CULTURAL PRACTICES AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NEBBI DISTRICT

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

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DECLARATION

I OTTI NYEKO WALTER, hereby declare, to the best of my knowledge, that this research report is my original work, and that it has never been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for any academic award.

Signed ….  .

Date 21/01/2021

OTTI NYEKO WALTER

APPROVAL

This research report has been submitted with my approval as the candidate's university supervisor.

Signature ……... Date…….

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SUPERVISOR

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May the Almighty God bless you all!

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to: My mother Wilfreda Atto who gave me hope when I was hopeless, Mr. Ben Oyika my former teacher in Primary school for shaping me, my wife and children. May this work encourage my children to be great academician!

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ABBREVIATIONS

BITVET	Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training
PLE	Primary Living Examination
SESEMAT	Secondary Science and Mathematics Programme
STiR	Students' and Teachers' Innovating for Results
UACE	Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education
UCE	Uganda Certificate of Education
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UPOLET	Uganda Post O Level Education and Training
USE	Universal Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

The primary focus of the study was to examine the effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.The objectives of this study were to: find out the influence of witchcraft on students' academic, investigate the effect superstitions on students' academic performanceand find out the impact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.In this study, a cross-sectional survey design was adopted and data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. The accessible population was all the students in S3 and S4 in the selected secondary schools. The total population size was 906 consisting of 679 students, 50 parents and 177 teachers. Using simple random and purposive sampling techniques, a sample of 270 was selected to participate in the study. Data from the questionnaires was presented using frequency tables and graphs for easy interpretation, from which narratives were generated to answer the research questions. Interview data were analysed focusing on the themes that emerged and were linked to the objectives of the study.

The results from hypothesis test indicated that there is no statistically significant effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. Conclusively, the influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance was associated with evil spirits attacks and unexplained fear which made them unsettled in class.In addition to this superstitious beliefs in prayers, lucks and dreams about successes or failures before sitting exams dominated the minds of the students and these affected their academic performance.Furthermore, poor students' academic performancewas also linked to absentmindedness and discomfort associatedwith toxicity of traditional medicine.The study recommended that there should be effort to harmonise cultural and school activities, schools should develop programs that support children as students, stakeholders should design effective forms of communications about school programs and children's progress and that strong school-community relation should also be develop.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The primary focus of the study was to examine the effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. This chapter presents the background of the study including historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual perspectives, the problem statement, purpose, specific objectives, research questions, hypothesis, scope and the significance of the study.

1.1.0 Background to the study

'We are on drip!' Said the District Inspector of schools for Nebbi District Local Government during a workshop organised by Students' and Teaches' Innovating for Results (STiR) Education in January 2018. This quotation has become very common in Nebbi District especially among the education stakeholders such as the District officials, teachers, parents and students. A shadow of hopelessness and worries cast by poor academic performance in the District manifests itself at the beginning and end of every school term when those who can afford, scramble to board buses to take their children to other Districts where academic performance is relatively better. Meanwhile those who cannot afford, resort to using other means to make good out of the little that schools can do for their children. This has been the general trend of life in the District every term and year. The uncertain future of pupils and students in the District is a reality.

1.1.1 Historical Perspective

The origin of cultural practices can be traced back as far as the beginning of the existence of mankind. Pre historic education can be viewed as the process they used for cultural transmission. The Maya civilization in Central America was culturally very religious. According to Ballou,(2008), to the Maya, religion was ultimately their creator and destroyer. The Maya lived

in the area of Central America that encompasses present day Brazil, and parts of southern Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. The Maya regarded priesthood as one of the most influential factor in the development of the society. The priest had extensive knowledge, literate skills, religious and moral leadership. Priesthood was inherited from the father or a close relative through rigorous education system. Already it can be noted that before the emergence of schools as specialized agencies, education took place in society, where the young and the not so young became educated by simply living their culture.

In ancient Greece, the kings and the nobles were the controller of the people. They were very rich and lived in very good houses. According to Sarah, Stanley, Walter, & Jennifer(2004), religion became the most important means of control, for it identified the will of the ruler with the will of the gods. Vast wealth and increased population allowed the frequent wars of conquest and retribution to be fought on a huge scale by well-organized armies. Among the most prominent persons in Greek history is Socrates who believed that the best way to develop ideas was in the give and take of conversation, and that the best way to educate people was to ask them a series of questions leading in a particular direction(Sarah, Stanley, Walter, & Jennifer, 2004).

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, (1984), Egyptian culture and education were preserved and controlled chiefly by the priests, a powerful intellectual elite in the Egyptian theocracy who also served as the political bulwarks by preventing cultural diversity. The accomplishments of the ancient Egyptians are many and varied. They pioneered in architecture, building comfortable homes as well as monumental temples and tombs. Their builders devised every method of joining wood (scarce even in ancient Egypt) known to carpentry, as well as methods of air-cooling houses and even building latrines. Their scribes developed one of the world's first writing systems, which they used to keep records and to create stories, poems, and religious

texts(Arthur, 2008). Egyptians used education to transmit culture. This was done by developing two formal schools: Schools for the privileged youth and priests and school for

scribes and other priest trainees. For the purpose of uniformity in cultural transmission and control of deviation from the traditional pattern, strict discipline and a lot of rigidity was used. Culturally Egyptian had very rich culture these include: Building, preparing dead bodies for burial, writing, cultivation and many others. Generally, all the civilizations had some kind of education that they used to pass on the cultural norms from generations to generations.

According to Zuck(1971), the ancient world was deeply entrenched in occultism. Not only were the nations of Canaan, Israel, Judah and Babylon engaged in witchcraft; Assyria too was an active participant in the black arts. The city of Nineveh, known for its bloody atrocities and torturous inhumane treatment of its prisoners, is called "the mistress of sorceries”Nah. (3:4).

Zuck(1971) mentioned further that in the Bible, it is stated that in the morning after the Pharaoh dreamed about seven fat cows devoured by seven thin ones and seven full ears of corn consumed by seven thin ones, he called in his magicians to interpret the dream Gen. (41:1-8). In Moses' and Aaron's contest with Pharaoh the Egyptian magicians duplicated three of the miracles: rods were turned to snakes(Exod. 7:11), water was turned to blood (7:22), and frogs appeared (8:7).The three demonstrations of their magical powers were accompanied by enchantments or incantations.

According toSsekamwa(1997), before colonial time, in Uganda teaching and learning of basic skills was arranged in homesteads, around the fire place at night, in the sleeping houses and anywhere people carried out economic, political and social activities in the whole society. Therefore, one would not see schools, classrooms and reading books in those places as one would see today. There were particular knowledge and skills such as blacksmith, traditional medicine,farming; which were not known by all adult person in the society. Those particular

skills were taught by specialist teachers and those particular knowledge and skills were not taught to every boys and girls. There were a variety of teachers for a variety of skills and the teachers teach what the society valued.Besides good cultural practices, there are other forms of practices considered evil in the society these include: witchcraft, wizardry and sorcery. It follows that whereas cultural practices correlates positively with changes in human life styles in ancient times, it still does in all current community settings including schools.

According to Stolp & Smith(1995), the satisfaction and morale of students and staff are higher in schools with healthy cultures than in schools with unhealthy ones.Schools generally have unique cultural settings which may not be in tandem with cultural settings in the community in their surroundings. In the Alur community,cultural practices which were transmitted through informal education also existed.

The Alurare ethnic group who live in northwestern Uganda and northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Alur are part of the Luo. The language spoken by the Alur is called Alur, a language closely related to Junam, Acholi and Adhola. They live side by side with the Lendu and the Kebu.In Alur community, social rank depended on a lot of things – assertiveness, number of friends and family (allies), performance on male prestige tasks like war, patrols, hunting and fishing. Just like the Acholi, Alur men always stayed in the clan where they were born but women married men from other clans and moved there. In Alur society men did most of the work like farming, fishing, hunting and looking after the animals. The sexes are segregated by the Alur. Wife and husband have their own huts. The men sleep alone and the women and children together. They also eat separately and men and women rarely mix. Alur men have wider social networks than women and this explains the male dominance over women. Women quite often avoid contact with men because of aggression and fear of being labeled

prostitutes.Witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices are common cultural practices and are embraced by the community.

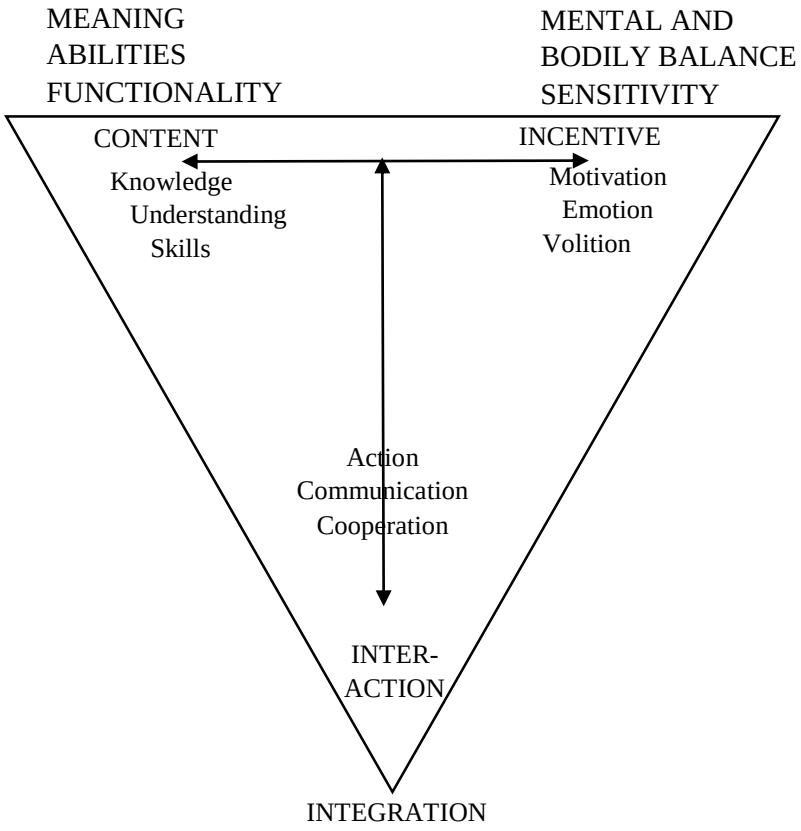
School system with foreign religious believes also denounces traditional ways of life such as witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices.It follows that the Alur traditional cultural practices which to a great extent has remained intact to the present day is in conflict with school cultural practices which emphasis active participation in class activities, attending school frequently and being discipline in order to improve onacademic performance.

1.1.2 Theoretical Perspective

This study was guided by the Three Dimension of Learning Theory Illeris(2007).

Illeris (2007) contended that there are two processes and three dimensions of learning.

All learning implies the integration of two very different processes, namely an external interaction process between the learner and his or her social, cultural or material environment, and an internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition. The three dimensions include:The Content dimension. This describes what is learnt and these include:knowledge, skills, opinion, insight, meaning, attitude, valuesand ways of behavior, methods and many others. These contribute in building up the learners' capacity and way of understanding; The Incentive dimension provides and directs the mental energy that the learner needs for learning to take place. These include: feelings, emotions, motivations and volition.The Interaction dimension provides the impulses that initiate the learning process. These may be in form of: perception, transmission, experience, imitation, activity, participation and so on. The dimensions as illustrated diagrammatically, represent a tension field of learning. The three dimension involve the mind (cognitive domain) and the body (psychomotor domain). In essence learning begins from the body and takes place through the mind.



Source: Adopted from Illeris (2007)

Figure 1.1: The Three Dimensions of Learning and Competence Development

The interactive dimension is responsible for the personal integration in communities and society and thereby also building up the sociality of the learner (Illeris, 2007). However, this building up necessarily takes place through the two other dimensions. The content and incentive dimensions are initiated by impulses from interaction process and integrated in the external process of elaboration and acquisition.

The implication of this theoretical model is that in a school setting, during curriculum implementation, students are constantly involved in an interaction process with the curriculum content. Subsequently, students are supposed to relate and apply the curriculum content to the day to day life i.e. they should be able to remember what they have been taught and, under certain conditions, to reproduce, apply and involve it in further learning (Illeris, 2007). But this ideal situation does not occur in its complete sense. There are quite a number of learning barriers

arising from the way the teachers deliver the content and also how the students perceive the learning situation. The teachers' expertise, interaction with the students, ability to correlate and explain the subject concept, if not well coordinated, may derail the students subsequently resulting into learning something not intended. On the other hand, if the students' concentration is lacking or poor, no learning can occur.

Illeris (2007) elucidates further that people develop a kind of semi-automatic sorting mechanism vis-à-vis the many influences. This sorting mechanism functions in such a way that one develops some general pre-understandings within certain thematic areas, and when one meets with influences within such an area, these pre-understandings are activated so that if elements in the influences do not correspond to the pre-understandings, they are either rejected or distorted to make them agree. In both cases, this results into no new learning but, on the contrary, often into the cementing of the already-existing understanding. This implies that the students' home prior knowledge may come in conflict with the school curriculum content if the traditional cultural disposition does not support or match with that of the school.

Through the day to day consciousness, students often defend their prior home learning experiences when they meet a new and relatively challenging school learning environment. This becomes a learning barrier in that students tend to defend the experiences they acquired from home in order to reduce the resulting academic stress. In all such defence situations, learning is obstructed, hindered, derailed or distorted if it is not possible for the learner to break through the defence, and the task of a teacher or instructor will often be to support and encourage such a breakthrough before more goal-directed and constructive training or education can take place (Illeris, 2007). Generally, students' perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, traditional cultural practices are some of the learning barriers. This theory is appropriate to the current study in that

it highlights the variousdimensions of learning and competence development that have a great bearing on students' academic performance.

