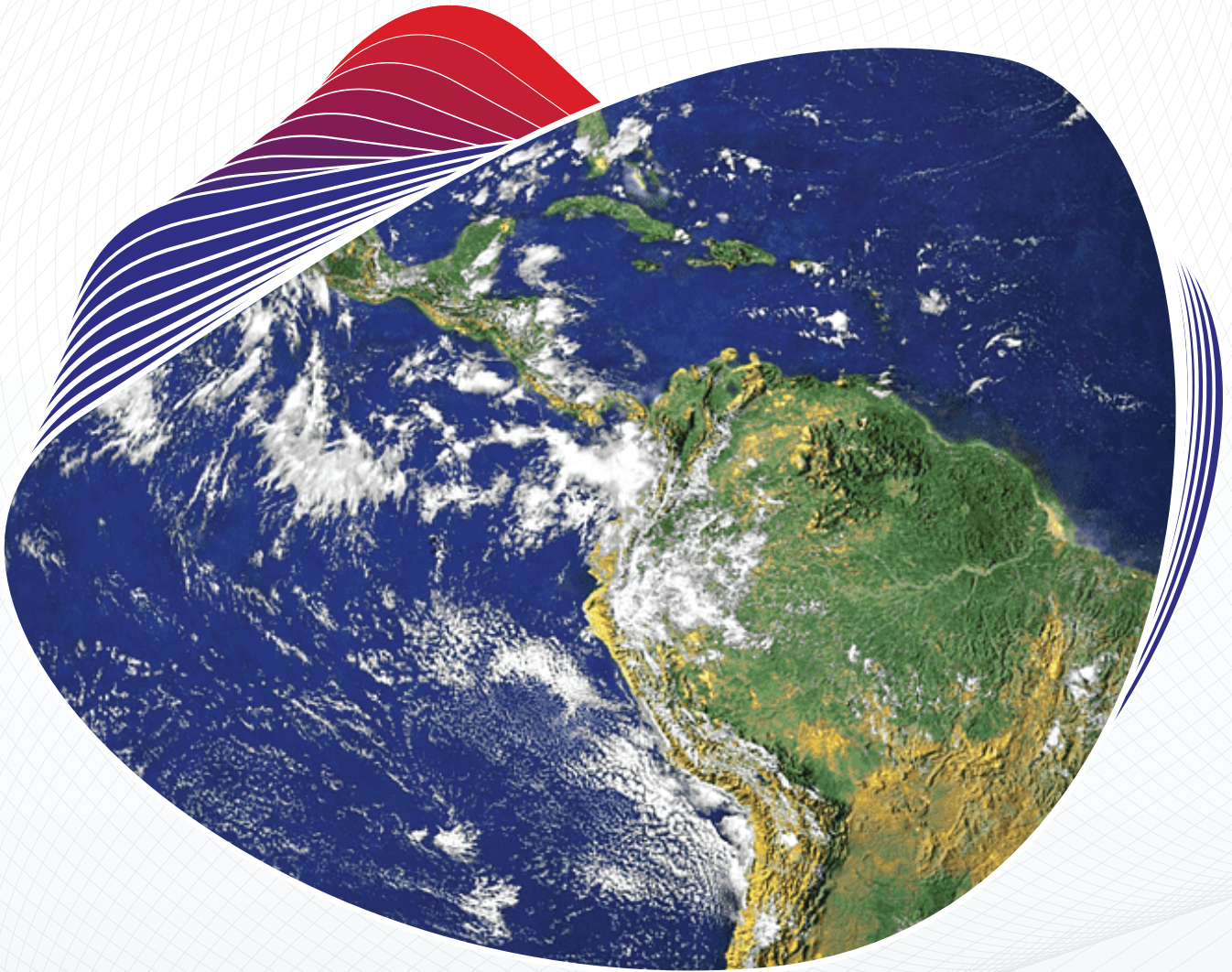


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Nkumba University
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Uganda

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Journal

EDITORIAL

THE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO A RESEARCH JOURNAL

The Nkumba International Research Journal (NIRJ), published by Nkumba University, is an open-access, peer-reviewed academic journal dedicated to the dissemination of scholarly research across a wide range of disciplines. As an online platform, the Journal provides a space for scholars to present, discuss, and document research findings and academic insights using a multi-disciplinary lens. Its mission is to make complex academic content accessible to a broader audience while maintaining scholarly rigor.

Since its inception, the Journal has upheld a commitment to publishing original, high-quality research. It accommodates a wide range of submissions, including formal research reports, re-analyses of existing studies, comprehensive literature reviews, theoretical propositions, and well-argued opinion pieces. This Second Issue of Volume Four, dated July 2025, features a compelling selection of articles, primarily focused on fashion and design, as well as human relations and community engagement. The issue underscores the intersection of academic inquiry and practical application, revealing the transformative potential of research in societal development.

Key highlights from this issue include:

- **Fashion and Cultural Values:** Elamu Mary, Catherine Gombe, and Grace Nsereko examine the role of value addition in ladies' skirt designs as a strategy for promoting modesty and cultural preservation. Their study suggests that integrating culturally inspired design elements into fashion can offer attractive alternatives to provocative clothing, thereby reinforcing decency and community values.
- **Technology in Men's Fashion:** Maxwell Okwir and Venny Nakazibwe explore the integration of digital technologies in the production of men's casual shirts. While traditional sewing machines remain widely used, the study observes a growing adoption of digital tools, including CAD software, computerized embroidery machines, and digital fabric printing, signaling a shift toward more efficient and innovative production methods.
- **Cultural Impacts of Modern Fashion Trends:** Beatrice Abao, Catherine Gombe, and Agnes Nsereko discuss the dual impact of modern fashion: while it empowers individual expression and enhances confidence, it also contributes to the erosion of traditional dress codes, intergenerational tensions, and perceived moral decline. Their findings highlight the complex relationship between fashion, identity, and societal values.
- **Skill Gaps Between Designers and Tailors:** Scaline Ayo and Catherine Gombe address the persistent skill gap in the

fashion industry. Designers were found to have broader exposure to design theory and diverse fabrics, whereas tailors exhibited strong construction skills but limited flexibility with complex materials. The authors advocate for design-based strategies, such as the use of appliqué line techniques, to enhance communication and collaboration between designers and tailors.

Community Participation in Combating Domestic Violence: Catherine Wobuyaga and Solomon Muchwa Asiimwe focus on the role of community actors in preventing and responding to domestic violence. Their research reveals that while community engagement is vital, structural and normative challenges limit its effectiveness. The authors recommend strengthening partnerships, fostering trust between communities and law enforcement, and investing in training and recognition for community actors.

This issue of the Nkumba International Research Journal reflects the Journal's dedication to multi-disciplinary research that is both academically rigorous and socially relevant. It is our hope that the insights contained herein will contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse and inform practice across sectors.

Prof. F.L. Orach-Meza
Editor in Chief

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Faustino L. Orach-Meza
Nkumba University
P. O. Box 237 Entebbe, Uganda
E-mail: orachfl@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Managing editor

Assoc. Prof. Asiimwe Solomon Muchwa,
Nkumba University,
P. O. Box 237 Entebbe, Uganda,
E-mail: sasiimwe@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Copy editors

Dr. Simon Peter Ongodia
Nkumba University,
P. O. Box 237 Entebbe, Uganda
E-mail: songodia@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Mr. John Baptist Imokola

Nkumba University,
P. O. Box 237 Entebbe, Uganda
E-mail: jimokola@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Mr. Joseph Lwevuze

Nkumba University,
Email: jlwevuze@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Content editor (s)

Mr. Barasa Patrick
Nkumba University,
Email: pbarasa@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Webmaster

Mr. Kasirye Arthur
Nkumba University,
E-mail: akasirye@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Editorial Board

1. Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana,
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Security And Strategic Studies: The Neglected Aspect Of Securing Africa's Future.

Katongole Badhul, Solomom Muchwa Asiimwe , John Paul Kasujja.

¹ Katongole Badhul, is a PhD Candidate at Nkumba University. His interest in research is in the area of security and strategic studies, especially the field of economic security.

Prof. Solomon Muchwa Asiimwe, is a professor of security studies and International Relations at Nkumba University, and Uganda Martyrs University, Uganda.

Dr. John Paul Kasujja, a Cultural and Political Historian, is a lecturer at Kabale University. He holds a PhD in History, a Master's Degree in History and a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Education (History) all from Makerere University, Uganda

Keywords: *Security, Strategy, Security Studies, Strategic Studies, Modeling, Model Specification, Model Identification, Model Estimation, Model Testing.*

Abstract

The study explored the evolution of security and strategic studies (SSS) in African institutions. This was against the observed neglect of SSS products by African governments despite increased establishment of SSS courses in African military and civilian institutions of higher learning. The objective of the study was to explore the studying of SSS in order to understand their potential to contribute to securing Africa's future and the consequences for neglecting them. Using a qualitative research approach, 15 respondents from universities, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in Uganda were interviewed and their information corroborated through document analysis. The study found that SSS in Africa begun in military academies then later went to civilian universities and gained speed in the 2000's; due to need for trained graduate specialists to aid the security and strategic discourse in Africa. However, the contribution of SSS to this discourse is hampered by prevalent state-centric biases exhibited by governments in Africa and lack of interface between SSS academicians, security practitioners and policy makers. This has resulted in African states interacting with competitors in the international system both state and non-state from a position of disadvantage. The study recommended that there must be a clear institutional framework in form of security and strategic studies think-tanks and establishment of a physical or legal entity responsible for development and application of information from SSS following certain policy; in order to secure Africa's future through sustainable peace, security and development.

Introduction.

Security and strategic studies are one of the growing fields of study at graduate and post-graduate levels world-wide. This development, which until recently was a Western phenomenon, necessitated a systematic investigation into the evolution of SSS in Africa with a view of examining their potential to contribute to securing Africa's future. The study also explored the study of SSS in order to get a clear feel of the consequences of their neglect by African governments; well aware that continents that have taken advantage of SSS products have managed to secure their future through sustainable peace, security and development.

Contextual Background.

Security studies (SS) has mainly been a western subject, largely done in North America, Europe and Australia characterized as war studies, military and grand strategy and geopolitics (Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Rowley & Weldes, 2018). Between 1940's and 1990's SS were systematically institutionalized through establishing courses and institutes, creation of specialist sections within academic institutions, development of specialist journals, founding of SS think-tanks and setting up funding programs by governments and foundations (Lynn-Jones, 1991; Buzan & Hansen, 2009). Before the 1940's security studies existed: the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) was established in 1831 while the United States (US) Army War College has existed for more than a hundred years. Some of the western institutions in which SS is being pursued today existed before the Second World War including the Brookings Institution Think-Tank founded in 1927 (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

Traditionally, the study of strategy was conducted in military institutions and academies and then scholarship moved to think-tanks and to universities because nuclear weapons meant to be addressed remained a theoretical exercise requiring civilian experts ranging from physicists and economists to sociologists and psychologists (Buzan & Hanse, 2009; Duyvesteyn & Worrall, 2017). As a result of the cold war and construction of Soviet and international communism (enemies), strategic studies emerged; focusing on external (communist) threats, the (western) state as a referent object of security, a bipolar (East-West) balance of power, distinction between the domestic and the international – especially nuclear threats (Rowley & Weldes, 2018). In contemporary times, strategic studies are carried out in institutions like Strategic Institute of the US Army War College that sponsor conferences on strategic studies and their research analysts publish their findings. The publications provide a framework for considering strategy at the grand strategy, national security strategy, national military strategy and regional or theater strategy levels (Yarger, 2006).

In Africa, security and strategic studies do not have a long history (Amaiike & Ben, 2017) and are hardly engaged in; because past experience has shown that they have not been useful as a result of incorrect forecasts. Additionally, the strategic environmental factors change so

rapidly that actors are unable to cope. The African continent has also historically lacked think-tanks dedicated to understanding complex issues and developing responses to emerging policy challenges (Devex, 2019). Most of the existing think-tanks are national in character or mainly pursue national policy agenda. The African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) is based in Washington DC and is just meant to support United States foreign policy by strengthening the strategic capacity of African countries to identify and resolve security challenges in ways that promote civil-military cooperation, respect for democratic values and safeguard human rights (DCAF, 2019).

African interest in security studies is however evidenced by the emergence and growth of a number of institutes in that respect. Examples are; the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) based in South Africa. This is the pioneer African strategic studies organization, which aims at enhancing human security on the continent through independent and authoritative research and provision of expert policy advice (Devex, 2019). Other continent-wide institutions include; the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC) established in Ghana and offering masters and PhD courses in peace and security (KAIPTC, 2020); the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) established at Addis Ababa University (AAU), Ethiopia, in 2007, as a premier institute of higher learning that aims at contributing to African peace and security-through education, research and professional development and finding African-led solutions to peace and security in Africa (African Union Peace and Security Programme, [APSP], 2012).

Conceptual Background

The concepts addressed in this background are; security studies, security, strategic studies and strategy.

Security studies.

Security studies entail analysis of security issues including pandemics, environmental degradation, transnational organized crime and more traditional security concerns such as weapons of mass destruction and interstate conflicts (Asiimwe, 2017). Undertaking security studies is necessary because in the hierarchy of human problems, security features prominently and at the same time it is the most important though not the only common good required by humanity (Buzan, 2009; Jackson-Preece, 2011). Security studies (Kolodziej, 2004), can be classified according to three levels of analysis; state-to-state, trans-state and international levels. Apart from security studies that are close to the traditional theories of realism and liberalism, there are Critical Security Studies (CSS) that originated in the late 1970's. Errikson as quoted in Mutimer (2007) indicated that they deal with the social construction of security, assured an emancipatory goal and (Abaho, 2023) claimed that security of the state was not equal to security of citizens and the environment. Since the early 1980's (Grey, 2009) security studies have broadened considerably in that whilst its traditional concerns are still present, there has

been an increasing accent upon human security.

Security

Most scholars define security as preventing nations/states from threats, attacks or aggression; others focus more on individuals or people emphasizing individual emancipation and perceptions (Lin, 2011). Security is most commonly associated with mitigation of threats to cherished values, especially those which if left unchecked threaten the survival of a particular referent object in the near future (Buzan, 2009; Krause & Williams, 19997; Asiimwe, 2017).

Traditionally, the state has been the thing to secure, what is known as the referent object and it has sought security through military might since threats to the state were expected to only come from outside its territorial frontiers. Security emphasized the preservation of the state and by extension the ruling regime as the primary goal (Buzan, 2009; Krause & Williams, 1997; Nebo, 2021). However, (Asiimwe, 2017) the elements of ‘hard security’ (military tools) that were traditionally relied upon may now be ill-suited to cope with the changing threat environment where threats are sudden, unpredictable, protracted and unyielding; with a broad range of conditions threatening people’s survival, livelihood and dignity (Buzan, 2009; Krause & Williams, 1997) what is known as human security. Human security is concerned with both people’s freedom from fear and freedom from want (Abaho et al, 2019; Asiimwe, 2017; UNDP, 1994). Often (Baldwin, 1997; Buzan, 2009; Krause & Williams, 1997) redefining security takes the form of proposals for giving high priority to such issues as human rights, economics, the environment, drug trafficking, epidemics, crime or social injustice. In the broad sense, security can also include the protection of individuals and groups from arbitrary and coercive forms of political rule (Metz, 2001).

Strategic studies

Strategic studies are about the study of strategy and thus involved in looking into the future and identifying trends and issues against which to align organizational priorities so that goals can be achieved in the most effective and efficient manner possible- through strategy a mission can be achieved comparatively better than other organizations (the competition) (United Nations, 2019). At state level (Yarger, 2006), strategic studies are applied to grand strategy, national security strategy, national military strategy and regional or theater strategy.

Strategy

There is no (Mindtools, 2019) definitive answer about what strategy is; some people believe that strategy is about analyzing the present carefully and anticipate changes and from this plan how to succeed in the future. For others the future is too difficult to predict and prefer to evolve strategies organically. Strategy (Business Dictionary, 2019) is a method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem. Strategy is also

defined as the art and science of planning and marshalling resources for their efficient and effective use. Strategy (Mindtools, 2019) determines how resources should be configured to meet the needs of markets and stakeholders and defines and communicates an organizations unique position and should determine how organizational resources, skills and competitiveness should be combined to create competitive advantage.

Strategy (Amaike & Ben, 2017) should be regarded as a statement of what resources to take advantage of which opportunities to minimize which threats and to provide a desired result. Strategies are schemes, methods and maneuvers which management hope to deploy to move the organization from its present position and arrive at its target goal by the end of a specific period, recognizing that during the intervening period, a host of changes are going to take place in the environment. Strategy (Yarger, 2006) at all levels is a calculation of objectives, concepts and resources within acceptable bounds of risk to create more favorable outcomes that might otherwise exist by chance or at the hands of others. In case of the state, it is the art and science of developing and employing instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national and/or multinational objectives.

Knowledge Gap

SSS help formulation of policies for sustainable growth and development of economies through providing guidance to decision making, contributing to recognizing and responding to winds of change, new opportunities and threats to development (Amaike & Ben, 2017). Security studies has mainly been a western subject largely done in North America, Europe and Australia; with all the western-centrism that this entails (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

In the 1970 survey of strategic studies the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) listed 128 places in 29 countries where research in strategic studies including Peace Research was being pursued. Most of these were in the West and Japan with the US accounting for 20 and the UK 13 but Eastern Europe and some Third World countries also had representation (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). SSS has mainly flourished in democratic countries, while strategic thinking in non-western countries remained more firmly in the grip of the military (Duyvesten & Worrall, 2017) and (Asiimwe, 2017) mainly for the purpose of survival of regimes.

On the African continent security and strategic studies do not have a long history (Amaike & Ben, 2017), and are hardly engaged in because past experience has shown that they have not been useful as a result of incorrect forecasts. Additionally, the strategic environmental factors change so rapidly that actors are unable to cope. As a result SSS in Africa have suffered from retarded growth and neglect. There is therefore need for remedial action if Africa is to benefit from the dividends arising out of undertaking SSS such as well-informed policy choices and development paths.

While recent trends in Africa reveal a growth of courses in the area of SSS and institutions

offering these courses, there is need for a systematic study to establish how these studies have evolved, how they are connected to securing the continents future and the consequences for neglecting them via a definite methodology guided by the following objective.

Objective

The objective of the study was to explore the studying of SSS in Africa in order to understand their potential to contribute to securing Africa's future and the consequences for neglecting them.

Theoretical Review

The theories reviewed include realism, liberalism, social constructivism and human security.

Realism.

Realism states that the nation-states act as the referent object of security and security is appropriation of military and economic power rather than pursuit of ideals and ethics (Asiimwe, 2017). Tenets of realism are that; states are the principal actors in the international system; that the aim of countries is to reach their national interests, expressed in particular by country-survival and preservation of its territorial integrity; that the means of reaching those interests is the determination of countries to use military power; that countries have an inherent desire that forces or leads them to wage war and that security corrections is in their hands and is based on their domination of others (Ondrejesak, 2014). Realists (Lin, 2011) consider the main feature of the world to be anarchy, characterized by no central government within it and no supreme authority that can rule state behavior, settle disputes and conduct punishment.

Realism on its own is an inadequate theory for the study because it only emphasizes the state as the referent object of security and ignores other actors like institutions in matters of security and strategy. Given the limitations of realism, it was necessary to look at other theories as to identify the theory suited for the study. Next is a look at the theory of liberalism.

Liberalism

Liberalists believe that there are many different influential actors besides states on the world stage, that all that happens in the world isn't related to balance of power between states and that therefore force is not inevitable and it should be the purpose of political institutions to eliminate it or at least minimize it (Wendt, 2005). They believe in the moral and legal constraints to regulate war in case it breaks out. Liberalism also encourages diplomacy, international law and disarmament as means to avoid war. The goodness of man, democracy, free trade and human rights are the main tenets of liberalism (Asiimwe, 2017). The theory (Ondrejesak, 2014) is based on the assumption that countries function in a peaceful environment and that countries endeavor for cooperation and peaceful handling of disputes; as a basis of prevention of conflict and wars,

that the spread of democracy contributes to building of world-wide peace. Liberalism (Lin, 2011) recognizes that states are key actors in the international system but not the only actors; that states have mutual interests; that institutions and regimes are the mediator, significant forces and the means to achieve cooperation between actors in the international system.

Alone the liberalism theory is not adequate for the study because it assumes that there will be an environment of cooperation between states based on mutual interests between states; which cannot always be the case. Since the theory does not fully satisfy the requirements of the study, we shall also explore the theory of social constructivism.

Social constructivism

Social constructivism (Cahan, 2018) emphasizes the creation of circumstances and social construction of reality, the establishment of international regimes and norms; and that the structure of the international system is both anarchic and ideational. Ideas and norms once adopted can become sticky and transformational. They may exercise not just a regulative effect on the behavior of actors but also constitute their identities and thereby transform their previous identities. Anarchy (Wendt, 2005) is what states make of it. Socialization can lead to formation of collective identities that can overcome the security dilemma among states, institutions and regimes are not merely regulative, but also have a constitutive effect; international institutions as agents of socialization have a transformative impact on state behavior (Acharya, 2005). Applied to security studies, constructivism argues for a more practical and cultural understanding of security studies (Wendt, 2005). Social constructivism (Lin, 2011) posits that social structures are made up of elements such as shared knowledge, material resources and practices and the way we think about international relations can help to bring about greater international security. They accept that states are the key referents in the study of international security (but they recognize the importance of non-state actors); that the international system is anarchic; that states have a fundamental wish to survive and that states attempt to behave rationally.

Social constructivism on its own is an inadequate theory for this study because of the importance they attach to norms particularly international norms. Such norms, surely exist but they are routinely disregarded if that is in the interest of powerful states. Constructivists tend to assume that the social interaction between states is always sincere and that states generally attempt to express and understand each other's intentions. However, anarchy, offensive capabilities and uncertain intentions combine to leave states with little choice but to compete aggressively with each other. It is therefore necessary to have a look at the human security theory.

Human security theory

This theoretical approach considers individuals rather than states to be the referents of security. This is a significant leap from broadening which still views insecurity as a primarily state-related problem as opposed to a human condition. The deepening of security goes further than

broadening the different threats which a state finds itself with (Hough, 2004; Lodgaard, 2004). Central in the deepening approach to security studies is of human security whose objective is the safety and survival of the individual and thus is synonymous with security of people (Buzan, 2009). According to the United Nations (2009) human security is defined as “...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and fulfillment. Human security (Abaho, Mawa & Asiimwe, 2019) means protecting fundamental freedoms.... freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic and cultural systems that give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.

Human security is like sustainable development, everyone is for it, but few have a clear idea of what it means, it also causes major problems for policy makers whose specific task is to make sure that resources are properly allocated to the most pressing matters; which is a very difficult to undertake when one considers all issues as equally urgent. Whilst many developing states are now capable of properly guaranteeing human security, non-state actors have not had much success and there is still hardly an international body which can properly govern the treatment of humans by their respective states and other possibly threatening actors. Human security thus is more of an ideal than something which can be strategically implemented (Paris, 2001). We therefore found need to combine of all the above four theories to guide the study.

Literature Review

Literature was reviewed to prove that the study was not a re-invention of the wheel and in that respect some of the literature reviewed included the following:

The work by Baldwin (1997) “*The Concept of Security*” where it is argued that redefining “security” has recently become something of a cottage industry. Often this takes the form of proposals for giving high priority to such issues as human rights, economics, the environment, drug trafficking, epidemics, crime or social injustice in addition to the traditional concerns with security from external military threats.

The work by Krause & Williams (1997) “*Critical Security Studies and Cases*” which takes issue with arguments that security studies is a discipline of limited use in making sense of the post-cold war world. They argue that many of the most interesting theoretical issues in international relations can most usefully be studied through a prism labelled “security studies”.

The work by Ogata (2001) “*State Security-Human Security*” which advanced knowledge on human security development and tries to address sources of human insecurity; social, economic, cultural, environmental, political- leading to direct threats to human security (violent conflicts, natural disasters, discrimination on spurious grounds, hunger, torture, imprisonment without a free and fair trial).

The work by Zulkifli (2019) ‘*Difference between Strategic Studies and Security Studies*’ where it is argued that strategic studies can be identified with the use of the military as an instrument of state policy. It’s also seen as the use of engagement for the purpose of war and also as the bridge that relates military power to political purpose and more specifically the theory and practice of the use and threat of use of organized force for political purposes. Strategic studies developed theories, policies and operations that reduced the risk of war.

The work by Koliopoulos (2017) ‘*Historical Approaches to Security/Strategic Studies*’ that treats strategic and security studies as synonymous and as pertaining to the study of the interaction of policy ends with military and other means under conditions of actual or potential conflict. That strategic/security studies are arguably the most historically minded branch of international relations.

Theorized Model

As already indicated in the theoretical review, the theories of security individually are inadequate to explain the realities of African security matters but a combination of theories of security such as realism, liberalism, social constructivism and human security can to a great extent explain the realities about security in Africa and guide security studies but they can only explain the reality about strategy in Africa and guide strategic studies to a small extent.

For example, realism explains that for countries to manage their security, they must act selfishly and even be ready to go to war to protect their interests; given that the international system is anarchic. Liberalism indicates that countries can guarantee their security through cooperation with other states through trade, respecting international law and membership to international institutions in which to address mutual interests and conflict. For social constructivism states can be able to take care of their security through adhering to agreed norms and being aware that these norms can be disregarded if it’s in the interest of the powerful states. They can also do so through acquisition of knowledge and material resources. For human security theory, countries can take care of their security by enhancing human freedoms and fulfillment through creating political, social, environmental, economic and cultural systems that together ensure people’s survival, livelihood and dignity; and security studies are guided accordingly.

While the above aspects can explain the reality about African strategy and strategic studies, they only do so to a small extent and leave out aspects that I wish to add like: for a good strategy and useful strategic studies- strategic studies should be for the purpose of supporting foreign policies by strengthening the strategic capacity of African countries to identify and resolve security challenges in ways that promote civil-military cooperation, respect for democratic values and safeguard human rights. Strategic studies can contribute to African peace and security through education, research and professional development and can take up the intellectual challenge of finding African-led solutions to violence and insecurity in Africa,

Strategic studies should address the issues of grand strategy and geopolitics and the existence of nuclear weapons elsewhere on the globe; should address the need for deliberate action to establish SSS courses and institutes within universities, creation of specialist sections within academic associations, development of specialist SSS journals, founding of SSS think-tanks and setting up of funding programs by governments and foundations in order to promote SSS. A place will be found by governments for civilian strategists ranging from physicists and economists to sociologists and psychologists as this will result into cross fertilization of ideas and bring in different intellectual and policy foci. Conferences organized regularly provide a framework for considering strategy at the grand strategy, national security strategy, national military strategy and regional or theater strategy levels and help researchers publish their findings. Strategic studies aid policy formulation for sustainable growth and development of economies, provide guidance to decision making, contribute to recognizing and responding to winds of change, new opportunities and threats to development. Strategic studies think-tanks should be dedicated to and further understanding of complex issues and developing responses to emerging policy challenges.

