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**CULTURE AND THE INFLUENCE OF MORAL VALUES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS. THE CASE OF  
MASAKA DISTRICT**

**Yiga Deo<sup>1</sup>, Sekiswa Peter<sup>2</sup>**

**1,2 Metropolitan International University**

**Abstract**

The study aimed at culture and the influence of moral values in secondary schools with the case of Masaka district and it was guided by the following objectives; To find out the role of culture in improving secondary school student moral values in Masaka district, to identify the causes and effects of moral decay in secondary school students of Masaka district and to identify the different strategies in providing solution to moral decay in secondary schools in Masaka district. The researcher used experimental research design. The target population in this research were secondary school students, religious leaders, head teachers of different secondary school in masaka district, teachers, parents, cultural leaders and political leaders of masaka district and the total population covered 660 people. The collected data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively using SPSS. Quantitative data was grouped and statistical description such as tables showing frequencies and percentage were developed. For questioner, question was written on papers and given to student, parents and teachers. As indicated in the analysis, 41.67 % of the respondents according to Pugh (2006) argued that parents must remember that these new people in our lives need direction most of the time cannot differentiate well from bad. The respondents were further asked to indicate whether the role of the parents and their influence in early life would affect the life of the child for good or bad and 16.67% of the respondent noted with their statement of source of advice. When asked whether as a head teacher are able to create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement, 10% of respondents said that the head teachers are able to create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement. The women should take their role of nurturing children in steady of minding about businesses on and making of money and leave this work to the house girls. This will help children to grow with good morals.

**Keywords: culture, moral values and secondary schools**

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**Background of the study**

According to Edward B., Taylor is considered the scholar who first created and defined culture. In his work *Primitive Culture* (1872) and reprinted in 1958. Taylor saw culture as a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs or any other abilities and habits that a person has acquired as a member of society (Sylvia & Peter, 2023). Culture includes a wide range of human phenomena, material achievements and norms, beliefs, feelings, marital morals, and so on. It is a patterned way of sharing by a particular group of people who claim to share a single origin or ancestry. (Ninsiima et al., 2023) argues that culture refers to the sum total of behavior patterns of a certain group of people. includes a district that distinguishes a district from any other group of people, such as their greetings, customs, dress, social norms, taboos, foods, songs and patterns, notations of passages for birth through marriage to death, traditional occupations, religion and as philosophical beliefs. According to (Sylvia & Peter, 2023) he says that the cumulative storage of knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes, meaning, hierarchies, religions, concepts of the universe and material objects and possessions acquired by groups of people over generations through individual and group staying. According to Ruth Benedict (2003), the source of moral values is the culture and society into which one is born. this is because there are many cultures in the world that differ from each other in their own ways. culture and social education play a major role in students' academic performance in high school (Micheal et al., 2023). People are shaped and defined by the culture and moral values they believe in. According to (John et al., 2023), he identified immorality committed in the school system as cultism, investigative malpractice, bullying, killing, terrorism, religious intolerance, sexual harassment, indecent dressing, loose tongues, bribery, truancy, insubordination, disrespect for authorities, arson and noise.

**Statement of the problem.**

There has been a decline in the moral behavior of secondary school students, leading to increased immorality in secondary schools in Uganda (Kanyerere & Muhammed, 2023). For example, absenteeism, children involved in sexual immorality, bullying, among others, this led to early school leaving, poor academic results (Godfrey et al., 2023). This research will help to solve the above problem in secondary schools in Masaka district. Therefore, there is a need to adopt cultural guides and practices to help improve student moral values among secondary school students in Masaka District (Victor et al., 2023).

**Specific Objectives**

- To find out the role of culture in improving secondary school student moral values in Masaka district.
- To identify the causes and effects of moral decay in secondary school students of Masaka district
- To identify the different strategies in providing solution to moral decay in secondary schools in Masaka district.