1.1.3 Conceptual Perspective

Nieto, (1999) defines culture as the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion. According to Cambridge dictionary, culture is a way of life of a particular people as shown in their ordinary behaviour and habits, their attitude towards each other and their moral and religious beliefs.

Keesing(1974) defines cultures as systems of socially transmitted behaviour patterns that serve to relate human communities to their ecological settings. These ways of life of communities include; technologies and modes of economic organization, settlement patterns, modes of social grouping and political organization, religious beliefs and practices, among others.

Whereas culture is more complicated to define, Keesing (1974) gives a detailed descriptive definition to include social grouping, religious beliefs and practices. These elements of culture connote cultural practices which are patterns of social behaviours .These involve the use of products. Cultural practices represent the knowledge of what people want, where they want it and how. These include: table manners, socially approved behaviour, way of dressing, foods, sports, literature, music, beliefs, gestures, sacred rituals, religion and language among others. The inclusion of a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion by Nieto blends Keesing (1974) pattern of behaviour, describes culture completely.

Witchcraft has always been defined as a set of actions, practices and behaviours that certain people actually perform with terrible effect, and witches are believed to cause great evil in the

world through the harmful sorcery and that they work generally in close alliance with dark, supernatural forces (Bailey, 2003).

According to Mbogo(2017), witchcraft is an enigma in many societies of the world today with some denying it exists while most believe in its existence and are influenced by it to a large extent. In many educational institutions, especially high schools, witchcraft is mostly blamed for students' hysteric behavior, sudden drop in school attendance, and other real or imagined behavior such as hearing of invisible compulsive voices, appearances or actions of supernatural beings that cause students to faint and/or convulse, speak strangely under the influence of supernatural powers and hallucinations among other weird behaviors.

Bailey(2003) and Mbogo(2017) agree that witchcrft is not a socially accepted practice in the society. Gechiko & Nkonge (2014) hold that witchcraft is usually inherited but can also be acquired. It is shrouded in secrecy and associated with loathsome behaviour and revolting actions that break all accepted norms of behaviour in society.

According to Undie, Ushie, Blessing, & Duruamaka-Dim(2018), superstition has been seen as an irrational belief in a supernatural agency, black magic, withcraft, spirits apparitions and deities which are deeply rooted but unfounded in people's minds. Such beliefs are accepted as true by the society withiut any logical or empirical consideration; they are irrationally maintained by ignorance of the law of nature or by faith in magic or chance.

Akova(2011) argues that all cultures include materials aimed at protecting against the unknown and providing security. Scarabs in ancient Egypt or horseshoes in England are examples of such charms. Blue beads have been produced and put on by people in Anatolia for over 3500 years, against the evil eye and to bring good luck and fortune in every aspect of peoples' lives. Akova, (2011) indicates clearly that every community practices a culture aimed at safeguarding the wellbeing of such community. Such practices include beliefs and values among others and as

noted by Undie, Ushie, Blessing, & Duruamaka-Dim(2018). Such beliefs are irrationally maintained by ignorance of the law of nature or by faith in magic or chance.

According to Block & Kramer (2008), superstitions are beliefs that run contrary to rational thought or are inconsistent with known laws of nature. Superstitions can be classified as either cultural or personal, and are invoked either to bring good luck or to fend off bad luck.

Wikipedia dictionary defines *superstition* as a pejorative term for any belief or practice that is considered irrational especially if it arises from ignorance, a misunderstanding of sciences or causality, a positive belief in fate or magic, or fear of that which is unknown.

Block & Kramer (2008) and Wikipedia dictionary all directly imply that all human beings are superstitious as long as there is no scientific explanation to a given action such as magic, belief and associating some repetitive personal occurrences to some supernatural powers. Furthermore, superstitions arise out of ignorance and the need to console one's self from perceived difficult conditions.

Block & Kramer (2008) further assert that superstitions can be classified as either cultural or personal, and are invoked either to bring good luck or to send off bad luck. Superstitions, therefore, is a widely held but the irrational belief in supernatural influences which leads to good or bad luck. Superstitious beliefs arise from: ignorance, repeated experience linked to some signs, irrational thoughts, fear or uncertainty, trust in magic or religious practices and the need to console one's self from perceived difficult conditions. Superstitious beliefs are cultural and consequently influence a wide range of decisions and activities in the everyday life.

According to Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell(2004), *traditional medical practices* are described differently by different community. It is also known as indigenous traditional healing, Native American medicine, traditional healing, indigenous medicine, Indian medicine, traditional interpretation and spiritual interpretation. Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell (2004) further add that it

is an ancient, intact, complex holistic healthcare system practiced by indigenous people worldwide that is profound and more deeply rooted and complex than is commonly understood. Native American medicine is based upon a spiritual rather than a materialistic or Cartesian world view and its ancient feature conveys, it is possibly the most ancient form of holistic medicine. Already these authors pointed out those traditional medical practices are very ancient and involves spirit medium.

Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell(2004) further affirm that the art of traditional healing places an emphasis on: the spirit world, supernatural forces, religion, which is considered virtually identical to medicine. According to Annie, Howard &Mildred (1996), academic performance is the extent to which students, teachers or institution have achieved their educational goals. In this study, academic performance will be measured in terms of termly academic grades, annual academic grades and final academic performance in UNEB. By termly academic grades it means the students' academic achievements at the end of the term. Annual academic grades on the other hand are the students' academic achievement at the end of the year while in S3. Final academic grades are the results obtained after sitting UNEB examinations at S4.

According to Anshu & Narad(2006), *academic performance* of students is the central in which the whole education system revolves. The successes and failures of any education system are measured in term of academic performance of students. From Anshu&Narad (2006), it follows that one cannot discuss academic performance without including education.

Epistemologically, the word education comes from the Latin world educere, which means "to lead out". Education is a relentless process of becoming. To the human being we educate and to the animal we train.

According to Ssekamwa(1997), education is the process by which one generation purposefully transmits culture to the young, to the adults and to the old for their social, cultural and economic

benefit and for the benefit of the whole society. Formal education as practiced in schools involves teaching, assessing and evaluating learners among other things and these form part of academic performance.

Education, therefore, is a deliberate effort made by a person with more experience to transform another person with less experience mentally, physically, socially and culturally with the aim of making the less experienced person more useful to the community. Education is more than just going to school; it addresses the mind, the soul and the body.

1.1.4Contextual Perspective

In Nebbi District and West Nile sub region, generally, there is a belief that birds flying with light at night are the spirits of witches. According to the local community, balls of lights moving towards the west had been seen from around the community near Omier in Nebbi. It is believed that these were actually the spirits of witches who had turned into birds. Some witches were said to turn into cats or dogs. According to Jatho, in the past witches of such nature were banished and sent across Lake Albert into Bunyoro. There are some categories of people one should not quarrel for making a person work throughout the night while sleeping. That is when kindness befell them otherwise one would be strangled throughout the night in sleep. Some people testified being very tired in the morning without any cause! There are incidences where even handshake with some people is not allowed. Whenever there are gatherings, the local leaders especially Local Council One always warn people about poisoning.

The government of Uganda developed quite a number of educational policies with the aim of improving the performances standards in secondary schools in the country. One of such policies is the Secondary Science and Mathematics programme (SESEMAT) introduced in 2005.

According to Robert (2014), the Secondary Science and Mathematics (SESEMAT) programme has been recognized as an effective tool in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning science

and mathematics in secondary schools. The SESEMAT programme was introduced in 2005 with the purpose to improve the teaching ability of science and mathematics teachers at secondary level; and to improve performance in those subjects. Two years later, another policy on free access to education at secondary level was introduced; the provision of free secondary education the Universal Secondary Education (US E) which was rolled out in 2007. The USE program was put in place in order to increase enrolments in secondary schools in order to improve academic performance. Huylebroeck(2013) commented that the attendance in USE schools have become more regular. He further commented that there are few cases of absenteeism.

According to the National Population and Housing Census 2014, Area Specific Profiles (2017) for Nebbi District, the academic performance at UCE was recorded as follows: 2011 first grade 2.1%, 2012 first grade 1.0%, 2013 first grade 1.8%, 2014 first grade 2.4%, 2015 first grade 3.1%, 2016 first grade 1.8%, 2017 first grade 2.1%, 2018 first grade 1.4% and 2019 first grade 1.8%.

From the statistics above, it is very clear that the academic performance at UCE was generally poor. The poor academic performance is an indicator of high level of illiteracy. Therefore, there is urgent need to mitigate this trend of poor academic performance at secondary school level in Nebbi district.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nebbi District has been reportedly declining over the recent years. This has caused a lot of concern resulting from a shadow of hopelessness and worries cast by poor academic performance in the District and the uncertain future of students in the District.Despite the efforts made by Government to improve academic performance in schools at UCE through in-service training of teachers, provision of affordable education in Nebbi District secondary schools through USE, there was increase in enrollment of student in secondary school (Huylebroeck; 2013 &Education Abstract2016). The situation in

appears to have no or little positive impact. Much as the Government of Uganda made effort in improving the enrolment, constructing secondary school in each sub county and improving on the quality of teachers subsequently quality of teaching in Nebbi District has, however, continued to register low performance at secondary level. According to the National Population Census of 2014, Nebbi district whose population was 396,794, had 40.5% of the children who attended school, 41.7% left school and 17.8% never attended school at all. This statistics indicated that the dropout rate was much higher than the attendance rate. With the exception of private schools, all Government aided secondary schools are implementing the Universal Secondary Education policy and the schools operate as mixed, day and boarding with limited boarding facilities. The academic performance in UNEB UCE exams form 2011 to 2016 indicated that Nebbi District was one of the worst performing Districts in Uganda. This study, therefore, sought to examine how cultural practices affect students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

1.4 Specific study objectives

(i) To find out the influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

(ii) To investigate the effect of superstitions on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

(iii) To find out the impact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

1.5 Research Questions

(i) How does witchcraft influence students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District?

(ii) What is the effect of superstitions on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District?

(iii) What is the impact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District?

1.6 Hypothesis

The study also tested the following hypotheses:

H_0: There is no statistically significant effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

H_1: There is statistically significant effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study covered the content, geographical and time scope.

1.7.1 Content Scope

This study was conducted in order to examine the effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. The independent variable was cultural practices as characterized by witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices while the dependent variable was academic performance as reflected by termly academic grades annual academic grades and final academic grades in national examinations.

1.7.2 Geographical Scope

Nebbi District is bordered by Arua District to the north, Pakwach District to the east, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to the south and Zombo District to the west. Nebbi district headquarters are located approximately 77 kilometres (48 miles), by road, southeast of Arua, the largest town in the sub-region. The coordinates of the district are: 02 27N, 31 15E (Latitude: 2.4500; Longitude: 31.2500). Nebbi District has a population of 238,800 people (Nebbi District profile 2017). *Nebbi district was chosen because of its proximity to the researcher.*

1.7.3 Time scope

The study focused on the time from 2011 to 2019. During this time, there appeared to be no significant improvement in performance at Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) as released by Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB)

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings from this study may benefit the

Students directly since it will enable students to be aware of influence of witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices on their discipline, behavior and values and academic performance.

Parents and the community in that the cause of poor performance would be addressed once and for all through selected activities. This will be through sensitization, community dialogue and school visits among others.

Management and teachers in Nebbi district in understanding and identifying systematically the problems of teaching and learning associated with witchcraft, superstitions and traditional medical practices as well as recognising the roles played by other cultural practices in educating a child.

Government especially in the area of policy formulation in education and allocation of financial and human resources to Nebbi District and giving more consideration to cultural issues at secondary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on related available literature on the subject matter under investigation. The review critically discusses the contribution of the previous researchers, by highlighting the existing research gaps. The review of the related literature was based on the study objectives and variables, being guided by the conceptual framework

2.1 Empirical Review

Previous studies have attempted to unearth the relationship between culture and education. Pai (2005) asserts that culture and education are inseparable, as they are simply two sides of the same coin. The two concepts can in fact be said to be indistinguishable, as the primary definition of education is acculturation. Acculturation means those phenomena that result when two groups of individuals having different cultures come into first hand contact with each other with subsequent changes in the original cultural pattern of either or both groups. Acculturation takes place in both groups and all the individuals involved. During acculturation, one group can change to become like the other or both groups can change each other absorbing the other's culture. Acculturation will always result into change in behaviour and during cultural transitions, individuals may lack the relevant social skills needed to engage in the new culture. To overcome these difficulties specific behavioural skills need to be learnt.

The school setting and community setting can be considered as two cultural domains interacting with each other as represented diagrammatically in figure 2.1 below.

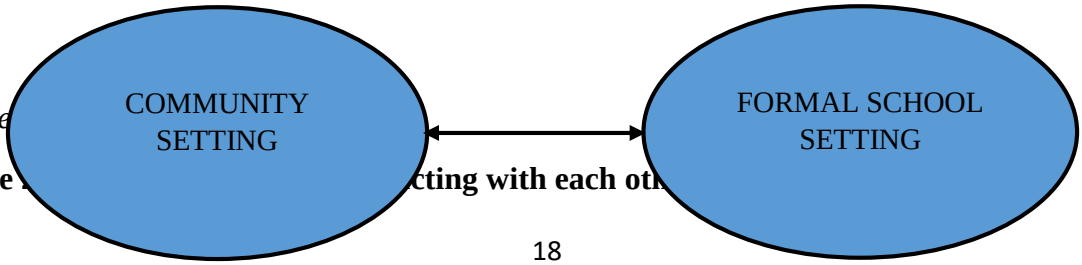


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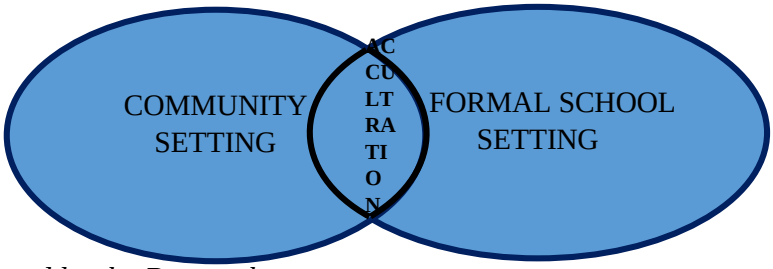
Figure 2.1 Separate cultural settings before acculturation

The community fronts students with traditional cultural setting and these students encounter school cultural setting. The intersection between the two cultural settings results into acculturation.



