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REVIEW ARTICLE

PUPILS' MORAL BEHAVIOUR IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MAKINDYE URBAN COUNCIL, KAMPALA DISTRICT, UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in 12 primary schools of Makindye Urban council, Kampala district in Uganda to assess the primary school pupils' level of moral behavior in Makindye Urban Council, Kampala district. Using cross-sectional survey design with a quantitative approach, the data was collected from 360 respondents, 350 of whom were pupils and 10 were head teachers. The findings indicated that the pupils' level of moral behavior was high despite the general outcry of moral decadence in the world. It was recommended that parents should try their best to ensure that they close the social, environmental and economic gaps which can be detrimental to their children.

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of education, its management and moral values have been emphasized over the centuries. Plato (428BC-348BC) a Greek philosopher for instance emphasized the importance of education and suggested that it be treated as an organized business, be formal, the Government or state he responsible for it and it should have its basis in ethics or principles of behaviors as pronounced and upheld by the citizens of a state, that mere knowledge and skills were not enough for a person. Without ethics, that person was likely to use the acquired knowledge and skills through schools against the aim of a state and against the members of society. He held that the norms or standards or ethics of a country should be at the bottom of education, at all levels (Ssekamwa, 1999). The idea of education and morality was also emphasized in the education of Egypt, India, China, France, through education; Egyptians were helped towards achieving their polytheistic religious ideas. Education sought to enhance their religious and moral development. In India, education was inseparable and indistinguishable from religious faith. Reason with moral education was given prominence. Punishment for evil and reward for good actions was emphasized. The system of education inculcated those religious tenets that stress good

character and self-denial. Compassion, sympathy, unselfishness and respect to all beings were signs of an educated person. In China, the teaching vocation was held highly and nobly. Teachers were expected to be sincere, mannerly and morally upright so that students were encouraged to emulate the behavior of their teachers (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994:18). In both the Islamic and Christian education systems, morality was given prominence e.g. Khan & Wasiullali (1981) reported that the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization meeting in Paris from November 14 to December 15, 1960 at the 11th session adopted a convention in which article 5:1, a states, "The states parties to this convention agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality..." Though the definition of "full development of the human personality" was not given, the element of morality was implied. Also, Khan & Wasiullah (1981) reported that the Committee of Education and Society of the First World Conference on Muslim Education which met on April 4, 5, 1977 took positions and made recommendations on a number of issues related to education, some of which were in line with moral fibres. It was stated that in all Muslim countries, most rigorous and planned efforts should be made to provide free, compulsory and universal education to all children to the extent that they are able to read, write understand and express the fundamental teachings of Islam and other sciences and Arts which may enable them to comprehend the nature of creation and man's

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place in the universe - this task should be given the highest priority. Expressing the fundamental teachings of Islam implies among other things, the promotion of good moral values because Islam means submission to the will of Allah (God) and God requires all people to lead morally upright lives. According to Ssekamwa (1999), formal education was introduced in Uganda by the Arabs and Christian missionaries. The first semblance of formal education came to Uganda implicitly through the arrival of Sheikh Ahmed Bin Ibrahim at the court of Kabaka Ssuuna of Buganda at Banda near Kampala in 1844. Sheikh Ahmed Bin Ibrahim came with a dozen of Arabs and Swahilis who, in addition to economic trade introduced Koran schools. In these schools, reading and writing using Arabic scripts as well as the basic principles of Islam were taught. Moral behaviour among learners and teachers was emphasized. In the year 1877 and 1879, Protestant and Catholic missionaries respectively reached at the court of Kabaka Mutesa of Buganda. They introduced Christian religion and western education. In the schools they set up, moral behavior was on top of the curriculum. Morality was not formally taught as an independent subject but was taught and emphasized at different times in class and outside class (Ssekamwa, 1999).

The current study was grounded in the Natural law theory propounded by Thomas Aquinas one of the leading theologians. According to this theory, morality is grounded in nature rather than being relative to God's commands, human beings or cultural norms, and that the moral laws embedded in our nature as humans take the form of the universal code that we all ought to follow. Aquinas formulated the basic principle of natural law as "do well and avoid evil". Natural law is universal and applies to all rational beings. Humans; religious people and atheists alike are all bound by the same moral principles and sentiments. According to this theory, moral judgments are dictated of reason. The natural laws that specify what we should do are laws of reason. To Bhatia (2000), the word moral and its derivations come from the Latin term 'MOS' which means manner, custom and habit. According to Webster's New International Dictionary, moral refers to fixed customs or folkways imbued with an ethical significance. In its general phase, the term moral refers to a system of personality traits which are in harmony with the inner nature of the individual and which are in accordance with the values approved by society.

