in Ethiopian public institutions, and the Amhara National Regional State in particular, compared with the body of research performed within private organizations (Jabeen & Isakovic, 2018; Farhan, 2022). Using the theories of organizational culture by Denison (1990), work-life balance theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), and social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), the proposed study provides a comprehensive theoretical framework explaining how the institutional culture influences the personal and professional life of women leaders in a unique public bureaucratic setting.

In light of these results, it can be concluded that an enhanced organizational culture, involving increased participation of employees, reliable and equitable institutional policies, and adaptability to changing requirements is an appropriate way forward for enhancing not only the wellbeing of women leaders but also their efficiency as leaders in the public organizations of Ethiopia. As such, organizational culture must be taken into account, not as an issue of marginal

interest, but as an essential means through which the attainment of gender-sensitive leadership and sustainable public sector performance can be facilitated. Additional studies of this kind conducted in other areas of Ethiopia or employing longitudinal research designs would provide further support for the above findings.

List of Abbreviations

- AVE – Average Variance Extracted
- CFI – Comparative Fit Index
- CR – Composite Reliability
- df – Degrees of Freedom
- HTMT – Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio
- IRERC – Institutional Research Ethics Review Committee
- MLQ – Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
- OC – Organizational Culture
- RMSEA – Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
- SD – Standard Deviation
- SEM – Structural Equation Modeling
- SRMR – Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
- TLI – Tucker-Lewis Index
- UoG – University of Gondar
- WLB – Work-Life Balance
- WLP – Women Leadership Performance
- β – Standardized Path Coefficient (Beta)

Acknowledgements

The authors sincerely thank all individuals and organizations who contribute to this study. They are especially grateful to the women leaders in the Amhara region for their meaningful participation and insights. Appreciation is also extended to the University of Gondar for its support and for providing essential resources throughout the research process.

Author's Contributions

All authors contributed to the conceptualization, theoretical foundation, research design, survey implementation, analysis, and discussion. FKG led the data extraction, synthesis process, and authored the initial manuscript draft. DAG and ATD provided critical review and editing of the manuscript. Both DAG and ATD have given written consent for the submission of the manuscript in its current form. The final manuscript was read and approved by all authors.

Statements and Declarations

Consent to participate

The author obtained informed consent from all participants prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and responses were collected anonymously and kept strictly confidential. The researcher completed the TCPS 2: CORE 2022 research ethics training and all data were collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality and compliance with ethical standards.

Consent for Publication

We affirm that all participants provided informed consent for the use and publication of their data and research findings. Appropriate measures were implemented to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants throughout the study.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors used AI tools (Claude and Grok) solely for language enhancement, grammar correction, and readability improvement during manuscript preparation. These tools were not used for research content, data analysis, or conclusions. All content was reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the published work.

Funding Statement

The authors received no funding agency for the research, authorship or publication of this article.

Data Availability Statement

The study data and materials are available upon request. Please contact the corresponding author for access.

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