Source: Constructed by the Researcher

Figure 2.2: Acculturation of two cultures

The bigger the intersection area, the more likely is the acceptance from either group. It follows that if community setting is not willing to identify itself with the school setting, then the fronted students are not likely to perform well academically due to home or community influence. The community influence is embedded in the cultural practices such as: table manners, health care, socially approved behaviour, way of dressing, food, sports, literature, music, beliefs, gestures, sacred rituals, religion and language among others. Accordingly, this study attempted to examine the effect of cultural on students' academic performance. For the purpose of this study, cultural practices were looked at in terms of witchcraft, superstitions and traditional medical practices. Meanwhile academic performance was looked at as results at the end of the term year and final UNEB results.

Jamie (2016), in his research studied the impact of school culture beginning with an understanding of how culture is learned, passed on and changed in a school context. The investigation included that there are some factors that contribute to a school culture such as traditions, mission statements, values, assumptions, and the way in which the school is run. According to Jamie (2016), the school community, including the students, staff, and parents, believe that it is important to the success of all the stakeholders involved in the learning. Jamie's

study implies that school culture is a stage used to inform the community of what the school expects. School culture reflects the vision, mission and motto of the school setting. For academic success, school culture must correlate with community culture as one complements the other. Poor academic performance can, therefore, be perceived as the gap between school culture and community culture and so, the wider this gap, the poorer is the academic performance. Such a gap can be wide when cultural beliefs such as witchcraft; superstition and other negative cultural practices are rampant. It follows that misconceptions arising from witchcraft, superstitions and traditional medical practices could cause a mismatch thereby causing a widening gap.

A study carried out by Les, Whitbeck, Hoyt, Stubben, & Teresa(2001), examined factors affecting school success from a sample of 196 fifth-eighth grade American Indian children from three reservations in the upper Midwest. The regression model included age, gender, family structure, parent occupation and income, maternal warmth, extracurricular activities, enculturation, and self-esteem. Similar to the current study, the results indicated that traditional culture positively affects the academic performance of fifth-eighth grade children.

According to Alsubaie (2015), the education system of students' cultures are different from the culture of their new classroom, the academic achievement of students may be low or bad. Alsubaie (2015) asserts that there is a positive relationship between cultural practices and students' performances in school. Traditional cultural practices and school culture influence each other. Alsubaie (2015) further asserts that classrooms are becoming increasingly multicultural, and this leads to new challenges for teachers. Traditionally, students coming into the multicultural classroom are at a deficit because they must learn how to navigate unfamiliar people, their cultures, and language. Thus, teachers have an added responsibility of leading students through this unfamiliar situation towards achievement. This requires specialized learning techniques, practice, and education in order to effectively accomplish.

According to Meier & Hartell (2009), the increasing cultural diversity in educational institutions necessitates that educationists teach and manage learners with cultures, languages and backgrounds that are unknown to them. Similarly, in this study, the researcher examined the effect of cultural practices i.e. superstition, witchcraft and traditional medical practices on students' academic performance in some selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The literature was based on theThree Dimension Theory of learning (Illeris, 2007). According to Illeris, learning begins with the external interaction between the individual and the learning environment. In this case the environment includes: social, cultural or material environment. This interaction induces another process called internal process of acquisition which is the function of the mind. Irrespective of the type of learning, the internal acquisition process consists of content and incentive dimensions. Content dimension describes what is being learnt which includes: values, attitude, way of behaviour, belief, methods, etc. and this contributes to the understanding of the learner. The incentive dimension which depends on the content dimension provides and directs the mental energy which is necessary for learning to take place. These include: feelings, emotions, willingness, motivation, desire etc. which develops a personal sensitivity. The content and incentive dimensions constantly influence each other. This means that it is upon the learner to be motivated to choose what he or she wants to learn and what he or she learns may be driven by desire or motivation. Subsequently the interaction between content and incentive dimensions results into application of the learning outcome. This, according to Illeris (2007) constitutes the third dimension, the integration dimension.

Illeris (2007) further explains that on most occasions, there are barriers to learning which may be due to lack of concentration of the learner, unfamiliar learning environment, interference from a colleague, failure to relate previous learning experience to the new one etc. Such influences lead

to misunderstanding which eventually triggers a defensive mechanism resulting into semi-automatic sorting with respect to the many influences.

The defensive mechanism works in such a way that a learner develops a pre-understanding within the learning area and when confronted with similar influence and the elements in the influences do not correspond to the pre-understanding and then there will be a rejection or a distortion to make the elements agree. This results into no learning but instead concretising the already existing understanding. Example students' perceptions of charms or beliefs in superstition may be in conflict with what is taught at school and since the influences of these cultural elements are experienced first, the students tend to reject or distort the new idea being imparted by the teacher. The end result is failing to learn new idea.

Superstition, witchcraft and traditional medical practices represent the learning barrier in this theory. Superstitious beliefs, witchcraft practices and use of traditional medicine represent the pre-understanding of the learners with respect to the school learning environment. These are concretised when such a student meets influences which are not corresponding of prior understanding.

Illeris (2007) theory was also supported by the Cognitive Development Theory whose proponent is Jean Piaget. According to Piaget (1936), there are four primary stages of development: sensor motor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. Piaget believed that the development of a child occurs through a continuous transformation of thought processes. A developmental stage consists of a period of months or years when certain development takes place. Although students are usually grouped by chronological age, their development levels may differ significantly as well as the rate at which individual children pass through each stage. This difference may depend on maturity, experience, culture, and the ability of the child.

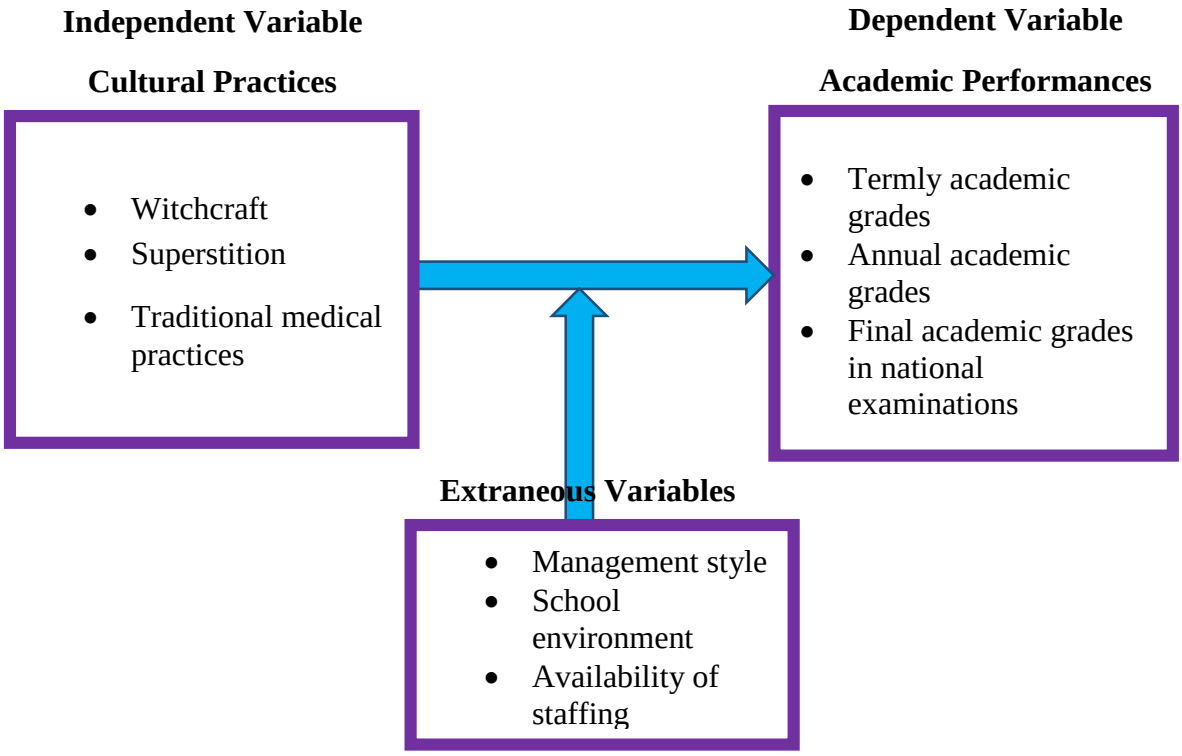
According to Berk (1997), Piaget believed that children develop steadily and gradually throughout the varying stages and that the experiences in one stage form the foundations for movement to the next. Experiencing a new event, situation, or learning environment at times engenders contradictions to one's present understandings, which in turn makes them insufficient and leads to perturbation and a state of disequilibration in the mental schemata Fosnot, (1996). To handle this situation and to form a comfortable state of equilibrium in the cognitive structure, the individual needs to modify or reorganize his or her schemata via adaptation. Once confronted with an imbalance, learners may resort to three kinds of accommodations. They may: disregard the contradictions and adhere to their original schema; vacillate by maintaining both theories simultaneously and trying to cope with the contradiction via viewing each theory as separate or form a new, modified notion to explain and resolve the prior contradiction.

Both Illeris (2007) & Piaget (1936) agreed that learning is as a result of the learners' interaction with the environment and that learning occurs through a cognitive process that should not be interrupted. Interrupting the learning process also results into distorting the learning. School environment with its various programmes appears to have some difference with the home environment. This implies that the school based formal learning may act as an interference to the home based informal learning. This interference becomes disruptive to students' informal home learning. There must be reconciliation between school and home for formal learning to take place. This requires adjustment from the side of the students but this adjustment appears difficult since the school pursues its own goals.

2.3Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a scheme of concepts (variables) which a researcher will operationalise in the study in order to achieve the set of objectives (Sarantakos, 1998). a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in a narrative form, the main things to be

studied, that is, the key factors, constructs or variables and the presumed relationship among them. The interrelation between these factors are displayed diagrammatically as shown below.



Source: Constructed by the Researcher

Figure 2.3Conceptual Framework for Cultural Practices and Academic Performance

The independent variable Cultural practices as characterized by witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices that is hypothesised to have an effect on the dependent variable (academic performance) as reflected by termly academic grades annual academic grades and final academic grades in national examinations. However, there are some extraneous variables that could also have an effect on academic performance. These include among others management style, school environment and availability of staff.

2.4 Influence of Witchcraft on Students' Academic Performance

According to Harish (2010), the idea of witchcraft is central to the day to day experience of an African and permeates every aspect of life in Sub-Saharan Africa. There is a constant awareness of reality of evil induced by witchcraft. Classroom concentration is affected by witchcraft in that students tend to base their inability to concentrate during study time on someone using incantation from within or without the school environment against them. Some students who have access to witchcraft practices may use their witchcraft power to discourage the relatively brighter students. Some of them who think witchcraft works in their favour tend to relax with the hope that their witchcraft will help them to excel in academics; Still some students instill fear generally on other students not to work harder during study time; Yet some students think that their witchcraft power can put teachers under a spell and would make teachers leave them free to do whatever they want.

Acts of witchcraft typically involve simple gestures, spells, or rituals, and witches are usually assumed to be uneducated people of low social status, more frequently women than men. In many cases, the power of witchcraft is often regarded as somehow inherent in the witches themselves, as opposed to lying in the ritual actions or spells that one performs. This special status that marks the witch as being intrinsically evil, as opposed to just performing evil acts, might be inherited from other family members or derived from some personal association with dark and supernatural forces. Mbogo (2017) asserts that many scholars and professionals are even afraid to investigate such phenomena for fear of being attacked by witches. In Kenya, it is the journalists who have been bold enough to investigate this phenomena but with reports of unexplained camera failures under uncertain circumstances.

According to Standefer (1978), witches are sometimes thought to have a system of apprenticeship whereby one must be trained to become a witch. Like many ordinary human

groups, the witch community also sometimes requires an initiation fee before allowing someone to become a full member.

Ranger (1980) as cited in Gechiko & Nkonge (2014) adds that in countries like Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda, witches are identified mostly with women or infants. In Nigeria, all nocturnal insects and animals especially birds are suspected to be witches or wizards. In Gambia or Senegal, witches are associated with the bird (owl) and children are advised to kill it wherever they see it. Witches are believed to operate mainly at night. Manifestations of witchcraft are linked to: inflicting harms from an invisible world, sacrifices, changing from human form to animals or birds or insects, seduction using gifts, inducing fear, being in a trance and use of charms. It follows that witchcraft has very harmful social implications including students' social and academic lives in school settings.

According to Aleksandra (2010), failure at school or professional task can also be explained in terms of witchcraft and attributed to jealous neighbours. In Nebbi District and West Nile sub region in general, an academically successful child is not a welcome person in some areas. Such a person would seek protection by either migrating to urban areas or seek some supernatural protection. Quite a number of deaths of intellectuals have been associated with the acts of witchcraft.

Furthermore, the idea of witchcraft is central in the day to day experiences of an African and permeates every aspect of life in Sub-Saharan Africa. There is the constant awareness of the reality of evil induced by witchcraft (Harries, 2010). As Africans, we learn, practice and experience witchcraft quite often. From generation to generation, witchcraft as a practice is deeply embedded in African culture with Nebbi District not being an exception.

According to Mbiti (1991), when something goes wrong in the welfare of an individual or his family, he immediately wonders who has made it to happen. It is not enough to answer how such

a circumstance could have occurred. In most cases the affected person will suspect that someone has evil magic, sorcery or witchcraft against him or his household, animals and fields. In most cases when a person believes that evil powers or magic have been used against him or her, someone in the family or in the neighbourhood or among the relatives is suspected.