In the opinion of Theroux (2001), morality points to the relationships between human beings; it concerns good and evil. Therefore moral behavior means the good manners and good way of pupils conducting themselves. Though sometimes what is moral or immoral differs from society to society, in this study moral behavior of the pupils was based on the moral or ethical values as per the laws of the Republic of Uganda and the educational policies of Uganda as they are at present. Religious laws were not based on since Uganda is a civil state, not a theocratic state and secondly, Uganda is a religious pluralistic society. In this study moral behavior was looked at from different concepts, namely: social and sexual behavior, as well as school-related moral values. Social behavior includes such elements like the interaction among people (in this case, pupils), humility, cooperation, self-respect and respect of others, self-control, alcohol and drug use, use of the tongue, etc... While sexual behavior or morality includes such aspects of sexual act like fornication, homosexuality, adultery, lesbianism, prostitution, bestiality, defilement, rape, incest, masturbation and abortion.

Statement of the problem

The promotion of moral values is among the national aims of education in Uganda, thus all educational institutions are supposed to see to it that all those who pass through the educational institutions are morally responsible. Though the promotion of moral values is emphasized in every society, the social, political and economic changes in the world over time have brought a dilemma in the field of learners' moral values. Much as morality is important, some schools do not mind much about promoting it (Gwokyalya, 1992; Kibuuka, 1998; Nyirabimana, 2004). Private primary schools are mushrooming in every division of the district but the moral behaviors of the learners and even of some teachers and head teachers leaves a lot to be desired, hence an issue of concern especially to the parents whose children in such schools are assumed to be the leaders of tomorrow. This cannot be taken lightly because without morals, society is dead (Nagawa, 1998; Byamugisha, 1991; Byaruhanga, 2004). Thus, the study was carried out to assess the primary school pupils' level of moral behavior in Makindye Urban Council, Kampala district, Uganda.

Literature Review

Morality has to do with what is right and what is wrong. This is determined by the culture of a given society, religion, and government legislation. Because of this, sometimes what is perceived to be moral or immoral can at times differ from society to society (Kayindu, 2015). Studies related to moral behaviour have been carried out but there exists gaps the present study intended to fill. For example Nagawa (1998) studied corporal punishment and the behavior of primary school pupils in Kampala district. She found that many schools were using corporal punishment as a measure of preventing and ending immoral behavior. Relatedly, Byamugisha (1991) examined the contribution of 0-Level CRE towards moral awareness of students in Kampala district secondary schools. He found out that whereas Christian Religious Education had morality related topics such as sex, marriage, family life, obedience, the biblical teachings on morality-related topics, it had not done much in improving the morals of the learners. Muhaire (2002) examined the management and control of students' behavior at Makerere University and found out that students' behavior at Makerere University was generally poor mainly because of the much freedom they are given, limited guidance, as well as the perception the students have that they are adults. This study was however about University students not primary school pupils. Gwokyalya (1992) studied the social origin and discipline of secondary school students in Makerere College school and found out that there were significant differences in children's discipline based on such factors as geographical environment where they stay, socio-economic factors, among others. This study, unlike the current study was carried out in a secondary school. Though Makerere College was (at that time) situated in Kampala district near Makerere University, which is currently Kampala Central Division, the current study was carried out from a different Division, Makindye. Besides, Gwokyalya (1992)'s study was carried out in only one school yet its administration and set up are different from some other schools such as the primary schools in Makindye division which the current study addressed. Additionally, Tumwebaze (2003) linked moral behavior of secondary school students in Uganda to family background. He found out that family background contributed non-significantly to children's moral behavior, as children from both rich and