**Methodology**

The researcher used experimental research design. The target population in this research were secondary school students, religious leaders, head teachers of different secondary school in masaka district, teachers, parents, cultural

**Received: 7.11.2023****Accepted: 13.11.2023****Published on: 30.11.2023**

leaders and political leaders of masaka district and the total population covered 660 people. The researcher used that big number of people in order to get the right and collect information from the society. The researcher used the stratified sampling techniques while making his researcher. Schools were grouped in three groups and these were Day schools, boarding schools and Day and Boarding schools. Because there is different culture in those three different groups. This helped the researcher to find the real cause of moral decay in secondary school students. The interview schedule was used because it has a high completion rate compared to other methods. Interviews also guarantee on immediate feedback. The study used both primary and secondary data and this was done through utilization of quantitative methods of data collection. In qualitative research the design was developed at the beginning of research and deviation if any kind of deviation was not permitted as such deviation is thought to cause problems, communication and interaction objectively define the fashion, data analysis took place only when the process of data collection was completed the data collection methods were standardized and fixed leaving no options for correction and adjustment. Face to face interview was carried out with the head teachers and teachers to cross check the response from the questionnaire. These were designed in a way that more specific and truthful answers were got. All relevant data was captured for making comparison and Analysis. After collecting all the data, there was cleaning of data which involved identification of incomplete or inaccurate responses which were corrected to improve the quality responses. The collected data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022). Quantitative data was grouped and statistical description such as tables showing frequencies and percentage were developed. For questioner, question was written on papers and given to student, parents and teachers.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: how school culture improves on secondary school students' moral values**

| Role of school culture               | Frequency  | Percentages |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Melding students                     | 100        | 20          |
| Providing spiritual value            | 50         | 10          |
| It brings civilization               | 50         | 10          |
| Making students to be principled     | 20         | 4           |
| It instills moral values in students | 200        | 40          |
| A good perspective over the world    | 80         | 16          |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>500</b> | <b>100</b>  |

**Source: Secondary data**

According to the study finding, Students were asked to give the role of school culture in improving secondary school student's moral value. This how they answered, 100(20%) students said that school culture melds them hence making them to have good moral values, 50(10%) said that it provides them with spiritual value which helps to be with good behaviors hence good moral values, 50(10%) said that it makes them to be civilized hence making behaving like civilized people, 20 (4%)students said that school culture makes them to be principled which makes

**Received: 7.11.2023**

**Accepted: 13.11.2023**

**Published on: 30.11.2023**

not to behave immorally (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022), the majority of student said that school culture instills moral values in students and these were 200(40%) and lastly 80(16%) students said that school culture makes the students to have a good perspective over the world.

**Table 2: Parents' response on the role of school culture on improving of secondary school student's moral values**

| Role of school culture in improving students' moral values | Parents   |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
|                                                            | f         | %          |
| Transformation of students into use full citizens          | 10        | 16.67      |
| Shaping of students                                        | 10        | 16.67      |
| Associating with others                                    | 10        | 16.67      |
| Time keeping                                               | 5         | 8.33       |
| Dining manners                                             | 20        | 33.33      |
| Self-driven                                                | 2         | 3.33       |
| Leadership skills                                          | 3         | 5          |
| <b>Total</b>                                               | <b>60</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Secondary data**

As indicated in the table above parents responded as follows the role of school culture in improving of students moral values, 10 (16.67%) said that culture help in the transformation of students into useful citizens and also 10 other parents (16.67%) said that schools help in the shaping of student which also improves on their moral values and other 10 parents (16.67%) said that school culture help students to associate with others, 5(8.3%) parents said that school culture help students to good in time keeping (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023), 20 parents with a percentage of (33.33%) said that school culture help students to learn dining manners . 2 (3.33%) said that school culture help students to be self-driven and lastly 3(5%) parents said that school culture teach students good leadership skills (Richard et al., 2022).

**Table 3: Responses of teachers on different forms moral decay in secondary school students in masaka district**

| Different forms of moral decay in secondary school students | Parents         |    |                    |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----|--------------------|----|
|                                                             | Private schools |    | Government schools |    |
|                                                             | f               | %  | f                  | %  |
| Escaping from school                                        | 50              | 10 | 100                | 20 |
| Bulling                                                     | 100             | 20 | 30                 | 6  |
| Fighting                                                    | 30              | 6  | 20                 | 4  |
| Lesbianism                                                  | 10              | 2  | 10                 | 2  |
| Eating school fees                                          | 20              | 4  | 10                 | 2  |
| Abusing teachers                                            | 30              | 6  | 170                | 34 |
| Fornicating                                                 | 110             | 22 | 30                 | 6  |

Received: 7.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

|                 |            |            |            |            |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Dodging classes | 150        | 30         | 130        | 26         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>500</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>500</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Secondary data**

Teachers were asked on the different forms of moral decay in secondary school students both in government and private schools and the following were their responses; escaping from school in private school is at 10% and in government schools is at 20%, bullying in private schools is at 20% and in government schools is at 6% (Zulaikah & Rebecca, 2023), fighting in private schools is at 6% and in government schools is at 4%, lesbianism in private schools is at 2% and in government schools is at 2%, eating school fees in private schools is at 4% and in government schools is at 2%, abusing teachers in private schools is at 6% and in government schools is at 34%, fornicating in private schools is at 22% and in government schools is at 6% and lastly dodging classes in private schools is at 30% and in government schools is at 26%.