Mbogo (2017) asserts that students and teachers seem to be in agreement that witchcraft is usually directed to someone by close relatives and neighbors who may have ongoing interpersonal conflicts. Both Mbiti (1991) and Mbogo (2017) concur with the fact that when something bad happens in the community, fingers are always pointed at a person believed to have perpetuated it. Among students, witchcraft accusations and witchcraft practices breed hatred which may result into violence and physical and psychological injuries.

Mbogo (2017) conducted a study on the effects of witchcraft, including witchcraft accusations and witchcraft imaginations on the academic, socio-economic and spiritual welfare of high school students in Nairobi Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that in schools, students suffer negative effects of witchcraft such as phobia, isolationism, school drop-out, physical illnesses, hallucinations, violence, crime and poor academic performance.

A study conducted byTeklemariam & Nyenze (2002) on the effect of witchcraft practices on education in public secondary schools in Mwingi District in Kenya showed that in schools, witchcraft continues to dominate the minds of many teachers and students especially during moments of crisis when they are looking for answers to vexing issues. They go back to traditional way of explaining misfortunes when current scientific technology, religions and medicine do not seem to provide the answers.

Despite this socially unwanted practice, witchcraft is still practiced. The answer to persistence in witchcraft practices is partially provided by Teklemariam & Nyenze,(2002) who further asserted that teachers and students practiced witchcraft mainly for protection from being bewitched by

their rivals and to perform better academically. In addition, Teklemariam & Nyenze (2002) noted that witchcraft practices also aim at inflicting arm against a reveler especially where there is competition. In Nebbi District, there is a strong belief among the people about the powers of witches and witch doctors. Therefore, quite often, services of witch doctors are sought. In schools, many students have a belief that their academic excellence can be boosted with the help of witchdoctors and some seek the services of a witch doctor to suppress their classmates who would appear to be performing better.

Conclusively the available literature shows that witchcraft is practiced by all communities in the world though the levels may vary. Witchcraft practices impact negatively on academic performance (Teklemariam & Nyenze, 2002).Mbogo (2017) argues that witchcraft is practiced in schools to enhance academic excellence and or to cause suffering to other students. However, there is little documented evidence on the influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance, the gap which the present study attempts to fill.

2.5Effect of Superstition on Students' Academic Performance

Empirical evidence shows that pupils often bring with them to the classroom alternative concept of sciences. These alternative concepts differ fundamentally from the knowledge that is transmitted the science school teacher (Undie, Ushie, Blessing, & Duruamaka, 2018), This alternative concept is deeply rooted in superstitious beliefs. Undie, Ushie, Blessing, & Duruamaka(2018) further assert that superstitious beliefs still have a significant influence on the academic performance in sciences suring early childhood irrespective of sex of the pupil. It follows that termly academic grades are, therefore, influenced by superstitious beliefs such as: linking poor grades to some bad omen but not on hard work; believing that to be the first to get out of the sleeping places is bad since bad spirits await the first person to get out of the house in the morning; charms and amulets can help one to get better academic grades without actually

reading. Incantations, repeated experiences based on some signs, magic among others are the basis of good academic grades. Some of them believe that good academic grades can only be achieved by luck.

Sharma (2014) conducted a study on influence of culture on secondary school students' understanding of statistics. The study was conducted in Fiji and the research was based on the way the students perceived statistics culturally and how the students' understanding can be related to statistics taught in class. The concepts of chance and luck, beliefs and attributions, and probabilistic thinking are believed to be connected to some supernatural power. Some students thought God controls everything that happens in the world while others thought God chooses to control, or not control, anything in the world. There were also beliefs directly related to coins and dice, such as tossing 'heads' with a coin is good luck. Sharma (2014) found that in a number of cases, students based their reasoning on their beliefs about coins (luck and control). Superstitious beliefs in luck are learnt either from elders or an individual can develop a unique belief. This is common among football fans, hunters and students especially when exams are due and it cuts across all subjects.

The view that an outcome is due to luck or control is a widespread belief among students and the community. In some communities, luck is associated with sighting pigeons, or the person one meets first in the morning determines one's luck of the day. Bad luck was associated with owls crying at night. These examples reveal the extent to which belief in luck permeates the thinking not only of Fijian students but also Ugandans and more specifically the Alur people. Thus, it is not surprising that these formed an important component of these students' explanations. Sharma established that superstition causes students to have misconceptions in understanding probability. Similarly, superstitious beliefs such as using charms, refusing to greet by shaking hands among others are very common among the students in Nebbi District. The influence that such

superstitious behaviour has an effect on student's termly academic grades is a subject of this research.

A study conducted in Nigeria by Olufunke (2015) on the influence of cultural beliefs and values on secondary school students' understanding of atmospheric related Physics concepts concluded that Physics students hold superstitious beliefs and ideas which they heard mainly from their grandparents and parents. Such beliefs include: whirlpool is caused by devils; if it rains when there is sun shine, then the leopard is giving birth; formation of rainbow is a sign of rain. It was further established that students bring their superstitious beliefs into Physics class which can lead to misconceptions in understanding Physics concepts. Also, the misconceptions held by students due to their cultural beliefs significantly and negatively influence their academic performance in Physics.

The cultural beliefs that were found to influence understanding concepts in Physics are all rooted in superstition. In this case, Sharma(2014) and Olufunke (2015) agreed that there was a correlation between superstitious beliefs and students' academic achievements. However, there was need to investigate further the influence of students' general superstitious behaviour on their termly academic grades as a contributing factor to the overall academic performance.

Superstitious beliefs and belief in witchcraft exist in almost all the societies in the world.

According to Michael (2005), in African communities, there exist men and women who have been trained, either through apprenticeship or by deep mystical experiences, to diagnose, treat, cure or ward off anything that might harm one's life. It can, therefore, be asserted that in African communities, the practices of wizardry, witchcraft and superstition are deliberate. Ignoring the reality on witchcraft (often called Satanism) rather than acknowledging it among Africans perpetuates poverty, resulting in the emergence of many booming but apparently shallow African churches. Harries (2010), Michael(2005) and Gechiko& Nkonge (2014) agreed that superstitious

and witchcraft practices can either be inherited or acquired by an individual for personal usage or commercial purposes. Accordingly, desperate students and parents are an easy prey to such practices which eventually affect other students directly or indirectly.

Available literature indicates that quite a lot had been done on superstitions and how they impact on the community and on some specific academic subjects like Physics and Probability the misconceptions arising from superstitious beliefs (Harries, 2010).. This study addressed the general day to day superstitious life of students and how some superstitious beliefs affect students' academic performance.

2.6 Impact of Traditional Medical Practices on Students' Academic Performance

According to Vedavathy (2003), traditional medical knowledge is thought to be within everyone's reach and does not require any study or training to practice it. In some families, almost all the members of the family are acquinted with some part of herbal remedies. Some parents encourage their children not to accept any treatment from school or hospital. Such a student would seek permission to go home for treatment hence leading to absenteeism which eventually affects the student's academic grades. Some modes of traditional medical treatment require shaving off hair from the head of the sick person prior to treatment and no interaction with people during treatment. All these would mean the student will not attend classes leading to missing lessons. Where incision is required, it is done using unsafe instruments leading to contraction of certain diseases which eventually would disrupt normal lesson attendance. Some students would seek traditional medicine from specialists who are always far away from home and /or school. This would not allow timely reporting to school. The use of charms and amulets to wade off evil spirits and enhance protection against diseases make students overconfident and perpetual lessons dodgers.

In Cambodia, it was found that traditional medicine has been, and continues to be resorted to for a wide range of serious and non-serious illness (Bandeth, Gillian, Barbara, & Suzanne, 2017). Traditional medicine is used for treatment of various types of ailments including mentally related illness such as epilepsy. Many families chose traditional medicine even though it was more expensive than biomedicine. Some illnesses are associated with evil spirits and it is believed that traditional medicine is the source of cure. In Nebbi District for example, some families move as far as Democratic Republic of Congo in search of better traditional medical practitioners to cure their ailments.

A study conducted in Ghana by Erah (2008), indicated that in contrast with western medicine, which is technically and analytically synchronised, traditional Ghanaian medicine takes a holistic approach, recognizing the fact that good health, diseases, success or misfortune are not seen as chance occurrences but are believed to arise from the actions of individuals and ancestral spirits according to the balance and imbalance between the individual and the environment. In an African traditional setting, there is always an explanation as to why someone is suffering from a certain disease at a particular time. Witchcraft is considered the main cause of disease and illness. Other causes are sorcery, gods or ancestors, and natural illness as well as inherited diseases. But in many instances, the first aspect associated with the cause of disease and illness is witchcraft. Traditional medical practices are, therefore, very closely related to superstitions and witchcraft since all involve the spirit realms (Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004) and Erah, 2008). In many developing countries Uganda inclusive, a large proportion of the population relies on traditional medical practitioners and their array of medicinal plants in order to meet health care needs. Although modern medicine may exist side-by-side with such traditional practice, herbal medicines have often maintained their popularity for historical and cultural reasons (Vedavathy2003).

A study was conducted in Nigeria by Ugwu, Diovu, & Iliemenam (2016) to determine the influence of integration of indigenous knowledge and practices into chemistry teaching on students' academic achievement. The findings showed that there was a change as students taught with integration of indigenous knowledge and practices had higher mean achievement scores than their counterparts and that gender had no significant influence on academic achievement. Also there was no interaction between gender and methods used. Indigenous peoples' traditional education processes were carefully constructed around observing natural processes, adapting modes of survival, obtaining sustenance from the plant and animal world and using natural materials to make their tools and implements. However, it should be observed that whereas Ugwu, Diovu, & Iliemenam (2016), argued that there was a positive correlation between indigenous peoples' traditional education and better performance in Chemistry, the indigenous tradition referred was generally accepted chemical practices like separation techniques that included: sieving, decantation, evaporation, distillation, chromatography among others that are indigenously practiced. These concepts have their origin in many and diversified indigenous knowledge and practices of the people. These and many other chemistry concepts are unknowingly practiced indigenously but in isolation from chemistry as a school science subject. Such Chemical processes are very common among the traditional medical practitioners who usually include a variety of items in their medical concoctions but unfortunately may use their concoctions for the good or bad intentions.

Ugwu, Diovu, & Iliemenam (2016) found out that the integration of indigenous knowledge and practices into chemistry teaching improved the understanding of the concepts in Chemistry. However they did not consider the influence of indigenous knowledge on the user of the end product. According to Mark, Tanaka, Kendal, & Kevin (2009), traditional remedies, utilising medicinal plant and animal products, have been used as treatments for human diseases and

medical conditions for millennia. In recent years, 60–80% of the world's population, mainly from developing countries, depended primarily on traditional medicines, folk remedies and home cures, as well as treatment from witchdoctors and other 'supernatural practices', for their health-care needs. Whereas Mark, Tanaka, Kendal, & Kevin (2009), agreed that the use of traditional medicine exists mainly in developing countries, there are vast ways in which these traditional medicines are used; for healing as well as for harming other people.

A study conducted in Ethiopia by Dawit, Eshetu, Masresha, Misganaw, & Atsinaf(2005) revealed that there are a variety of both beneficial and harmful traditional practices in Ethiopia. However, it is not only in Ethiopia are such traditional medical practices found but also in Uganda and Nebbi District in particular. Harmful traditional medical practices are done for various reasons but can cause a spectrum of health and social problems which include: physical body injury like removal of milk teeth and circumcision, application of local herbs to cure ulcers, use of plant parts as charms, cutting of body parts among others.

Further study conducted in Ethiopia by Kahsu, Atsede, & Gerezgiher (2014), indicated that traditional medical and behavioural practices such as vulectomy, tonsillectomy, female circumcision, milk teeth extraction, and eyebrow incision are widely practiced with no or little attention to hygiene. In sub-Saharan Africa, traditional medical and behavioural practices have been evaluated infrequently in relation to risk of infectious disease transmission. The magnitude of damage caused to girls almost equals those of boys. These complementary medicines, traditional remedies and home cures for medical ailments which are used extensively world-wide, have serious doubts cast about the efficacy and safety of many treatments, and so the industry remains stifled in controversy.

Traditional medical knowledge is thought to be within every one's reach Vedavathy (2003). In the Alur culture, most families have some kind of knowledge of some herbal medicine. In some

families almost all the members have some knowledge of traditional curing using herbs. There is always specialisation among the practitioners that include: bone setters, use of herbs, faith healers, psychic healers, sacrifices, rituals and exorcism among others. Some traditional medical practitioners do engage in minor operations using unsafe instruments while others administer herbal concoctions with no specific doses. Cases have been reported where the local community would prefer traditional medicine to treat some ailments to clinical medicine dispensed in hospitals with the view that such ailment can only be treated traditionally. Such cases are sometimes taken to the neighbouring country (the Democratic Republic of Congo) where the locals believe better traditional medicines are found.

The commercialisation of traditional medicine is on an increase in most part of the region though the health authorities have not given any authoritisation (Vedavathy, 2003). There are various modes of applications of the traditional medicines. Some of which include: infusion and decoctions through drinking, bathing or applying on the skin, at times the herbs could be pounded into powder and licked or applied to incisions or mixed and drunk from traditional beers especially *kwete* and *malwa* (local beer made from finger millet or sorghum); the herbs could be burnt and the smoke is used for expelling or appeasing the spirits or eliminating curses and spirits and for treating chronic illnesses. Sometimes the individual is washed or sprinkled with the concoction with recitation or incantations and sacrifices. To a great extent, some traditional medical practitioners perform functions associated with superstitions or act like witchdoctors.

2.7Summary of literature review and identified research gaps

The literature review clearly pointed out that indeed witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices existed a long time ago and in all parts of the world. Available literature also revealed that students practiced witchcraft, superstition and use traditional medicine widely.

