

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND STUDENTS' BEHAVIOUR CHANGE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
A CASE OF NAMUGOONA HIGH SCHOOL, KAMPALA DISTRICT.**

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ABSTRACT:

The main purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which Religious Education moulds behaviour among secondary school learners. The study used a qualitative approach and it followed a case study design of one school in the Namugoona Parents School, Kampala. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of participants comprising of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and learners, parents and other stake holders. The study revealed that learners were aware of the Christian based Religious Education and that the learners believed that Christianity teaches them good morals. Teachers on the other hand were of the view that CRE was not enough as a tool in molding learners' behavior but should be supplemented with other factors such as parental guidance, religious leaders and the government intervention. The study concluded that teachers need to be trained in CRE competences. It was recommended that schools should foster the cooperation between teachers and parents in molding learners' behavior through active parental involvement initiatives

Keywords: Religious Education, Behavior Change, Secondary Schools and Punishment

Background of the Study

In Uganda, the origin of foreign Religions and Religious Education is believed to have been introduced by the Christian missionaries and the Arabs who introduced Christianity and Islam respectively. The teaching of Religious Education is traced back from 1844, 1877 and 1879 when the first Arab, Protestants and Catholic Missionaries respectively arrived in Kabaka's palace with the Purpose of Spreading their Faith

against the other faith (Byaruhanga, 2017) and started setting up Religious Founded Schools to act a center for teaching young ones their specific faith in order to grow strong in faith and love it against the other faith. Religious Education is the instruction of Faith, spiritual growth and teaching of morals in the school or college (Jaener, Naeme & Ramadiro, 2013). It is also a discipline of study that focuses on the imparting religious values, attitudes, morals and spiritual growth aimed at ensuring tolerance and harmonious living (Bweyale, 2018).

More so, Religious Education is course of study that aims at ensuring Multi - Religious and Cultural understanding, Promoting Spiritual growth and finding out solutions to world challenges of peace , harmony , respect for life and other civil rights (Sylvia & Peter, 2023). Contextual Perspective. The researcher was concerned about the causes of indiscipline of the learners in the school, the role of religious education in promoting good behavior and challenges faced by the teachers in trying to enhance positive behavior.

Statement of the Problem

The nature of religious studies in Uganda is separatist in nature comprising of Christian religious education (CRE) and Islamic religious education as already noted earlier. This separatist nature is driven from the historical background of religious studies in the country by the end of religious conflict in Buganda and Uganda at large (Pauline, 2023). At the end of the war, both religious sects embarked on putting up churches and mosques in order to teach the new converts about their faith against the other faith and the mode of teaching was confessional in nature. In pre-independent Uganda, the teaching approach varied from indoctrination to confessionals. In order to preserve its religious beliefs, the pre-Christian Uganda used education as a means through which religious knowledge was communicated to the young and the old. The aims/goals of religious education were mainly to prepare the young people for the transition from the infant stage to maturity and to develop an awareness of and respect for the

religious dimension of life. In pre-Christian Uganda, morality was derived from God and the adult members were regarded as teachers of religion. This means that in the pre-colonial Uganda, the major aim of religious studies was to strengthen the converts in faith and for moral development. It is against this background that the researcher was interested in find out how religious education has effectively helped in behavior change of the learners taking Namugoona High school as a case study.

Specific Objectives

- 1. To find out the factors that influence indiscipline among the Religious Education students of Namugoona High School.*
- 2. To investigate how effective can Religious Studies cause behavior change of learners at Namugoona High School.*
- 3. To find out the challenges faced in instilling positive behavior among the learners at Namugoona High School*

Research Questions

- 1. Examine the factors that contributes to students' indiscipline in Namugoona High School*
- 2. To what extent can religious studies contribute to the behavior change of the learners at Namugoona High school?*
- 3. What are the challenges faced in instilling positive behavior at Namugoona High school.*

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher applied the qualitative research design which was in form of a case study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describes a case study as an in-depth investigation of an individual, a group, institution or a particular phenomenon. Koul (2001) looks at a case study as an attempt to examine a particular individual or a unit in depth in order to gather pertinent information that can help to solve a problem at hand. A

qualitative case study design was selected because it helped to get detailed information on how religious education has improved on the behavior change of the learners at Namugoona High School. This was research design was selected in order to capture deep understanding of the study including respondents' feelings, emotions and non-verbal communications.

Study Population

Amin (2005) defines study population as a complete collection of the elements that are of interest in a particular investigation. It is also defined as the entire set of cases from which research samples is drawn (Wilson 2010). The research was be conducted on the students and teachers of Namugoona High School.