poor families, religious and non-religious families, rural and urban families can both be either moral or immoral or both moral and immoral almost in the same way. Though at times the difference is there, that difference is in most cases small. The findings of this study are related to those of Babita (2007) who studied family environment and students' discipline in Kampala private day secondary schools and found out that some parents cause their children to get spoilt at an early age, for example some parents are prostitutes, they make love to each other in bed or in the sitting room when children are hearing and to make matters worse some men and women use vulgar words as they are making love, they abuse each other as children are hearing, and in a worse case some men have sex with their daughters. In addition, Kibuuka (1998) studied the antecedents of inter-student aggression within boarding secondary schools in Uganda. He found out that school managers were highly to blame for the un-civilised acts aggression is schools, such as bullying, teasing and beating of new students, and fighting. However, his study was only on boarding secondary schools unlike the current study which was conducted in both day and boarding schools Besides, he focused on student aggression alone, not other forms of immoral behavior, the current study addressed the different forms of learners' moral behaviour. Ikumbe (2004) examined the role of the mass media on secondary school students' discipline in Kampala district and found out that the mass media both print and electronic had contributed much to students' moral degeneration. There is however time lag factor, as for example in the year 2004 when his study was carried out Smart Phones were not yet so much in hands of students and in addition, social media such as the internet, watssap, twitter, Youtube were not yet so much known by many children in Uganda unlike in 2017 when the current study was done.

Additionally, Nyirabyimana (2004) studied the influence of school culture on discipline in secondary schools and found out that some schools especially the mushrooming private secondary schools do not have any school culture, they are mainly after getting money. The end result is compromised students' discipline. This is in line with Kyamulabi (2006)'s study which linked the management of students' discipline in secondary schools to school culture and almost came up with the same findings. None of those studies has a direct linkage to school management, a gap the present study filled. The nearest attempt to study the problem was Kabandize (2004). The study was however uni-variate, investigating how discipline in Kampala district secondary schools was managed. Another nearest attempt to the study was Byaruhanga (2004). This study was however carried out in Kabarole district, an environment far different from that of Kampala and besides, it linked students' behavior in Government aided secondary schools to head teacher leadership behavior. The present study therefore filled these gaps. Kahangura (2005) studied behavioral habits of National Teachers' College Kakoba, linking them to social moral systems; other international studies revealed the role of parental involvement in the moral fibres of their children. For example, Okpala *et al* (2001) investigated the relationship between parents involvement (in terms of hours of volunteered in-school help), school spend (in terms of dollars per child spent on instructional supplies). Neither dollars spent nor, less yet, parental hours spent helping in the school, were related to pupil achievement. Similar results were found by Zellman and Waterman (1998) in a study of 193 second and fifth grade children. An important attribute of this study was that it contained, amongst other data collection techniques, a direct

observation component so that parental involvement was indexed not only by various reports and ratings but by observations made by independent researchers. Amongst many findings (which will be reported later) it was evident that in-school manifestations of parental involvement were not related to school improvement. There are many possible reasons for having parents working in schools. It might be very good for the parents. It has the potential to help schools link better with the community. It could contribute to the openness and accountability of the school. Izzo *et al* (1999) studied four forms of involvement; frequency of parent-teacher contact; quality of parent-teacher interaction; participation in educational activities in the home; and participation in school activities. These factors, as well as family background variables were examined to find any relationship they might have with school improvement as indexed by school grades. Consistent with other studies, Izzo *et al* showed that all forms of parental involvement declined with child's age and that involvement in the home 'predicted the widest range of improvement variance'.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed the cross-sectional survey design, using the quantitative approach since the study involved a large sample.

Study Population

A sample size of 350 pupils and 12 headteachers as respondents was taken. The 12 head teachers of the schools under study were got using universal sampling, and the 350 pupils were got from twelve primary schools using Morgan and Krejcie's method of determining the sample from a given population. Though according to the calculation using Morgan Krejcie, the minimum sample from a population of 2,736 is 338, the researcher chose to take a sample larger than that because Amin (2005) asserts that the larger the sample, the more accurate the findings of the study are likely to be and the findings can confidently be generalized to the population.

Data collection Instrument

A researcher- designed instrument was used to collect data from the respondents. It was designed based on the way the current study conceptualized moral behavior.

Data Analysis

The arithmetic mean was used to get the dominantly used management styles of primary school headteachers. The mean ranges that were used to establish the headteachers' dominant management styles were the following.

Mean range	Response	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	strongly Agree	Very High
2.51-3.25	Agree	High
1.76-2.50	Disagree	Low
1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Limitations of the study

The following were perceived limitations to this study.

- 1) Attrition/mortality in that not all questionnaires were returned completely answered; and some head teachers

made the researcher move several times to them to collect the filled questionnaires. In the end, some of them filled the questionnaires hurriedly, thus a possibility of not having been so accurate in what they filled.