Theoretical gap: Many theorists have discussed about human behaviour with respect to cognitive development as well as how learning may be acquired. However, previous researchers did not reveal much about interrelation between cultural practices i.e. witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices and academic performance.

Content gap: Many authors and researchers have dwelled a lot on witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices. However, there is little documentation on how these cultural practices influence academic performance as a whole. This study examined how these cultural practices influence students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

Knowledge gap: There was no much knowledge of how witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices influence the students' academic performance in Nebbi District. No much research has been done in this field as evidenced by almost no written documentation of this occurrence. This study addressed this gap and was intended to create awareness of the effects of cultural practices on students' academic performance. Various scholars have revealed that traditional medical practices can either be useful or armful to life and that spiritual media are involved in some diagnostic and treatment processes. However, previous studies seem not to relate traditional medical practices with students' academic performance. This research addresses the impact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance.

Methodological gap: Whereas there had been similar methods employed by most researchers, these methods did not directly link witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices to academic performance. Generally, there is very scanty literature available that links witchcraft, superstition and traditional medical practices to students' academic performance. This research is intended to examine the influences of these cultural practices i.e. witchcraft, superstition and

traditional medical practices to students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the description and justification of the methods that were used to collect and analyse data. It describes and justifies the research design, area of study, population of the study, study sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, data quality control measures, data analysis, research ethical consideration, methodological limitations.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2002). The study specifically adopted a cross sectional survey research design employing both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. This design was chosen because it allowed simultaneous collection of views, opinions, perceptions and beliefs at a single point with population which included: the students, teachers and parents. a survey research design also flexible, appropriate and efficient (Amin, 2005).

3.2 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Nebbi District and it targeted both Government aided and private secondary schools. Choice of the study area was premised on the fact that the researcher was working in the district and so this made it easier to access the respondents who participated in the study.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 2,320 students (boys and girls) in S3 and S4 from the 17 secondary schools in Nebbi District. However, the accessible population was all the

students in S3 and S4 in the selected secondary schools. This generated a population of 679 students, 50 parents of some few randomly selected students as well as 177 teachers. This gave a total 906.

3.4 Study Sample

For the selected schools, the total population of size 906 students, parents and teachers was sufficient from which the study sample size was drawn. a sample of 270 was obtained using the following formula:

$$s = \frac{\chi^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + \chi^2 P(1-P)}$$

s = required sample size.

χ^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

For N = 650, P = 0.5, d = 0.05, χ^2 value at 1 degree of freedom is 1.96.

$$s = \frac{1.96^2(906)(0.5)(1-0.5)}{0.05^2(906-1) + 1.96^2(0.5)(1-0.5)}$$

$$= 270.$$

Let s = sample size = 270. With N = 906, the target population for students, parents and teachers proportionately calculated becomes.

Number of students = 679

Students' sample size = $\frac{679}{906} \times 270$

$$= 202$$

Number of teachers = 177

$$\text{Teachers' sample size} = \frac{177}{906} \times 270$$

$$= 53$$

$$\text{Number of parents} = 50$$

$$\text{Parents' sample size} = \frac{50}{906} \times 270$$

$$= 15$$

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame

Category of respondents	**Population size**	**Sample size**	**Sampling techniques**
Students	679	202	Simple random sampling
Parents	50	15	Purposive sampling
Teachers	177	53	Simple random sampling
Total	**906**	**270**	

Source: Primary (Data 2019)

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Simple random sampling was used to select the students since the sample size is big.

(i) Simple random sampling: This is a procedure in which the choice of respondent is guided by the probability principles (Sarantakos, (2005). Simple random sampling was used because it enabled every member of the population to be given equal chance of being included in the study sample (Graham & Ian, 1997). This sampling technique was also very suitable for large homogeneous population with large population like students. This sampling technique was also used to select the teachers because of the homogeneous nature of teachers. The students' population was 679 that generated a sample of 202 students. The teachers were 177 which generated a sample of 53.

(ii) Purposive sampling: In this technique, the researchers purposively selected respondents who in his opinion were relevant to the study (Sarantakos, 2005). This sampling technique

was used to select the parents. This enabled the researcher to reach the parents with information relevant to the study. The parents were 50 and this generated a sample of 15.

3.6 Data Sources

The data for this study was obtained from two sources

3.6.1 Primary Data Source

This enabled the collection of data from the field by administering questionnaire to the students and interview guides to parents and teachers.

3.6.2 Secondary Data Source

This collected data was obtained from documentation available at schools. This included termly academic grades for S3 and S4 and final results from national examinations set by Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) for the previous years. Checklist was used in order to assess the academic performance of students over the years 2011 to 2019.

3.7Data Collection Instruments

The study used a variety of research instruments that included questionnaires, interview guides, documentary review as well as triangulation.

3.7.1 Questionnaires

In this study, questionnaires were used for students and these were self administered. Each item in the questionnaire was designed to address specific objective of the study. Questionnaires were used because students were able to read and write and a large number of students could be accessed within a short period of time while maintaining anonymity. From the questionnaire, frequency tables were drawn followed by statistical representations using bar graph and χ^2 test.

3.7.2 Interview Guide

An interview is an oral questionnaire where the investigator gathers data through direct verbal interaction with participants: for example teachers, parents and students (Amin, 2005).The

interview guide was used for both teachers and parents. Interview guide was opted for because sincerity and insight of the respondent could easily be evaluated, it enabled follow up which lead to more data obtained with greater clarity (Amin, 2005).The researcher recruited research assistants in some schools as he got involved in the face to face interview with some of the parents and teachers.

3.7.3 Documentary Review

Documentary information was obtained by carefully studying records on previous years' academic performances for UCE.

3.8 Data Quality and Control

The quality of the research study highly depends on the accuracy of the data collected. The researcher ensured the reliability and validity of data collected by carefully constructing the research instruments and subjecting them to appropriate tests prior to data collection.

3.8.1Validity test

The instruments were subjected to the experts to test validity. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. According to Amin, (2005), content validity refers to the degree to which the test actually measures or is specifically related to the traits for which it is designed. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was computed as follows:

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{(\text{Number of items valid})}{(\text{Total number of items})} \times 100$$

Witchcraft and students' academic performance

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{8}{10} \times 100$$

$$= 80\%$$

$$= 0.8$$

Superstition and students' academic performance

$$CVI = \frac{7}{10} \times 100$$

$$= 70\%$$

$$= 0.7$$

Traditional medical practices and students' academic performance

$$CVI = \frac{8}{10} \times 100$$

$$= 80\%$$

$$= 0.8$$

Table 3.2: **Results from the CVI Test**

SN	Variables and students' academic performance	No of items	No of valid items
01	Witchcraft and students' academic performance	10	8
02	Superstition and students' academic performance	10	7
03	Traditional medical practices and students' academic performance	10	8
	Total	**30**	**23**

Source: Field Data (2019)

From the table,

$$CVI = \frac{0.8+0.7+0.8}{3}$$

$$= 0.78$$

The CVI calculated was 0.78, which was greater than 0.70 hence content of the questionnaires was rendered valid (Amin, 2005).

3.8.2Reliability test

Mugenda & Mugenda(2003) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trial. There are various techniques used to measure reliability. For this study, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used, hence:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{(k-1)}\left(\frac{\sum SD_t^2 - \sum SD_i^2}{\sum SD_t^2}\right).$$

Where α = Cronbach Alpha coefficient,

k = Number of items in the questionnaire,

SD_i^2 = Standard Deviation within items,

SD_t^2 = Variance for total items in the questionnaire.

With k = 5, $SD_i^2 = 3769.8$, $SD_t^2 = 11014.8$,

$$\alpha = \frac{5}{(5-1)}\left(\frac{11014.8 - 3769.8}{11014.8}\right).$$

$$= 0.9866.$$

The value of $\alpha = 0.9866$ is very close to 1. This implies that the items in the questionnaire were reliable enough (Mugenda& Mugenda 2003),

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the Director School of Graduate Studies and Research of the University of Kisubi. This permission was photocopied and distributed physically to the heads of selected schools as a proof of authenticity to the study. The researcher then proceeded to collect data from the students using the designed questionnaires. For teachers and parents, each respondent was given a copy of the permission to collect data prior to the interview.

3.10 Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. Qualitative data analysis involved making sense out of an enormous amount of narrative data, i.e. looking for categories, patterns, and common themes which facilitated a coherent synthesis of the data (Meadows, 2003). Coding involved critically analyzing the data and identifying themes and topics which represented categories into which numerous pieces of data could be classified (Gay 1996 and Corbin & Strauss 1990 and Dey 1993). Data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively (Salkind 2003 and Wetherell 2001). This was because all answered questionnaire items, interviews and all observed data were organized and coded by categorization and processed.

Responses to open-ended items were categorized based on themes developed from the objectives of the study and other emerging themes from the data collected. Each data was then assigned to themes to which it belonged or closely related. The different categories were then summarized, presented and compared with quantitative data forms obtained using descriptive analysis. Quantitative data from questionnaires and checklists were coded and imputed into the SPSS computer software for analysis. Descriptive statistics, principally; frequencies, proportions and percentages were obtained and used for further analysis in juxtaposition with data from interviews. The results were presented mainly in form of tables. Finally, data on testing of the hypothesis was analyzed quantitatively, using the Pearson's Chi-square test. The Pearson's Chi-square test (χ^2) was the most appropriate statistical analysis procedure because the researcher was analyzing survey data. Besides, the data was put into categories (frequencies, percentages, proportions) in order to reflect the effect of the independent variable.

3.11Research Ethical Considerations

Like all other studies that involve human subjects, very close attention was paid to ethical measures. The research instrument (questionnaire) was carefully designed in order not to discriminate, hurt or cause disturbance to the respondents. Before administering the questionnaire, there was thorough explanation to the respondents on the purpose of the study. All matters concerning the research were treated as confidential. Respondents were not required to write their names on the questionnaires so as to ensure anonymity.

3.12 Methodological Limitations of the Study

The most serious limitation was the freedom of indulging information from the respondents since some of the elements under investigation were socially very sensitive. Nobody wanted to associate with witchcraft practices and some people were ashamed or shy to indulge information about superstition and some respondents were suspicious about the whole exercise. This was

overcome by assuring respondents of confidentiality. Another challenge was the accuracy of the instruments for data collection. This was overcome by subjecting them to validity and reliability indices.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The primary focus of the study was to examine effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. In order to adhere to this, the study sought to answer three research questions. In addition, one null hypothesis was formulated to guide the investigation. This Chapter, therefore, gives the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected using the methodology presented in Chapter three. The Chapter first highlights the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by presentation of data obtained from the research instruments, basing on the objectives of the study. Lastly, the data is analysed and interpreted in the context of the study problem.

4.1 Method of Analysis

The discrete data collected was transformed into quantitative data using simple counts for the responses of each of the research questions and hypothesis tested. These responses were later tabulated as will be seen later in the chapter. As far as hypothesis testing was concerned, the method of analyzing the data was the Person's Chi Square test and more specifically, the Chi-Square test of independence for variables Amin, (2005). This method was opted for because the data used in the research was expressed in categories, frequencies and percentages. The observed value of the chi-square (x^2obs) was obtained using the following formula:

$$\chi^2{}_{obs} = \sum \left[\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e} \right]$$

Where: f_o = observed frequency

f_e = expected frequency

$\sum$ = sum of all categories.

Having computed the observed value of the Chi-square ($\chi^2{}_{obs}$), it was necessary to compare it with the chi-square critical value ($\chi^2{}_{cv}$) with appropriate degrees of freedom (df) = (r-l) (c-1) and the corresponding level of significance (ρ). This was then used to interpret the results. Where the observed chi-square value ($\chi^2{}_{obs}$) was greater or equal to the chi-square critical value ($\chi^2{}_{cv}$), then the results were statistically significant. In this case, the stated hypothesis was rejected. Likewise, after computing the ($\chi^2{}_{obs}$) and it was found to be less than the ($\chi^2{}_{cv}$), then the results were not statistically significant. This meant that the stated hypothesis was retained. First, the response rate was given.

4.2 Response Rate

The researcher had a sample size of 270 respondents which included 202 students, 15 parent and 53 teachers. All the 202 questionnaires issued to students were returned, constituting a response rate of 100%. For the case of teachers, the researcher interacted and interviewed 44 out of 53 teachers indicating a response rate of 83.01% and 13 parents out of 15 parents which constituted a response rate of 86.7%. This is as indicated in the table below.

Table 4.1: ResponseRate

Respondents	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Students	202	100.00
Teachers	44	83.02
Parents	13	86.67
Total	**25995.59**	

Source: Field Data (2019)

The respondents consisted of students, teachers and parents. This was considered because students, parents and teachers interact constantly and so a lot of common ideas about the research topic could be obtained.

From the table 4.1, students' response rate was 100%, teachers' response rate was 83.02% and parents' response rate was 86.67%. A total of 259 responses was recorded out of 270 expected giving overall response rate of 95.59% this was above 80%which was very good. The students used questionnaires and both teachers and parents responded using interview guides.

4.3: Background Information of the Respondents

The background information of the respondents included age, gender and educational background. The background information analysis was done for students, teachers and parents.

4.3.1: Age of Respondents (students)

There were 7 students in the age bracket 12 to 15 years and this represented 3.50%, 190 students were in the age bracket 16 to 20 years representing 94.10% and this represented the majority while 5 students were over 20 years which represented 2.40%.

4.3.2: Gender of Respondents (students)

Out of the 202 students in the sample, 141 students were male and 61 were female. These represent 69.80% and 30.20% respectively.

From the statistics above, majority of the respondents were male students. This was an indication that in the selected secondary schools, there were more male school going students than female students.

4.3.3: Educational Level of Respondents (students)

There were 202 students who responded to the questionnaires out of which 77 students representing 38.1% were in S3 and 125 students representing 61.9% were in S4.