**Table 4: political leaders' responses on the causes of moral decay in second schools in Masaka district**

| Cause of moral decay                        | Responses |            |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
|                                             | F         | %          |
| Bad peer groups                             | 1         | 5          |
| Luck of parental guidance                   | 2         | 10         |
| Band wagon                                  | 04        | 20         |
| Luck of proper school rules and regulations | 4         | 20         |
| Domestic violence at home                   | 2         | 10         |
| Environment where a child grows from        | 3         | 15         |
| Luck of a religion at home                  | 4         | 20         |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>20</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: Secondary data

According to the findings from the political leaders, bad peer groups take 5% of one of the forms of moral decay in secondary school students and 1 leader said so, 2 (10%) political leaders said that luck of parental guide also contributed to the increased moral decay in secondary students of masaka district, 4(20%) said that its Band wagon, also another 4 (20%) said that its lack of proper school rule and regulations, 2(10%) political leaders said that its domestic violence at home which cause moral decay in secondary school students because their parents don't work as role models (Mark et al., 2023), 3 (15%) political leaders said it's the environment where a child grows from which leads to moral decay in secondary school student most especially grow from towns and lastly but not the least 4(20%) political leaders said luck of a religion is among the great cause of moral decay in secondary school students of masaka district because someone without a religion does not fear to sin.

**Table 5: Head teachers' responses on the effects of moral decay**

| Effects | Responses |   |
|---------|-----------|---|
|         | f         | % |

Received: 7.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

|                                |   |     |
|--------------------------------|---|-----|
| Poor academic performance      | 2 | 40  |
| Increased School drop outs     | 1 | 20  |
| It leads to strikes in schools | 1 | 20  |
| Lack of humanism in students   | 0 | 0   |
| Students may become evil       | 1 | 20  |
| Total                          | 5 | 100 |

Source: Secondary data

According to study, the findings from the head teachers showed that, 2(40%) head teachers said that moral decay in schools leads to poor academic performance, 1(20%) said that it leads to strikes in schools which in end lead to destruction of properties, 1(20%) head teacher said that moral decay may cause increased drop out in school (John et al., 2023). According to the researcher while he was carrying out his survey, he found out that lack of humanism in students it may also be one of the effects of moral decay in secondary school of masaka district. Lastly one head teacher making a percentage of (20%) said that students may become evil due to lack of morals or due to moral decay.

**Table 6: teachers' responses on the effects of moral decay in secondary school student of masaka district**

| Effects of moral decay                   | respondents | percentage % |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Loss of life                             | 15          | 27.3         |
| Un wanted pregnancies                    | 8           | 14.5         |
| Physiological problems due to drug abuse | 2           | 3.6          |
| Destruction of school properties         | 10          | 18.2         |
| Indecent dressing                        | 7           | 12.7         |
| It gives a bad picture of the school     | 04          | 7.3          |
| Conflicts between teachers and students  | 3           | 5.5          |
| Corporal punishments and its effects     | 6           | 10.9         |
| Total                                    | 55          | 100          |

Source: Secondary data

According to the table above, teachers responded as follows to the effects of moral decay in secondary schools of masaka district; 15 teachers said that it leads to the loss of life and this gave a percentage of (27.3%), 8 (14.5%) said that physiological problems due to drug abuse. 2(3.6%) destruction of school properties is also one of the effects of moral decay in secondary schools, , 10 (18.2%) said that destruction of properties is yet another effect moral decay in secondary school students 7teacher(12.7%) indecent dressing is also defined as one of the effects of moral decay in secondary school students, 04 (7.3) teachers said it gives a bad picture of the school, 3 teachers with a percentage of (5.5%) said that moral decay in secondary school students it brings conflicts between teacher and students. 6

(10.9%) lastly said that moral decay in students can lead to corporal punishment and its effects to the students who have immorally acted (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