- 2) Uncooperative behavior of some respondents and those who seemed reluctant to give information. This was realized among the first respondents of a school the researcher went to, as some pupils thought that asking them to rate themselves on moral issues could be a way of tricking them which could make them be expelled from school. Having realized this, the researcher and his assistants addressed the pupils about the purpose of the study, and that it was not in any way meant to trick them, their teachers were also requested to go away as the pupils were filling the questionnaires for them to fill them without fear.

Findings

On this research objective, it was found out that the general level of pupils' moral behavior in Makindye Urban council of Kampala district was high, given the mean of 3.05. This means that the primary school pupils in Makindye Urban Council are generally well behaved and are morally responsible.

Two of the three concepts under pupils' moral behavior were ranked high. These were: social behavior (mean 2.75) and school-related behavior (mean 3.05). One aspect, namely, sexual morality was ranked very high (mean 3.33), meaning that the pupils are generally not sexually immoral. On sexual morality, it was for example found out that none of the pupils had ever practiced homosexuality, lesbianism and rape, given the highest mean score of 4.00 on each of those acts/items. High scores were also achieved for other sex-related acts such as masturbation, writing love messages and letters, talking obscene words, fornication, adultery, indecent assault and prostitution, meaning that the pupils generally shun those immoral acts. However, the mean scores were not the maximum scores of 4.00 which means that though on average the pupils shun those immoral practices, there are few pupils who, despite being young, sometimes do them. As for the element of social behavior, all the items were ranked high, such as the pupils being polite, tolerant, practicing humility, being dependable, not insulting others who are economically challenged, among others. This shows that teachers and parents have done a good job in the moral spheres of the children's lives. Even the school-related moral aspects were rated highly,

Table 1A. Mean showing pupils' moral behavior in Makindye urban council, Kampala, Uganda

Variables	Mean	Interpretation	
Social behavior I am polite	2.85	High	3
I interact with others freely	2.65	High	3
I practice humility	2.56	High	3
I cooperate with others	2.53	High	3
I do not steal	3.17	Very high	4
I do not speak obscene words	3.16	Very high	4
I do not watch blue movies	2.99	High	3
I do not make intentional moves to hear my parents making love to each other	2.87	High	3
I do not steal	2.31	High	3
I am not arrogant	2.27	High	3
I am empathetic	2.67	High	3
I am not rude	2.57	High	3
I respect elders	3.32	Very high	4
I respect my colleagues	2.35	High	3
I do not tell lies	3.41	Very high	4
I am not quarrelsome	2.39	High	3
I am obedient to my parents	3.10	high	3
I am reliable	2.60	high	3
I am not a roumermonger	2.53	High	3
	2.75	High level	3

Table 2B. Mean showing pupils moral behavior (n=350)

Sexual Morality	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
I do not commit adultery	3.22	Very high	4
I do not commit bestiality	3.45	Very high	4
I do not commit homosexuality	4.00	Very high	4
I do not write write love letters and love phone messages	3.43	Very high	4
I do not rape	4.00	Very high	4
I do not indecently assault people of the opposite sex	3.20	Very high	4
I do not practice lesbianism	4.00	Very high	4
I do not practice masturbation	2.13	Very high	2
I do not practice incest	2.51	Low	3
School-Related moral behavior		High	3
I do not escape from school	3.23	Very high	4
I do not nick-name teachers	3.32	High	3
I do not nick-name fellow pupils	3.23	High	3
I do not abuse teachers	3.12	High	3
I do not abuse fellow pupils	2.80	High	3
I listen to teachers' advice	3.25	High	3
I do not insult pupils who are economically less fortunate than myself	3.11	High	3
I do not insult the physically handicapped pupils	3.04	high	3
I do not discuss about teachers I perceive to be poorly dressed	2.53	High	3
I do not write malicious information about teachers and drop it in the suggestion boxes available at school	3.13	High	3
Mean	3.08	High level	
Grand mean	3.05	High level of discipline	

such as the pupils not insulting their teachers, not escaping from school, not writing maliciously about their teachers, not abusing teachers and fellow pupils, among others. So, the learners are generally morally upright. Though they are not upright 100%, as shown in the mean scores on each item, which scores are not the maximum 4.00, that is to show that the pupils are human beings, not Angels. Only God and His Angels are believed to be perfect, not the human beings. Therefore as human beings, the pupils are sometimes seemingly tempted to do what society perceives to be immoral.