4.3.4: Duration at School (students)

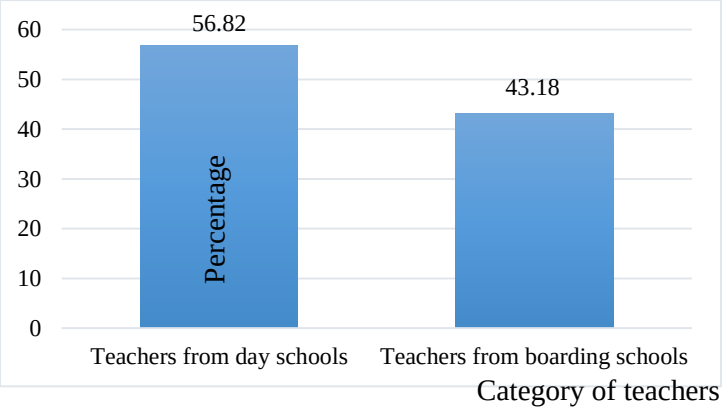
The number of years the respondents were in school was also sought. Out of the 202 students, 12 students (5.90%), were in the given schools for one year, 29 students (14.40%) were in the school for two years. This implied that those students transferred from other schools. 68 students (33.70%) were in the school for three years, 84 students (41.60%) had been in the schools for four years. 9 students (4.50%) were in the given schools for more than four years meaning that they repeated some classes. Majority of the students had stayed in their respective schools long enough to know what was taking place among the students in those schools.

4.3.5: Nature of the schools

Out of the 13 parents, 8 parents (61.34%) had their children studying in day schools and only 5 parents (38.46%) had their children going to boarding schools. This implied that the children were more conversant with their parents' ways of life as well as the nature of life within the community.

Statistically, most of the teachers had stayed in their respective schools for at least 5 years; they had very rich experiences about students' behaviour in their respective schools.

Among the teachers, there were 25 teachers represented by 56.82% teaching in day schools and 19 teachers indicated by 43.18% teaching in boarding schools.



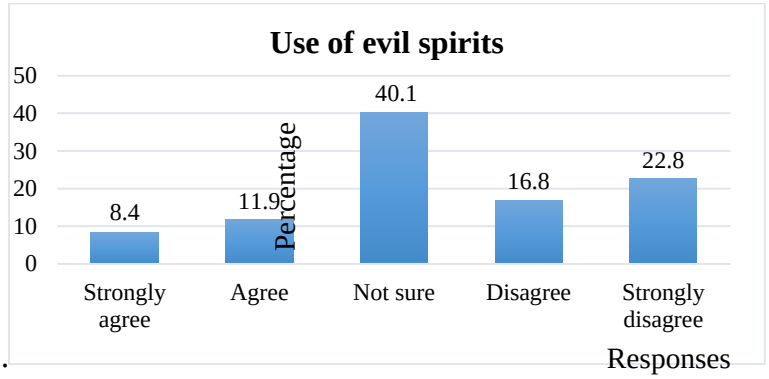
Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.1:Teachers and their Schools

Statistically this implied that most of the teachers who handled students came from the community daily. The opinions of these teachers and parents were conclusively similar.

4.4 Influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance

In this study, the first objective was to establish the influence of witchcraft on students' academic grades in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. Respondents were first asked whether some students used evil spirits against them when at school. The findings were as in figure 4.2Below.



Source: Field data (2019)

Figure 4.2:Students using evil spirits

Majority of the respondents i.e. 40.1% were not sure whether there were some student using witchcraft against themor not while 8.4% and 11.9% of the respondents strongly agree and disagree respectively. Also 16.8% and 22.8% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This implied that majority of the students were not sure whether evil spirits were being used on them or not

The followings were the responses from the teachers

> *'……Students use charms which have spiritual powers to protect themselves against other students and to make teachers not to punish them.*
> *……the effect of evil spirit seen on student is that the evil spirits take physical control of such a student. A student being attacked by evil spirit talks anyhow.*
> *Students under the attack by evil spirit usually have bad dreams……'*

One parent said

‘*…. they use evil powers to suppress their brighter colleagues so that they can excel……’*

From the responses above teachers and parents agreed that evil spirit attack on students was as a result of other students using the spirits on their colleagues.Statistics from teachers and parents further showed that out of the 44 teachers interviewed, 22 teachers (50.0%) agreed that students actually practiced witchcraft at school and out of the 13 parents who participated in the study 10 parents (76.92%) agreed that students use witchcraft on their colleagues at school.

Respondents were asked whether they frequently feel unexplained fear during examinations. The findings were summarised as in the table below.

Table 4.2:Unexplained fear during examination time

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	17	8.4
Agree	55	27.2
Not sure	25	12.4
Disagree	60	29.7
Strongly disagree	45	22.3
Total	202	100.0

Source: Field Data (2019)

From the table, 29.7% and 22.3% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively and 8.4% and 27.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively while 12.4% of the respondents were not sure. However data collected from teachers indicated otherwise.

Responses from teachers were as follows

> ‘……*witchcraft creates fear in the students which eventually affects concentration on class.*

Witchcraft makes students to have negative attitude towards examinations i.e. when timetable is out they normally fall sick and when the exams are over they become well. Witchcraft causes students to fear each other……'

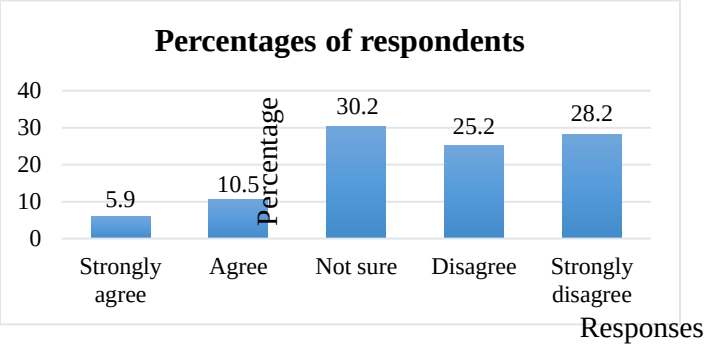
Responses from parents

'……*Witchcraft makes students uncomfortable at night*.
Students who are bewitched develop fear and stop reading for fear that they will be attacked by the witches……..'

From this finding, majority of students disagreed that they frequently feel unexplained fear during examination time. These views were in contradiction to those of the teachers and parents.

Respondents were asked whether they failed to settle in class because somebody is doing evil thing on them due to witchcraft. The findings were as follows.

Graphically this appeared as in the figure below.



Source: Field data (2019)

Figure 4.3: Failure to settle in class

The statistics indicated that majority of the students (30.2%) were not sure whether their failing to settle in class was due to somebody doing evil on them or not. Meanwhile 25.2% and 28.2% of the students disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. 5.9% strongly agreed while 10.5% agreed that their failing to settle in class was due to somebody doing evil on them.

Responses from teachers:

'…..*There are some students who come to school with charms which they believe can help them escape punishment and also offer them protection. Students who are affected by witchcraft practices feel unsettled in class and their performance becomes poor*.
A student becomes sleepy or mentally disturbed…..'

Responses from parents:

> '……*Some students are disturbed by evil spirits which make the stay away from their fellow students….A student would fall sick frequently and when taken to hospital, such a student would not get cured*……'

Whereas 53.4% of the students disagreed, teachers and parents accepted that students were disturbed by evil spirits. Respondents were asked whether they experienced unexplained sicknesses that prevented them from attending tests. The findings were indicated as in the table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Unexplained sickness that prevents students from attending tests.

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	22	10.9
Agree	32	15.8
Not sure	13	6.4
Disagree	62	30.7
Strongly disagree	73	36.1
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

Majority of the students represented by 36.1% strongly disagreed that they experienced unexplained sickness that prevented them from attending tests. While 30.7% disagreed to this assertion and 6.4% of the students were not sure. 10.9% strongly agreed and 15.8% agreed that they experienced unexplained sicknesses

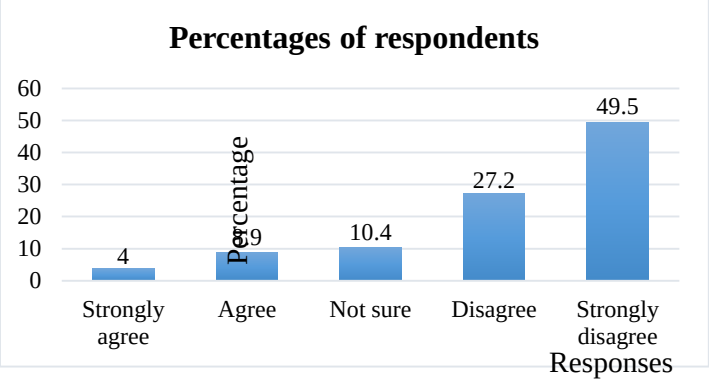
Responses from teachers

> '*….A bewitched student have some sicknesses which are unexpected.*
> *Bewitched students always have negative attitude towards examinations i.e. when timetable is out they normally fall sick and when exams are over, they get well.*
> *Witchcraft practices can affect students' concentration in class when the student fall sick and miss school…..*'

Responses from parents:

> '…..*A bewitched student experiences constant sickness…..Students suffering from witchcraft experience sickness which medics can't detect scientifically……*'

The findings above indicated that students' views did not agree with those of the teachers and parents. Respondents were asked whether they sometimes they heard voices during study time but were not able to see the person talking. The findings were represented figure 4.4 as below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.4: **Hearing voices during study time**

Statistical evidences indicated that 49.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 27.2% disagreed that they heard voices during study time but they were not able to see the person talking. 10.4% of the respondents were not sure meanwhile only 4.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and 8.9% agreed. Whereas majority of the students did not agree to hearing voices of invisible persons during the study time, the teachers and parents had the following responses.

Responses from teachers

> *'……..some students who are bewitched to not reason well and talk anyhow.*
> *……..students usually develop fear which results in phenomena of fright.*
> *……. students see image of abnormal things e.g. students can see image of the person bewitching them…..'*

Responses from parents

> '*…..some students are possessed by spirits which are evil….. this make them hear voices.*
> *bewitched students experience demonic attacks especially the spirits of the living…..'*

This finding indicated that whereas the students denied hearing voices as they studied, teachers and parents offered explanations to that effect. Fright and bewitchment were the explanation from teachers and parents for this phenomenon. This implied that some of the students who claimed to have heard those voices must have pre meditated about them before the occurrences of such incidences. The respondents were asked if they saw vision that interrupted their concentration during examinations. The findings were as follows.

Table 4.4: Seeing Vision that Interrupts Students' Concentration During Exams.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	18	8.9
Agree	40	19.8
Not sure	31	15.3
Disagree	51	25.2
Strongly disagree	62	30.7
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

From the table, 30.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 25.2% disagreed that they saw vision that interrupted their concentration during exams. 15.3% of the respondents were not sure while 19.8% agreed and 8.9% strongly agreed that they saw vision that interrupted their concentration during exams.On the other hand the teachers and parents had the following views.

Responses from teachers

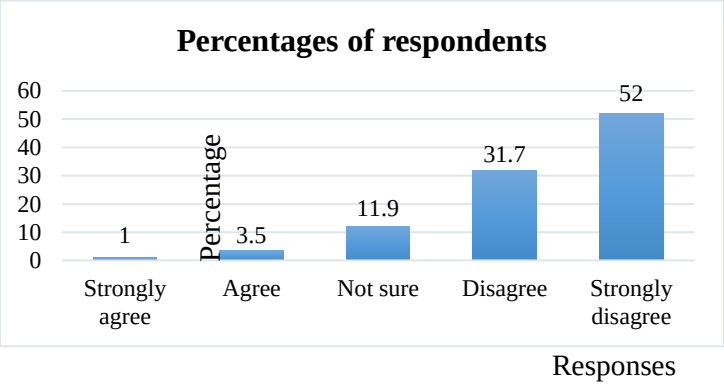
> *'……some students see vision about other boys or girls.*
> *……. I witnessed a situation where a spirit of a student who was alive that entered into another student and prompted the student not to do her exams.*
> *Some students do hallucinate and are always in negative mood……*'

Response from parents

'*Those are devil worshipers.*
Some of those students associate too much with witchdoctors.
Some families are not trustworthy……'

These responses from teachers and parents did not deny the existence of students who saw vision yet there was a lot of reluctance to comment further. The existence of students who see visions did not raise much concern to the teachers and parents. This again pointed out that this phenomenon is insignificant.

The respondents were further asked whether their fellow students said that they had strange behaviour associated with evil spirit and the findings were as illustrated graphically below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.5: Students Exhibiting Strange Behaviour

From figure 4.5 above, the greater majority of the respondents constituting 52.0% strongly disagreed and 31.7% of the students disagreed. The following were responses from teachers and parents. Quite a number of teachers agreed that students did exhibit strange behaviour and they associated such behaviour with evil spirits..

Responses from teachers:

'*…. a student under attack of evil spirit shows sign of dizziness, low morale and such a student always envies his/her colleagues……evil spirits take control of one's physical balance and the student's concentration becomes low as he or she loses control….*
Students under attack of evil spirit talk anyhow and fail to reason well and they look sickly…..'

Responses from parents:

> '…..*Students with strange behaviour associated with evil spirits are sad, aggressive, and perform mysterious things in schools and at home…….such students do not like prayers at all and sings satanic verses and also such students hide their property from others*…..'

A number of teachers linked strange behaviour associated with evil spirit to:

> '*…shouting unnecessarily, bad dreams, fear of darkness, anger, suspicions, madness and isolation*…..'

On the other hand parents accepted that indeed some students exhibit strange behaviour associated with evil spirits. From this item, teachers and parents generally accepted thatsome students did exhibit strange behaviour and they associated such behaviour with evil spirits but the total number of these students was very small.