A good strategy should be based on correct forecasts and the realization that the strategic environmental factors change so rapidly for the purpose of coping with them. Strategist should be able to look into the future and identify trends and issues against which to align organizational (state/continental) priorities so that goals can be achieved in the most effective and efficient manner possible. A good strategy should drive focus, accountability and results and ensure a mission is achieved comparatively better than other organizations (the competition). Understanding should be made of the challenges, trends and issues, who are the key beneficiaries or clients and what they need; to determine the most effective and efficient way possible to achieve the mandate.

To formulate a good strategy, there must be a mission (what we exist to do); sense of urgency (why we need a strategy); vision statement (where we need to go); how we will achieve it (through customers/stakeholders, services/programs, processes, people/knowledge, finances); values (beliefs we will follow). A strategy must analyze the present carefully and anticipate changes; and from this plan how to succeed in the future. It must be a plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem and should be applied to planning and marshalling resources for their most efficient and effective use. A strategy should determine how resources should be configured to meet the needs of markets and stakeholders. It should define and communicate an organizations unique position, and determine how organizational resources, skills and competitiveness should be combined to create competitive advantage. A strategy should determine the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term. A strategy should be about methods and maneuvers which management hope to deploy in order to move the organization from its present position to arrive at its target by the end of a specific period; recognizing that during the intervening period, a host of changes are

going to take place in the environment. It should be a statement of what resources are going to be used to take advantage of which opportunities to minimize which threats and to provide a desired result.

A strategy should be a calculation of objectives, concepts and resources within acceptable bounds of risk, to create more favorable outcomes that might otherwise exist by chance or at the hands of others. A strategy should be about developing and employing instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national and/or multinational objectives. It should be for using the political, economic, social-psychological and military powers of the state in accordance with policy guidance to create effects that protect or advance national interests relative to other states, actors or circumstances.

Research Methodology

The study was exploratory and used a qualitative and descriptive approach to capture people's views, attitudes and experiences of the aspect of security and strategic studies in Africa. An interview guide and document review checklist were used to collect data. The sample size was of 15 (Fifteen) respondents drawn from universities, governmental, inter-governmental and civil society organizations in Uganda. Non-probability sampling was used through purposive, convenience and snowballing sampling techniques, to arrive at the sample; guided by the principle of the saturation point. Data was categorized according to the similarity of responses, was then coded, edited, analyzed and the study findings published.

Discussion Of Study Findings

The study found that the undertaking of SSS in Africa don't have a long history, with the first institution- the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) based in South Africa having begun in 1991 and others much later in the 2000's. This is in contrast with an early start of SSS in the developed world (Freedman, 2019) which began in the 1950's, the importance they attach to them and the benefits they have enjoyed from SSS such as well-informed policy choices and development paths among others. This means that SSS in the developed world have been on for over 50 years following a tradition of studying war, for example the study of Naval and Military science that began as far back as 1831 (Buzan & Hansen, 2009), an over 190-year history. Given that Africa began undertaking SSS many years later, after they were taken up by other countries means that we have a long way to go in their development and it would be asking too much, to expect Africa to interact on equal terms/footing in the international system, with states that know us better than we know ourselves, courtesy of their early start in SSS and yet we know very little about them because of under developed SSS.

It was noticed that the undertaking of SSS in Africa arose out of the fact that initially, security had traditionally been understood and practiced from the angle of the state as the referent object of security and the use of the military to protect state institutions with the hope that security

will trickle down to the people. Academicians then woke up to the fact and saw need to shift the thinking about security from a state-centric one to one that is people-centric/centered; security not being seen through the military, but in light of the involvement of people in discussing such issues as poverty, climate change and so on. Initially, Africa was state-centric and security training was the preserve of security (military) institutions; with civilian academic institutions sidelined. The coming on board of academicians saw the advent of the civilian strategist in African SSS. Despite the security forces being meant to serve society, with funding from government (tax payers), until the advent of the civilian security expert, there was little knowledge about security issues including oversight. Academicians saw the need to fill the gap and decided to provide security training not only the security officials in need of academic knowledge in security and its new dynamics but also to other people outside the traditional security sector.

The reason advanced by African academicians for starting SSS in Africa were in agreement with how SSS evolved in the developing world (Buzan & Hansen, 2009) having started in military institutions and then transited to civilian universities and institutions. It is unfortunate that (Asiimwe, 2017) state-centrism- seeing security in terms of need to protect the state and its institutions and ensuring the survival of the regime in power was a dominant factor in the African security discourse. This disregarded the security of the people whose taxes fund the activities of the security sector and government in general. Yet according to Chutter (2011) the military and security in general should be responsible to the society that employs it and that pays not only its wages but also the many other costs associated with maintaining and developing a defense capability.

It was seen that attempt at Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Africa offered new avenues for the development of SSS. It brought on table such issues as security oversight, redefinition of security and introduction of the concept of human security, which was very important particularly for the security sector in Africa by enlightening civilians on issues of security. However, success in SSR on the African continent is limited. Yet (Hendrickson, 2004) SSR are meant to help states enhance the security of their citizens and shift from state and military centric notions of security to greater emphasis on human security, which underscores the importance of governance issues and civilian input in policy making. The decision by African Academicians to shift from state-centered security to human security was a well-informed one because according to the United Nations (2009), whereas state security draws attention to threats directed against the state- mainly in form of military attacks, human security draws attention to a wide scope of threats faced by individuals and communities. It focuses on root causes of insecurities and advances people centered solutions that are locally driven, comprehensive and sustainable. Human security acknowledges that as a result of downturns such as conflicts, economic and financial crises, ill-health and natural disasters people are faced with sudden insecurities and deprivations. These not only undo years of development but also generate conditions within which grievances lead to growing and destabilizing tensions. Human security advocates for human well-being and is

driven by values relating to security, stability and sustainability of development gains. Africa governments should therefore follow suit.

It was realized that the study of SSS in Africa began late and should have started a longtime ago since in other parts of the world like the West it began decades ago. But it was also agreed that in a way it was timely, because it began when states in Africa were democratizing and people were beginning to realize that security is more than physical security, as it incorporates other aspects such as social security, psychological security and so on. People, due to increased security consciousness were able to write and talk about security issues in the media and get involved in the security discourse. People are also able to tell that the state is insecure even if leaders tell them lies that its secure based on physical security alone; they are able to detect/identify other insecurities because (United Nations, 2009) they affect their livelihood and dignity. Africa & Kwadjo (2009) agree that seeing security in other aspects other than physical security is important if security in the widened and deepened sense is to be appreciated.

It was appreciated that if SSS had begun earlier African states would have avoided the political and security challenges they have gone through as a result of people in the security sector lacking enlightenment, lacking professionalism and not knowing who they were supposed to work for- the people. African states would have for example avoided the various military coups they went through and their attendant negative consequences for survival and development. The researcher agrees with the findings that SSS in Africa begun a little late because looking at the tradition from which they emanate, (Buzan & Hansen, 2009) other countries laid the foundation for these studies dating as far back as the 19th century and (Devex, 2019) in Africa we are beginning the study of SSS in the 21st century without a strong foundation. The researcher agrees with the findings that if SSS in Africa had begun earlier, we would have avoided the political and security challenges such as the various coups many countries have gone through and their attendant negative consequences for Survival and development. The situation Africa went through is captured by Scholars like Woods (2007); that since independence many African countries plunged into decades of divisive politics with coups and counter coups marking prolonged periods of instability.

According to the study, while several institutions have emerged to undertake SSS, there is hardly any inter-institutional collaboration or partnership between universities; that should come in form of conferences, journals and contributions thereto and so on. The papers presented in conferences would then be turned into publications. It is because of lack of the above approach that growth of SSS is retarded and therefore Africa has to resort to concepts of SSS imported from experts from outside Africa such as Barry Buzan and others. There is no known formal (official) inter-institutional collaboration (between universities and between universities and policy-making institutions). The main impediment was said to be lack of funding because it requires a lot of money which is not available. The lack of inter-institutional collaboration in SSS is an unfortunate development. While SSS shouldn't be the preserve of governments and

their institutions as the case is, it would serve us better if they were deliberately coordinated by governments and involving civilian institutions; for the benefit of the continent and its populace. It would suffice to realize that SSS are about how states can operate from an advantageous position relative their competitors both state and non-state (Yarger, 2006); neglecting SSS means that the state/s has/have no choice but to operate from a position of disadvantage to its/their competitors- which is detrimental to the very basis of survival and advancement.

The researcher found that outputs of SSS in Africa include dissertations by students at Bachelors, Masters and PhD levels, some Scholars produce policy briefs which they send to government ministries, departments and agencies albeit informally and others produce articles that are published in Journals. These outputs generate literature on strategic and security issues thus imparting skills and improving knowledge to those who access them. The unfortunate part is that journals in Africa are limited and scholars end up sending their publications to journals outside the continent. SSS should serve the purpose of knowledge development and according to Jonasec (2019) such knowledge development can be for science or education purposes, to verify or stimulate new methods, to bring up or recruit new scientists, future strategic study producers, students and lifelong education attendants and to develop presentation of attained knowledge. We can borrow a leaf from European and American government Institutes and Journals and how they operate, such as the US Army War College and its publications (Yarger, 2006). Unfortunately, our governments have neglected SSS and our research outputs are not shared with national policy-makers, mainly because there are hardly journals of SSS in Africa and no formal arrangement for generating and sharing policy briefs.

It was found that the consumers of research outputs of SSS are students, the general public and researchers, but unfortunately there is no framework for sharing the research outputs with policy-making institutions. Policy-makers have not involved themselves in the consumption of the research outputs of SSS, many may not even be aware of the existence of such valuable research output and some may not even be comfortable that people are studying SSS- because of their eye-opening nature and yet they themselves are not knowledgeable in this area. It is only a few policy-makers who are undertaking SSS (even then on their own initiative) that are benefiting from SSS, but even when they go back to office, it is not easy to tell whether they are allowed/take the initiative to practice what they have learned. The study also found that such a pivotal and beneficial course like SSS is mostly being accessed by chance and through personal effort, which is disturbing for a course that should be given priority by academic institutions and governments given the benefits that can accrue to the continent if SSS are highly developed. It is necessary that the course is highly advertised and marketed as to attract the best brains.

If SSS are to be beneficial to the national and continental development vision/agenda, the specialization in SSS should be based on the needs of a country and continent at large and the gaps identified thereto- a duty that should fall on the shoulders of governments. According to Jonasec (2019), there should actually be a physical or legal entity responsible for development

and application of information from SSS; following certain policy. Some of the decision to be taken would include; which people should be acquainted with the studies; recommendation for incorporation of the knowledge in education; enhancement of requirements for planning procedures; theoretical fundamentals and scientific work. After having applied strategic studies, the users/recipients/consumers are obliged to write recommendations for their producers to get feedback on each phase of the strategic studies development process. As Freedman (2019) indicates, governments can rely on academic institutions for conceptual innovation, hard research, practical proposals and willing recruits for the bureaucracy. Strategic studies should play a major role in the relationship between civilians and members of the armed forces- mutual understanding of the problems faced can play a positive role in respect armed forces control- what Duyvesteyn & Worrall (2017) referred to as the perspective of cross-fertilization of ideas and different intellectual and policy foci present in those locations, from which new ideas can be born through exchange of perspectives between the military and civilians.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

The study draws the following conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusion

The undertaking of SSS Africa has a short history and is behind the Western world by over 80 years. Like in the Western world these studies started in military institutions for their operational needs and then went to civilian institutions such as universities. This was as a result of need by African academicians to see a shift from the traditional state-centric approach to security to an approach based on human security.

However, SSS have been neglected by governments on the African continent evidenced by: late undertaking of SSS when other areas started it decades before us- whose implication is that African states can't be able to interact on equal terms/footing in the international system with states that had as early start in SSS; inability of African states to successfully carry out security sector reform that would improve human security resulting in many African states failing to avoid the political and security challenges they have gone through- whose implication is a plunge into decades of divisive politics with coups and counter coups marking prolonged periods of instability; lack of inter-institutional collaboration and partnerships between universities and between universities and policy-making institutions in respect of SSS matters- whose implication is retarded growth of SSS leaving African states to operate from a position of disadvantage relative to their competitors both state and non-state; failure to utilize outputs of research such as dissertations, journals and policy briefs and therefore failure to utilize developed knowledge coupled with lack of a framework for sharing research outputs with policy-making institutions- whose implications are ill-informed policy choices and ill-informed development paths (all detrimental to the basis of survival and advancement); people accessing of SSS by chance or

through personal effort and not by deliberate government arrangements- whose implication is that African states are not able to benefit from the security and strategic studies development processes.

Recommendations.

- a. There is need to consider and review the SSS curriculums so that they can allow for specialization in the study of SSS into specialized knowledge areas including specialized geopolitical studies.
- b. There should be established inter-university policy research platforms for strategic research that should translate into resourceful think-tanks.
- c. There should be deliberate and regular interface between SSS scholars and policy-makers; through research and policy analysis seminars and conferences. All the above arrangements should be able to encourage publications, the establishment of as many journals of SSS as possible and sharing of policy briefs.
- d. There should be a clear institutional framework linking security practitioners, policy makers and academicians in the SSS sector; this should be done through the establishment of a physical or legal entity responsible for development and application of information/knowledge from SSS; following certain policy.

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Perceptions of older persons with noncommunicable diseases on the accessibility of primary health care services and health-related quality of life in central Uganda

Atim Fiona^{1,2}; (fatim@ciu.ac.ug)^{1,2}, Ndagire Regina¹; (rndagire@ciu.ac.ug)², Chloe Nampima¹; (cnampiima@ciu.ac.ug)², Frank Kiyinji²; (kfrankpio@yahoo.com)¹, Rose Clarke Nanyonga¹; (nanyongaclarke@ciu.ac.ug)², Faustino Orach-Meza²; (orachfl@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug)¹.

¹ Nkumba University, Entebbe Road, P.O Box 237, Entebbe, Uganda

² Clarke International University, Kawagga Close, Off Kalungi Road, Muyenya. Block 244|Plot 8244: Bukasa Kyadondo, Kampala-Uganda

Abstract

Primary health care services (PHCs) play a pivotal role in the early diagnosis, prevention, and management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and the improvement of the health-related quality of life (HRQOL) of the aging population in developing countries. Ensuring responsive PHCs enhances accessibility and improves patient utilization and retention rates, hence promoting equitable access to service delivery. The study aimed to explore the perceptions of older persons with NCDs towards accessibility of primary health care services and health-related quality of life in Uganda. The objectives of the study were to.

- Explore the understanding of older persons with Noncommunicable diseases on health-related quality of life
- Describe the nature of Primary health care services accessibility among older persons with Noncommunicable diseases
- Explore the facilitators and barriers to primary health care services accessibility among older persons with noncommunicable diseases.

This exploratory qualitative study design involved 16 older men and women aged 65 years and above and 7 Key Informants were interviewed. Thematic analysis using an inductive approach generated themes that informed the study's qualitative findings. The key themes that emerged include poor access to PHCs, and lack of priority setting in the provision of PHC services for older persons with NCDs. The HRQOL of the participants was poor, and their understanding of HRQOL included holistic well-being, lifestyle modification, financial stability, and psychosocial support. Enhancing access to PHC services through proper planning, priority setting, evidence-based budget allocation, and ensuring psychosocial support systems are strategies that can curb the agony emanating from poor access to PHC services among older persons with NCDs in Uganda.

Keywords: *Qualitative study, Healthcare access, Older care in Central Uganda.*

Introduction

Primary health care services (PHCs) are the cornerstone of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) control and management. PHCs accessibility is a key indicator for improved health care services and continuity of care which translates into improved quality of life of the senior citizens. A responsive PHC not only enhances accessibility but also promotes equitable access to services among people living with NCDs (Mahipala et al. 2018). NCDs pose a global challenge and are responsible for 71% of deaths globally (WHO 2021) including disability, violence and injuries, has devastating health consequences for individuals, families and communities and threatens to overwhelm health systems. It is recognized that failure to act on noncommunicable diseases in the short term would lead to massive cumulative output losses. The main types of NCD are cardiovascular diseases (such as heart attacks and stroke. Annually, NCDs are responsible for 41 million deaths (WHO, 2021). Of these, 86% of the deaths occur in low-and middle-income countries. Despite the high burden of NCDs, only 2% of global health funding is directed toward tackling the ever-growing burden of NCDs (WHO 2021) including disability, violence and injuries, has devastating health consequences for individuals, families and communities and threatens to overwhelm health systems. It is recognized that failure to act on noncommunicable diseases in the short term would lead to massive cumulative output losses. The main types of NCD are cardiovascular diseases (such as heart attacks and stroke. Additionally, notwithstanding its strategic component to alleviate NCDs, PHC services are reported to be characterized by poor access in many developing countries like Uganda (Peoples et al. 2021). Morbidity and mortality data indicate the rising impact of NCDs in low-resource countries where 80% of deaths are due to cardiovascular diseases could be linked to poor accessibility due to inadequate health funding (WHO 2021) including disability, violence and injuries, has devastating health consequences for individuals, families and communities and threatens to overwhelm health systems. It is recognized that failure to act on noncommunicable diseases in the short term would lead to massive cumulative output losses. The main types of NCD are cardiovascular diseases (such as heart attacks and stroke.

In Uganda, NCDs are a major health problem accounting for 706 per 100,000 deaths among males and 506 among females, with the population at risk being the older (World Health Organization (WHO) African Region 2023). A survey using the WHO STEP tool across Uganda indicates a prevalence of Hypertension at 26.4%, with central Uganda Nakaseke specifically having a prevalence of 28.5%, a prevalence which is higher than the national prevalence of NCDs estimated at 27% (Siddharthan et al. 2021; Guwatudde et al. 2015). Additionally, in central Uganda, the major challenge of PHC services is poor access to services coupled with inequity, such as poor health infrastructure, and lower health care among other inequities (Dowhaniuk, 2021; Kyaddondo, 2014; Tusubira et al. 2020, & Wandera, et al. 2015). Poor access to PHC services impacts negatively HRQoL and induces morbidity and premature mortality due to delayed diagnosis and treatment. This elevates worsening health conditions leading to increased hospitalization, and reduced quality of life among older persons in Central Uganda.

Issues related to PHC services and Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQOL) among older persons with NCDs in central Uganda have not been given much attention (Id et al. 2020). There is a greater need for improved health care services for the older with NCDs to combat poor access and inadequate PHC services. Unveiling the perceptions of older persons towards PHC accessibility and the influence on HRQoL is paramount in devising strategies for the improvement of healthcare access. This study therefore aimed to explore the perceptions of

older persons with NCDs on PHC services accessibility and HRQoL in central Uganda.

The objectives of the study were therefore to

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Describe the nature of Primary health care services accessibility among older persons with Noncommunicable diseases

Explore the facilitators and barriers to primary health care services accessibility among older persons with noncommunicable diseases.

Understanding of the Older Persons on the Health-related Quality of Life

The concept of HRQOL encompassing the physical and mental domains is an important indicator of improved access to medical care and attention among the older. Self-perceptions about aging and HRQOL are key issues that need to be explored by healthcare workers during clinical sessions with the older. Studies conducted in developed countries (United States, Switzerland, China, Slovenia, and Turkey) indicate that HRQOL is a global phenomenon that should be explored more to facilitate the inauguration of mechanisms to improve older persons' well-being (Dresden et al. 2019; Santos et al. 2019; Lee, Cha, and Kim 2021). Findings from these studies done in developed countries indicate that mental health issues are a common theme perceived to affect the HRQOL among the older (Santos et al. 2019; Dresden et al., 2019; Baek et al. 2021; Lee, Cha, and Kim 2021). Additionally, other common themes that were linked to the older perceptions of HRQOL include anxiety driven by emotional experiences, a strong desire to regain physical function, interpersonal impacts of health on quality of life driven by social aspects, socio-economic status denoted by high income, higher level of education, and individual experiences of physical and mental health status (Dresden et al. 202; Lee, Cha, and Kim 2021).

Furthermore, self-efficacy, numeracy in health literacy, physical health-promoting behavior, perceived support, and a lesser frequency of comorbidities were themes from a study conducted by Lee, Cha, and Kim (2021). Findings from another study show poorer self-perceptions of HRQOL among older persons in rural areas compared to their counterparts in urban areas (Wang et al. 2023). A similar study conducted in Iran found the HRQOL of older persons to be low and characterized by poor mental health status (Tourani et al. 2018). A discrepancy in findings from middle-income and low-income countries indicates that HRQOL was perceived to be driven by poverty, lack of social support, psychological status, and negative self-perceptions of aging (Maniragaba et al. 2018; Wandera et al. 2015; Id et al. 2020). A study done in Uganda by JL (2022) shows that older persons had positive perceptions towards HRQOL (JL 2022) though, largely characterized by young people, has seen the number of people aged 60 and over grow from 686,000 twenty years ago, to 1,433,596 in 2014. Effective caring for the well-being of this population requires strategic and deliberate planning that involves Quality Of Life (QoL). However, this did not stop them from having poor HRQOL as 86% of the respondents had poor HRQOL when assessed quantitatively.

Some of the issues noted to influence the perceptions of older persons towards their HRQOL include lack of social and financial support, poor housing, and loneliness (JL 2022). The differences in findings between developed countries and underdeveloped countries may be attributed to the better socio-economic status of the aging population in developed countries compared to low-

income countries. Another observation elucidates that older people in developed countries have high mental and psychological issues. This can be explained by the fact that most of the older in developed countries live by themselves which psychologically impacts their mental health.

Nature of Primary Health Care Services Accessibility

In the United States, data indicate that older American senior citizens with access to health care reported improved access to PHC services compared to their Latin American counterparts who reported poor accessibility, lower satisfaction, and inconvenience as strategies for improved access did not reflect improvement in the quality of patient-physician interpersonal relationship for older minority groups (Pinchbeck, 2019). This shows that health maintenance organizations reduce the economic burden associated with access to health care and do not necessarily enhance the social, ethical, and clinical aspects of PHC services. Another study conducted in Nepal to assess the perceptions, acceptability, and use of PHC services among people with Cardiometabolic diseases is in agreement with the later finding where issues about relationships (patient-provider relationship), cost of care, and inequitable PHC services are the major issues of concern that were raised by the study participants (Peoples et al. 2021). The same study found PHC uptake to be high but with profound barriers and dissatisfaction with the services that result in poor quality of care. Shifting care from emergency care to primary care is likely socially beneficial as 15-40% of visits to the emergency departments were for health conditions that could be safely handled at lower-level health facilities (Weinick, Burns, and Mehrotra 2010; Pinchbeck 2019; Lippi Bruni et al. 2016)

Accessibility to PHC services has an influence on health outcomes by reducing the rate of emergency department utilization among people living with NCDs in the East Asian region (Peoples et al. 2021). A study conducted in England found that convenience-oriented services divert three times as many patients from emergency visits (Pinchbeck 2019), and reduce annual emergency throughput by between 1,000 to 2,000 visits. This could be because when access to health services is prioritized, and patients can attend medical care even when not on appointment, the outcome could be reduced utilization of emergency departments. In addition, the ethical aspects where patients are treated with dignity, trust, respect, and value have been seen to increase the acceptability of PHC services among older persons (Pinchbeck 2019; Alruthia and Asiri 2020).

A Cross-sectional study to establish the relationship between HRQOL and trust in primary health care physicians in Saudi Arabia by Alruthia and Asiri (2020) indicates that there is a significant relationship between the patient-provider relationship and the enhancement of HRQOL of patients attending PHCS. This implies trust is an important element of PHC services that enhances accessibility. Patients prefer primary healthcare facilities where the health providers exhibit trust, paving the way for confidentiality, dependability, and effective communication (Alruthia and Asiri 2020).

A Cross-sectional study to establish the relationship between HRQOL and trust in primary health care physicians in Saudi Arabia by Alruthia and Asiri (2020) indicates that there is a significant relationship between the patient-provider relationship and the enhancement of HRQOL of patients attending PHCS. This implies trust is an important element of PHC services that enhances accessibility. Patients prefer primary healthcare facilities where the health providers exhibit trust, paving the way for confidentiality, dependability, and effective

communication (Alruthia and Asiri 2020). Another study conducted in Bangladesh shows that access to healthcare services for older persons in general is still a major challenge in both low- and middle-income countries (Sarker 2021).

A study done in Hong Kong found improvement in age-friendly services and acknowledged better communication and feedback to older patients (Woo, Mak, and Yeung 2013). The same study showed that participants had no challenges regarding follow-up visits compared to making new appointment visits which had enormous challenges ranging from placing an appointment to making medical examinations or investigations (Woo, Mak, and Yeung 2013). In addition, the physical environment at the health facilities was registered as a challenge as seats and examination rooms were not enough for the older patients seeking care. In Uganda, older persons' access to health care is limited by long distance to care, transportation, poverty, shortage of medicine, lack of social support, and negative attitudes toward healthcare providers (Alruthia and Asiri 2020; Wandera, Kwagala, and Ntozi 2015) there is limited research on older persons' healthcare disparities in Uganda. Therefore, this paper aimed at investigating factors associated with older persons' healthcare access in Uganda, using a nationally representative sample. Methods: We conducted secondary analysis of data from a sample of 1602 older persons who reported being sick in the last 30 days preceding the Uganda National Household Survey. We used frequency distributions for descriptive data analysis and chi-square tests to identify initial associations. We fit generalized linear models (GLM. Strategies for better management of NCDs have been implemented through the introduction and initiation of Community Health Care Workers (CHW) who are trained to assess, prevent, provide health education, diagnose, counsel, and refer patients with NCDs to the nearby health facilities (Musoke et al. 2021) evidence on the role of CHWs in delivering interventions for non-communicable diseases (NCDs. However, the efforts from healthcare providers have not yielded enough as aging-friendly services remain a challenge at primary healthcare levels in Uganda.