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DISCUSSION

It was found out that the learners' moral behavior in Makindye Urban Council was high, meaning that the pupils are generally morally upright. This differs from the way some authors portray the children of this 21st century, whereby they are perceived to be immoral, rebellious, big-headed and indisciplined in general (Gwokyalaya, 1992; Nyirabimana, 2004). Other researchers have also ascertained the emergence of indiscipline in schools (Tumwebaze, 2002; Kahangura, 2005; Kyamulabi, 2006; Babita, 2007). The difference between the findings of the current study and the previous findings of other researchers and authors can be attributed to the population under study. The population under the current study were primary school pupils who are generally young in age, yet Nsubuga (2001) and Tumwebaze (2002)'s studies were carried out in secondary schools where the learners are usually adolescents and teenagers, whose minds and physiological body changes usually have sex-related orientations, thus the possibility of secondary school students more likely to be sexually active than their primary pupil counterparts.

As noted on the aspects of fornication, adultery, and masturbation, it was found out that the pupils generally do not do these acts. However, the fact that none of the respondents gave a maximum score of 4:00 implies that some of the learners have ever done those acts or do them sometimes, though to a small extent. This could be attributed to the social, economic, geographical and technological factors. As Kayindu (2015) claims, some children do masturbate because they fear to approach prospective sexual partners partly fearing to get AIDS. Others do it because of the desire to quench sexual thirst which is usually high among some teenagers. For adultery, some young girls accept to have sex with mature married men hoping to get money and other material benefits from them; and with fornication, the influence of peers, parents neglecting to guide their children, poor environment, such as single room or two-roomed homes whereby the parents make love when children are hearing though they can pretend to be asleep, as well as slum areas where children see prostitutes, hear obscene words spoken by prostitutes and drunkards, all these are usually breeding grounds for immorality among children. Makindye Urban Council where the study was carried out has a few slum areas such as Kansanga-Kiwempe, hence the likelihood of some pupils having ever done fornication, adultery and masturbation though to a small extent. Gwokyalaya (1992) and Nagawa (1998) reported that the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes (AIDS) awareness programs in the country have, to some extent helped to improve the morals of the learners but parental and schools' laxity in enforcing discipline have caused

immorality to increase among students. They reiterated that many parents are so busy to talk to their children about morality; others are so stupid to the point of kissing their partners when children are seeing, and others suggest love affairs from their daughters. The schools have become relaxed on discipline as they mind more about the learners' passing of the national examinations at the expense of other aspects of the curriculum. The reported good moral behavior could also be attributed to parents' showing of care and love to their children. Psychologists claim that parent's withdrawal and harshness towards the child, usually leads to children's Problematic behaviour (McKee, Colletti, Rakow, Jones & Forehand, 2008). Therefore, parents who are inconsistent in their approach towards their child can unintentionally promote negative child behaviour, which can lead to a mutual escalation into negative behaviour from both (Rutter, *et al.*, 2008). In families where the focus is on negative behaviour, prosocial behaviour often goes unrecognized and non violent conflict resolution is neither taught, nor modeled (Patterson 1982). Reducing harsh, negative and inconsistent parenting has been shown to have a positive influence on children's behaviour in a number of studies (Eyberg, Nelson, & Boggs, 2008; Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 008); once parents have been shown the skills to manage problem behaviour, levels of antisocial behaviour in children can return to a normal level (Jouriles, Mc Donald, Rosenfield, Corbitt- Shindler, Stephens, & Miller, 2009). The high level of pupils' discipline in Makindye urban council could as well be attributed to punishment administered by parents and teachers as a form of power assertion. Punishment involves the presentation of a negative stimulus following specific behaviour in order to reduce the likelihood of that behaviour being repeated in the future.

Conclusions

Based on the fire objectives of the study, the following conclusions are presented. Despite the outcry of challenging children's moral behavior in Africa and Uganda in particular, the majority of the primary school pupils in Kampala district are morally upright.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that:

1. Since other factors other than the headteachers' management styles mainly impact on the pupils' moral behavior, parents should try their best to ensure that they close the social, environmental and economic gaps which can be detrimental to their children.
2. Despite the changes in global environment, the children's moral behavior in Africa and in Uganda in particular, the majority of the primary school pupils in Kampala Uganda are morally to be encouraged by the head teacher and parents to make the children moral upright.

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