It was noted that some students use evil spirits to fail others. Respondents were asked to give their views. The findings were as summarised in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Students who use Evil Spirits to fail other Students.

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	51	25.2
Agree	54	26.7
Not sure	46	22.8
Disagree	21	10.4
Strongly disagree	30	14.9
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field data (2019)

Statistical evidence from table 4.3.8 indicated that 25.2% and 26.7% of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that some students used evil spirits to fail other students. The statistics also revealed that 22.8% of the students were not sure while 10.4% and 14.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively

Data collected from the teachers revealed the followings:

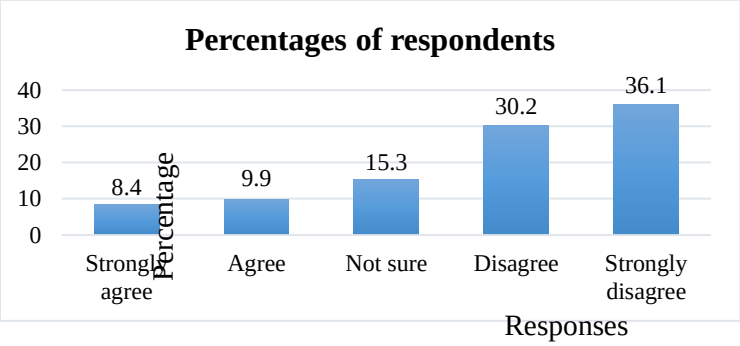
> '*…..There are some students who come to school with charms for protection*.
> *……students use devil languages, burn herbs in the bush and perform rituals at night for protection……students use charms, wear devil ornaments, speak in difficult spirits languages, become aggressive and put on fearful face……*'

Responses from parents revealed that:

> '*……because of evil spirits, some students develop fear about school environment.*
> *Students use evil spirits to weaken administration from suspending them from school or if they commit indiscipline acts….Students who use veil spirits love sitting in shrines and visit graves at night to consult spirits of dead people for authority over deathI witnessed a case where a student was chased away from school because he was a witch doctor who was giving charms to other students……*'

Both teachers and parents strongly insisted that students used charms on their colleagues and school management mainly for defence and protection. Teachers and parent concurred that such behaviour was common among the students.

Respondents were asked if they received gifts from their fellow students and the gifts made them not to concentrate in class. The findings were as figure 4.6 below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.6: Failing To Concentrate After Receiving Gifts

Statistical evidence revealed that majority of the students (36.1%) strongly disagreed and 30.2% disagreed that they received gifts from their fellow students and made them failed to concentrate in class later. 15.3% of the students were not sure meanwhile 9.9% and 8.4% agreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Responses from teachers revealed that

> '*……some students squeeze their colleagues at night and sometimes give them poison at school.*
> *…….a student was given poison in drinking water by a colleague by a fellow student. Students who are not performing well academically attribute their failure to fellow colleagues who are following them with charms…..*'

In another development, three teachers and five parents concurred with each other that:

> '*…..Some students do cut hair of their colleagues and part of their clothes. Cases of removing books or tearing some pages were also noted……*'

Another teacher said:

> *'……Some students hide their property and do not want other students to see what they have. They are so secretive…...*'

It is not socially acceptable for a child to receive gift from strangers just anyhow. Receiving gifts from strangers would be interpreted differently. Some parent and teachers attributed lack of concentration by students after receiving gift to thinking about the gift but not as enchanted gift.

Respondents were also asked if their fellow students suddenly disappeared and reappeared and made them failed exams. The findings were as summarised in table4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Students Exhibiting Astral Projection

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	0.5
Agree	5	2.5
Not sure	28	13.9
Disagree	49	24.3
Strongly disagree	119	58.9

Total	**202**	**100.0**

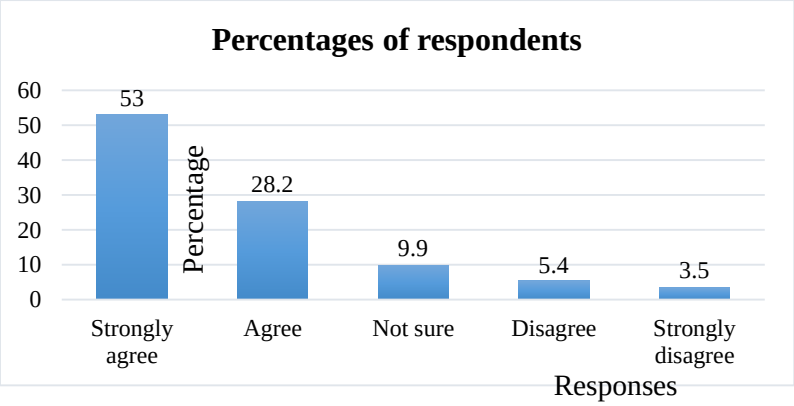
Source: Field data (2019)

Statistical findings above indicated that overwhelming majority of the students disagreed (24.3%) and strongly disagreed (58.9%) meanwhile very insignificant number of students strongly agreed (0.5%) and disagreed (2.5%). Some students (13.9%) were not sure.

With the exception of one teacher who said that a student was suspected to be in different places at the same time, all other teachers and parents said they had not heard or known of practise astral projection.

4.5: Effect of Superstition on Students' Academic Performance

In this study, the second objective was to investigate how superstitions affect students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. Respondents were first asked whether praying before going for exams made them passed. The findings were as shown in figure 4.7 below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.7:Praying Before Going for Exams

The above findings showed that overwhelming majority of the students constituting 53.0% strongly agreed and 28.2% agreed that indeed praying before going for exams made them passed.

While 5.4% and 3.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed about praying before going for exams. 9.9% of the students were not sure.

Majority of the students represented by 81.2% associated prayers with requesting for Godly intervention but not with evil intentions. Meanwhile 8.9% of the students did not believe in prayers before exams. These did not believe in God and they associated their successes to something else.

Interaction with the teachers revealed that out of 44 teachers interviewed, 29 teachers (65.91%) agreed that students really practice superstitions at school. 7 teachers (15.91%) denied the practice meanwhile 8 teachers (18.18%) were not sure. Out of 12 parents interviewed, 11 parents (91.67%) agreed that students do practice superstitions and only 1 parent (8.33%) was not sure.

Responses from teachers revealed that:

> '*….Some students think that their colleagues who perform extremely very well use magic. Some students pray to their ancestors for better results….When some students see and imagine some funny happenings in their lives, they believe that they are being bewitched by others. Their prayers are incantations….*'

Responses from parents revealed that:

> '*…I personally encourage my children to pray all the time….Some people pray to dead people for help and their children do the same thing….'*

Both teachers and parents believed in prayers for good performance. This was in agreement with the finding from the students. Respondents were also asked whether they pass exams by good luck. Table 4.7 below has the details findings.

Table 4.7: PassingExams by Good Luck.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	47	23.3
Agree	72	35.6
Not sure	25	12.4

Disagree	33	16.3
Strongly disagree	25	12.4
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

The findings indicated that 35.6% of the respondents agreed and 23.3% strongly agree that they passed their exams by good luck. 12.4% of the students were not sure while 16.3% and 12.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. From this finding, overwhelmingly students accepted that they passed their exams by good luck as indicated by 58.9% only a total of 28.7% contradicted this assertion. Belief in luck and not hard work significantly affected students' academic performance. This implies that students believed more in probabilistic occurrences. The teachers and the parents had similar ideas about students' behaviour on luck.

Responses from teachers revealed that:

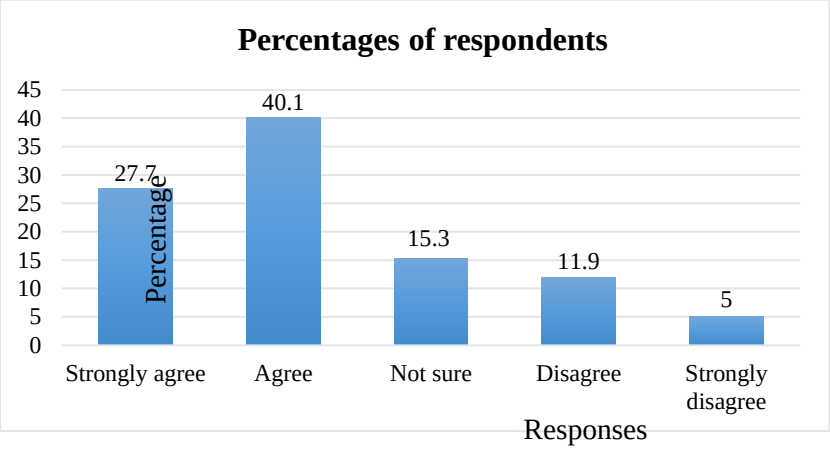
> '…..*Students who believe in lucks are very sensitive about their surroundings e.g. the person they meet when going on an errand….Some students associate luck with objects and animals or birds. Owls are associated with bad luck, seeing cats very early in the morning is associated with meeting spirits of dead people….When students failed to understand certain concepts in challenging subjects, they assume they have bad omen…..*'

Responses from parentsrevealed that:

> '…..*Some students after hearing the cry of an owl associate it with bad luck.*
> *Students who believe in passing by luck usually perform poorly and when they fail exams, they attribute it to bad luck…..Many students use superstitious words that describe how unlucky they are. Many lose concentration because they consider that they are unlucky……*'

In this item, the students, teachers and the parents shared similar views about passing exams by luck. The finding pointed out that students capitalised so much on lucks and attributes associated with lucks such as associating luck with objects, charms and many others.

Respondents were asked whether they dream about their successes before actually sitting for exams. The responses were presented in figure 4.8 below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.8:DreamingAbout SuccessIn Exams

The statistical findings indicated that 27.7% of the respondents agreed and 40.1% strongly agreed that they actually dream about their successes before sitting for the exams. Only 5% strongly disagreed and 11.9% disagreed meanwhile 15.3% of the respondents were not sure. From this statistics, a total of 67.8% of the students based their performance on spirit medium through dreaming. Students therefore associated their passing exams by dreaming about the exams. This was very similar about passing exams by luck.

The data obtained from interviewing the teachers indicated the followings.

Responses from teachersrevealed that:

> '*…Wrong belief about superstitions make students not to concentrate in class. This results into failing.*
> *…..most of them say they normally dream at night about bad things like evil.*
> *…..it creates disorderliness, unsettledness and this leads to lack of concentration; since one is afraid of what might happen…..*'

Responses from parents revealed that:

> '*….Superstitious students see strange dreams, visions ……such students don't perform well because their mind is centred on their belief…..*'

Both teachers and parents agreed that the reason why students performed poorly in exams was due to superstitious belief such as bad dreams and as a result, their minds were cantered on their beliefs.Respondents were ask if their academic results are influenced by forces they cannot control. The findings were summarised as in table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Students Influenced by Uncontrolled Forces

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	20	9.9
Agree	51	25.2
Not sure	37	18.3
Disagree	50	24.8
Strongly disagree	44	21.8
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data

The statistical findings indicated that 9.9% and 25.2% strongly agreed and agreed respectively meanwhile 24.8% and 21.8% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The statistics further showed that 18.3% of the respondents were not sure whether their academic results were influenced by forces they could not control.

The statistical summary indicates that 46.6% of the students did not accept that their academic results were influenced by forces they could not control and 35.1% agreed that their academic results were influenced by forces they could not control. These percentages indicate that the students neither accepted nor denied being influenced by forces they could not control.

Further interaction with teachers revealed the followings.

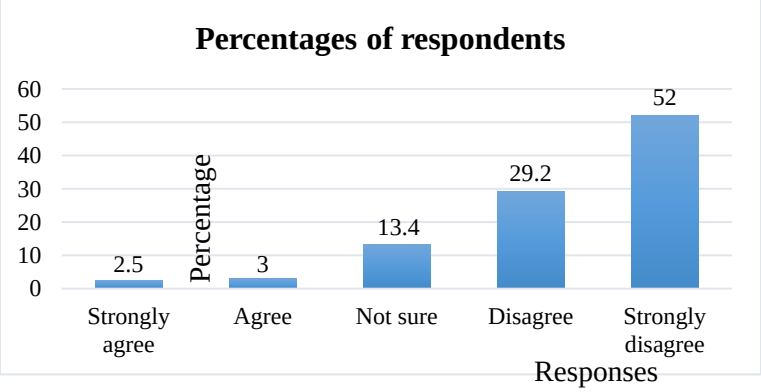
> '…..*Some students attribute their poor performance to their colleagues thinking that the good performers use magic and the magic is responsible for their poor performance*.

……superstitious students usually blame their poor performance to something without proof. Such students usually are violent, highly controversial and fail to take responsibility for their actions especially negative outcomes.
……a student sits for examinations and fails. This student will be thinking that he or she is being bewitched. Such student begins to dodge lessons, isolate himself or herself and sits lonely…..'

Responses from parents revealed that:

'*….Superstitious students associate some people and things with bad luck that befall them and they feel that bad luck surrounds them all the time…..some students claim it is bad luck to meet some people …..such a student loses concentration thinking that his or her bad luck started on his or her first meeting a particular person at school…….such students always complain of spirits disturbing them in the night ……they don't share knowledge with others thinking that other students are evil. Such students tend to give up hence poor performance….*'

According to the parents and teachers, they generally agreed that some students felt that other students were using some influence on them. They attributed their poor performance to evil forces being used by other students on them. The teachers and parents associated this situation with superstitions. Respondents were asked if wearing charms or amulets made them perform better in exams. Data was collected was presented figure 4.9 as below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.9: Students Wearing Charms or Amulets

From the statistics, overwhelming majority of the respondents represented by 52% strongly disagreed and 29.2% disagreed that wearing charms or amulets make them perform better in

exams. Only 2.5% strongly agreed while 3.0% agreed to this assertion. It was also noted that 13.4% of the respondents were not sure.