**Table 7: Responses of religious Leader's responses on the different strategies in providing solution to the increased moral decay in secondary school students**

| RESPONSE                                                         | Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Parents should create more time for their children               | 2           | 20             |
| There should time for Guidance and counseling in schools         | 1           | 10             |
| There every school should have counselor                         | 3           | 30             |
| There should be a senior man for boys and senior woman for girls | 2           | 20             |
| Setting up of proper school rules and regulations                | 1           | 10             |
| Proper monitoring of schools by the government                   | 1           | 10             |
| TOTAL                                                            | 10          | 100            |

**Source: Secondary Data,**

According to the table above religious leaders responded as follows on the different strategies in providing solution to the increased moral decay in secondary school students of masaka district; 2(20%) said that parents should create more time for their students, 1(10%) religious leader said that there should be guidance and counseling sessions in every schools in order to reduce on moral decay and 3(30%) said that there should be a senior woman for girl students and a senior men for boy students and these will help also to give guidance to students with special needs, 1(10%) religious leader said that the schools should set up proper rules and regulations that will prevent student from doing wrong which will also help in reducing the increased moral decay in masaka district (Christopher, 2022). Last but not the list 1 religious leader making a percentage of (10%) said that there should be proper monitoring of schools to see whether the teachers are teaching because some students act immorally because of having too much huddle time.

**Teachers' responses on the on the solutions to the increased moral decay in secondary schools**

**Table 7: Teacher's responses on the solutions to the increased moral decay in secondary schools**

| Solution To moral Decay                             | Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Sensitizing of students of what is right and wrong. | 20          | 36.4           |

Received: 7.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

|                                                                           |           |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Organizing of workshops for teachers on how to guide and counsel students | 5         | 9.1        |
| Emphasizing teaching of religious subjects in school                      | 15        | 27.3       |
| Teaching of ethics at “O” &” A” level in secondary schools                | 7         | 12.7       |
| Teaching students their norms and customs                                 | 8         | 14.5       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                              | <b>55</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Secondary Data**

According to the analysis made in the table above it showed that 20 teachers with a percentage of (36.4%) said that sensitizing of students of what is right and wrong will help to reduce on moral decay in secondary school students, 5(9.1%) teachers said that there should be organizing of workshops for teachers on how to guide and counsel students who need help, 15(27.3%) teachers said that there should be emphasizing of teaching of religious subject in secondary schools (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023), 7teacher with a percentage (12.7%) said that there should be teaching of ethics at both “O”&A Level in secondary schools and lastly 8(14.5%) teachers said that teaching students their norms and customs could help them improve on their moral values.

**Table 8: methods of preventing moral decay in secondary school students**

| Methods of managing moral decay in secondary school students | Head teachers |       | Teachers  |      | Students  |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------|-----------|------|-----------|------------|
|                                                              | f             | %     | f         | %    | f         | %          |
| Reward method                                                | 4             | 25    | 9         | 28.1 | 17        | 32.1       |
| Guidance and counseling                                      | 7             | 43.75 | 15        | 50   | 23        | 44.6       |
| Formulation and clarification of rules                       | 5             | 31.25 | 7         | 21.9 | 12        | 23.3       |
| <b>Total</b>                                                 | <b>16</b>     |       | <b>32</b> |      | <b>52</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Secondary data**

Analysis in table showed that 25% head teacher’s 28.1% teachers, 32.1% students support reward method as one of the methods to reduce moral decay in secondary school students of masaka district. According to Arnold (1962) reward may be given retributively for merit or determinately where opposite behavior is manifested. Retributively is meant to be an incentive while conditioning is used deterrent to stop the learner and others from repeating the undesirable behavior where rewards can be verbal or actual gifts. The data indicated that 43.75% head teachers, 50% teachers, and 144.6% student’s ranked guidance and counseling as another method that can be used in preventing moral decay in secondary school students of masaka district.

**Role of parents in prevention of moral decay in secondary school students.****Table 9: Role of Parents in preventing moral decay**

| Role of Parents                         | Frequency | Percentages |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Assist school system in decision making | 25        | 41.67       |

Received: 7.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

|                                               |           |            |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Source of advice                              | 10        | 16.67      |
| Guidance and counseling                       | 05        | 8.33       |
| Ensure school rules are followed              | 05        | 8.33       |
| Parents use alternative methods of discipline | 05        | 8.33       |
| Role models                                   | 10        | 16.67      |
| Total                                         | <b>60</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Secondary data**

Analysis in table above gave the frequencies and summaries of findings on role of parents in preventing moral decay in secondary school. As indicated in the analysis above, 41.67 % of the respondents According to Pugh (2006) argued that parents must remember that these new people in our lives need direction most of the time cannot differentiate well from bad. The respondents were further asked to indicate whether the role of the parents and their influence in early life would affect the life of the child for good or bad and 16.67% of the respondent noted with their statement of source of advice (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022).