Sample size and sampling method

A sample size of 30 students was be selected to represent the entire schools and was be randomly selected and 5 teachers was be purposely selected to represent all teachers in the school.

Data collection methods

Interview

The researcher collected data from the respondents through having face to face interaction with them about the topic under study which helped to get detailed information about the topic understudy. This was systematically carried out using interview guide which is the list of questions to be asked and recorders to record the conversation to be ready for transcribing, interpretation and analysis.

Questionnaires

The researcher Supplied questions to both the students and teachers related to the topic under study. The results in the questionnaires were supplement the face-to-face interview results.

Data analysis

The data collected was analyzed using narrative approach where by the results was presented in form of statements but not in statistics using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022). There was coding of results to make up themes.

RESULTS

Which factors contribute to indiscipline among the Religious Education students of Namugoona High School.

This research question was used in order to get the response to the factor objective of the study. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers and other educational stakeholders and interviews through the focus group discussion were administered to the learners.

The findings showed that the causes of indiscipline among students as viewed by teachers in Namugoona Parents Secondary School are societal factor, Government factor, parental factor, school factor and students' factor respectively. The result of the study revealed that the common types of indiscipline in Ugandan secondary schools are cases of insubordination to school authority such as assault and insult on teachers and non-teachers and assault on school prefects. The most common cases of indiscipline relating to the collective misbehavior of students such as the vandalization of school properties and mass protest, while the common cases of indiscipline relating to poor habits of students are speaking of pidgin English, chewing gum in class, fighting, wearing dirty and wrong clothing contrary to the official school uniforms and examination malpractice. Causes of students' demonstrations attracted divergent views from the respondents. About 44% and 40% of the teachers attributed the causes of students' demonstrations to the school and the individual students respectively. However, on the part of the students about 51% and 31% attributed it to the school and the individual himself or herself respectively. Also, while 13% of the students were of the view that the community causes students' demonstrations, only 4% of the

teachers supported this idea. It is believed that where the school rules and regulations seem to be harsher, students easily resort to demonstrations.

How effective can Religious Studies cause behavior change of learners at Namugoona High School?

To get the answers to this research question, the respondents were interviewed and given freedom to tell how Religious Education leads to behavior change in students. At least 75% of the respondents agreed that Religious Education is very important in moral development of the learners.

According to Maiyo (2015), the teaching of Christian Religious Education helps in moral development of students in secondary schools. The subject moulds students to become responsible citizens, helping them to develop values and virtues that reinforce appropriate behavior. To ascertain further the role of Christian Religious Education, selected teachers were interviewed and students were involved in Focus Group Discussion. The results indicated that religious education enables to produce good citizens who are God fearing and with a sense of humor.

Further, most of the respondents strongly disagreed CRE subject should be abolished in secondary schools. This indicates that that CRE is a very relevant and essential subject because it helps in ethical formation of students in secondary schools. Topics taught in CRE in secondary schools contribute enormously to moral values of students as noted by most of the respondents. The findings also showed that topics taught in CRE touch contemporary issues affecting the students.

Challenges faced in instilling positive behavior among the learners at Namugoona High School

To get the answers to this research question, the teachers were asked to reveal the information and share the challenges that they face in trying to enhance good morals among the learners in the school. The research results indicate that teachers face the challenge of open communication with the parents. Since moral development is not

one way but combination of factors, both the teacher and the parent have to work together to ensure good behavior of the learners. However, to the dismay, parents are ever busy and they don't check on their children at school even when you send the child at home due to indiscipline, the parents don't come in person but they delegate. Indeed, this remains a great challenge to moral development of the learners.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the majority of learners and teachers believed that Christianity Religious Education teaches them good morals as well as basic values of life. However, the teachers believe that the government policy of abolishing of punishments in schools and parents' reluctance are some of the factors that have increased students' immoralities. Teachers Have doubts regarding the practical effectiveness of Christian Religious Education in shaping the morals and behavior of learners the long term because the teachers are poorly motivated in terms of payment and even no on job training is done to these teachers to make them relevant n this century. In other Teachers have limited competencies and skills to ensure that CRE is used as a powerful tool to advocate for morality and behavior change.

Recommendations

It is recommended in this study that more topics on morality can be included in the curriculum to improve its impact. Also, moral education as a school subject can be introduced by the Ministry of Education. Parents, schools and churches should work in cooperation in molding the behavior of learners through active parental involvement initiatives such as teacher-parent meetings, open days among others. Schools must consider giving awards and incentives to the most behaved learners per class to ensure that learners are truly motivated and see the rewards of expressing good behavior.

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