Facilitators and Barriers to Primary Health Care Services Accessibility

The facilitators for primary healthcare services accessibility have been documented to include improved access, interpersonal relationships, age-best friendly services, education, social support, and knowledge of NCDs (Kabir et al. 2022) EMBASE, CINAHL, PsycINFO and Scopus were searched from 1 January 1984 to 30 July 2021, with hand-searching references and expert advice. Eligibility criteria Any English-language health research with evidence of readiness/preparedness of the health system at the primary healthcare level in the context of four major NCDs: Diabetes mellitus, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs (Adatara and Adoliwine Amooba 2021). A scoping review in Southeast Asia revealed the main enablers and barriers to older persons seeking medical care to be accessibility and acceptability of services, with other factors including family or social support, finances, and transportation (Du et al. 2019).

Barriers to PHC services included poor quality of care, diagnostic capacity, untrained human resources, poor waiting time for elective surgery, and shortage of medicine (Kabir et al. 2022; Doetsch et al. 2017). Similar findings from a study done in Ghana show that transportation, financial constraints, geographical inaccessibility, lack of caregivers to accompany the older to seek medical care, and poor attitude of healthcare workers are the most reported barriers to service accessibility among the older (Adatara and Adoliwine Amooba 2021). In Uganda, facilitators and barriers to PHC services access have been reported to include the severity of illness, self-reported NCDs, and household wealth status (Wandera, Kwagala, and Ntozi 2015; JL 2022; Nyanzi, Wamala, and Atuhaire 2014). Literature shows diverse facilitators and barriers

to accessing care in developed, developing, and developing countries. However, most of the studies on facilitators and barriers were conducted in countries with functional national health insurance and enhanced access to services that promote the integration of NCDs at PHC levels. Unlike in Uganda where national health insurance is still a dream yet to come true, with poor primary health system structures.

Overall, the literature on the effectiveness of PHCs in managing NCDs presents a complex and often conflicting picture. For instance, studies in developed countries report high levels of success in using PHCs to improve HRQOL among the older (Dresden et al. 2019; Tourani et al. 2018; Santos et al. 2019). These studies attribute their success to well-funded healthcare systems, comprehensive insurance coverage, and robust social support networks. Conversely, research from developing countries like Uganda and Nepal highlights significant challenges, including inadequate healthcare infrastructure, limited funding, and socio-economic barriers (Peoples et al. 2021; Wandera, Kwagala, and Ntozi 2015). For example, Peoples et al. (2021) found that while PHCs were theoretically accessible, practical barriers such as long waiting times and frequent drug stockouts severely limited their effectiveness.

These conflicting findings can be partly explained by socio-economic differences. In high-income countries, the aging population often has better access to healthcare resources, higher income levels, and stronger social support systems, which contribute to better health outcomes. In contrast, older individuals in low-income countries frequently face poverty, limited access to healthcare, and social isolation, which exacerbate their health issues. However, the effectiveness of PHCs cannot be solely attributed to socio-economic factors. The organizational structure of healthcare systems, cultural attitudes toward aging, and the availability of trained healthcare professionals also play critical roles. For instance, a study by Baek et al (2021) in South Korea, a middle-income country, showed that community-based PHC programs could significantly improve HRQOL among the older, highlighting the importance of culturally tailored healthcare interventions (Baek et al. 2021). These debates underscore the need for a context-specific approach in evaluating the effectiveness of PHCs. This study aims to contribute to this ongoing discourse by exploring the unique challenges and facilitators of PHC accessibility in central Uganda. By examining the perceptions of older individuals with NCDs, this research seeks to identify locally relevant strategies that can enhance PHC effectiveness in this setting.

Methodology

This was a qualitative study design conducted between January and February 2023. The study was conducted in Luwero and Nakaseke districts in central Uganda. The districts were purposively selected based on the high prevalence of NCDs registered in Nakaseke District in 2015, which was projected at 28.5% (Guwatudde et al. 2015; Siddharthan et al. 2021), a prevalence higher than the national prevalence of NCD of 27%. Qualitative design was preferred to quantitative because it is the best approach for obtaining subjective insights and perceptions on a given phenomenon of interest. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), qualitative research is the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in a natural setting, and these phenomena can include how people experience aspects of their lives.

The study employed both focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). The authors conducted two FGDs with 8 participants each. Participants were older persons aged 65 years and above with NCDs who had sought PHCs from Nakaseke (Semuto Health Center

IV) and Luwero (Kalagala Health Center IV) and 7 key informant interviews. The key informants included district health officers, clinicians, nurses, counselors, and doctors from the two randomly selected health facilities. Participants for the FGD were selected using convenience sampling techniques. The researchers had planned to interview 12 key informants. However, the principal point of saturation informed the generation of the 7 key Informants. To avoid bias, the authors adhered to the inclusion criteria and approached the target population that was available at the time of the study who met the criteria. The participants were asked to take part in the study and were included after consenting to the study. Koerber and McMichael. (2008) assert that using convenience sampling is bound to the researcher's choice considering access to the research content, participants, and the methodological framework (Koerber and McMichael 2008).

The key informants were purposely selected based on their characteristics, knowledge, and experience dealing with older persons with NCDs. Both FGDs and key informant interviews were conducted following an interview guide. All participants provided written consent before data collection, and confidentiality and privacy were ensured. Ethical review and approval were sought from the Clarke International University Research Ethics Committee (CIUREC) under protocol no: CLARKE-2022-404 and clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) under study reference no: SS1528ES. Data collected were entered into the Nvivo software version 20.2 to generate codes.

Thematic analysis using an inductive approach was used to generate themes that informed the study's qualitative findings. Using NVIVO version 20.2, the authors first transcribed the data and imported it to NVIVO, familiarized the data by reading through and developed nodes. Nodes of containers for the concepts and themes were created. After creating nodes, data was coded by assigning codes to specific segments of data by highlighting the text and linking it with the node, and then organizing the codes into hierarchy. Code comparison was done across different data sources, such as comparing responses from different participants, and performing validation of the codes to ensure consistency and accuracy. Data analysis was then done, themes and patterns were generated which facilitated data analysis and finally report writing.

To ensure the quality of data, memoing reflexivity, and data saturation were observed. Memoing involved writing notes about the research process (regularly writing memos throughout data collection and analysis). Reflexivity involves acknowledging and examining own biases, assumptions and influences in the research process. For example, regularly reflecting on how self-biases influence the data outcome and acknowledging own experiences, beliefs, and values helped to shape the research process and promoted the quality of the research. Additionally, data saturation was ensured by analyzing data in cycles to assess saturation, ensuring data quality and depth before concluding saturation.

Results

This section presents the results of the qualitative study done among 7 key informants who were interviewed, and 16 older persons aged 65 years and above with NCDs who participated in focus group discussions and were recruited from the selected health facilities in the two districts of the study (Luwero & Nakaseke).

Understanding of Health-Related Quality of Life

In the present study, when the participants were asked about their understanding of health-related quality of life, the following themes emerged: holistic well-being, lifestyle modification, and financial stability which is similar to the conceptualization of HRQOL by Vette (2010) and Mitchell et al., (2016).

1. Theme 1: Holistic Well-being

Holistic well-being involves the complete state of health, including physical, mental, and social well-being. Participants noted that being physically healthy and able to perform daily duties, maintaining good mental health described and informed by the absence of worries and stress, and being supported and loved by family members: the majority of the participants pointed out support from a spouse and biological children, and having access to social health as the important aspects of HRQoL. The participants viewed HRQoL as having basic health, access to mental and physical, and social amenities. To some participants having access to medical care was reassuring.

"Health-related quality of life to me means being happy, no pain, no stress, good food, and support from family" (Vb-8 source. FGD1/S/2023)

"Being healthy, having access to medical treatment, absence of disease, pain, care from my family, and having a community that relates well with people" Vb-2 source. FGD1/k/2023

"Having what it takes to improve my life, Medicine, house, food, and having enough money to earn a living" Vb-10 source. FGD2/S/2023

2. Theme 2: Lifestyle Modification

Findings from the current study elucidate the theme of lifestyle modification to encompass healthy living, and behavioral change which are the subthemes. The sub-theme of healthy living in the current study is related to diet and physical activity. The participants highlighted the importance of healthy living through behavioral change like regulating one's diet, refraining from drug abuse, and engaging in physical activities like exercising and weight management. A common thought was as easy as "adjustments of harmful habits"

"I perceive health-related quality of life to be things that I do that make me healthy like avoiding alcohol intake and eating foods low in fats" Vb-4 source. FGD2/k/2023

3. Theme 3: Financial Stability

Financial stability in the current study was hinged on the following themes: good financial status (referring to the availability of funds or money), and enhanced access to healthcare. It should be noted that one of the factors that promote access to healthcare services is financial stability because to access services, one needs money to cater for transport run tests, and buy medication in the event there is a drug stockout, a common phenomenon in public health facilities in Uganda. The subthemes above were supported by the following verbatim.

"Having money, being able to access health care, availability of drugs, availability of health equipment to monitor their health status" Vb-17 source. KI2/k/2023

4. Theme 4: Psycho-social Support

In the current study, psychosocial support as a theme was informed by psychosocial well-being, and social support networks as subthemes.

“For me having or the presence of dependents, being educated, and being a government pensioner, having access to support systems defines one’s health-related quality of life” Vb-18 source. KII3/S/2023.

Health-Related Quality of Life of the Older Persons in the Last 30 Days

The key findings above also informed the key themes. The sub-themes that were hinged on poor physical, mental, and social health included depression, physical inactivity, and physical weakness. The following is the verbatim that backs up the subthemes.

“I feel I worry too much, I feel weak, and experience general body pain and I feel confused most of the times that I start forgetting things” Vb-51 source FGD2/k/2023

Nature Of Primary Health Care Services Accessibility

Accessibility to PHCs is a key measure of acceptability and utilization of services. When the participants were asked about the nature of PHC services accessibility in their community, the following key themes emerged; poor access to PHCs, and lack of priority setting in the provision of PHC services for the older persons with NCDs. The sub-themes included long waiting hours, frequent drug stockouts, inadequate number of healthcare workers, lack of family support, lack of older-based services, non-functional NCD clinics, and lack of social support networks which influence accessibility of healthcare services.

1. Theme 1: Poor Access to Primary Health Care Services

Findings of the study shows that most of the study participants perceived PHCs to be inaccessible and characterized by poor access to services. Poor access to PHCs in the current study was informed by three sub-themes namely, long waiting hours, drug stockout, and inadequate number of healthcare workers.. Below is the verbatim that supported poor access as a theme.

“Services are provided at the health facility; the challenge is long waiting time. It takes me about eight hours to get done with the hospital processes” Vb-66 source FGD1/S/2023

2. Theme 2: Lack of Priority Setting for Primary Health Care Services.

Findings show that lack of priority setting was one of the major bottlenecks hindering access to PHCs. Participants reported a lack of priority care and treatment as a result of uniform queuing for health services by the older together with the general patient population, and a lack of specified healthcare workers to handle older persons which informed the subtheme under lack of priority setting. The verbatim below supported the theme of the study.

“PHC services are not equitable, there is no priority in service delivery, I line up for services just like any other person, and I spend more than 6 hours at the facility” Vb-86 source FGD4/k/2023.

Facilitators and Barriers to Primary Health Care Services Accessibility

When participants were asked about the facilitators for PHC services access, the following themes emerged; improved knowledge and attitude of healthcare workers, availability of age-based friendly services, and patient safety. The themes above were informed by subthemes hinged on improved communication, improved care, Improved knowledge, and respect for older persons by health workers. The findings of other studies is similar to the findings of the current study. The verbatim below supported the themes generated from the findings of the current study.

"Health workers treat us well, they respect us, they give us attention, take time to explain medication prescribed" Vb-81 source FGD6/k/2023.

Barriers to Primary Health Care Services

Barriers to PHC services access delays early treatment interventions and can have a negative health effect on the HRQOL. Findings from the current study highlight the major barriers to accessing PHCs include long waiting hours, inaccessibility of PHCs and high cost of PHC services; these barriers informed the key themes which were derived from the sub-themes which comprehended high cost of transportation and medical investigations, and poor services delivery. Additionally, participants indicated that they move more than 5 kilometers to access PHCs and pay between 5,000 to 15,000 Uganda shillings, with the majority paying over 12,000 shillings for transportation and medical examinations (diabetic participants pay 2,000 shillings per visit for a glucometer machine). In addition, the common means of transportation for the older is bodaboda which is not safe for the older persons and can induce more physical challenges.

"On average, I spend 15,000 on transport, I use a bodaboda because there are no taxis on our roads, I move a distance of 10 kilometers, and my major challenges are transport cost, medication, and long waiting hours at the facility". Vb-92 source FGD2/k/2023.

Discussion

The HRQOL of the participants was poor, and their understanding of HRQOL included holistic well-being, lifestyle modification, financial stability, and psychosocial support; from the verbatims, it is evident that the key component of HRQoL that was observed from the study was the physical domain, which implies that older persons perceive physical well-being as an important issue in promoting well-being. Findings from previous studies are in line with the current findings where the majority highlighted the physical component of HRQoL to influence well-being compared to the mental component (Wang et al. 2023; Defar et al. 2023 which is frequently equivalent to or greater than that of medical disorders. Although, HRQoL is rapidly being recognized as an essential treatment outcome indicator in modern psychiatry, research on the identification and significance of factors impacting QoL in PWMI is still in its early stages. Objective: The aim of this study was to identify predictors of HRQoL among people with mental illness who underwent outpatient follow-up in Sidama region, southern Ethiopia. Methods: We conducted a multicenter, cross-sectional study from April-1, to May-30, 2022. A total of 412 participants took part in the study, using an interviewer-administered structured questionnaire. The HRQoL was measured using the 12-item Short-Form Health Survey-Version 2 (SF-12v2; Dresden et al. 2019; Lee, Cha and Kim, 2021). Other studies found common themes that were linked to older person perceptions of HRQOL in the previous study to include anxiety driven by emotional experiences, a strong desire to regain physical function, interpersonal impacts of health on quality of life driven by social aspects, socio-economic status denoted by high income, higher level of education, and individual experiences of physical and mental health status (Dres-

den et al. 2019)encompassing social, emotional, and physical wellbeing is an important clinical outcome of medical care, especially among geriatric patients. It is unclear which domains of HRQoL are most important to geriatric patients and which domains they hope to address when using the Emergency Department (ED; Lee, Cha and Kim, 2021). Furthermore, self-efficacy, numeracy in health literacy, physical health-promoting behavior, perceived support, and a lesser frequency of comorbidities were themes from a study conducted by Lee et al. (2021).

Findings from another study are divergent from the current findings, with poorer self-perceptions of HRQOL among elderly persons in rural areas being recorded compared to their counterparts in urban areas (Liu et al. 2020). A similar study conducted in Iran found self-reported HRQOL among older persons to be poor and characterized by poor mental health status (Tourani et al. 2018). A discrepancy in findings from middle-income and low-income countries indicates that HRQOL was perceived to be driven by poverty, lack of social support, psychological status, and negative self-perceptions of aging (Maniragaba et al., 2018; Yaya et al., 2020; Craig et al., 2016). A study done in Uganda by JL et al., (2022) shows that older persons had positive perceptions towards HRQOL which is similar to the current findings whereby only positive HRQoL was recorded. However, much as the previous study reported positive HRQoL, it did not stop the participants from having poor HRQOL as 86% of the respondents had poor HRQOL when assessed quantitatively.

Some of the issues noted to influence the perceptions of older persons towards their HRQOL include lack of social and financial support, poor housing, and loneliness (JL, 2022)though, largely characterized by young people, has seen the number of people aged 60 and over grow from 686,000 twenty years ago, to 1,433,596 in 2014. Effective caring for the well-being of this population requires strategic and deliberate planning that involves Quality Of Life (QoL; Dresden et al., 2019)encompassing social, emotional, and physical wellbeing is an important clinical outcome of medical care, especially among geriatric patients. It is unclear which domains of HRQoL are most important to geriatric patients and which domains they hope to address when using the Emergency Department (ED. The differences in findings between developed countries and underdeveloped countries may be attributed to the better socio-economic status and development of the aging population in developed countries compared to low-income countries. Another observation elucidates that older people in developed countries have high mental and psychological issues which can be attributed to loneliness since most of the older persons live by themselves which psychologically impacts their mental health.

Plotnikoff et al., (2015) argue that regular physical activity, and improved health interventions like maintaining a healthy body weight and refraining from a sedentary lifestyle influence health decisively and promote HRQoL (Plotnikoff et al. 2015). Addressing both the physical and mental health aspects of HRQoL begins with the healthcare workers' knowledge and inquiry (Syamlan et al. 2022). Understanding older persons' perceptions of HRQoL helps to design health interventions targeting improvements in HRQoL. At the same time, it shows that older persons know what HRQoL implies, which was one of the main focuses of the current study. In addition to informing primary healthcare-based geriatric patient care, the study's findings may be most applicable in HRQoL status evaluations in the future.

Regarding priority setting in PHC services, the current study found a lack of priority setting in service provision. Priority setting has been envisaged by other scholars as making an informed choice based on a ranking mechanism to enable rationing or resource allocation due to scarce

resources (Arvidsson et al. 2010). Priority setting is an important element in health care driven by high demands that exceed available resources. Priority setting in PHC services is key and has a significant outcome in healthcare systems (Arvidsson et al. 2010). The issue of priority setting in PHCs for the older has been under-studied which explains the odd statistics highlighted. Literature shows that patients with acute conditions and present symptoms are more likely to be given priority than those with a risk of future disease complications (Arvidsson et al. 2010).

Additionally, difficulties in applying the criteria for priority setting are observed, especially in determining the timeframe, evidence level, and viewpoint. Viewpoint relates to taking both the medical and patient's viewpoint into consideration when assessing the severity of the condition, and timeframe concerns the duration and action required promptly. The current study focused on older persons who are the patients in this case compared to previous studies that focused on healthcare workers to determine the execution of priority setting. Unveiling the perceptions of the patients on priority setting is key to guiding policy review for better service provision. Additionally, knowledge gaps were identified as healthcare workers acknowledged the difficulties in implementing the criteria for priority setting which gives strengths to the current finding.

Study Limitation

The data collection tools were carefully designed to avoid leading questions. However, HRQoL was a new term that participants were not familiar with and required a thorough introduction to the topic and translation. Though the study topic was introduced, and translation done to promote understanding of the concept HRQoL, it is possible that the responses were driven by the way the format of the questions and not their prior knowledge. Another limitation relates to the study site, the study was conducted in a hospital setting, and findings may not be generalized to the population of older persons in the community. Additionally, the current study was conducted in Nakaseke and Luwero district, the findings may not be generalized to the entire population of older persons in Uganda. Lastly, the current study employed a qualitative study design which is based on subjective reality of the participants and may not bring out causal relationships as opposed to using a mixed methods approach.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The participants' perceptions towards accessibility of PHC services comprehended poor access to PHCs characterized by long waiting hours, long distances to the health facility, frequent drug stockout, and lack of priority setting in the provision of PHCs. This therefore implies that accessibility to PHCs among the older in rural settings is still a public health challenge affecting the older persons with NCDs in central Uganda. The perceived HRQOL of the older persons was summarized and found to be poor. Most of the participants reported poor physical, mental, and social health well-being. There is a need for the government to prioritize healthcare services for older persons in rural settings and invest more in improving health infrastructure to enhance access to PHCs. Additionally, the District Health Officers (DHOs) and the district health management teams (DHMTs) should advocate for functional NCD clinics to elevate access to care, and lead to the improvement of HRQOL. Generally, there is a need for more studies to unveil the perceptions of older persons towards accessibility to healthcare services, and their health-related quality of life to inform better strategies for aging interventions.

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Culture and its effect on the education of children with disabilities in Uganda: a case study of selected schools in Entebbe municipality

Alice Nyangoma Kyamiza ¹

Kyamiza has completed her Master of Education Planning and Management at Nkumba University, pending graduation in October 2023.

Dr. Esther Namugumya ²

is a senior lecturer in the School of Education at Nkumba University

Abstract

The study was about culture and its influence on the education of children with disabilities in Uganda with a case study of selected schools in Entebbe municipality. It was guided by three objectives; To find out the common culture rated beliefs among children with disabilities in Entebbe municipality, to examine the educational programmes available for children with disabilities in Entebbe municipality and to examine the relationship between culture and education of children with disabilities in Entebbe municipality. The study was guided by based on the Vygotsky's constructivist theory of learning. The study adopted a descriptive and Correlation design. The study population was 110 and a sample size of 86 respondents of which all participated. Results revealed that beliefs and myths regarding the causes of disability and community responses and interventions regarding people with disabilities were similar across regions. Underlying the various versions of the myths and cultural beliefs was the notion that there were supernatural causes of disability, such as witchcraft, and/or that a mother's improper relationships caused disability. From the findings of the study, it is worth to summarize that teachers are not adequately prepared in the integration of learners with disabilities in primary schools. The findings indicated that most of the teachers 27(96.7%) had a positive attitude towards learners with physical disabilities. Also the parents participated in the provision of the physical facilities. It is concluded that most of the teachers were not trained in special needs education. Inadequate teacher training was found to have an influence in the integration of learners with special needs in inclusive education. The study recommended; Teachers in most schools should be trained in special needs education for them to effectively implement inclusive education.

Introduction

Culture can be said to be an elusive concept (Nieto, 2004; Gollnick & Chinn, 2004; Winzer & Mazurek, 1999). This term itself refers to shared implicit and explicit rules and traditions that express the beliefs, values and goals of a group of people (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). Culture is transmitted to people through socialization, the general process of acquiring attitudes, skills and behavioral patterns. Therefore, a cultural act is an experience that is learned through the

daily interaction of people with people.

WHO (World Health Organization) (1990) defines disability as: disorders or abnormalities of mental, physiological or anatomical structure or function. Disability is the limitation or inability (caused by inability) to perform an activity in a way or to the extent of what is considered normal for a human being. Disability is a disability for a particular person due to a disability or incapacity that prevents that person from doing what is considered normal for them (according to age, gender, social and cultural factors). From a cultural perspective, disability is perceived differently in large and small societies. Close interaction between individual members is the norm in small communities. Each individual may have several extended relationships with other members of that community (Scheer & Groce, 1988). People may interact with each other during periods of economic production, during leisure time, or while participating in arts and ceremonies. The social identity in these small-scale societies is based on family clan and other characteristics but not on the individual's physical characteristics.

Special education refers to a specific way in which the needs of the disabled are targeted by society, consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that promotes education for all. According to Gerber (2005), special education includes the purposeful organization of schools that is directed to the needs of students with special needs and is characterized by the structural and organizational nature of the school environment and is characterized by a great effort to work within the boundaries. In other words, special education services within schools are deliberate attempts to serve those with disabilities in light of the underlying constraints that exist in schools.

Although the problem of children with disabilities has existed for a very long time, it has only recently begun to receive significant attention in Uganda. According to research, one of the reasons for establishing inclusive education is that students with disabilities used to attend separate schools in traditional societies. As a result, people were accustomed to the notion that special education entailed segregation. However, as time passed, society began to see that when children are educated together, great academic and social outcomes for all occur (Habla, 2016). Despite government enacting very good laws and policies, PWDs continue to be marginalized in mainstream development. Their rights to access equitable and quality education, health, public infrastructure, information and other community services are not adequately addressed. Some of the common disabilities in Uganda include visual impairments; physical disabilities; hearing impairment; multiple disabilities; mental and psycho socio disabilities; intellectual disabilities and albinism.

Children with disabilities face significant hurdles in enrolling, attending and completing school. UNESCO (2010) argues, "disability is one of the least visible but most potent factors in educational marginalization. One prominent explanation for the lagging enrollment of students with disabilities is cultural: because rural communities in Uganda tend to view disability as

a curse, parents of children with disabilities are inclined to hide them from the public and keep them away from school and other social settings (Munyere, 2004). Moreover, schools and others education institutions arguably make the situation worse by denying these students admission and placements into the public and private schools on grounds their management in general education settings is demanding and strains already scarce resources (Oketch, 2009). The incoherent application of legislation supporting the implementation of programs and services for persons with disabilities and special needs is cited as an additional factor that further exacerbates the provision of inadequate services hence limiting the education of the Children with disabilities.

Related literature

This study was based on the Vygotsky's constructivist theory of learning. Vygotsky's constructivist theory of learning directly relates to the importance of contextual factors in serving children with special needs in the educational setting. In their evaluation of social constructivism and the tenets of inclusion, Mallory and New (1994) explain the features of Vygotsky's theory as consisting of three different components. The first involves the value of the sociocultural context in learning; the second highlights the significance of social activity in the development of individuals and the third deals with the input each active learner has towards his or her self-development (Mallory & New, 1994). Vygotsky's model of learning also involves the notions of guided participation and the zone of proximal development. These notions refer to the critical importance of other people in facilitating the development of individuals by aiding them in tasks that are just beyond their level of comprehension and ability.

In this way, individuals benefit from social interactions that further their learning. By underlining the importance of interactions between the learner and the environment, Vygotsky's theory of learning recognizes that successful learning depends on the social framework present. Vygotsky's conceptualizations of knowledge are also relevant in identifying the ideal means in which children with disabilities can receive an education. Mallory and New (1994) refer to the comparison made by Vygotsky between the instrumental and ideological values cultivated through learning, both of which are shaped by the socio-cultural context. Instrumental values are skills that are internally necessary and valuable such as knowing how to hold a writing instrument, whereas ideological values reflect the broader values of society such as the value of knowing how to read by the age of five. Learning cultural tools are also important since they enable individuals with special needs to fully participate and be accepted in society. The determination that cultural tools "vary as a function of cultural norms, beliefs, and patterns of interaction" (Mallory & New, 1994, p. 326) encapsulates how approaches to special education should account for the specific cultural contexts of interactions. Consequently, as research by Weisner and Gallimore (1989) indicates, it would be ideal for all children to be a

part a community that promotes their learning process and continuously fosters their growth through long-term support (Mallory & New, 1994). As identified by Mallory and New (1994), it is crucial for communities to accept children with special needs and ensure that they are as much a part of the community as anyone else. Since differences in the socio-cultural beliefs between countries may affect the extent in which communities accept children with special needs, the ideal standard for special needs services may vary according to the sociological and developmental background.

Common culture rated beliefs among children with disabilities

Traditional ideas about the causes of disability remain prevalent in East Africa. It is important to consider the cause because beliefs about the cause can affect how the person and family members are treated. S.G. Harknett divides beliefs about the causes of disability into his three categories. (1) Traditional animism includes the belief that disability is a punishment for wrongdoing or the result of witchcraft performed by others. (2) Christian fatalism revolves around the idea that disability is God's will. (3) Medical deterministic beliefs accept modern medical explanations for the causes of disability (1996). It is unusual for individuals to use multiple categories of causal beliefs to neutralize negative beliefs about the disorder, perhaps by proposing medical explanations in addition to traditional animism (Ingstad, 1995).