When asked whether as a head teacher are able to create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement, 10% of respondents said that the head teachers are able to create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement. According to Mayer's and Pawl as (1989) recommend periodically restarting of the rules especially when learners return from holidays, as once rules have been communicated to, fair and consistent enforcement helps maintain respect to the school's discipline system (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022).

The respondents were asked to indicate whether parents understand that children need more of empathy, understanding and friendship than being pampered with money and other things, responses was 10% of the study respondents. In this context, parents' responses to children's behaviors, whether approving or disapproving are likely to have the greatest effect because the parent's approval is important to the children.

**Table 10: Ways how school administration can ensure managing discipline after the ban of corporal punishment.**

| Responses                                 | Frequency | Percentages |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Chair formulation and clarification rules | 31        | 62          |
| Promotes effective communication channel  | 12        | 24          |
| Offer rewards                             | 03        | 06          |
| Role models                               | 02        | 04          |
| Enforcing school rules                    | 02        | 04          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>50</b> | <b>100</b>  |

**Source: secondary data**

As indicated in the analysis in table above, when asked whether administrators know what the rules were and responds to learners' misconduct properly, 19(62.5%) of the respondents agreed. When asked whether as a school administrator communicates to the staff, students and parents through newsletters, in assemblies and handbooks,

Received: 7.11.2023

Accepted: 13.11.2023

Published on: 30.11.2023

majority 8(25%) agreed, the respondents were further asked to indicate whether they offer rewards both social rewards like smiling, praising and complimenting and material which are extremely effective in increasing desirable behavior. The findings revealed that 10% of the respondent agreed with their responses. The respondents were further asked to indicate whether as the head teacher plays an important role in establishing school discipline, both by effective administration and by personal example and each with remaining responses of 1% gas reported by the respondents. When asked whether as a head teacher are able to create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement, 1% of the study respondents noted that the head teachers are able to create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement.

#### **Challenges faced by teachers when trying to prevent moral decay in secondary school s of masaka district**

It was of interest in this study to find out from respondents whether there are challenges faced trying to instill moral values in students and the findings were as follows in table below

**Table 11: Challenges faced when trying to instill moral values in Leaners**

| <b>Challenges</b>                               | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentages</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Cultural conflicts                              | 14               | 28                 |
| Influence of Mass Media                         | 10               | 20                 |
| Lack of skills on alternative methods.          | 12               | 24                 |
| Corporal punishment elicit temporary compliance | 08               | 16                 |
| Rewards promote discipline                      | 05               | 10                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>50</b>        | <b>100</b>         |

#### **Source: Secondary data**

According to the study finding when asked whether cultural aspects pose a challenge when applying alternative of discipline and the analysis showed that 28% of the respondents on cultural practices. Marah (2006) argued that cultural aspects are part of the main reasons why schools have problems of implementation and some families condoning it. According to the 20% of the respondents said that, their response on media influence children to air their grievances and can challenge authority on anything. The respondents were asked to indicate whether teachers have poor skills to offer guidance and counseling 25%of the respondents said that. The Koech commission (1999) reiterated the need for guidance and counseling in schools. Therefore, learners should be equipped with skills and knowledge to help them make appropriate and relevant choices as to fit in the world of work.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the underlying flow with using the traditional classroom management system can succeed in eliciting temporary compliance from learners with 25% of the respondent's response.

#### **Conclusions**

The decline of moral values of secondary school students of masaka district can be solved as a team. Parents should play their role in a way that they should increase on the time they give their children. This will help them to detect the difference vice in their children then it will need their coming in and show them what is wrong and write. It

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should be a collective effort for both parents. They should also inform them how to make friend and good friend not bad this while prevent student from joining bad peer groups. For the school administrators and teacher if there is any culture at school that does not help on the moral values of students in a way that it gives much freedom to the student. There should immediately action. There should punishment to those who brake school rules and regulations.

**Recommendations**

The women should take their role of nurturing children in steady of minding about businesses on and making of money and leave this work to the house girls. This will help children to grow with good morals.

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**Received: 7.11.2023****Accepted: 13.11.2023****Published on: 30.11.2023**

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