Taboos and Punishment for Bad Deeds; Beliefs about causes of disability in the examined literature were often described as expressed in proverbs, folktales, oral tradition, and from interviews with traditional healers. Historically, Adams pointed out in 1949 that Zimbabweans attributed cerebral palsy to witchcraft, spirits, or disobedience to taboos. They attributed blindness to witchcraft and leprosy to witchcraft, spirits, or natural causes (Mallory, 1993). Mbah-Ndam (1998) stated that disability "is seen as a punishment or a bad omen from God and therefore [disabled people] are rejected or abandoned". There are also descriptions of taboos that are said to cause disability if violated. For example, the Nandi of Kenya consider it wrong to kill animals without good reason during a wife's pregnancy (Ogechi & Ruto, 2002). Having sexual intercourse during pregnancy is also a taboo, and breaking this too can cause the child to have a disability (Hartley, Ojwang, Baguwemu, Ddamulira, & Chavuta, 2005; Ogechi & Ruto, 2002).

Laughing at people with disabilities could cause an individual to have a child with a disability himself or herself, cause an accident to befall you, or cause future generations in your family to be cursed (Ogechi & Ruto, 2002; Talle, 1995). A study from Kenya reported that family members and health care personnel believed that seizures were caused by several factors including birth trauma, abuse, witchcraft or spirits, and contact with certain animals (El Sharkawy, Newton, & Hartley, 2006).

Misdeeds of family members can also cause a disability. Family members can do something

wrong and the family can be punished for the act with a disabled child (Ogechi & Ruto, 2002). In Ethiopia, a father blamed his wife for causing their child's disability after she complained about seeing a person with distorted features in the street (Teferra, 2003). In other cases, when the mistake of the family member is thought to be very bad, a child is born deaf or mute in order to keep them from telling the family secrets (Omiegbe, 2001).

Divine Intervention; God(s) can either bless or curse families who have a child with a disability. In several instances, although disability was accepted as a medical mishap, this explanation was accompanied by the belief that divine intervention caused the accident (Mashiri, 2000). In Tanzania, Kisanji (1995b) found the majority of tribal elders believed that disabilities were caused by God's will (44%) or witchcraft (39%), whereas 82% of classroom teachers believed the disabilities were caused by diseases. In other studies, examined, parents of children with disabilities explained that their child was a gift from God or that is was God's will for a child to have a disability (Devlieger, 1999a; Kiyaga & Moores, 2003).

Educational programmes available for children with disabilities

Teachers as a resource for SNE institutions: MOE (2004) notes that introduction of FPE in January 2003 resulted in a significant increase in enrolment in public primary schools, rising from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.2 million in 2003. However, this phenomenal increase has presented primary education in class size of 100 students and more. Furthermore, the new policy of inclusive education, particularly for vulnerable children and children with special education needs, means teachers need skills to help them to continue to provide relevant and supportive services to all children.

Physical facilities and learning resources: MOE (2004), the government recognizes that over time there has been a major backlog of infrastructure provision and shortage of permanent classrooms, particularly in poor communities. At the same time, existing infrastructure was generally in poor condition due to lack of investment capital, poor construction standards and inadequate maintenance.

The result of the sharp rise in number was poor conditions and overcrowding that are not conducive to good learning environment. Marked progress has been made in getting new buildings, classrooms, and teachers for a rapidly increasing child, population. KISE, (2000) this in itself is a highly significant accomplishment. However, in planning of new buildings and in securing of school facilities and equipment, the tendering has been to make only minor changes from the arrangements of the past, on the assumption that the same equipment and institutional materials would serve equally well for the nurturance of all forms of abilities in all children. Children with special needs often need specialized aids to move about, to read and write and to hear. Thus a comprehensive package of facilities would be provided to all disabilities.

Developing curriculum for SNE: Hannu (2000), the success of SNE education in SNE institutions which serves all children depends on a flexible and relevant curriculum that can be adapted to the needs of each learner. All learners cannot reach the same level of competence and do not learn at the same pace. ROK (2008) an appropriate curriculum is broad-based, it includes physical, social, emotional and intellectual goals. Children will progress at different rates, thus individualized planning and instruction are important parts of a developmentally appropriate SNE institutions curriculum. Therefore, one goal of the primary curriculum should be to establish a foundation for lifelong learning and create a positive experience for the child.

Financing special education schools; UNESCO (2006) notes that the government policy measures and investment in education in order to alleviate household costs burden, to increase access to ensure adequate and learning inputs and ensure internal efficiency. UNESCO (2010) also noted that the available government resources were inadequate in meeting the current demands of quality in education with continuous improvement of aspect of the education to increasing numbers of students therefore means first expanding resources based beyond government sources to fill up costing gaps, utilizing the available resources more efficiently, establishing outcomes funding system strategizing the allocation of funds and providing strategies for quality improvement in all competent of education.

Relationship between culture and education of children with disabilities in Entebbe municipality.

Cultural influence can be found in a variety of contexts, ranging from the intimate home milieu to wider social settings within ecological systems. It directs one's implicit thoughts and feelings as well as one's explicit acts in a social engagement (Lindsey et al., 2015). Cultural influence is illustrated in this study by how preferences differ among students from various cultures. The environment in which students with disabilities reside differs significantly from that in which their able-bodied colleagues reside, and this continues to influence their choices as decided by elements surrounding them. Culture-related values that are reflected in the quality of sibling relationships People who place a high importance on collective identity and group identification tend to have strong, close sibling relationships. Siblings' everyday lives are highly entwined in Latino cultures, for example, where sibling caretaking and friendship are routines, in contrast to European American kids, who report higher degrees of camaraderie with their peers than with their siblings (Cooper and Christie, 2015).

In this study, the feature of sibling connection simply indicates that students who grow up in families where they are nourished with a sense of cooperation with brothers and sisters explain why certain students want to be joined with peers while at school. Students who grow up in

households with one or two children, on the other hand, appear to be in a solitary mood all the time, and putting such students into groups requires too much teacher attention.

Sibling relationships are less interdependent in societies that respect the autonomy of the individual kid, and siblings tend to compete for their parents' attention. Parents frequently want to encourage individual identity and achievement, to treat siblings "equally and equitably," and to keep siblings from becoming "overburdened" by one another's care (Brude, 2020). Simply put, in the context of Uganda, it is recommended that parents raise their children with a sense of community. This is because many able-bodied students at inclusive schools believe it is a curse because their peers with disabilities are cursed. Aside from the family environment, a study on the effect of culture on inclusive education was conducted, and the findings suggested that the existence of four broad school cultural features and practices, including staff understanding of special and inclusive education concepts, leadership and organization, school cultural features/practices and implications for staff, and policies, caused teachers and school administrators to have limited knowledge and understanding of curriculum.

In families with strong individual values, involving siblings in special needs planning may help to develop a sense of identity and recognized value within the entire family system. Siblings, regardless of cultural variations, are crucial role models who can have a positive or bad impact on the child with special needs (McCormick, 2016). Although Mitchell (1999) suggested that the physical environment and school climate are the most significant barriers to full inclusion, the school environment is seen as part of a larger school culture. According to Polloway et al. (2004), for children with disabilities to have the best learning opportunities possible, a typical inclusive school environment must be designed in such a way that they have easy access to classrooms, resource rooms, playing fields, and, of course, the restrooms and the library.

Methods and Materials

1. Research design

A descriptive and Correlation design was used to conduct this study. According to the Kowalczyk (2010), this type of research design is a test under controlled conditions made to demonstrate a known truth, examine the validity of hypothesis or to determine the efficiency of something previously untried. Prior to this interpretation, available studies have tried to explore much about teaching methods, school environment and other related factors affecting education but the aspect of inclusive education still lacks a lot of information in the publications. A research paradigm involving use of mainly quantitative approach was used.

2. Sample size

Parents of school-aged children are indispensable advocates for their children because they are minors with impairments that affect their ability to self-advocate and, in some cases, express

themselves. Other children with cognitive, speech, and hearing impairments may not have the capacity to explain why they are in the programs they are enrolled in. Community culture may also be a complex subject for school-aged children with disabilities to discuss. These adults are principal actors in shaping the policy context and influencing the experiences of primary school students with disabilities and therefore will be considered more resourceful and informative regarding exploring the study questions than the children with disabilities themselves. Head teachers are school managers who are charged with the responsibility of admission and placement of students in the school.

Table 1: Sampling Framework

<i>Category</i>	<i>Popn</i>	<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Sampling method</i>	<i>Instrument</i>
Parents	30	24	snowball sampling	Interview guide
Head teachers	6	4	Purposive sampling	questionnaire
Teachers	24	24	Purposive sampling	questionnaire
Total	60	52		

Source; primary data, 2023

Primary data that is data fresh from the field (Oppenheim, 1996) was collected through survey/questionnaire and interview methods. Review of documents on culture and its influence on the education of students with disabilities was done to collect secondary data that is data obtained from already done research and publications (Oppenheim, 1996). The questionnaire was administered to respondents who confined in one location. This is the best method of collecting data from respondents since they can read and understand and conceptualized ideas. The questionnaires were structured with close ended questions and open ended questions. It was formulated from the objectives. The study used questionnaires because of the nature of the data which seeks for feelings and perceptions of respondents given the time available and the objective of the study. Interviews will also be used. This was used to clarify the data collected from questionnaires. It was also used in order to add more information which has not been got from questionnaires and documentaries.

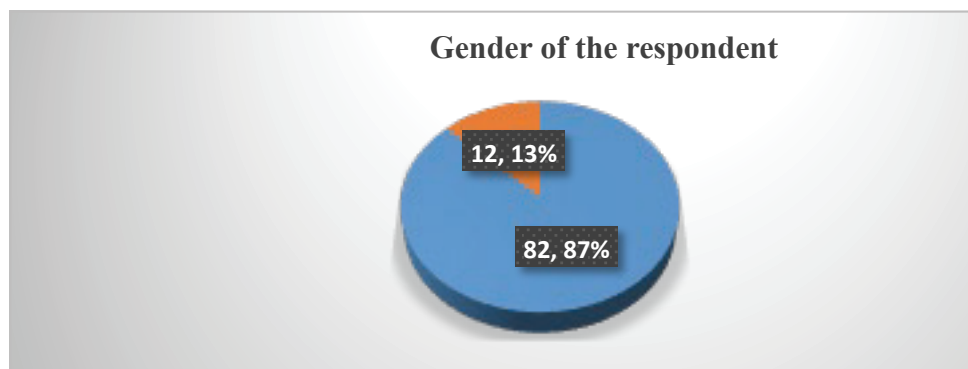
Focus group discussions was conducted with thirteen primary school teachers from four schools to examine their perceptions on the influence of culture on the education of students with disabilities. Four focus groups consisting of three teachers in three focus group discussions and four teachers in the fourth focus group discussion was conducted so the discussions can be effectively moderated. The study used existing Literature from books, internet, and published magazines among others the study which critically analyzed them, record and get the appropriate writings.

This being academic research, the researcher looked for a supportive letter explaining the objectives of the research signed by the Dean of School of education, Nkumba University before distributing the self-administered questionnaires and interview guide to the respondents.

Respondents were asked to present their data confidentially and anonymously. The data collected for the purpose of the study was adopted and coded for completeness and accuracy. The observation from closed-ended questions were tabulated and analyzed. Frequency tables were prepared for open-ended questions so as to convey meanings to the data. The collected data was analyzed and interpreted. The researcher used descriptive statistics that included frequencies and (%)s. Data was analyzed using computer package the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows.

Results

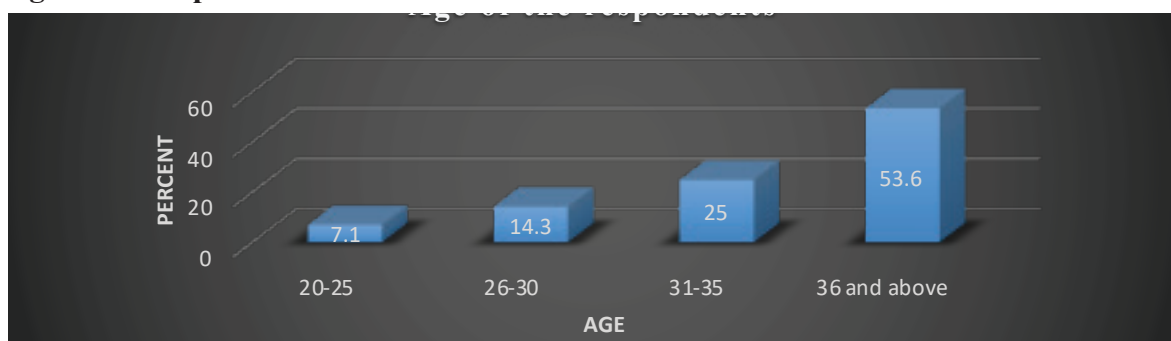
Gender of the Respondents



Source: Primary data, 2023

During the survey 4 head-teachers and 24 teachers were used in the study making a total of 28 respondents, 6 (12%) males and 22 (82%) females.

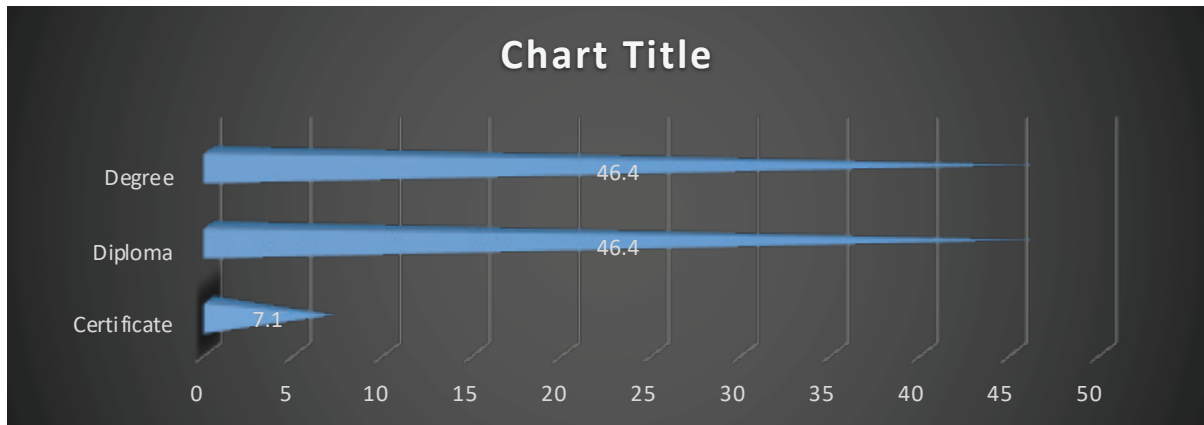
Age of the respondents



Source: primary data, 2023

The teachers and head teachers involved in the study were (7.1 %) were aged between 20- 25; 4 (14.3 %) aged between 26- 30; 7 (25.0%) aged between 31- 35 and 15 (53.6 %) aged between 36 and above. This therefore indicates that most respondents are mature enough and going by the years, then it is believed that they have accumulated enough skills and experience in the teaching and learning process.

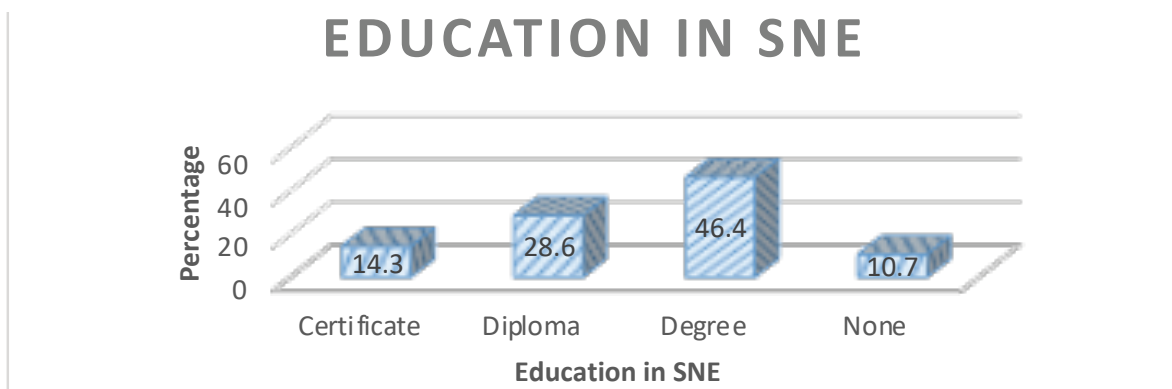
Academic qualification of the Head-teachers and teachers.



Source; primary data, 2023

Out of the 28 head-teachers and teachers in the study, 2 (7.1%) had certificate in their academic qualifications, 13 (46.4 %) had diploma and 13 (46.4%) had degrees.

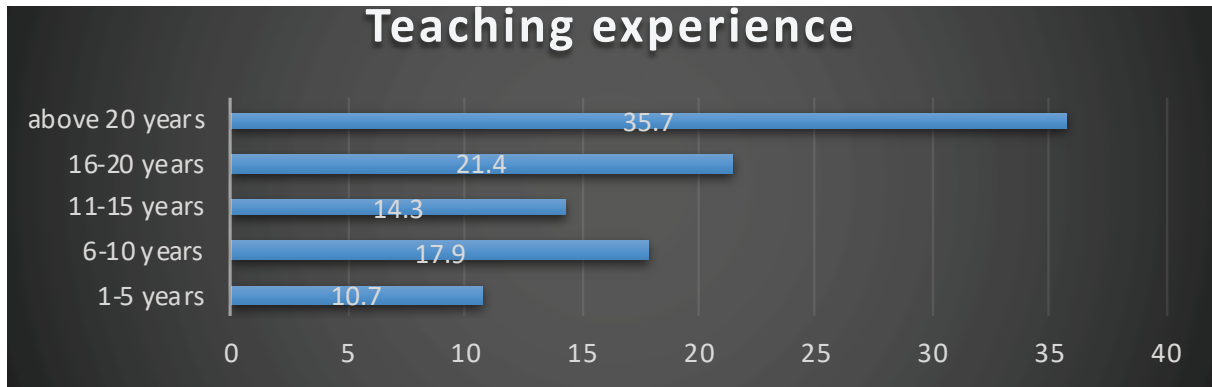
Academic qualification in SNE



Source; primary data, 2023

Out of the 28 teachers and head teachers, 4 (14.3%) had certificate in ECE, 8 (28.6 %) had a diploma in ECE, 3(10.7%) had no training in special needs educations and only 13(46.4 %) had a degree of ECE. This implies that most teachers had DIP (Ed) and degrees as their highest professional qualification. Results showed that most teachers have been trained above the required training for primary teachers with majority have diplomas and few others having degree in education. Thus, most of the teachers are very qualified in providing education.

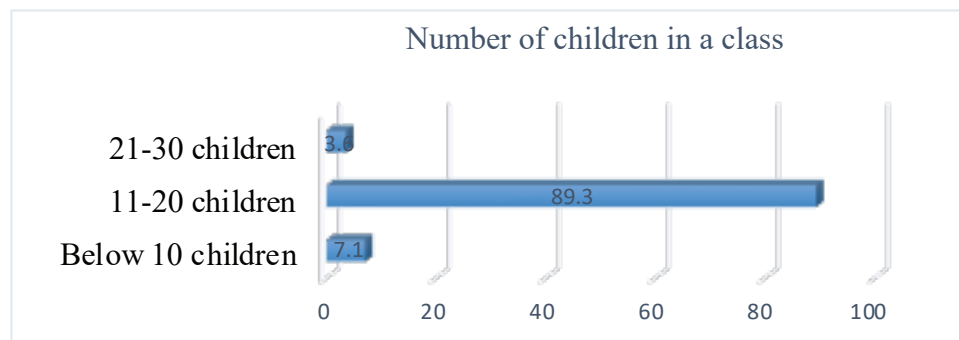
Working Experience of Administrators and Teachers.



Source; primary data, 2023

Out of the 28 head-teachers and teachers, 3 (10.7 %) had a working experience between 1- 5 years, 5 (17.9 %) had a working experience of between 6- 10 years, 4 (14.3%) had a working experiences of between 11-15 years, 6 (21.4%) had a working experiences of between 16-20 years, and 10 (35.7 %) had a working experience of 20 years and above. This therefore show how much experience they have had particularly with integration of children with special needs and therefore were the right people for the study as information given was reliable.

Number of children in a class.



Source; primary data, 2023

Out of the 28 teachers and head teachers, 2(7.1%) were below 10 children, 25(89.3%) had 11- 20 children with disabilities in the class while 1(3.6) had 21-30 children with disabilities in the class.

4.2 Cultural beliefs about disabilities

Punishment from God. Another common theme noted by research participants was that “a family that has a child with a disability was being punished by God for sins they have committed. These sins ranged from having laughed at someone with a disability himself or herself, to disobeying God, to not giving enough to the church or to not sharing with the poor.” This theme was not as common as the witchcraft theme, and some mentioned both witchcraft and punishment from God, illustrating the complicated belief systems held by many parents in

Entebbe municipality.

One association that some of our young participants made about disability, which always led to negative views of disability, was the fact that it could occur as a just consequence of reckless, unlawful or immoral behavior. The most common example cited by youth who lived in an urban environment was the acquisition of a cognitive impairment as a result of drug use (particularly khat).

“There are many young people who smoke khat in our community. That is something I have seen happening and these persons who are using drugs, for example khat or bhang, have been warned on several occasions but he did no heed to this and then they go mad”

1. Witchcraft.

The majority of research participants acknowledge a belief that any occurrence of disability was linked in some way to witchcraft. Among the 62 parents with disabilities, 49 respondents mentioned some sort of witchcraft as a cause for disabilities. There were largely two theories related to this belief. The first theory is that the jealous rivals bewitched the family that bears a child with a disability. These rivals could be neighbors, but in some cases, they could also be members of the extended family. This theory was mentioned most often in relation to disabilities that were acquired after birth. The second theory is that the family that bears a child who is born with disability practiced witchcraft and failed to fulfill all the requirements of the witchdoctor. This theory was linked more with congenital disabilities. Because of the association of disability with witchcraft, persons with disabilities and their families tend to be isolated, rejected or even harmed. Some of the elders revealed that, *“many years ago, children born with visible disabilities were killed immediately after birth or were left in the field to die naturally because of this association with witchcraft.”* However, others noted that they pitied people with disabilities because of the scourge of witchcraft.

2. Curse of ancestors or bad omen.

A theme similar to the Punishment from God theme is that ancestors, elders in the family, and the community cause not only by God, but disability also. This was also seen as generational, as some respondents revealed that a family was cursed for something one of their parents or grandparents had done in the past; or for not doing what was culturally expected of them. In one case, the mother believed that she was cursed because she had an abortion when she was younger. Yet another mother recalled that she looked at an adult who was naked and was cursed because of that.

3. Gift from God.

A theme in contrast to the theme mentioned above is the belief that disability was a gift from

God, and God would not have given the parents a child with a disability if He did not trust them and wanted them and their community to learn something through the whole experience. This theme was much less common than the previous two themes, and was raised more often by those who had a child with a disability. In most cases, this was a clear move from other beliefs, such as those of witchcraft, to this belief of Gift from God. The following narrative demonstrates this: *At first, it was very difficult for us to believe and accept that we had a child like this. We were asking ourselves what we have done wrong for God to punish us like this. We went as far as doing DNA tests to check whether our child was not exchanged for another one in hospital. After the tests proved that it was indeed our child, we had counseling. And now we believe Dorothy (not real name) is our gift from God (Respondent).*

4. Women allocating children to men who are not their real fathers.

Participants also brought up myths about the origins of disability that focus on disability as caused by inappropriate relationships, usually by a child's mother. For example, participants discussed one theme that relates to improperly allocating children to men who are not their real fathers. *"In the Buganda culture, certain rituals are performed for the newborn child, which involve the father accepting fatherhood, and the clan welcoming the child. During such rituals, the child receives traditional beads from the fathers' family."* Respondents indicated that *"when the father, who is identified by mother as having fathered the child, turns out not to be the actual birth father, especially after he has performed all the rituals, the belief is that the child will acquire a disability, especially an intellectual disability."*

4.3 Educational programmes available for children with disabilities in Entebbe municipality

Forms of support offered to learners with disabilities

Being attentive and receptive	26(92.8%)
Preparation and organization for their needs	10(35.7%)
Holding high expectations about their well being	18(64.3%)
Labeling them	26(92.8%)
Discrimination in sitting arrangement	27(96.4%)
Exclusion in collective activities	18(64.3%)
Separating things used by these children	22(78.6%)

Source; primary data, 2023

From the findings of the study 26 (92.8%%) of the teachers were not highly qualified and experienced in teaching in integrated schools that accommodate learners with disabilities. This affected the integration of those learners' in regular pre –schools. Most teachers, 26 (92.8%) were attentive and receptive to the news of LWD children. This boosted the learners' self-esteem and a feeling of being accepted in the school environment. Even though the teacher were

not trained in special needs education. Most of them high expectations about the well-being of LWD children 18(63.3%) by encouraging the learners to achieve.

The findings of the study showed that some teachers had low expectations about the LWD 18(63.3%) hence they did not see the need to push such learners to achieve their educational needs.

All the teachers 26 (92.8%) ensured that labeling and physically abuse of learners with disabilities either by other teachers or the other learners. This was achieved by ensuring that the LWD were not stigmatized and discriminated 18 (64.3%) through exclusion for participating in collective activities. The teachers held the responsibility of integrating all the learners by having an integrated sitting arrangement and not separating things used by the LWD 22 (78.6%) were against the discrimination of LWD from the main stream.

Extent of understanding inclusive education

<i>Extent</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>
Very adequately	5	17.9
Adequately	14	50.0
Fairly adequately	7	25.0
Not at all	2	7.1
Total	28	100.0

Source; Primary data, 2023

Findings in table 4.2 indicated that majority 14(50%) of the respondents indicated adequately, 7 (25%) fairly adequately, 5(17.9%) very adequately while 2 (7.1%) indicated not at all. This implies that most teachers adequately understand the objectives of integrating learners with special needs in regular public schools.

Facilities availability and suitability for pupils with special needs

Facilities	Available and suitable	Available and not suitable	Not available
Hearing aids	5(17.8%)	7(25%)	16(57.1%)
Visual aids	18(64.3%)	8(28.6%)	2(7.1%)
Crutches	19(67.8%)	2(7.1%)	7(25.0%)
Brails	20(71.4%)	4(14.2%)	4(14.3%)
Wheelchairs	22(78.6%)	6(21.4%)	00(00%)
Cane stick	10(35.7%)	15(53.0%)	3(10.7%)

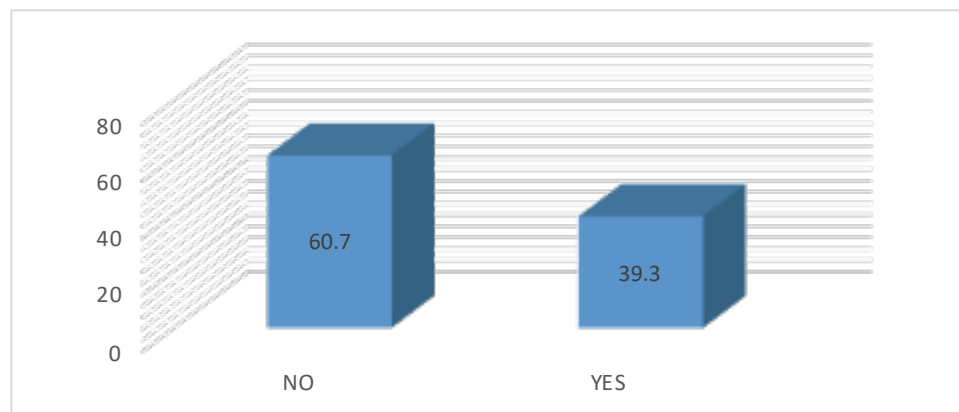
Source; primary data, 2023

When the teachers were asked about the availability and suitability of hearing aids, majority 16(57.1%) of the teachers indicated not available, 7 (25%) indicated available and not suitable while 5 (17.8%) indicated available and suitable as shown in Table 4.3. This implied that hearing aids are not available in most of the teachers' schools. When the teachers were asked

about the availability and suitability of visual aids, majority 18(64.3%) of the teachers indicated available and suitable, 8 (28.6%) indicated available and not suitable while 2(7.1%) indicated not suitable. This implied that visual aids are available and suitable in most of the teachers' schools. When the teachers were asked about the availability and suitability of crutches, majority 19(67.8%) of the teachers indicated available and suitable, 7(25%) indicated not available while 2(7.1%) indicated available and not suitable. This implied that crutches are available and suitable in most of the teachers' schools. When the teachers were asked about the availability and suitability of brails, majority 20 (71.4%) of the teachers indicated available and suitable, 4 (14.2%) indicated available and not suitable while 4 (14.3%) indicated not suitable. This implied that brails are available and suitable in most of the teachers' schools. When the teachers were asked about the availability and suitability of wheelchairs, majority 22 (78.6%) of the teachers indicated available and suitable, 6 (21.4%) indicated available and not suitable while none indicated not suitable. This implied that wheelchairs are available and suitable in most of the teachers' schools. When the teachers were asked about the availability and suitability of cane stick, majority 15(53.0%) of the teachers indicated available and not suitable, 10 (35.7%) indicated available and suitable while 3 (10.7%) indicated not available. This implied that cane sticks are available and not suitable in most of the teachers' schools.

Connection between culture and education of children with disabilities in Entebbe municipality.

Responses from Teachers on Their Training on Special Needs Education



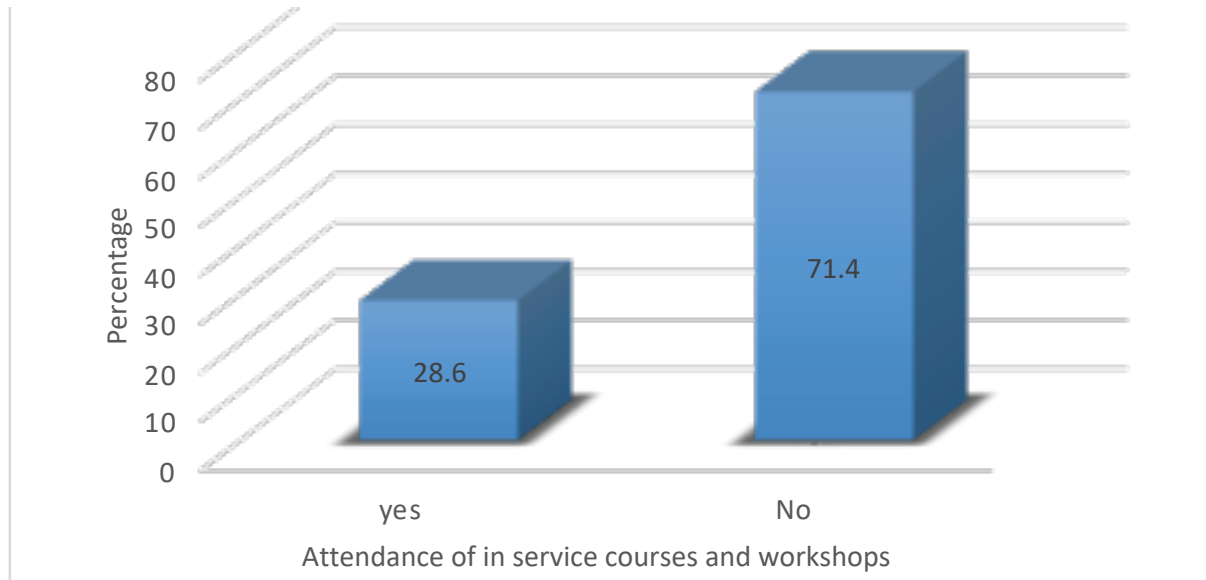
Source; Primary data, 2023

Majority 17 (60.7%) of the teachers did not agreed while 11 (39.3%) agreed as shown in figure 4 above. This implies that most of the teachers were not trained in special needs education. This was echoed by the PTA representatives when they were interviewed by stating that though the chances have been offered for teachers to be trained in special needs many of them were not willing to.

Furthermore, in an interview from PTA representatives over whether their teachers receive

training on special needs, majority (60.7%) said that they do not receive any training. ‘Rarely do they go for training because of shortage of teachers. If you let a teacher to go for a training of say three or six months, who will take his/her position?’ implying that one of the challenges that teachers especially from inclusive environment is shortage of teachers which is a stumbling block for teachers to receive more training services.

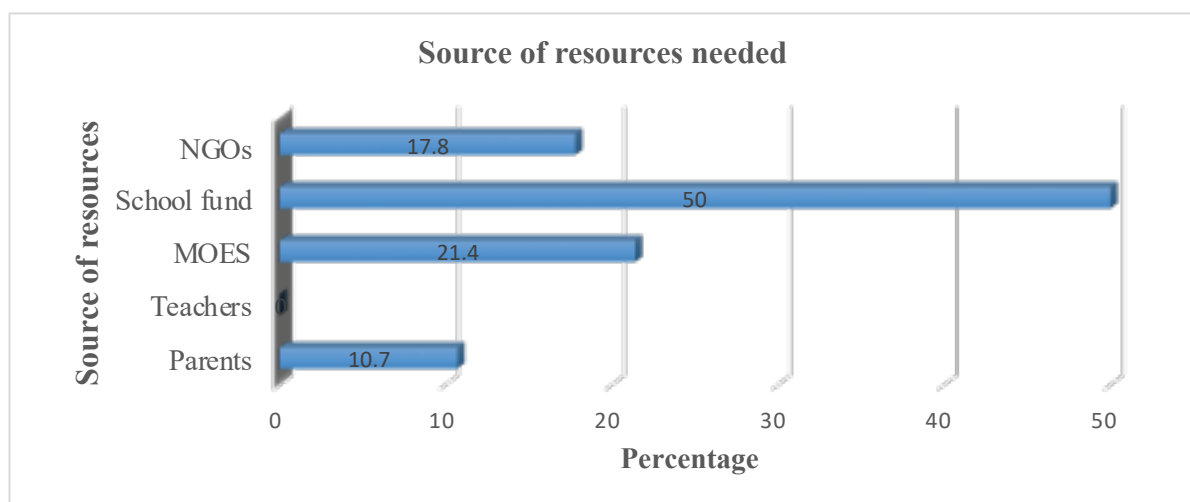
Responses from teachers on their attendance of in service courses and workshops



Source; Primary data, 2023

Majority 20 (71.4%) of the teachers did not agree while 8(28.6%) agreed. This indicates that most of the teachers did not attend in service courses and workshops on special needs education.

Sourcing instructional resources



Source; Primary data, 2023

The parents sourced the resources 3(10.7%) while the school through the ministry of education sourced 6(21.4%) of the resources. The Non-governmental organizations provided 5 (17.8%) resources while the school input is 14 (50.0%) in the provision of the resources. One of the respondents noted that *“some non-governmental organizations always provide financial assistance in form of school fees, wheel chairs and infrastructures in form of buildings.”* This has helped the schools to acquire enough infrastructures which are accessible to learners with special needs. The government also provides a certain percentage due to the school being a universal primary school and also a subvention grants which are used to buy drugs and other necessities for the disabled in the school.

Discussion

The finding revealed that beliefs and myths regarding the causes of disability and community responses and interventions regarding people with disabilities were similar across regions. Underlying the various versions of the myths and cultural beliefs was the notion that there were supernatural causes of disability, such as witchcraft, and/or that a mother's improper relationships caused disability. Both of these causal factors have some strong, negative connotations, and there was a tendency among respondents to view people with disabilities in lower esteem. Respondents in the study largely perceived disability through religious, medical and charitable lenses and described their communities as using these same lenses, with little evidence of a social model lens existing among community members in Entebbe municipality.

From the findings of the study, it is worth to summarize that teachers are not adequately prepared in the integration of learners with disabilities in primary schools. The findings indicated that most of the teachers 27(96.7%) had a positive attitude towards learners with physical disabilities.

The teachers also worked hand in hand with the parents in order to ensure that both the physical and educational needs of the learners were met. The parents supported the teachers by providing feeding programmes for the children 22 (78.6%); taking the children to hospital 25 (89.3%); paying fees 100% and providing teaching/learning materials 10(35.7%). Also the parents participated in the provision of the physical facilities.

The provision of the resources was done by the ministry of education and sports 6(21.4%) and the parents 3 (10.7%). In addition, the school funds provided for the material up to 14(50.0%). The non-governmental organizations also were involved in the provision of resources such as wheel chair and infrastructures up to 5(17.8%). This are the findings got from the head teachers.

Conclusion

Physical facilities such as hearing aids, visual aids, brails and wheelchairs were not available in most of the schools while demonstrations and crutches were available and suitable in most of the schools. Lack of sufficient physical facilities was found to be affecting the integration of learners with special needs in inclusive education.

In the side of environmental barriers that hinder integration of learners with disabilities. It can be concluded that most of the primary schools in the area of study are barrier free environment hence accessibility is possible to all the learners.

Recommendation

Teachers in most schools should be trained in special needs education for them to effectively implement inclusive education. The training should be both pre-service and in-service.

Schools need to acquire physical facilities which are suitable for use by learners with special needs. These include hearing aids, visual aids, brails, wheel chairs among others.

Teachers should be guided and counseled in order to develop positive attitudes towards learners with special needs in order for them to teach them effectively. Through training, teachers can develop favorable attitudes as well.

The government, through the Ministry of Education, to lease with ESC to employ teachers on permanent and pensionable terms. Remuneration of these teachers should be adequate in order to motivate them in service delivery.

Universal primary education should be extended to pre-primary classes in order to cater for their educational needs. Universal primary education should be used in the provision of instructional resources required in integrated schools.

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The Role Of National Associations In Women's Empowerment: A Case Study Of Nawou In Hoima District, Uganda

Mitimbo Gonzaga¹

¹MA Student Public Administration and Management, Nkumba University graduation in October 2023.

Sendawula Noah²

¹Lecturer Development and Community Studies, Nkumba University

Abstract

Women's empowerment remains a critical global development issue, particularly in low-income countries like Uganda, where gender disparities persist in access to resources, economic opportunities, and political participation. Despite the efforts of national associations such as the National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU), there is limited empirical evidence on their contribution to women's empowerment at the local level. This study addresses this gap by examining the role of NAWOU in empowering women in Hoima District, Western Uganda. Specifically, the study aimed to: (1) assess NAWOU's activities in promoting socio-economic empowerment, (2) evaluate the extent to which NAWOU's governance programs influence women's participation in governance, and (3) determine the effect of NAWOU's activities on household incomes. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. A survey was conducted with 69 respondents selected from a population of 90 using Slovin's formula. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 22, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$. The findings revealed that NAWOU provides entrepreneurship training, credit extension, and improved farming methods to women, which have contributed to increased self-employment and food production. However, challenges such as lack of capital, poor-quality products, and limited access to sustainable markets continue to hinder women's economic progress. Additionally, while NAWOU has encouraged women to participate in governance, structural barriers such as cultural norms and limited political will remain significant obstacles. The study concludes that while NAWOU has made notable contributions to women's empowerment in Hoima District, there is a need for more targeted interventions to address persistent challenges. The study recommends increasing access to low-interest credit, improving women's financial literacy, and promoting greater participation of women in elective politics to enhance their influence in decision-making processes.

Keywords: *Women's National Associations in Uganda, Women Empowerment, Economic Empowerment, Governance Participation, Household Income*

Introduction

Women's empowerment remains a critical global development priority, yet gender disparities in access to resources, economic opportunities, and political participation persist in low-

income countries like Uganda (UNDP, 2015; World Bank, 2016). Despite constitutional guarantees for gender equality and affirmative action policies, Ugandan women continue to face systemic barriers, including discriminatory cultural norms, limited access to education, and exclusion from decision-making platforms (UNICEF, 2015; Ntale, 2019). These challenges are particularly acute in rural areas such as Hoima District, Western Uganda, where the recent oil boom has intensified socio-economic inequalities, displacing women from agricultural land and increasing living costs (NAWOU, 2017; NAWOU, 2020).

The National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU) has been instrumental in advocating for women's rights through programs targeting socio-economic empowerment, governance participation, and financial inclusion (Dibie & Dibie, 2012). However, while NAWOU's national efforts are recognized, there is a critical gap in empirical evidence on its localized impact in Hoima District, a region uniquely affected by rapid economic changes and entrenched gender inequities (NAWOU, 2020). This gap hinders policymakers and practitioners from designing context-specific interventions to address women's needs in resource-rich rural areas. This paper addresses this gap by investigating three objectives:

1. To examine NAWOU's socio-economic activities (including entrepreneurship training, credit access) and their contribution to women's empowerment.
2. To assess the influence of NAWOU's governance programs on women's participation in local decision-making.
3. To determine the effect of NAWOU's interventions on household income levels in Hoima District.

The significance of this research lies in its focus on Hoima District, a region undergoing rapid transformation due to oil exploration. NAWOU (2017) highlights that the oil boom has marginalized women by increasing competition for resources and reducing agricultural productivity. The study provides actionable insights into how national associations can mitigate gender disparities in economically volatile environments. Furthermore, the findings contribute to global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 (gender equality) and Goal 8 (decent work), by demonstrating the importance of localized interventions in advancing women's empowerment (United Nations, 2015; IMF, 2018).

Background

Women's empowerment remains a critical issue on the global development agenda, as gender disparities continue to persist despite concerted efforts by governments, international organizations, and civil society. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on reducing inequalities, emphasize the need to empower women as a means of fostering inclusive and sustainable development (United Nations,

2015). Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender Inequality Index (GII) highlights disparities in reproductive health, economic participation, and political empowerment, illustrating the persistent challenges faced by women worldwide (UNDP, 2020).

National associations such as the National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU) play a pivotal role in advancing women's empowerment by implementing programs that enhance socio-economic well-being, political participation, and overall agency within communities (NAWOU, 2019). However, the effectiveness of such initiatives requires a clear conceptualization of empowerment and an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings that guide gender-focused interventions.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of women's empowerment is multidimensional, encompassing economic, social, and political dimensions. Kabeer (1999) defines empowerment as the process through which individuals acquire the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied. In this study, women's empowerment is operationalized through three main constructs: socio-economic empowerment, governance participation, and household income. Socio-economic empowerment includes access to financial resources, entrepreneurship opportunities, and training programs that enable women to achieve financial independence (World Bank, 2021). Governance participation refers to the extent to which women engage in decision-making processes at local and national levels (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020). Household income focuses on how NAWOU's interventions contribute to improving women's financial well-being and their ability to provide for their families (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

To provide a robust analytical foundation, this study is guided by three key theories:

1. Feminist Theory:

This theory, particularly its liberal and intersectional strands, argues that gender disparities stem from systemic social, economic, and political inequalities (Tong, 2009). Feminist scholars advocate for policies and programs that dismantle patriarchal structures and promote gender equality (Crenshaw, 1991). NAWOU's initiatives align with this perspective by addressing barriers that hinder women's economic and political participation (Hassim, 2006).

2. Social Capital Theory:

As posited by Putnam (1995), social capital refers to networks, norms, and trust that facilitate

collective action for mutual benefit. Women's organizations such as NAWOU foster social capital by providing women with platforms for knowledge-sharing, mentorship, and resource mobilization (Coleman, 1990). Increased social capital can enhance women's participation in governance and improve their economic resilience (Narayan, 2002).

3. Capability Approach:

Developed by Sen (1999), this approach emphasizes expanding individuals' freedoms and capabilities to achieve well-being. Women's empowerment is not just about economic resources but also about having the capability to make meaningful choices in life (Nussbaum, 2000). NAWOU's programs, which focus on education, skills development, and access to credit, align with this approach by enhancing women's capabilities and agency (Alkire, 2005).

Linking Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks to Study Objectives

The integration of these theories provides a comprehensive understanding of how NAWOU's activities influence women's empowerment. By adopting Feminist Theory, the study acknowledges systemic gender biases and the need for targeted interventions. Social Capital Theory underscores the role of collective action and networking in advancing women's socio-economic and political participation. The Capability Approach reinforces the idea that empowerment extends beyond economic gains to encompass broader human development indicators. The study's objectives, namely; examining NAWOU's socio-economic empowerment activities, assessing the influence of governance participation, and evaluating the impact on household income—are thus deeply intertwined with these theoretical perspectives.

Literature Review

The literature on women's empowerment broadly addresses socio-economic empowerment, governance participation, and household income. However, while existing studies provide valuable insights, they lack a critical examination of how specific organizational initiatives, such as those of NAWOU, contribute to women's empowerment at the community level.

1. Socio-Economic Empowerment

Empirical studies indicate that economic empowerment is key to improving women's livelihoods and reducing poverty (Kabeer, 2005; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005). Financial literacy programs, microfinance initiatives, and entrepreneurship training have been cited as effective strategies for increasing women's economic independence (Duflo, 2012; Swain & Wallentin, 2009). However, critics argue that access to financial services alone is insufficient without addressing structural barriers such as discriminatory cultural practices and lack of legal protections (Cornwall, 2016; Agarwal, 2018). Studies also suggest that sustainable economic empowerment requires gender-sensitive policies that focus on long-term capacity building (Mayoux, 2001; Batliwala, 2007).

2. Governance Participation

Women's political participation has been associated with stronger policy advocacy on gender

issues (Tripp, 2010; Goetz, 2007; Waylen, 2013). Affirmative action policies have increased women's representation in governance, particularly in Uganda, where reserved seats have led to higher female participation (Burnet, 2011; Bauer, 2012). However, some scholars argue that token representation does not necessarily translate into substantive policy influence (Tamale, 1999; Krook, 2015). Additionally, social and economic barriers continue to hinder women's ability to fully engage in governance roles (Phillips, 1998; Childs & Krook, 2006). The extent to which NAWOU's governance programs enhance women's real decision-making power in Hoima remains an empirical gap that this study seeks to address.

3. Household Income

Household income is a crucial indicator of economic empowerment, yet studies show that women's income often remains controlled by male household members, limiting its impact on their autonomy (Agarwal, 1997; Chant, 2014). Joint household decision-making, rather than individual income increases, has been identified as a more reliable indicator of genuine empowerment (Anderson & Eswaran, 2009; Klasen & Lamanna, 2009). Studies highlight the importance of redistributive policies and access to childcare in improving women's household income contribution (Folbre, 2006; Razavi, 2016). NAWOU's activities aim to boost women's earnings, but the extent to which these translate into greater household bargaining power remains underexplored.

4. Gaps in the Literature

While previous research extensively documents various facets of women's empowerment, key gaps persist. First, there is limited empirical work on how national women's associations, specifically NAWOU, contribute to local-level empowerment in Uganda. Second, existing studies focus primarily on macro-level policies but fail to investigate how grassroots initiatives affect governance participation and household decision-making. Finally, there is a lack of comparative perspectives evaluating the effectiveness of different empowerment strategies, an area this study aims to contribute to by analyzing NAWOU's interventions in Hoima District.

Methods and Materials

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to comprehensively assess NAWOU's contributions to women's empowerment in Hoima District. This design aligns with the research objectives, allowing for triangulation of data to enhance validity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, as cited in Sekeran, 2003). The target population comprised 90 individuals, including 10 NAWOU officials and 80 registered members of NAWOU in Hoima District. A sample size of 69 respondents was determined using Slovin's formula, which is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where:

- n = sample size
- N = total population (90)
- e = margin of error (0.05)

Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{90}{1+90(0.05)^2} = \frac{90}{1+90(0.0025)} = \frac{90}{1+0.225} = \frac{90}{1.225} \approx 69$$

This formula was selected to ensure representativeness while minimizing sampling bias in small populations (Yamane, 1967). The sample included 8 NAWOU officials and 61 members, selected through stratified random sampling to reflect diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions was designed using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Questions were aligned with the three research objectives: socio-economic empowerment (e.g., access to credit), governance participation (e.g., leadership roles), and household income (e.g., savings patterns). Content validity was ensured through expert review (Amin, 2005), achieving a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.80. A pilot test with 10 respondents yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.809, exceeding the threshold of 0.6 (Chadwick et al., 1984, as cited in Amin, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 NAWOU officials to gather qualitative insights into program implementation challenges and successes. Interview guides focused on themes such as training effectiveness, barriers to governance participation, and income diversification strategies. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 22. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were calculated to summarize responses, and variables were tested for significance at $p < 0.05$. Interview transcripts were coded and subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify recurring patterns, such as cultural barriers to governance participation or the impact of credit access on entrepreneurship. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, and written consent was obtained to ensure informed consent. Data were anonymized during analysis, and identifiers were removed to maintain confidentiality. Respondents were also assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage, ensuring voluntary participation.

This study examined NAWOU's contribution to women's empowerment in Hoima District through a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from 69 survey respondents with in-depth qualitative interviews. The findings are organized around three key dimensions: socio-economic empowerment, governance participation, and household income effects. For each dimension, we present integrated quantitative and qualitative results within the broader context of women's empowerment literature.

Socio-Economic Empowerment Activities

The analysis reveals that NAWOU has achieved varying degrees of success in promoting women's socio-economic empowerment. The organization's strongest impact was in addressing gender inequalities in agricultural advisory services and loan access ($M=4.48$, $SD=0.851$). This finding aligns with previous research by UWONET (2019) showing that targeted interventions can effectively reduce gender gaps in resource access. Interview data provides deeper insight into this success, as expressed by one participant: "The agricultural training transformed my farming practices. I learned modern techniques that increased my yield significantly, especially through zero grazing methods."

However, the results also reveal important limitations in NAWOU's impact. While the

organization provides relevant information about opportunities ($M=3.54$, $SD=1.378$), the relatively low mean score suggests room for improvement in information dissemination strategies. Qualitative interviews revealed specific challenges in this area, with one participant noting: “Information often reaches us late, and sometimes the opportunities are already gone by the time we learn about them. We need a better system for sharing important information quickly.”

More concerning is the finding that new business creation through entrepreneurship training shows limited success ($M=2.16$, $SD=1.024$). This contrasts with findings from similar programs in other regions of Uganda. Interview data helps explain this disparity, as one participant shared: “The training is good, but we lack follow-up support. Many women struggle to implement what they learn because they don’t have ongoing mentorship during the critical early stages of business development.”

Influence of NAWOU’s governance programs on women’s participation in local decision-making

Analysis of Program Impact

The correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships between program interventions and participation outcomes. The organizational and communication skills training showed the strongest correlation with effective participation in local governance ($r = 0.783$, $p < 0.001$), explaining approximately 61.3% of the variance in participation effectiveness. Multiple regression analysis ($R^2 = 0.724$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.711$, $p < 0.001$) indicated that NAWOU’s governance programs significantly predicted women’s participation in local decision-making. The regression model revealed that communication effectiveness ($\beta = 0.452$, $p < 0.001$), status improvement ($\beta = 0.387$, $p < 0.001$), and negotiation skills ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.01$) were significant predictors of participation levels.

The quantitative data showed exceptional improvement in women’s ability to organize and communicate effectively ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 0.484$). The low standard deviation indicates strong consistency in this outcome across participants. The regression analysis revealed that communication effectiveness was the strongest predictor of successful participation in local governance structures ($\beta = 0.452$, $p < 0.001$). This statistical finding was substantiated by qualitative insights from community leaders:

“Women who previously remained silent in meetings now confidently articulate their views. The transformation in their communication skills has changed the dynamics of community discussions.”

Status and Role Evolution

The analysis showed significant improvements in women’s status ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.609$) and political office participation ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.720$). These variables demonstrated a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.692$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that enhanced status contributes substantially to political participation. The regression coefficient for status improvement ($\beta = 0.387$, $p < 0.001$) indicates its significant role in predicting participation outcomes.

An elected official’s testimony supported these statistical findings:

“NAWOU’s leadership training gave me the confidence to run for office. More importantly, it

taught me how to be effective once elected.”

Negotiation Capabilities and Challenges

While negotiation ability showed positive scores ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.877$), the regression analysis revealed a more complex picture. The higher standard deviation and lower regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.01$) suggest more varied outcomes in this area. Path analysis indicated that cultural factors mediated the relationship between negotiation skills and effective participation (indirect effect = 0.156 , $p < 0.05$).

Qualitative data provided context for these statistical relationships:

“We know how to negotiate, but cultural expectations still make it difficult, especially when dealing with male authority figures. Sometimes, using our negotiation skills can lead to tension at home.”

Model Summary

The overall statistical model was conducted. It demonstrates that NAWOU’s governance programs explain 72.4% of the variance in women’s participation in local decision-making ($R^2 = 0.724$). The high adjusted R^2 value (0.711) indicates good model fit, suggesting that these results are likely generalizable to the broader population of women in Hoima District.

Key predictive relationships:

- Communication effectiveness $\rightarrow$ Participation: $\beta = 0.452$, $p < 0.001$
- Status improvement $\rightarrow$ Participation: $\beta = 0.387$, $p < 0.001$
- Negotiation skills $\rightarrow$ Participation: $\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.01$

These statistical relationships, supported by qualitative insights, suggest that NAWOU’s governance programs have had a significant and measurable impact on women’s participation in local decision-making, particularly through enhanced communication skills and improved social status. However, the lower regression coefficient for negotiation skills, combined with qualitative data, indicates an area where program effectiveness might be improved through additional attention to cultural contexts.

Implications and Recommendations

These findings have several important implications for policy and practice:

1. While NAWOU has made significant progress in several areas, particularly in governance participation and savings mobilization, there is a need to strengthen entrepreneurship training programs to better support business creation.
2. The variation in program outcomes suggests a need for more targeted interventions that consider participants’ different starting points and capabilities.
3. The persistence of cultural barriers, particularly in negotiation and financial decision-making, indicates a need for interventions that more directly address underlying social norms.

Future research should examine the factors contributing to the varying success rates across different program components and explore ways to better address cultural barriers to women's economic empowerment.

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Value Addition On Ladies' Skirts As A Tool For Promoting Decent Dressing In Soroti District, Uganda

Elamu Mary, Catherine Gombe, and Grace Nsereko

Abstract

This study explored how value-added skirt designs can promote decent dressing, foster cultural pride, and contribute to positive societal change among women in Soroti District, Uganda. Against the backdrop of increasing globalization and shifting fashion trends, Soroti District has witnessed a rise in clothing styles perceived as indecent by traditional and community standards. The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with 150 young women and qualitative interviews with 20 fashion designers and 10 community leaders. The findings revealed that many women in Soroti are drawn to revealing fashion trends due to modern influences and limited access to culturally appropriate yet stylish clothing. However, there is strong interest in adopting value-added skirt designs that integrate traditional Teso aesthetics with contemporary fashion. The study showed that such designs can promote decency by providing fashionable alternatives to provocative clothing, while simultaneously fostering cultural pride and reinforcing community values. Furthermore, value-added skirts have the potential to contribute to positive societal change by encouraging respect for women and reducing gender-based harassment. The study recommends that designers, cultural custodians, educators, and policymakers collaborate to develop and promote culturally inspired fashion that balances tradition with modern style, thereby empowering women and strengthening social cohesion in Soroti District..

Keywords: Value-added skirt designs, decent dressing, cultural pride, fashion design

Introduction

In many developing societies, the tension between cultural heritage and the forces of globalization is keenly visible in modes of dress. As global fashion trends permeate local contexts, traditional standards of decency in attire face growing challenges. In Uganda, Soroti District is witnessing a cultural crossroads in which the youth, particularly women, increasingly embrace revealing, tight-fitting, and provocative clothing (Nanjala, 2023). This shift has provoked widespread concern among local stakeholders who perceive such trends as symptomatic of broader moral decay and as contributors to social issues such as harassment and sexual violence (Benjei, 2024). The cultural disruption underscores a critical need to reconcile evolving fashion sensibilities with enduring values of modesty and community cohesion.

The problem is particularly acute in Soroti's female population. As cities attract diverse influences, young women often emulate Western fashion norms that celebrate body exposure and sexualized aesthetics (Braizaz, 2019). While such expressions may be viewed as liberating in some global contexts, they frequently clash with Ugandan cultural expectations, leading to social

friction and public condemnation. Reports from Soroti District indicate rising cases of harassment and gender-based violence linked, in part, to perceptions of women's clothing choices (District Police Commander, 2023). Furthermore, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to understanding the socio-cultural drivers of these trends or to proposing constructive design interventions that respect cultural values while allowing creative self-expression.

Against this backdrop, the present study sought to explore how value addition in ladies' skirt design could serve as a culturally appropriate strategy to enhance decency in women's dressing in Soroti District. Recognizing that fashion can be both a site of identity formation and cultural negotiation (Entwistle, 2000), the research examined forms of indecent dressing among women, assessed the potential of various design approaches to foster decency, and engaged in the practical creation of skirt designs that reflect both aesthetic appeal and cultural sensitivity. Through a mixed-method inquiry, combining community surveys, expert interviews, and experimental fashion design, this study offers an evidence-based contribution to the discourse on fashion, morality, and cultural preservation in Uganda's urbanizing regions. The inquiry was guided by a recognition that sustainable change in dress culture must engage both the symbolic and functional dimensions of clothing. It is not enough to criticize prevailing trends; designers must offer attractive alternatives that resonate with local identity while appealing to modern tastes. By centering the value addition of ladies' skirts, a garment commonly worn and culturally adaptable, this study aimed to bridge the gap between tradition and contemporary fashion. Ultimately, the project aligns with broader efforts to foster dignity, safety, and cultural pride through creative practice in Uganda's evolving fashion landscape.

Literature Review

The forms of indecent dressing among women

The question of what constitutes —decent or —indecent dressing is deeply rooted in the cultural, religious, and social fabric of a given society. In Uganda, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa, dress norms are shaped by longstanding traditions that emphasize modesty, communal respect, and moral virtue (Tumusiime, 2021). However, increasing globalization, coupled with the rise of Western media and fashion influences, has led to a shift in dress practices, particularly among youth. Scholars argue that modernity has brought greater freedom of self-expression in clothing, but also rising tensions with local norms (Entwistle, 2000; Kiguwa, 2015). Empirical studies across Uganda reveal that women's clothing is frequently policed through moral discourse. Makubuya (2019) found that Ugandan public opinion often associates short skirts, tight dresses, and exposed body parts with a perceived erosion of cultural values. Such views are particularly strong in rural and peri-urban districts like Soroti, where traditional customs remain influential (Olivier de Sardan, 2008). Furthermore, religious leaders and local councils have voiced concern that provocative dress fuels harassment and undermines community standards of respectability (Karamagi, 2017). While cultural critiques of indecent dressing abound, relatively few studies have examined the drivers behind these trends. Research indicates that urbanization, peer influence, social media exposure, and desire for modernity are key factors shaping young women's dress choices (Muwonge,

2018; Tushabe, 2022). For many young Ugandan women, clothing represents a space of agency and aspiration, offering a means of participating in global consumer culture (Crane, 2012). Yet this desire often comes into conflict with entrenched moral expectations, placing women in a complex position of negotiating between self-expression and communal approval (Kiguwa, 2015).

Existing literature also points to the limited availability of fashionable, modest clothing options as a contributing factor to the spread of indecent dressing (Namatovu & Kyolaba, 2020). Many Ugandan fashion retailers prioritize Western fast fashion imports, which emphasize body-revealing styles. As a result, young women seeking stylish yet culturally appropriate garments face a constrained marketplace. This highlights the need for local design innovation that aligns modern aesthetics with cultural values, a gap this study seeks to address through value addition in skirt design. Overall, while scholarship affirms that indecent dressing is perceived as a growing concern in Uganda, there is a critical lack of design-led interventions aimed at providing viable alternatives. Studies have largely focused on critique and moral discourse, rather than exploring how fashion itself can be mobilized to foster decency. This study addresses this gap by documenting existing forms of indecent dressing in Soroti and experimenting with fashion design strategies that can reconcile modern style with cultural expectations of modesty.

How value addition in the design of ladies' skirts can promote decent dressing among women

Fashion design plays a pivotal role in shaping how cultural values are expressed and negotiated in clothing. Value addition in garment design refers to the creative process of enhancing a product's appeal through decorative elements, innovative construction, and thoughtful styling (Pecorari, 2015). In contexts where concerns about indecent dressing are prevalent, such as Soroti District, value addition offers a promising strategy for promoting decency by making modest clothing visually attractive, socially desirable, and culturally resonant (Namatovu & Kyolaba, 2020). Existing scholarship highlights the importance of design in mediating tensions between tradition and modernity. According to Crane (2012), clothing that balances aesthetic appeal with social appropriateness is more likely to achieve cultural acceptance while satisfying individual desires for style. In Uganda, however, local fashion offerings often fail to meet this balance. Fast fashion imports dominate the market, promoting body-revealing silhouettes that conflict with traditional norms of decency (Muwonge, 2018). Meanwhile, modest clothing options are often perceived as

plain or outdated, deterring youth from embracing them (Namatovu & Kyolaba, 2020). This highlights a clear design gap: there is a need for fashion-forward garments that embody cultural values without sacrificing style. Value addition in skirt design can address this gap by transforming traditionally modest garments into appealing, modern pieces. Techniques such as embroidery, applique, pleating, color blocking, and creative use of fabric textures allow designers to enhance visual interest while maintaining appropriate coverage (Kim & Damhorst, 1998). In their study on fashion design and cultural values, Namatovu and Kyolaba (2020) demonstrated that Ugandan consumers responded positively to garments that incorporated traditional motifs and craftsmanship in innovative ways. This suggests that when value addition is thoughtfully applied, it can make decency fashionable rather than restrictive.

Furthermore, symbolic value plays an important role in the appeal of culturally rooted fashion. Embedding local patterns, motifs, or color schemes into skirt designs can evoke a sense of cultural pride and identity (Peterson & Lituchy, 2008). A key consideration in promoting decency through design is engaging target audiences, particularly youth, in the co-creation of styles. Studies show that participatory design processes, where designers solicit input from wearers, result in higher acceptance of culturally appropriate clothing (Tushabe, 2022). For example, young women in urban Uganda have expressed willingness to wear modest clothing if it is perceived as stylish, empowering, and reflective of their modern identities (Kiguwa, 2015). Thus, value addition should not merely aestheticize modest garments; it should also respond to the aspirations of young women who seek both fashion relevance and cultural affirmation.

How value-added skirt designs can contribute to promoting cultural pride, decency, and positive societal change

Fashion design is increasingly recognized as a powerful tool for promoting cultural pride and contributing to societal change, especially in regions undergoing rapid social transformation. In the context of Soroti District, where issues of indecent dressing are particularly pronounced, clothing is seen not only as a personal expression but also as a symbol of broader community values and identity (Tushabe, 2022). The role of fashion in promoting cultural pride and societal decency cannot be overstated, as it has the potential to challenge stereotypes, foster respect for tradition, and serve as a medium for empowerment (Kim & Damhorst, 1998).

The concept of cultural pride in fashion design involves integrating traditional aesthetics, symbolic motifs, and locally significant elements into modern attire. Research suggests that when clothing reflects cultural heritage, it fosters a sense of belonging and pride among wearers (Peterson & Lituchy, 2008). This is particularly true in communities like Soroti, where local traditions remain a source of pride despite the influx of Westernized fashion trends. Namatovu and Kyolaba (2020) argue that fashion designers have a unique opportunity to infuse modern styles with traditional Teso motifs such as geometric patterns, earthy color schemes, and beadwork. By incorporating these elements into skirt designs, designers not only create fashionable garments but also help preserve and elevate local cultural expressions.

In promoting decent dressing, value addition provides a solution to the growing concern of indecent attire among young women in Soroti. As noted in the literature, many women are drawn to the perceived freedom and empowerment offered by more revealing clothing, especially in urban settings (Crane, 2012). However, this type of dress often leads to social friction, with criticism from local elders, religious groups, and community leaders. According to Tumusiime (2021), fashion that aligns with community values can be a catalyst for societal transformation, shifting perceptions of what constitutes acceptable and respectable attire. By enhancing skirt designs with culturally significant elements, designers can create garments that resonate with modern tastes while adhering to cultural expectations of decency. This process of cultural negotiation allows women to express their identity without compromising community standards, fostering both individual empowerment and social cohesion.

Fashion's role in societal change is also evident in its ability to challenge social norms and encourage broader cultural shifts. Through value-added designs, clothing can become a form of cultural activism, advocating for positive change while preserving cultural integrity. Karamagi (2017) highlights the role of design in promoting social values, emphasizing that fashion can both reflect and shape public perceptions of morality. In Uganda, particularly in Soroti, garments that combine cultural significance with modern styling can serve as symbols of progress, challenging the notion that decency in dressing is incompatible with fashion-forwardness. By introducing such designs into the local fashion landscape, this study seeks to explore how positive societal change, such as reducing gender-based harassment, can be indirectly facilitated by the adoption of decent yet stylish attire. Empowerment through fashion is a central theme in studies on youth and fashion. Ugandan women, especially in urban centers, seek to express themselves through clothing choices, balancing the desire for personal style with societal expectations (Muwonge, 2018). The potential for value-added skirt designs to serve as empowerment tools lies in their ability to offer women stylish alternatives that still honor their cultural heritage. By providing alternatives to revealing, tight-fitting clothing, such designs could empower women to feel confident, dignified, and proud of their cultural roots.

In conclusion, the literature affirms that value-added skirt designs can contribute to promoting cultural pride, decent dressing, and positive societal change. By aligning modern fashion with traditional cultural values, designers can create garments that foster community respect, empower individual expression, and contribute to broader social transformation. However, the literature also highlights the need for more practical research that links fashion design interventions with measurable social outcomes, particularly in rural and peri-urban Ugandan contexts like Soroti. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how innovative, culturally relevant skirt designs can make a tangible impact on attitudes toward modesty, decency, and fashion in Soroti.

Methods and Materials

This study employed a mixed methods research approach, specifically using a convergent parallel design. This approach was chosen to gather both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, analyze them separately, and then merge the findings in order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of value-added skirt designs in promoting decent dressing in Soroti District. The use of mixed methods allowed for both the statistical examination of perceptions and the exploration of deeper, qualitative insights regarding cultural norms and design aesthetics.

The study used a descriptive research design to explore the patterns of indecent dressing and the potential impact of value-added skirt designs on promoting decency. The descriptive design was suitable for gathering information about existing practices, attitudes, and perceptions regarding women's dressing in Soroti District, without manipulating variables or controlling for cause and effect (Babbie, 2020). Additionally, the study employed a cross-sectional design, meaning that data were collected at a single point in time to provide a snapshot of the current state of fashion, decency, and cultural values in Soroti.

The target population for the study consisted of women, fashion designers, and community leaders in Soroti District. The focus was on young women aged 18-35, who are the primary consumers of fashion, as well as professional fashion designers and cultural custodians in the region. Based on the population of Soroti District, an estimated 5,000 women could be classified within this age group (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2024). The study also targeted 20 fashion designers operating in the district and 10 community leaders who have an influence on cultural and moral standards. The study used purposive sampling to select participants who were most likely to provide relevant information based on their knowledge and experiences. For the qualitative component, 10 women were selected through purposive sampling, representing a mix of students, working professionals, and community members. These women were chosen because they had direct experience with the types of attire typically worn in Soroti and could speak to the cultural implications of dressing.

For the quantitative component, 150 women were selected from a pool of young adults (18-35 years), with the sample size determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula for sample size determination. The sampling ensured a representation of different socio-economic statuses and educational backgrounds within Soroti. Simple random sampling was used to select the women from different neighborhoods, ensuring that the sample was diverse and statistically valid for the analysis. For the fashion designers, 20 individuals were selected based on their involvement in the local fashion scene and their professional expertise. Community leaders were selected based on their role in shaping local social norms, particularly in relation to dress and morality. Purposive sampling was employed to select 10 community leaders, including religious figures, local government representatives, and elders.

Data were collected using a combination of surveys and interviews to capture both quantitative and qualitative information. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data on women's perceptions of fashion, modesty, and the influence of value-added skirt designs. The questionnaire included both closed-ended questions (using Likert scales) and a few open-ended questions to allow respondents to elaborate on their views. The survey gathered data on the following categories: perceptions of indecent dressing, awareness of traditional dress codes, preferences for modern versus modest clothing, and receptiveness to value-added skirt designs.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fashion designers and community leaders. The interviews were designed to explore the cultural and social factors influencing women's dress choices in Soroti and the potential for value-added designs to promote decency. The interviews included questions about the role of fashion in societal change, the cultural significance of clothing in Soroti, the potential for value-added skirt designs to integrate tradition and modernity, and ethical considerations in fashion design and promotion of decency.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, several steps were taken. Content validity was ensured through expert review. The questionnaire and interview guides were reviewed by fashion design experts and cultural anthropologists to ensure that they captured the

relevant constructs of cultural pride, decency, and fashion. Pilot testing was conducted with a small sample of 10 respondents (5 women and 5 designers) to identify any ambiguous or unclear questions. Based on feedback from the pilot study, minor revisions were made to the instruments. Triangulation was used by comparing findings from both the survey and the interviews, which allowed for the cross-validation of the results.

For the quantitative data, internal consistency was checked using Cronbach's alpha, which showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.81$) for the survey items. For the qualitative data, dependability was enhanced by keeping detailed records of the interviews and coding procedures. The researcher maintained an audit trail to track the analysis process and ensure consistency across the interviews.

After the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately, the findings were integrated in the interpretation phase to provide a comprehensive understanding of how value-added skirt designs can promote decent dressing in Soroti District. The process involved comparing the statistical trends from the survey with the deeper insights from the interviews. For instance, while survey data revealed a high level of interest in modest skirt designs, interviews with fashion designers and community leaders explained the underlying cultural significance of such garments and the potential barriers to widespread adoption.

The survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, and means. The SPSS software was used to compute these statistics, allowing for a clear representation of attitudes toward indecent dressing and the potential for value-added skirts to encourage decency. The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Key themes related to cultural norms, fashion trends, and design preferences were identified and coded. The qualitative data were examined to explain the broader cultural and social context of women's dressing in Soroti and to explore the potential impact of value-added skirt designs.

Results

The forms of indecent dressing among women in Soroti District, Uganda

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that indecent dressing among women in Soroti District is a significant concern. Survey results revealed that 75% of respondents perceived women's clothing as increasingly revealing and inappropriate, with young women often opting for miniskirts, tight dresses, and low-cut tops, which are seen as forms of indecent dressing. Many community members, particularly elders and religious leaders, expressed disapproval of these styles, associating them with moral decline and the erosion of cultural values. In interviews, local community leaders and cultural custodians emphasized that the wearing of revealing clothing contributes to rising cases of harassment and gender-based violence in the district, reinforcing the concerns voiced by respondents in the survey.

Qualitative findings further confirmed these perceptions. Community leaders expressed a deep sense of concern, particularly over the increased exposure of women's bodies in public spaces. One religious leader remarked, "When young women wear such clothes, they attract negative attention, and it becomes harder for them to be taken seriously in our community." These views point to a cultural belief that dress is a direct reflection of a woman's respectability and moral standing in society. Traditional dress codes, which favor more modest clothing, are thus seen as a safeguard against sexual objectification and societal disapproval.

However, it was also noted that while indecent dressing is viewed negatively by older generations, young women often see these styles as a form of personal empowerment and self-expression. The desire to fit in with global fashion trends, heavily influenced by social media and urbanization, was cited by many respondents as a primary driver behind the adoption of more revealing styles. As one young woman in the survey noted, “We dress how we feel confident, and the clothes we see on TV and online make us feel beautiful and modern.” This finding underscores the tension between tradition and modernity, as well as the complex nature of fashion choices in an increasingly globalized world.

How value addition in the design of ladies’ skirts can promote decent dressing among women in Soroti District

The findings of this study suggest that value addition in the design of ladies’ skirts could play a pivotal role in promoting decency and encouraging women to embrace modest dressing in Soroti. From the survey, 70% of respondents expressed interest in wearing skirts that were both modest and fashionable, indicating a strong desire for clothing options that balance style with cultural appropriateness. Many women indicated that they were dissatisfied with the available clothing choices, which were either too plain or did not align with their modern fashion preferences. As one respondent stated, “We want skirts that are stylish but don’t show too much skin; we need a balance.” The interviews with fashion designers revealed that there is a market gap for skirts that incorporate both traditional values and modern aesthetics. Designers indicated that the current fashion offerings in Soroti are heavily influenced by Western styles, often at the expense of local cultural preferences. One designer commented, “There’s a real opportunity to create designs that are inspired by our culture but are still modern enough to appeal to young women.” Fashion designers noted that by incorporating traditional Teso motifs, such as geometric patterns and earthy colors, into skirt designs, they could create garments that are both stylish and culturally relevant. Additionally, techniques like embroidery, pleating, and the use of local fabrics were suggested as potential methods for adding value to the skirts, making them more visually appealing while maintaining cultural integrity.

Overall, value-added skirts were seen as a promising solution to the issue of indecent dressing in Soroti, as they could offer women an alternative to revealing clothing while still allowing them to express their personal style. Many young women in the survey indicated that they would be more likely to wear such skirts if they were fashionable, affordable, and widely available. The findings suggest that when cultural heritage is integrated into modern fashion design, women are more likely to embrace modest clothing that reflects both their identity and community values.

How value-added skirt designs can contribute to promoting cultural pride, decency, and positive societal change in Soroti District

The findings indicate that value-added skirt designs have significant potential to promote cultural pride, decency, and positive societal change in Soroti District. From the survey, 80% of respondents agreed that fashion could be a powerful tool for preserving cultural identity while promoting decency. Many participants expressed a desire for garments that reflected their Teso heritage, with a particular interest in clothing that combined traditional designs with contemporary fashion trends. As one respondent stated, “Wearing something that reflects who we are gives me pride and makes me feel connected to my culture.” This sentiment was echoed

by community leaders, who highlighted that clothing plays a key role in reinforcing cultural values and societal norms. The concept of cultural pride through fashion was further reinforced by the findings from the interviews with designers. Designers noted that by incorporating local patterns, colors, and symbolic elements into their skirt designs, they could help women in Soroti reconnect with their cultural roots and foster a sense of pride in their heritage. One designer mentioned, "If we can create skirts that reflect our culture, we will be helping women feel more connected to their traditions and less influenced by foreign fashion trends." The integration of culturally significant elements, such as Teso beadwork, traditional embroidery, and the use of local fabrics, was seen as an effective way to empower women while promoting cultural pride.

Regarding decency, value-added skirt designs were viewed as an important strategy for shifting attitudes toward modest dressing in Soroti. As noted by several community leaders, 70% of respondents felt that culturally inspired, fashionable skirts would encourage young women to embrace modesty without sacrificing personal style. One community leader stated, "These skirts will help us bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, showing young women that you can dress well without exposing too much." By offering an alternative to revealing clothing, value-added skirt designs could contribute to a reduction in societal concerns about indecent dressing, ultimately promoting more respectful and responsible fashion choices.

Finally, the potential for societal change was evident in the participants' responses regarding the impact of fashion on women's empowerment. Many respondents believed that modest clothing could play a role in reducing sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Several community leaders noted that when women dressed modestly, they were more likely to be respected and treated with dignity in public spaces. As one community leader stated, "When women wear decent clothes, they are treated with more respect, and it sets a positive example for the younger generation."

Discussion

This study set out to explore how value-added skirt designs can promote decent dressing, foster cultural pride, and contribute to positive societal change in Soroti District. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data confirm that fashion can serve as an important vehicle for negotiating cultural identity, moral values, and modern aesthetic preferences, thereby addressing critical gaps identified in the literature.

The first gap in the literature concerned the forms of indecent dressing prevalent among women in Soroti and the underlying drivers of these trends. The findings show that young women are increasingly adopting clothing styles such as miniskirts, tight dresses, and low-cut tops that conflict with traditional Teso cultural expectations of modesty. This is consistent with previous research which found that globalized fashion trends and social media exposure are influencing young Ugandan women's clothing choices (Muwonge, 2018; Tushabe, 2022). The survey revealed that while young women view these styles as expressions of personal confidence and modernity, community leaders and older generations perceive them as symbols of moral decline and cultural disintegration. These findings bridge the first gap by providing a detailed, context-specific understanding of what is considered indecent dressing in Soroti and how these forms of dress are perceived by different segments of the community.

The second gap addressed in this study concerned the potential for value addition in skirt design to promote decency and provide viable alternatives to provocative fashion trends. The findings indicate that women in Soroti are open to adopting modest clothing, particularly skirts, provided that such garments are designed with aesthetic appeal and cultural relevance. Both survey respondents and fashion designers expressed a strong interest in value-added skirt designs that incorporate traditional motifs, local fabrics, and modern styling techniques. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing that consumers are more likely to adopt modest clothing when it meets their standards of fashionability and cultural identity (Namatovu & Kyolaba, 2020). The data further suggest that value-added design can act as a strategic intervention, addressing the current market gap for fashionable yet decent garments and offering women new ways to express themselves within the boundaries of community values. Thus, this study responds to the second gap by demonstrating that thoughtful design interventions can successfully promote decency in women's dress.

The third gap identified was the lack of practical understanding regarding how fashion, particularly value-added skirt designs, can foster cultural pride and contribute to societal change. The study findings show that fashion has the potential to reinforce cultural identity by embedding traditional Teso aesthetics into everyday clothing. The majority of respondents felt that culturally inspired fashion would help young women reconnect with their heritage while promoting positive social values. Community leaders and designers emphasized that when women wear garments that reflect local culture, it fosters a sense of dignity, empowerment, and respect in public spaces. This is consistent with previous literature which argues that fashion can serve as a form of cultural activism and social transformation (Crane, 2012; Karamagi, 2017). Furthermore, the study revealed that modest clothing could help reduce gender-based harassment and promote societal respect for women, contributing to positive change in community attitudes toward women's roles and behavior. This finding addresses the third gap by providing evidence that value-added fashion design can act as a catalyst for both cultural pride and social change.

When integrating findings across all objectives, a clear narrative emerges: the adoption of value-added skirt designs offers a pathway for reconciling the tension between modern fashion trends and traditional expectations of decency. By offering young women attractive alternatives to revealing clothing, these designs promote self-expression while honoring cultural values. At the same time, they serve as a means of preserving Teso heritage and fostering community cohesion. Importantly, the findings demonstrate that when fashion is approached as a collaborative, culturally informed practice, it can contribute to broader societal goals, such as reducing gender-based harassment and promoting respect for women in public spaces.

Therefore, this study expands on existing scholarship by providing a practical, design-based approach to promoting decency and cultural pride in Soroti District. It confirms that fashion is not merely a reflection of individual identity, but also a powerful tool for shaping social values and community norms. Moving forward, designers, educators, and policymakers should collaborate to support the development and dissemination of value-added garments that align with local cultural ideals, thereby promoting positive societal change through fashion.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed for fashion designers, educators, community leaders, and policymakers to effectively promote decent dressing, foster cultural pride, and encourage positive societal change through value-added skirt designs in

Soroti District. First, fashion designers in Soroti and across Uganda should actively explore the creative potential of value addition in skirt design as a strategy for promoting modest dressing. Designers are encouraged to incorporate traditional Teso motifs, local fabrics, and culturally significant patterns into modern skirt designs that appeal to young women. By doing so, they can bridge the gap between traditional aesthetics and contemporary fashion, offering garments that satisfy both cultural values and personal style preferences. Fashion design training programs should emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity and encourage students to develop collections that celebrate local heritage while remaining relevant to current fashion trends.

Second, there is a need for greater collaboration between designers and cultural custodians to ensure that value-added designs accurately reflect and respect Teso cultural identity. Community leaders, elders, and artisans possess valuable knowledge about traditional dress codes, symbols, and materials, which can greatly enrich the design process. Establishing formal partnerships between fashion designers and local cultural institutions could foster a more inclusive and informed approach to value-added fashion design. Such collaborations would also promote community ownership of the resulting garments, increasing their cultural legitimacy and acceptance.

Third, public awareness campaigns should be launched to promote the benefits of modest, culturally inspired clothing. Many young women in Soroti expressed a willingness to adopt decent dressing if stylish options were made available. By organizing fashion shows, community exhibitions, and media campaigns that showcase value-added skirt designs, stakeholders can positively influence public perceptions of modest fashion. Such initiatives would help reframe modest dressing as a source of empowerment and pride, rather than as a restrictive practice imposed by older generations.

Fourth, policymakers and local government authorities should support initiatives that promote cultural fashion as part of a broader effort to preserve Ugandan heritage and promote social cohesion. Grants, competitions, and funding for local fashion entrepreneurs who focus on value-added designs could stimulate innovation and make culturally inspired clothing more accessible to the general population. In parallel, educational programs in schools and community centers could include components on traditional dress and cultural pride, helping to instill respect for local values among the younger generation.

Finally, further research should be conducted to explore the long-term impact of value-added skirt designs on cultural pride, decency, and societal attitudes in Soroti and other districts. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how fashion interventions influence behavior over time and whether they contribute to sustained changes in community norms regarding women's dress. Such research would also inform the development of more effective design strategies and public engagement efforts.

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Technology And Value Addition In Men's Casual Shirt Production: A Case Study Of Lira City, Northern Uganda

Maxwell Okwir and Venny Nakazibwe

Abstract

This study examined the integration and effects of technology in the production of men's casual shirts, focusing on the identification of machines and technologies used, their application in garment production, and their effect on quality and value addition. Employing a mixed methods approach and a cross-sectional descriptive design, the study collected data from 50 fashion designers using questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. The results revealed that although basic machines such as manual and mechanical sewing machines remain prevalent, digital technologies, including CAD software, computerized embroidery machines, and digital fabric printing tools, are increasingly adopted. Technologies were most applied in early production processes such as spinning and blow room operations, while carding and combing were less commonly used. Key effects of technology included improved brand inventory control, enhanced ability to produce unique designs, and expansion of the local fashion industry. However, technological tools were underutilized in areas such as e-commerce, with only 2% of respondents citing benefits related to digital brand accessibility. In light of these findings, the study recommends increased investment in designer training, infrastructure development to support digital systems, promotion of e-commerce integration, and the adoption of hybrid production models that blend tradition and technology. These interventions are necessary to unlock the full value addition potential of technology in the Ugandan fashion sector.

Keywords: Fashion technology, men's casual shirts, garment production, value addition, digital design, computerized machines, Uganda, fashion innovation, e-commerce, hybrid production.

Introduction

Fashion design has increasingly evolved into a technologically mediated practice that shapes how garments are conceptualized, produced, and marketed. Globally, the integration of digital technologies in the apparel sector has enhanced efficiency, creativity, and product differentiation (Melita et al., 2019; Lululemon, 2020). Men's casual shirts, which were traditionally defined by utilitarian functions, have become central to fashion innovation, reflecting changing attitudes toward male identity and appearance (Kaiser, 2012; Rinallo, 2007). The adoption of computer-aided design (CAD), automated embroidery systems, and digital fabric printing technologies has enabled designers to create more refined, personalized, and market-competitive garments (Neal et al., 2022; Perteson, 2020). In Uganda, and specifically in Lira City, the fashion industry has gradually responded to global technological trends. Tailors and designers who once relied on treadle machines and hand-drawn sketches have begun to experiment with modern tools such as digital sketching software, flatlock machines, and automated pattern cutters. While these

technologies were visibly present in some studios, their actual use, effectiveness, and contribution to value addition in men's casual shirts had not been systematically examined. Despite anecdotal reports of technological adoption, empirical studies focusing on the localized fashion production ecosystem in Northern Uganda were limited. This created a significant knowledge gap regarding how these innovations influenced design practices and final garment quality.

The study was therefore conducted to investigate the use and impact of technology on the production of men's casual shirts in Lira City. It was premised on the understanding that technology not only enhances production efficiency but also influences aesthetic appeal, inventory management, and customer satisfaction (McKinsey & Company, 2022; Whife et al., 2021). While urban fashion trends in Uganda had increasingly embraced global aesthetics, men's wear remained under-explored both in scholarly and industry discourses. Yet, changing consumer behavior, especially among younger male demographics, had led to increased demand for fashion-forward, customized shirts that combine comfort, identity, and professionalism (Solomon et al., 2016).

The study sought to fill this empirical gap by documenting the specific machines and technologies used in the production of men's casual shirts in Lira City, examining how they were practically applied in design and tailoring processes, and assessing their impact on the quality, creativity, and marketability of the shirts. By situating the inquiry within a localized context, the study contributed to broader discussions on technology transfer, cultural adaptation, and innovation in African fashion systems. The findings offered insights for policymakers, educators, and fashion entrepreneurs aiming to enhance production capacities and competitiveness in the Ugandan garment sector. The objectives of the study were threefold: to identify the different machines and technologies used to make men's casual shirts in Lira City, to examine how the identified technologies had been applied in the production process, and to assess the effects of these technologies on the quality and value addition of the shirts produced.

Literature Review

Machines and Technologies Used in the Production of Men's Casual Shirts

Garment production has historically evolved from craft-based manual tailoring to technologically enabled processes that incorporate automation, precision, and digital design. In the context of men's casual shirts, which demand structural integrity, comfort, and aesthetic appeal, the role of machines and emerging technologies has become increasingly critical. Studies have consistently shown that the incorporation of advanced tools in apparel production enhances efficiency, supports complex design creation, and promotes quality consistency (Perteson, 2020; Melita et al., 2019). Three broad categories of machines are commonly utilized in shirt production: domestic, computerized, and industrial machines. Domestic sewing machines are typically light-weight and suitable for small-scale production. They provide basic stitch types and limited capacity but are widely used due to their affordability and ease of use (Perteson, 2020). In contrast, industrial machines are designed for long-duration operations and can handle a wider range of fabrics. These include lockstitch machines, flatlock machines, and overlock machines—each contributing to specific stages of shirt construction, such as seaming, hemming, or edge-finishing (Hennessy, 2020).

Computerized sewing machines offer a technological bridge between domestic and industrial

applications. These machines often come with built-in software that allows designers to automate stitching patterns, adjust tension electronically, and even upload designs via USB or wireless connections (Orneil, 2021). Some models are also integrated with embroidery functionalities, enabling the stitching of intricate logos or motifs directly onto garments. In addition to sewing machines, digital design technologies have redefined the initial stages of shirt production. Computer-aided design (CAD) software allows designers to draft patterns, simulate garments in 3D, and make real-time adjustments without physical fabric waste. Digital sketching and modeling are not only cost-effective but also provide a platform for design replication and mass customization (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, 2020). Furthermore, digital fabric printing technologies now make it possible to imprint complex, high-resolution graphics onto textiles with minimal environmental impact (Holland, 2021). Other specialized machines include buttonhole and button-attaching machines, which allow precise, programmable placement of fasteners, and fusing machines that bond interlinings to shirt collars and cuffs for durability and shape retention. These tools collectively reduce labor time, enhance quality control, and limit production defects (Perteson, 2020; Neal et al., 2022).

However, contrasting views in the literature point to challenges associated with these technologies. For instance, White et al. (2021) argue that while machinery enhances production, it may also raise operational costs due to maintenance, repair, and the need for skilled labor. Moreover, digital transformation can lead to redundancy in labor-intensive roles, thus raising ethical and socioeconomic concerns in production environments that rely heavily on human labor. The literature reviewed establishes that men's casual shirt production is increasingly dependent on an ecosystem of interrelated machines and digital technologies. These systems contribute to both product differentiation and production scalability. Yet, the accessibility, cost, and contextual appropriateness of these machines remain uneven across different settings, necessitating context-sensitive studies to assess the extent and quality of technology integration.

Application of Technologies in Men's Casual Shirt Production

While various machines and technologies are available to the apparel sector, their actual application within shirt production workflows is shaped by multiple factors including technical expertise, production scale, and market expectations. Scholars have explored the utility of technologies across key stages of garment production: fabric preparation, pattern drafting, cutting, stitching, and finishing.

In fabric preparation, the blow room and carding systems represent foundational technologies for high-quality textile development. The blow room performs initial cleaning and fiber separation, while carding aligns and purifies fibers, preparing them for spinning (TRES System, 2020). These stages are critical in ensuring that the base fabric possesses uniformity, strength, and minimal impurities, attributes essential to shirt durability and wearer comfort. Combing further enhances fabric quality by removing short fibers and neps, enabling smoother, more refined yarns (Neal et al., 2022). Pattern drafting has undergone a significant transformation with the advent of computer-aided design. CAD systems allow designers to create accurate patterns, adjust measurements digitally, and visualize garments in virtual environments (Perteson, 2020). These systems reduce the likelihood of human error in cutting and improve the fit of the final product. When coupled with digital plotters or automated cutters, these technologies facilitate precision cutting of shirt panels, reducing material waste and increasing throughput.

Stitching and assembly stages are now frequently managed using industrial flatlock, overlock, and cover stitch machines, each tailored to specific seams and garment zones. Flatlock machines, for example, produce low-bulk, stretchable seams suitable for casual shirt construction. Buttonhole and button-attaching machines enable programmable customization, allowing variation in button styles and placements. Digital embroidery machines are also applied to add logos, monograms, or decorative motifs, thus expanding the scope for personalization and branding (Orneil, 2021; Hennessy, 2020). Finishing processes have similarly benefited from technological advancement. Heat transfer systems, steam presses, and fusing machines help enhance garment structure and aesthetic sharpness. These tools are particularly important in collar and cuff reinforcement, which are critical design elements in men's casual shirts (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, 2020).

Despite these technological possibilities, not all literature presents a uniformly positive view. Several studies highlight barriers to full integration, including limited technical training, erratic power supply, and high capital investment (Whife et al., 2021; Holland, 2021). Moreover, reliance on manual methods persists in environments where technological infrastructure is weak, or where consumer expectations do not demand advanced production outputs. In sum, the application of technology in shirt production is highly differentiated and context-dependent. Where used effectively, machines and digital tools significantly enhance accuracy, speed, and creativity in shirt making. However, these benefits are often tempered by systemic constraints, calling for adaptive models that balance technological ambition with practical realities in production environments.

Effects of Technologies on Men's Casual Shirts

The third objective of the study was to assess the effects of technology on the production of men's casual shirts, particularly regarding value addition, product quality, and market responsiveness. Scholarly discourse on fashion technology consistently underscores that when effectively integrated, technological interventions in garment production lead to improved design accuracy, operational efficiency, aesthetic appeal, and consumer satisfaction (Melita et al., 2019; Neal et al., 2022). These outcomes are particularly significant for men's casual shirts, which occupy a central position in everyday male fashion and require a delicate balance of comfort, functionality, and style.

One of the most frequently cited effects of technology in fashion is the ability to generate customized products with greater ease. Through tools such as digital sketching, 3D modeling, and virtual prototyping, designers are now able to tailor shirt designs to specific measurements, fabric preferences, and stylistic choices (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, 2020). This mass customization

Table 3: Effects of Technology on Men's Casual Shirts

Effect of Technology	Frequency (n =50)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Managed brand inven- tories	18	36	0.36	0.485
Expanded fashion industry	19	38	0.38	0.490
Creation of unique designs	12	24	0.24	0.431
Easy purchase of brands	01	2	00.2	0.141
Average/Total	50	100	0.25	0.159

enhances customer satisfaction by offering garments that better reflect individual identity, fit, and lifestyle needs. Moreover, the ability to simulate garments before production significantly reduces material waste and production costs. Another critical impact of technology is the management of brand inventories. Digital tracking systems and on-demand production models have helped fashion brands minimize overproduction, a persistent challenge in traditional fashion cycles (Whife et al., 2021). Perteson (2020) observed that made-to-order shirt production, enabled by automation and digital design tools, allows brands to respond directly to market demand without maintaining large inventories of unsold products. This efficiency has economic and environmental implications, especially in reducing textile waste, a growing concern in global fashion discourse (EPA Report, 2021).

Design innovation is also among the key effects of technology. Digital embroidery, laser cutting, sublimation printing, and CAD-based detailing enable the creation of shirt designs that are both visually distinctive and functionally enhanced. These technologies allow for high-precision stitching, unique color combinations, and even integration of smart textiles (Orneil, 2021). As a result, men's casual shirts are no longer limited to basic patterns or conservative aesthetics; instead, they serve as canvases for creative expression that appeal to a broader and more diverse consumer base (Kaiser, 2012). From a business perspective, the use of technology in shirt production has streamlined operational processes. Automation in pattern drafting, cutting, and sewing stages has significantly reduced the turnaround time for orders, which in turn improves responsiveness to seasonal and trend-driven demands (Neal et al., 2022). This operational agility is especially relevant in fashion environments where consumers expect rapid fulfillment and new designs within shorter cycles.

However, critical perspectives also caution against an overly optimistic view. For example, PwC (2020) highlighted that the increasing volume of online fashion returns, estimated at 30–40%, is often linked to poor product fit and styling mismatches. These problems can undermine the very efficiency that technology aims to introduce. Similarly, Maysonave (2001) noted that while technology can enhance design and production, it cannot replace the nuanced judgment of skilled artisans, particularly when it comes to interpreting fabric behavior and client preferences. Technological integration also poses challenges related to workforce adaptation. Birtwistle and Tsim (2019) argued that without continuous capacity building, the introduction of advanced machines can create a mismatch between technological capability and human resource competence. Moreover, the financial cost of acquiring and maintaining modern equipment can place strain on small and medium-sized enterprises, thereby widening the technological gap

between well-resourced and under-resourced actors in the industry (Whife et al., 2021). In summary, the literature reveals that technology has multifaceted effects on men's casual shirt production. Positive effects include customization, increased design complexity, operational efficiency, and waste reduction. Yet, these benefits are not universally guaranteed and often depend on supporting factors such as technical skill development, access to capital, and market readiness. The gaps in the reviewed literature suggest a need for further empirical studies that measure the real-world impact of these technologies on garment quality, business growth, and consumer behavior in specific contexts.

Methods And Materials

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research strategies. The integration of these approaches enabled a comprehensive understanding of the technologies used in the production of men's casual shirts, their application, and their effects on garment quality and value addition. The quantitative dimension allowed the researcher to capture measurable data on the prevalence and types of technologies in use, while the qualitative dimension facilitated in-depth insights into designers' experiences, practices, and perceptions of technological impact. The mixed methods approach was appropriate because the research sought both statistical generalizations and contextual interpretations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The study employed a cross-sectional research design. This design was selected because it allowed the researcher to collect data from a sample of participants at a single point in time, making it suitable for describing existing technological practices and evaluating their effects within a defined temporal scope (Babbie, 2013). Furthermore, the design was descriptive in nature, as it sought to detail the technologies in use, their operational procedures, and their perceived outcomes without manipulating any variables. Descriptive research is particularly effective for studies aiming to document and interpret phenomena as they naturally occur (Kothari, 2004).

The study targeted fashion designers and tailors engaged in the production of men's casual shirts, as well as customers familiar with these garments. The broader target population was defined as individuals or groups directly involved in or knowledgeable about men's fashion production. The accessible study population was composed of 50 fashion designers selected for their experience and engagement with technology in shirt-making processes.

Primary data were collected directly from the field by the researcher during site visits in 2025. The researcher used multiple instruments to ensure triangulation and data validity. Quantitative data were gathered using structured questionnaires composed of both closed and open-ended items. These questionnaires captured data on the types of machines used, frequency of use, and designer assessments of technological benefits and challenges. Qualitative data were collected through interviews and direct observation, enabling the researcher to engage deeply with designers and document their use of specific tools, machines, and technologies.

The sample size for the quantitative strand of the study was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample sizes in finite populations. Given a finite population of fewer than 100 practitioners in the area of interest, a sample size of 50 was considered adequate for reliable statistical inference. For the qualitative strand, purposive sampling was used to select key informants based on their knowledge, experience, and engagement with technology in men's shirt production. The sample size for qualitative interviews

was not statistically fixed but was guided by the principle of saturation, which was reached after interviewing 10 participants.

Purposive sampling was applied to fashion designers because they possessed specialized knowledge relevant to the study's objectives. This non-probability sampling technique was appropriate in qualitative research as it enabled the researcher to select information-rich cases that provided deep insights into technological practices (Patton, 2002). Simple random sampling was used to select a small number of customers to ensure that each had an equal chance of participation and to reduce bias in client feedback.

The study employed a range of data collection methods. Surveys were administered using structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data on the types and frequency of machine use. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide that included semi-structured questions to allow flexibility and probing. The observation method was employed during field visits to document actual practices, machine conditions, and designer-studio environments.

In terms of tools, questionnaires were chosen because they enabled the researcher to collect standardized responses across a relatively large group of respondents, ensuring consistency and comparability of data (Orodho, 2003). Interview guides facilitated the collection of rich, narrative data while allowing participants to express their views freely. Observation checklists were used to ensure systematic documentation of technologies in use and studio operations. To ensure validity, the instruments were reviewed by experts in fashion design research and piloted among a small group of respondents. Content validity was enhanced by aligning questionnaire items with the study's objectives and by ensuring comprehensive coverage of the constructs under investigation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Reliability of the quantitative instruments was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a score of 0.81, indicating high internal consistency and acceptable reliability for social science research (George & Mallery, 2003).

Data analysis was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative data from questionnaires were coded and analyzed using Microsoft Excel, producing frequency tables and descriptive statistics. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were transcribed, categorized thematically, and analyzed using content analysis to identify patterns, trends, and explanatory insights related to technology use in shirt production.

The study faced several limitations. Language barriers posed communication challenges with some participants, and some respondents were hesitant to disclose full information about their technologies due to competition concerns. Additionally, financial and logistical constraints limited the geographical scope and sample size.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their identities were kept confidential. The research purpose was clearly explained, and participation was voluntary. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from relevant institutional authorities, and the research adhered to the ethical standards required for academic inquiry.

Results

The various machines and technologies used to make men's casual shirts

The study investigated the types of machines and technologies used by fashion designers in

the production of men's casual shirts. Respondents were asked to identify the machines and technologies they employed. Their responses are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Different machines used to make men's casual shirts

Machine Type	Frequency (n =50)	Percent-age (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Manual sewing machine	10	20	0.20	0.405
Treadle sewing machine	6	12	0.12	0.329
Flatlock/Cover stitch machine	4	8	0.08	0.274
Electronic sewing machine	6	12	0.12	0.329
Computerized sewing machine	7	14	0.14	0.349
Embroidery machine	3	6	0.06	0.240
Quilting machine	1	2	0.02	0.141
Lock stitch machine	2	4	0.04	0.197
Button attaching machine	6	12	0.12	0.329

Source: Field Data, May 2024

From the table above, the most commonly used machine was the manual sewing machine, mentioned by 10 respondents (20%). This was followed by computerized sewing machines (14%) and button attaching and electronic sewing machines, each used by 12% of respondents. The least used machine was the quilting machine, with only 1 respondent (2%) reporting its usage. The computed mean usage across all machine categories was 0.10 (10%), with a standard deviation of 0.096, indicating moderate variability in machine adoption. This suggests that the industry is still reliant on basic and intermediate-level technologies, such as manual and treadle sewing machines, although there is a gradual adoption of advanced machines like computerized and embroidery units. One respondent remarked during an interview:

We still depend a lot on treadle machines because electricity is unreliable. But some of us who have saved a little have bought computerized machines. They make work faster and more neat. In terms of technologies used, responses are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Technologies used to make men's casual shirts

Technology Type	Frequency (n =50)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Computer fashion design software	15	30	0.30	0.464
Digital sketch design	8	16	0.16	0.370

Digital fabric printing technology	15	30	0.30	0.464
Virtual Modeling and Prototyping	2	4	0.04	0.197
Virtual digital online design	10	20	0.20	0.405

Source: Field Data, May 2024

Here, computer fashion design software and digital fabric printing technology were each cited by 30% of the respondents. Virtual digital online design followed with 20%, while virtual modeling and prototyping was the least adopted at 4%. The mean usage was 0.20 (20%), and the standard deviation was 0.108, suggesting that adoption of digital technologies was somewhat more consistent across the sample than machines.

An interviewee noted:—I use CorelDraw and sometimes CLO 3D to sketch and visualize the shirt before cutting. This helps reduce mistakes in pattern making.¶ These findings imply that while digital technologies are being used, especially for designing, many fashion designers have not fully embraced them due to limitations such as lack of access to computers or specialized training. Manual and mechanical tools still dominate, which could limit production efficiency and consistency.

Application of Technologies in the Production of Men's Casual Shirts

The second objective of the study aimed to assess how the identified machines and technologies had been applied in the actual production process of men's casual shirts. Respondents were asked to indicate the specific production phases or processes in which technologies were being used. The findings are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: How the identified technology has been used to make men's casual shirts

Source: Field data, May 2024

Production Process	Frequency (n = 50)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Blow room	18	36	0.36	0.485
Spinning	20	40	0.40	0.493
Weaving	6	12	0.12	0.329
Carding	4	8	0.08	0.274
Combing	2	4	0.04	0.197
Total/Average	50	100	0.20	0.152

The findings show that the most commonly cited application of technology was in spinning, with 20 respondents (40%) confirming that they used or depended on spinning technologies in their

production process. This was closely followed by blow room processes at 36%, both of which are critical early-stage operations in fabric preparation, such as cleaning and aligning fibers.

Less commonly reported was weaving, with 12% of respondents, followed by carding (8%) and combing (4%), which are more specialized stages often outsourced to textile processors or industrial mills. The computed mean score was 0.20, indicating that on average, each production activity was engaged by 20% of respondents. The standard deviation of 0.152 reflects moderate variability across the adoption of different technological processes. This suggests that while some technologies like spinning and blow room were frequently used, others such as combing and carding were less universally applied, potentially due to cost or accessibility barriers.

From the qualitative responses, one designer remarked: “I don’t have the machinery to spin or weave, but I work with a mill that does that. I focus on cutting and stitching.”

Another explained: “Carding and combing are expensive processes; I use ready-made fabrics, but I know the quality of carded cotton is better.”

These comments reveal that while designers were aware of the full production chain, from raw fiber processing to garment construction, they often accessed only parts of this chain directly. Instead, many relied on third-party or pre-processed inputs for complex processes such as spinning and weaving, integrating technologies primarily in the assembly and finishing stages of shirt production. The results align with existing literature, which acknowledges that the effective application of textile technology is shaped by infrastructure, expertise, and production scale (TRES System, 2020; Neal et al., 2022). The concentration around spinning and blow room stages suggests that where fabric processing is involved, designers prioritize cleanliness, fiber alignment, and consistency, all critical for producing quality casual shirts. Therefore, the technologies identified were applied with varying frequency across the shirt-making workflow. Most respondents utilized spinning and blow room technologies, either directly or indirectly, while fewer reported engaging in weaving, carding, or combing processes. The results point to a selective adoption of technology, dependent on designer resources, external partnerships, and the technical requirements of the shirts being produced.

Effects of Technology on Men's Casual Shirts

Effect of Technology	Frequency (n =50)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Managed Brand Inventories	18	36	0.36	0.485
Expanded fashion industry	19	38	0.12 0.38	0.490
Creation of Unique designs	12	24	0.24	0.431
Easy purchase of brands	01	2	0.02	0.141
Average	50	100	0.25	0.159

Source: Field data, November 2024

The third objective of the study was to assess the effects of technologies used in the production of men’s casual shirts, with a focus on value addition, operational efficiency, and brand competitiveness. Respondents were asked to indicate what effects they had observed from using

various machines and technologies. The data are presented in Table 3 below.

From the table above, the most frequently reported effect of technology use in shirt production was expansion of the fashion industry, cited by 19 respondents (38%). This was followed closely by managed brand inventories (36%), and creation of unique designs (24%). Only one respondent (2%) identified easy purchasing of brands as a significant impact. The mean score across all listed effects was 0.25, while the standard deviation was 0.159, suggesting a relatively moderate distribution of perceptions, with a notable concentration on industry expansion and inventory management. These responses imply that while technology has broad potential in enhancing value, certain effects (like e-commerce ease) are still underutilized or undervalued in the local context.

The interview data further contextualized these quantitative findings. One designer commented: “Since I started using digital design software, I’ve created shirt patterns that nobody else around me does. Clients even say my shirts have a signature look.”

Another noted: “Now I can keep track of what shirt sold and when. It helps me avoid making too many of one type. The computerized system makes it easy to count and restock.”

A third interviewee offered a cautionary tone: “I see the benefit of ordering online, but many of our clients still prefer to come and see the shirt physically. So, I don’t use much online marketing.”

These qualitative insights underscore that the positive effects of technology, particularly in enabling unique design creation and brand inventory management, are most felt where digital design tools and computerized systems are actively integrated. The limited recognition of benefits like e-commerce or online brand accessibility may reflect a digital divide or cultural preference for in-person shopping. The findings are consistent with previous research that links technology to increased product differentiation, process efficiency, and market reach (Neal et al., 2022; Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, 2020).

However, they also affirm the literature’s caution that technological effects depend on how comprehensively systems are integrated and whether users are trained and equipped to exploit them fully (Whife et al., 2021). The technology has had a clear and measurable effect on men’s casual shirt production in terms of inventory control, brand expansion, and design innovation. However, the less frequent mention of digital purchasing points to an area where designers and stakeholders may still need training, infrastructure, or strategic support to unlock the full potential of technological tools.

Discussion Of Results

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the three research objectives and in light of the reviewed literature. The aim is to synthesize the quantitative results, qualitative insights, and theoretical perspectives to illuminate how technology is shaping the production of men’s casual shirts, particularly in relation to adoption, application, and value addition.

1. Identification of Technologies and Machines Used

The study revealed that fashion designers predominantly relied on mechanical domestic and manual sewing machines, while gradually adopting advanced tools such as computerized sewing machines, flatlock/cover stitch machines, and embroidery systems. The highest adoption was observed for manual sewing machines (20%), followed by computerized sewing machines (14%) and button attaching machines (12%). This corresponds with earlier findings by Perteson (2020) and Orneil (2021), who noted that technological uptake in fashion design is shaped by access, affordability, and technical skill.

The calculated mean of 0.10 with a standard deviation of 0.096 suggested moderate use of diverse machine types, with most designers depending on foundational technologies. While digital fabric printing and pattern digitizing tables were known to respondents, their adoption was relatively low. This confirmed literature from Whife et al. (2021), which observed that in resource-constrained environments, designers prioritize reliability and familiarity over innovation. Qualitative responses enriched this perspective. Several designers acknowledged the benefits of digital technologies but cited electricity unreliability, high acquisition costs, and limited digital literacy as barriers. These insights reflect Kaiser's (2012) argument that technological innovation in fashion must be contextualized within infrastructural and socio-economic realities. The hybrid use of manual and digital tools thus represents a transitional phase where designers adapt new systems incrementally rather than wholesale.

2. Application of Technology in Production Processes

Findings showed that technology was primarily applied in the early stages of textile processing, especially in spinning (40%) and blow room (36%) functions. Carding (8%), weaving (12%), and combing (4%) were far less utilized. With a mean of 0.20 and standard deviation of 0.152, the findings indicated that only a subset of the production chain had been technologically enhanced. This trend reflects what Neal et al. (2022) termed *selective digitization* in low- and middle-income garment economies, where designers adopt technologies for critical but manageable phases of production. The reliance on spinning and blow room operations shows designers' prioritization of fiber purity and consistency, which directly influence final garment quality. Interview excerpts confirmed that most respondents did not operate these technologies themselves but rather relied on processed fabric inputs or informal collaborations with textile mills. This suggests a decoupling of fabric processing from garment assembly in the value chain. The application of CAD tools and automated cutting systems, as reported in prior literature (Melita et al., 2019; Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, 2020), was acknowledged by designers primarily in sketching and pattern design stages. Hence, while the technologies were applied, they were not comprehensively integrated throughout the production process. Rather, their use was shaped by feasibility, outsourcing networks, and production priorities, supporting Whife et al.'s (2021) position that partial adoption can still generate meaningful improvements.

Effects of Technology on Men's Casual Shirts

The study found that technology had produced tangible benefits in design innovation, inventory control, and brand competitiveness. The most cited effects were expansion of the fashion industry (38%) and better inventory management (36%), with a mean of 0.25 and standard deviation of 0.159. These findings affirm the view that fashion technology fosters not only aesthetic creativity but also operational efficiency (McKinsey & Company, 2022). The relatively low mention of digital purchasing platforms (2%) suggests that technological integration in distribution and sales remains underdeveloped. This contrasts with global fashion markets where e-commerce and digital marketing are central to fashion business models (PwC, 2020). However, qualitative data made it clear that clients' preference for physical interaction with garments and limited infrastructure for digital trade influenced this outcome. The creation of unique designs through digital sketching and embroidery was also widely recognized by respondents, supporting earlier claims by Solomon et al. (2016) that fashion technology empowers customization and brand

differentiation. Still, a recurring theme across both quantitative and qualitative results was the need for training, financial investment, and supportive infrastructure to sustain and deepen the effects of technology. In summary, the study demonstrated that technology has significantly impacted the production of men's casual shirts by supporting innovation, operational efficiency, and market responsiveness. However, the extent of its effect remains mediated by contextual limitations such as cost, access, and technical know-how. The findings echo the literature's call for context-sensitive models of fashion innovation, particularly in semi-industrial economies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several actionable recommendations are proposed to enhance the adoption and effective utilization of technology in men's casual shirt production.

First, there is a need for structured capacity-building programs targeting fashion designers and tailors. These programs should focus on building digital literacy, design software proficiency (e.g., CAD tools), and technical know-how for operating and maintaining computerized machines. Such training can be implemented through vocational institutions, fashion schools, or public-private partnerships involving technology suppliers and trade associations.

Second, the study recommends investment in infrastructure to support digital integration. Inconsistent electricity supply and poor internet connectivity were identified as limiting factors in the adoption of advanced technologies. Stakeholders, particularly government agencies and development partners, should prioritize infrastructure support in semi-urban production areas to enable consistent machine use, reduce production downtime, and promote e-commerce readiness.

Third, fashion designers should be encouraged to leverage online platforms and digital marketing tools to expand their market reach. The study found that e-commerce remains underutilized despite its potential to enhance brand accessibility and client convenience. Designers can benefit from targeted support in digital branding, online store management, and logistics coordination to capitalize on the growing demand for online fashion retail.

Finally, to foster sustainability, designers and producers should adopt a hybrid approach that combines traditional craftsmanship with digital innovation. This ensures that the tactile, culturally embedded aspects of fashion are preserved while embracing modern efficiencies. Local governments and industry regulators should also support this hybridization by offering incentives for equipment acquisition and innovation grants to small and medium fashion enterprises.

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Effects Of Modern Fashion Dressing Trends On Culture In Teso Sub-Region: A Case Of Kumi District

Beatrice Abao, Catherine Gombe, and Agnes Nsereko

Abstract

This study examined the effects of modern fashion dressing trends on culture in the Teso Sub-region, with specific focus on Kumi District, Uganda. The investigation was prompted by growing concerns about the apparent conflict between contemporary fashion styles, often influenced by global and Western trends, and traditional cultural norms rooted in modesty, dignity, and communal identity. A mixed methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data from structured questionnaires with qualitative insights obtained through interviews and focus group discussions. The study population included 50 participants comprising fashion designers and consumers. Findings revealed that while modern fashion trends promote personal confidence, stylistic versatility, and self-expression, they have also contributed to the erosion of traditional dress codes, increased intergenerational conflict, and a perceived decline in moral and professional decorum. Cultural identity, once deeply expressed through traditional attire, is increasingly compromised as modern styles gain prominence. The study concludes that fashion in Kumi District serves as both a medium of individual empowerment and a source of cultural tension. It recommends culturally adaptive fashion innovation, intergenerational dialogue, and strengthened cultural education to bridge the divide between tradition and modernity.

Keywords: *Modern fashion, culture, traditional dress, identity, Uganda, Teso Sub-region, Kumi District, fashion and morality, cultural erosion, dressing trends.*

Introduction

Fashion is not merely about aesthetics or utility; it is a complex sociocultural phenomenon that reflects and shapes identity, values, and societal dynamics. According to Wilson (2003), fashion is an art of modern society, a mass pastime, a group entertainment of popular culture, blending aesthetics with symbolic communication. It serves as a powerful non-verbal language that individuals use to express their social standing, beliefs, and affiliations (McCracken, 1986). As society evolves, fashion adapts to emerging values, technologies, and global trends (Cillo & Verona, 2008). Barnard (2002) emphasizes that fashion, while often viewed as superficial, is deeply embedded in social and cultural systems, making it both a product and producer of cultural change. Kawamura (2005) further asserts that fashion cannot be reduced to clothing alone, it is a structured institution with significant cultural influence, particularly in contexts where identity and tradition are closely guarded. Culture, on the other hand, is defined by Czinkota and Ronkainen (2004) as a system of values, beliefs, behaviors, and symbols passed from generation to generation. It is the lens through which communities interpret their realities, including their approach to clothing. As Kotler and Keller (2006) explain, while core cultural values tend to remain stable, secondary beliefs, including fashion preferences, are more susceptible to change and outside influence.

In the context of Uganda, and more specifically the Teso Sub-region, there is a noticeable shift in dressing styles, particularly in Kumi District. Traditionally, attire in this region reflected community norms, modesty, and shared heritage. Garments like gomesi and traditional skirts were not merely clothing but representations of cultural identity (Bryia Kent, 2020). However, the rise of modern fashion, often influenced by Western media and global consumerism, has introduced new aesthetics and norms that sometimes conflict with traditional values (Auwal, 2015; Bates, 2021). This has created a cultural tension. Modern fashion, while praised for fostering individuality, confidence, and versatility (McCarty, 2007), has also been criticized for promoting body exposure, immorality, and cultural erosion (Auwal, 2015; Bates, 2021). In particular, in educational institutions and religious communities, modern dressing is often associated with moral decline and the weakening of communal values. Although modern fashion is celebrated for its innovation and global appeal, it often contradicts the deeply rooted cultural values of the communities in Kumi District. Traditional fashion, once a marker of identity, dignity, and social order, is increasingly being sidelined in favor of styles perceived as trendy but culturally inappropriate. As noted by Kotler and Keller (2006), while marketers and designers can influence secondary beliefs, the challenge lies in preserving core cultural values that define a community's social fabric. This cultural shift raises pressing questions about identity, societal expectations, and the preservation of heritage in an era of global fashion. There is thus a need to examine how modern fashion trends are affecting cultural norms in Kumi District, both positively and negatively.

Despite the widespread changes in fashion trends across Uganda, there is limited academic research focusing specifically on their cultural implications in rural and peri-urban areas like Kumi District. While fashion literature has covered global consumerism (Wyne, 2013) and creativity in apparel design (Rudd & Chattaramman, 2005; Mete, 2006), few studies have localized these frameworks to Uganda's diverse cultural settings. This research addresses that gap by empirically investigating the effects of modern fashion dressing trends on culture in the Teso Sub-region.

Literature Review

Fashion, as a socio-cultural construct, has long played a central role in identity formation, value expression, and social organization across societies. Theoretical literature supports the notion that fashion is not merely clothing but a symbolic language embedded in power, gender, and cultural systems. Kawamura (2005) asserts that fashion functions as a system that governs behavior and aesthetic norms, separate from clothing as a mere physical product. Similarly, Barnard (2002) argues that fashion acts as a form of non-verbal communication through which individuals signify their position within a cultural or social hierarchy. McCracken (1986) reinforces this perspective by describing fashion as a medium that transfers cultural meaning from symbols to consumer goods, and ultimately, to individuals.

In terms of cultural behavior, Kotler and Keller (2006) explain that while core cultural values are difficult to alter, secondary beliefs, such as fashion preferences, are more flexible and respon-

sive to external influences. This framework is particularly relevant in analyzing how fashion trends introduced by global media, urban migration, or economic changes might influence traditional communities like those in Uganda's Kumi District. Fashion, as noted by Vinken (2005), has transitioned into a postmodern phase where aesthetic choices become fragmented, pluralistic, and often disconnected from traditional cultural systems, thereby creating both opportunities for self-expression and risks of cultural disintegration.

Empirical studies around the world reflect these theoretical tensions. In Nigeria, Auwal (2015) conducted a study among university students and found that modern fashion, particularly Western-inspired dress codes, was significantly associated with increased cases of indecent dressing, sexual objectification, and the erosion of traditional norms. Auwal argued that the

ldressing to killll trend, particularly among female students, was both a reflection and a cause of declining moral standards. Similarly, a study in Kenya by Atieno and Otieno (2017) found that youth in urban areas were abandoning traditional attire such as lesos and kangas in favor of jeans, crop tops, and bodycon dresses. The researchers observed that this shift was often interpreted by elders as a loss of respect and a breakdown in intergenerational cultural transmission. In a South African context, Kekana (2019) examined the relationship between fashion and identity among adolescents in Soweto. Her mixed-method study revealed that teenagers viewed Western fashion trends as a symbol of modernity, success, and global belonging. However, it also found that these same youths often felt culturally alienated, particularly during national holidays and traditional ceremonies where they lacked appropriate cultural dress. This echoes findings by Kim and Kim (2010) in South Korea, who documented how Western fast fashion led to a homogenization of youth identities, resulting in the marginalization of hanbok, the traditional Korean attire. The study noted that fewer than 10% of Korean youths owned a hanbok, and most considered it irrelevant to their daily life, except during mandatory cultural events.

In the United States, Crane (2000) explored how consumer culture and media shape fashion behaviors. Her longitudinal study found that fashion trends in the West were increasingly driven by individualism and seasonal reinvention, a trend later observed to influence developing countries through globalization and social media. Meanwhile, Mete (2006), in a comparative study across Turkey, France, and Japan, revealed how youth in cosmopolitan areas embrace global fashion while maintaining certain symbolic elements of local dress to avoid total cultural detachment. Her research emphasized the need for hybridization, integrating modern fashion with traditional aesthetics—to preserve cultural identity while engaging with global trends.

In Uganda, however, empirical literature on the cultural effects of fashion is scarce. Bryia Kent (2020) observed that in Kampala and other urban centers, fashion is increasingly driven by Instagram influencers, Nigerian music videos, and global brands. The study found that modern fashion was viewed positively for enhancing self-confidence and mobility but had a polarizing effect on older generations who viewed it as disrespectful and alien. Yet there was little evidence in that study addressing rural or peri-urban areas like Kumi District, where traditional values are

more deeply entrenched, and dress is closely linked with identity, respect, and community cohesion. This gap in empirical literature, particularly on the rural impact of fashion trends in Uganda, highlights a pressing need for localized research. Much of the current literature tends to focus on urban youth or elite consumers, overlooking how modern fashion penetrates rural spaces and interacts with indigenous cultures. Moreover, few studies explore both the positive and negative effects of fashion trends in a balanced way. While Western literature has emphasized empowerment, self-expression, and confidence as benefits of modern dress (McCarty, 2007; Florida, 2005), African studies more often focus on morality and cultural loss, without exploring how modern aesthetics might be adapted to reinforce cultural identity. There is also limited integration between fashion theory and practical design frameworks in addressing cultural concerns. While the Lamb and Kallal (1992) framework provides a model for incorporating cultural considerations into apparel design, few empirical studies have operationalized it in African settings. Additionally, Rudd and Chattaramman (2005) note the absence of context-specific design policies that help harmonize modernity and tradition in clothing systems.

Therefore, although the global literature acknowledges the dynamic interplay between fashion and culture, very few studies critically analyze this relationship within Uganda's rural or semi-urban communities. The available research is either theoretical or urban-centric and lacks grounded data on how individuals in districts like Kumi perceive and navigate the evolving world of fashion. This study aims to fill that void by empirically investigating the cultural effects of modern dressing fashion trends in the Teso Sub-region, offering insights that are both practical and culturally resonant.

Methods and Materials

This study employed a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative strategies to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of modern fashion dressing trends on culture in the Teso Sub-region, specifically Kumi District. The mixed methods design was chosen to enable triangulation of data, as recommended by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), allowing for a richer interpretation by integrating statistical evidence with in-depth cultural insights. Quantitative data provided measurable trends and patterns, while qualitative data captured the subjective meanings, interpretations, and tensions related to fashion and cultural identity.

The research was guided by a descriptive cross-sectional case study design. The descriptive aspect allowed for a detailed presentation of the current state of fashion trends and cultural perceptions, while the cross-sectional design permitted data collection at a single point in time. Kothari (2004) notes that this design is ideal for studies aiming to describe characteristics of a population without manipulating the study environment. As a case study focused on Kumi District, the design facilitated in-depth contextual analysis of local fashion practices and their cultural implications.

The study targeted two main categories of respondents: fashion designers (tailors) and fashion consumers (customers) based in Kumi District. These groups were selected because of their direct engagement with the production and consumption of fashion. The total study

population was fifty (50) individuals, comprising 25 fashion designers and 25 customers. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the fashion designers due to their expertise and knowledge of current dressing trends. In contrast, simple random sampling was used to select customers in order to avoid selection bias and ensure representation of ordinary fashion consumers within the community. This sampling strategy provided a balanced perspective that captures both technical and experiential knowledge of fashion in the area.

Data were collected using three main methods: structured survey questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The questionnaires, which included both closed and open-ended items, were distributed to all 50 respondents to capture data on dressing styles, perceived cultural impacts, and demographic information. The open-ended questions allowed respondents to freely express their views beyond the constraints of predetermined response options. In-depth interviews were conducted with selected designers and culturally aware customers to delve into personal and community perceptions of modern dressing trends. Additionally, focus group discussions were held with small groups of respondents to explore collective community views on the evolving nature of fashion and its implications for culture in Teso. To support these methods, a variety of data collection tools were utilized. These included structured and semi-structured questionnaires for the surveys, interview guides for probing deeper insights, and FGD checklists to guide group discussions. The instruments were designed based on the study objectives and informed by literature reviewed during the study's conceptualization. Prior to full deployment, all tools were pre-tested and revised to improve clarity and reliability.

In ensuring data quality, validity and reliability were carefully addressed. Content validity was achieved through expert review by academic supervisors and through the pre-testing process which helped to refine the tools. Reliability of the quantitative data collection instruments was enhanced by using consistent formats and administering the same tools under similar conditions. For the qualitative component, credibility was supported through triangulation of sources (questionnaires, interviews, FGDs) and member checking—where respondents were asked to verify summaries of their responses during the interviews.

Data analysis followed both quantitative and qualitative paths. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were entered into Microsoft Excel and analyzed using descriptive statistics, mainly frequencies and percentages. The findings were presented using tables, pie charts, and bar graphs. On the other hand, qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were analyzed using thematic content analysis. Responses were transcribed, coded manually, and organized into themes corresponding to the study's objectives. This analysis provided nuanced insights into community attitudes, generational differences, and socio-cultural conflicts brought about by changing fashion norms.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the university to present to potential participants and local authorities. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured, and no names were recorded in the final datasets. Respondents were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Despite its strengths, the study faced some limitations. A few respondents were reluctant to discuss sensitive topics such as morality and body exposure, particularly in mixed-gender settings. Language barriers occasionally arose, especially when engaging with elderly respondents unfamiliar with English requiring

translation into the local Ateso language. Financial constraints and transport limitations also restricted the study to selected areas within Kumi District. Nonetheless, these challenges were mitigated by careful planning and did not significantly affect the overall quality or credibility of the findings.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that modern fashion dressing trends have produced a range of cultural effects, both transformative and disruptive, on the people of Kumi District in the Teso Sub-region. These effects reflect broader global patterns of cultural negotiation seen in developing societies, where the influence of Western fashion intersects with traditional norms and practices.

A central finding from the study is that modern dressing has led to a weakening of traditional clothing norms, particularly among the youth. Respondents acknowledged that garments such as gomesi and cultural skirts, once worn regularly during family and communal events, are increasingly being replaced by Western-influenced outfits like jeans, crop tops, business casual wear, and designer imitations. These changes mirror findings from Atieno and Otieno (2017), who noted similar cultural displacement in Kenya, where traditional fabrics and styles have been sidelined in favor of what is perceived as modern or trendy. In Kumi, this shift has affected cultural practices tied to clothing, such as the symbolism of attire during rites of passage, weddings, and religious ceremonies. Older participants expressed concern that young people now attend formal cultural events in clothing that lacks local significance, diluting the social and cultural meanings traditionally assigned to dress.

In terms of cultural identity, the study revealed a growing tension between personal self-expression and communal expectations. While some respondents, particularly among the youth, felt that modern dressing allowed them to express individuality and confidence, a majority, especially older and middle-aged participants, viewed these trends as eroding shared cultural values such as modesty, dignity, and respect. For instance, 30% of respondents felt that modern dressing devalues people's dignity, while 20% reported that body exposure promoted by modern trends contradicted Teso cultural norms. This supports earlier critiques by Auwal (2015), who associated the adoption of Western fashion with moral decline in Nigerian communities, where dress was traditionally a marker of respect and communal standing.

Moreover, intergenerational cultural conflict was a recurring theme in the findings. Respondents frequently noted that modern dressing has widened the gap between elders and the younger generation. While the youth often view modern styles as empowering and contemporary, older community members interpret them as disrespectful or provocative. This is consistent with Kekana's (2019) study in South Africa, which found that teenagers viewed fashion as a global identity marker, while older generations felt alienated by what they perceived as cultural abandonment. In Kumi, some elders linked the adoption of revealing or tight-fitting clothing to disobedience, lack of discipline, and even spiritual decay. These perceptions suggest that fashion is functioning as a site of generational identity struggle, where dressing choices are both personal statements and social provocations.

The research also revealed how fashion affects the perception of professionalism and cultural credibility. A small but significant portion of respondents (4%) expressed concerns that modern fashion styles, particularly overly casual or sexually suggestive attire, were inappropriate in formal settings such as schools, churches, and offices. This echoes findings by Lee (2005), who argued that blurred dress codes in professional spaces could lead to misinterpretation of roles, reduced credibility, and challenges in institutional image management. In the context of Kumi, respondents noted that while modern styles may enhance confidence and visibility, they often conflict with existing dress expectations in education and religious institutions, leading to disciplinary actions or moral censure.

Despite these challenges, the findings also highlight positive cultural effects. Modern dressing trends were credited by many respondents (36%) for promoting versatility and adaptability across different social spaces. Another 12% cited increased confidence as a benefit, and 8% noted that certain modern outfits instilled a sense of authority or empowerment. These findings support the literature by McCarty (2007) and Peluchette and Karl (2007), who observed that modern fashion enhances workplace morale, bridges generational appearance gaps, and allows individuals to project competence and personal style. In Kumi, particularly among youth and working-class individuals, modern dressing was seen as a pathway to social mobility, offering a sense of global belonging and personal progress. Nevertheless, the cultural cost of these perceived benefits remains high. Respondents consistently noted that modern dressing contributes to cultural dislocation, especially as traditional garments lose relevance. This resonates with Kawamura's (2005) argument that fashion shifts are more than aesthetic, they symbolize deep changes in values, beliefs, and societal priorities. In Kumi District, traditional dress once served not only as attire but also as a bearer of cultural memory. Its erosion, therefore, represents a broader concern about the loss of cultural continuity and identity transmission.

Ultimately, the findings affirm that modern fashion dressing trends are reshaping cultural landscapes in Kumi District. While they promote individuality, confidence, and stylistic freedom, they also provoke moral, generational, and institutional conflicts. They alter traditional understandings of modesty, challenge authority, and contribute to the dilution of symbolic cultural attire. As such, fashion in this context is both an agent of change and a trigger for cultural anxiety, reflecting the global-local dialectic described by Crane (2000) and Wilson (2003), where fashion becomes a medium through which societies negotiate modernity and tradition.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study have demonstrated that modern fashion dressing trends are significantly influencing cultural values, perceptions, and practices in Kumi District. While these trends offer benefits such as increased confidence, stylistic versatility, and individual empowerment, they have also introduced social tensions that challenge long-standing cultural norms. Traditional attire, once an essential expression of identity, respect, and social status in the Teso Sub-region, is being increasingly marginalized by imported or Western-inspired styles that often conflict with indigenous expectations of modesty and decorum.

The erosion of traditional dressing is not just a shift in aesthetic preference but reflects deeper cultural transformation. The findings indicate that many community members, especially

elders and cultural custodians, view modern dressing styles as a threat to collective identity, moral standards, and intergenerational harmony. Respondents raised concerns about body exposure, the decline in dressing-based respectability, and the perceived association between modern styles and moral laxity. These sentiments reveal that the dressing code, in this context, is more than a matter of fashion, it is a symbolic battleground between modernity and tradition.

Moreover, fashion trends in Kumi are not merely imported; they are negotiated, localized, and interpreted differently by various social groups. While some youth see fashion as a tool of empowerment and global engagement, others struggle with the social judgment it attracts. This duality highlights the complexity of cultural adaptation and the need for a contextual approach to understanding fashion's role in society.

Based on these conclusions, the study recommends several strategies to mitigate the negative cultural effects of modern fashion while preserving its positive contributions. First, cultural education programs should be implemented in schools, churches, and community centers to promote awareness of the historical and social significance of traditional attire. Such programs can foster pride in cultural identity and encourage young people to appreciate their heritage while still exploring personal style.

Second, local designers and tailors should be encouraged to develop fashion that blends modern aesthetics with traditional elements. This would create a culturally resonant fashion identity that maintains decency, dignity, and symbolism while appealing to contemporary tastes. Government and private stakeholders can support such initiatives through grants, design competitions, and promotional platforms that showcase culturally inspired modern wear.

Third, community leaders, cultural institutions, and policymakers should engage in open dialogue with youth on matters of fashion, modesty, and identity. Rather than imposing rigid dress codes, these discussions should be participatory and inclusive, recognizing the evolving values and aspirations of different generations. Respectful intergenerational dialogue can help reduce conflict and support shared cultural continuity.

Lastly, future research should broaden the scope beyond Kumi District to include other regions in Uganda and explore comparative patterns in urban and rural settings. More extensive data can provide a national framework for understanding how fashion intersects with culture, identity, and modernization across different communities.

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Journal reference style - Note that to unambiguously identify articles published in a journal, the issue number, the volume number, and the pages are needed.

Zeng R. J., Lemaire R., Yuan Z. & Keller J. (2004). A novel wastewater treatment process: simultaneous nitrification, denitrification and phosphorus removal. *Water Science and Technology*, 50 (10), 163-170.

Book reference styles:

(i) Article in compilation; (ii) Multi-author work; (iii) Standard reference; (iv) Report; (v) Thesis:

- i. McInerney M. J. (1999). Anaerobic metabolism and its regulation. In: *Biotechnology*, J. Winter (ed.), 2nd edn, Wiley-VCH Verlag, Weinheim, Germany, pp. 455-478.
- ii. Henze M., Harremoës P., LaCour Jansen J. & Arvin E. (1995) *Wastewater Treatment: Biological and Chemical Processes*. Springer, Heidelberg.
- iii. *Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater* (1998). 20th edn, American Public Health Association/American Water Works Association/Water Environment Federation, Washington DC, USA.
- iv. Sobsey M. D. & Pfaender F. K. (2002). *Evaluation of the H₂S method for Detection of Fecal Contamination of Drinking Water*, Report WHO/SDE/WSH/02.08, Water Sanitation and Health Programme, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland.
- v. Bell J. (2002) *Treatment of Dye Wastewaters in the Anaerobic Baffled Reactor and Characterisation of the Associated Microbial Populations*. PhD thesis, Pollution Research Group, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Online references - These should specify the full URL for the reference and give the date on which it was consulted. Please check again to confirm that the work being cited is still accessible:

Alcock S. J. & Branston L. (2000). SENSPOL: Sensors for Monitoring Water Pollution from Contaminated Land, Landfills and Sediment. Retrieved 22nd July 2005 from: <http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/biotech/senspol/>

References in languages other than English - These should be accompanied by an English translation of the article title:

Barjenbruch M., Erler C & Steinke M. (2003). *Untersuchungen an Abwasserteichanlagen in Sachsen-Anhalt im Jahr 2003 (Investigation on wastewater lagoons in Saxony-Anhalt in 2003)*, Report for the Environment Ministry of Saxony-Anhalt, Magdeburg, Germany.

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