Interactions with the teachers indicated that:

> '…..*Most students practicing superstitions perform averagely…. they carry lots and ornaments…they attribute their failure to fellow colleagues who are following them with charms….Superstitious students brag a lot in school, indiscipline and they have herbs and carry charms……'*

Parents who participated in the study contributed the followings:

> '……*Students believe that they cannot pass without applying drugs to protect them.*
>
> *Superstitious students behave by wearing charms inform of bracelet e.g. those made of cowry shells…..Some students carry charms to school and have been discovered……*'

Both parents and teachers agreed that students who possessed charms and amulets performed poorly. However the percentage of those who possessed amulets and charms could not attribute the poor academic performance in Nebbi District to superstition. Respondents were asked whether they usually perform some rituals before sitting exams. Table 4.9 below has the details.

Table 4.9: Students Performing Some Rituals before Sitting Exams.

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	3	1.5
Agree	5	2.5
Not sure	15	7.4
Disagree	48	23.8
Strongly disagree	131	64.9
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

From table 4.9 above, majority of the respondents (64.9%) strongly disagreed and 23.8% of the respondents disagreed that they performed some rituals before sitting for exams. Very

insignificant number of respondents (1.5%) strongly agreed while 2.5 agreed. 7.7% of the respondents were not sure.

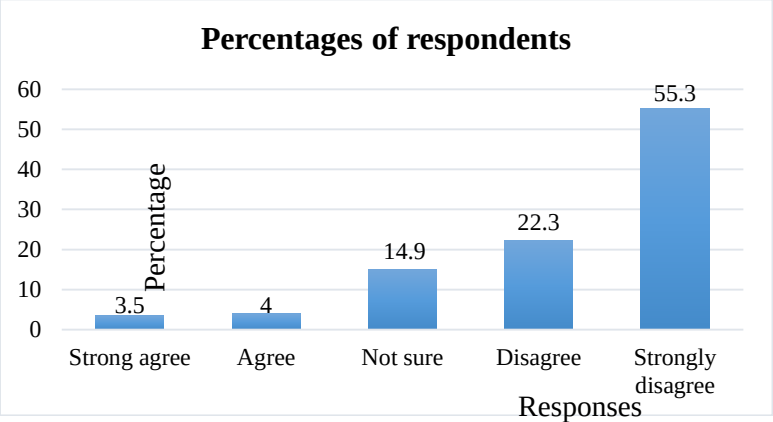
Interactions with the teachers revealed the followings:

> *'……Superstitious students behave in a strange way from normal. They react arrogantl I know of students who complained that part of their clothes have been cut. Superstitious students do things secretly…..*'

On the side of the parents revealed that:

> '*…..Such students perform mysterious things in school and at home. They relate every occurrence to danger…..*'

The interview with the teachers and parents did not reveal much either. In summary, students, teachers and parents did not accept that students do perform some rituals before sitting exams. The few students who accepted to have performed some ritual have very insignificant impact to students' academic performance. Respondents were asked if they didn't sweep rubbish out of the room at night because of passing exams. The findings were presented in figure 4.10 below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.10:Students Not Sweeping Rubbish at Night

Statistically, the greater majority of the respondents (55.3%) strongly disagreed followed by 22.3% who disagreed that they sweep rubbish out of the room at night because they would sweep away their luck of passing exams. Only 3.5% and 4.0% strongly agree and agreed respectively while 14.9% of the respondents were not sure.

The following responses were from teachers revealed that

> *'……anything is possible depending on the background of the student. ……always cautious of their environments…..*'

Responses from parents revealed that

> '*……they don't tell the truth. .....he/she tells you something very strange which you might not believe… live in isolation and don't share knowledge with others thinking that others are evil…..*'

Interview with the parents and teachers revealed that both teachers and parents accepted that some students could have been engaged in not sweeping rubbish out at night and could have also linked their action to sweeping away luck, but such actions were done secretly. However the number of students with this mentality was small and could not be associated with poor students' academic performance. Some teachers and parents explained that people are discouraged from sweeping rubbish out of the house at night because in the process, they could sweep away some valuable property. Furthermore, respondents were asked whether they associated certain events with bad luck that should not happen to them during exams. The responses were as in the table below.

Table 4.10: Associating Certain Events with Bad

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	12	5.9
Agree	30	14.9
Not sure	45	22.3
Disagree	51	25.2
Strongly disagree	64	31.7
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

From the table, 31.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 25.2% disagreed that they associate certain events with bad luck that should not happen to them during exams. 22.3% of the respondents were not sure while 14.9% and 5.9% agreed and strongly agreed respectively.

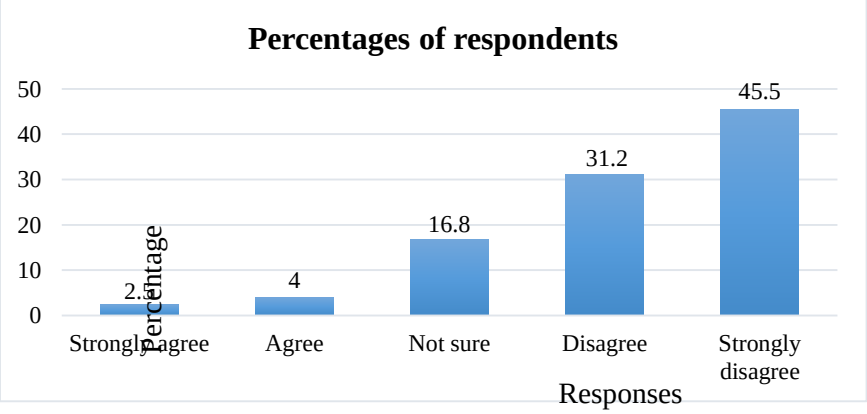
Responses from teachers revealed that:

> '*There are some students who complain especially when they meet an opposite sex. They complain of having bad day because they met an opposite sex….staying lonely in avoidance of others thinking that they are not good people……..they are frightful, afraid, aloof, crying …… Always cautious of the environment…….. They always feel insecure.*'

Also the parents contributed as follows:

> '…..*The students tend to isolate themselves from other students and society.*
> *…..always staying alone i.e. no friendship….Superstitious students live in isolation. False accusations against others…yes students practice superstition. Many use superstitious words that describe how unlucky they are….High rate of failure in academic work believing that bad luck surrounds others……*'

Both teachers and parents accepted that such kind of students who associated certain events that occurred to them with bad luck existed at school and displayed anti social behaviour of not associating with other fellow students. Furthermore, teachers and parents maintained that staying in isolation by such students was responsible for poor academic performance because those students would not consult, were always jealous, aggressive and accused their colleagues of many things. Respondents were whether they passed exams when they greeted some people before. Figure 4.11 below has the summary of the findings.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.11:Passing Exams after Greeting Some People

The statistics above showed that 45.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 31.2% disagreed that they passed exams when they greet some people before. 16.8% of the respondents were not sure while 4% agreed and 2.5% disagreed. A total of 76.7% of the students did not associate passing exams with greeting some specific people while a total of 6.5% associate greeting some people with the luck of passing exams. The percentage of students who associated greetings with luck was very small and could not contribute much to the poor students' academic performance.

Responses from teachers revealed that:

> '*….. Some students consider some persons to be special luck for them. They feel that mere talking to them is good luck enough…they don't like acceptable norms in the society. They associate themselves with specific people only…Yes ….because students who perform poorly always allege that there are some people behind their poor performance….They hate almost everybody. For them seeing some people only is bad luck already…..*'

On the other hand the parents had the followings to say:

> '*…..These students tend to isolate themselves and they don't greet anyhow…They have specific people they associate with…There are so many suspicion among these students that they tend to stay isolated and not to greet or talk to other students. Other students consider them to be arrogant……*'

Both teachers and parents agreed that some students did not want to greed other people because of superstitious feeling of bad or good luck. They all agreed that such students suffered from isolationism which eventually affected their academic performance. Whereas this was the case, the percentage as revealed from the field data was very small. Such students' behaviour could be categorised as isolated cases. Respondents were asked if there were some specific dressings that they put on to make them pass exams. The findings were as in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Putting On Some Specific Dressings to Pass Exams

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	2.5
Agree	7	3.5
Not sure	13	6.4
Disagree	54	26.7
Strongly disagree	123	60.9
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

Statistically, 60.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 26.7% disagreed that there are some specific dressings that they put on to make them pass exams. 6.4% of the respondents were not sure meanwhile 3.5% and 2.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. A total of 87.6% of the students did not associate putting on special dressings with luck to pass exams. Only 6% of the students associated some specific dressings with luck of passing exams.

Most of the teachers interviewed commented that they have not come across such assertion of wearing specific clothes for luck. However, a few commented thus

> '*……wearing of specific clothes for luck exist but mostly among the footballers. ……yes some people reported so. That there are some specific clothes that when they put on, give them luck. I think since students come from the community, they have this experience too…..*'

Views from the parents were not so different from those of the teachers. One parent said

> '*…….specific clothes include under garments as well. Some people put on specific under garments for luck. Some students though not so common, practice this too…*'

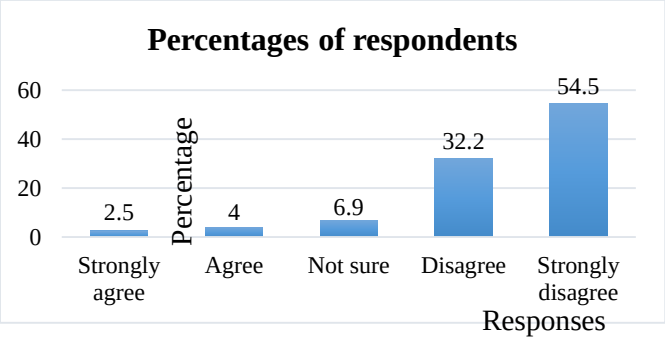
Teachers and parents agreed that some few cases of associating dressings with good luck existed even in the community. Hence some few students who associated dressings with luck could have naturally got the idea from their homes or community. However, the percentage of students who linked dressings with good luck was very insignificant to affect students' academic performance.

4.6 Impact of Traditional Medical Practices on Students' Academic Performance.

In this study, the third objective was to find out the impact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

Respondents were first asked whether they used traditional medicine very frequently. The findings were represented graphically as below.

The graphical representation is as follows.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.12:Frequent Use of Traditional Medicine

The statistics showed that 54.5% and 32.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they use traditional medicine very frequently. Meanwhile 2.5% strongly agreed and 4.0% agreed. 6.9% of the respondents were not sure. Overall, a total of 86.7% of the students did not agree to have used traditional medicine very frequently meanwhile 6.5% agreed to have used traditional medicine very frequently. The percentage of students who agreed to have used traditional medicine was very insignificant to contribute to poor academic performance of students. Out of the 44 teachers interviewed, 28 teachers (63.6%) agreed that students use

traditional medicine at school, 12 teachers (27.3%) did not agree that students use traditional medicine at school while 4 teachers (9.1%) were not sure.

Further interview with the teachers revealed the followings:

> '*….Students use traditional medicine but not openly because they fear being embarrassed by colleagues……. Students always administer the treatment in hiding or where he or she is alone…It is not easy to know how frequent but frequent moving out of class or school may be a sign…..*'

With the parents, 85.47% of them agreed that students engaged in the use of traditional medicine while at school. The following were responses from parents:

> '*…..Using medicine comes when a student is sick. This student when sick does not accept to go to hospital. He or she would prefer going home saying that the medicine is at home. When a sick student refuses to go to hospital but desires to go home instead…….such a student moves home frequently…..*'

Both teachers and parents accepted that students used traditional medicine both at school and at home. Furthermore students who use traditional medicine from school did so in hiding since they feared being embarrassed by their colleagues. However the statistical evidence showed that the number of students who used traditional medicine was very small and could not affect students' academic performance. Respondents were asked whether they stayed away from school for a long time when using traditional medicine. Table 4.12 below has the findings.

Table 4.12: Staying Away From School during Traditional Medical Treatment

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	2.5
Agree	8	4.0
Not sure	16	7.9
Disagree	60	29.7

Strongly disagree	113	55.9
Total	202	100.0

Source: Field Data (2019)

According to the data collected, 55.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 29.7% disagreed that they stayed away from school for a long time during treatment with traditional medicine. 7.9% of the respondents were not sure meanwhile 4% agreed and 2.5% strongly agreed. Majority of the students represented by 85.6% did not accept to have stayed away after being treated using traditional medicine. From the previous item, majority of the students denied using traditional medicine. It follows that the 6.5% representing those who stayed away from school after treatment using traditional medicine, were the ones who received treatment using traditional medicine.

According to the teachers,

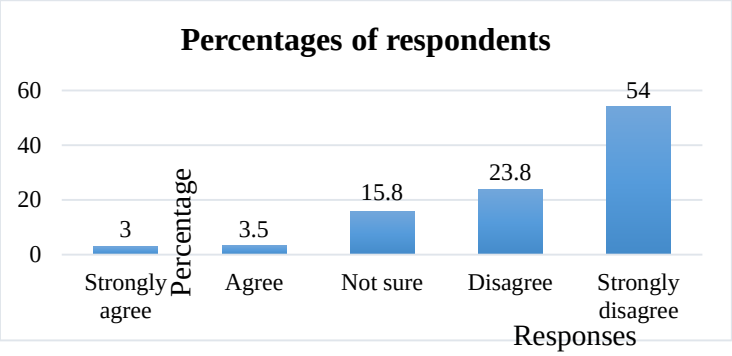
> '…..*Students undergoing traditional medical treatments are forced to stay away from school because of the nature of administration of the treatment. These involve cutting of the skin, some specific air style……. Some traditional medicines are applied using hot or warm water, rubbing the chests with herbs and putting powdery herbs on the faces. As long as the treatment is on, such a student cannot attend classes*…,…'

Responses from parents revealed that:

> '……*A student who uses traditional medicine goes home very frequently for treatment since the medicine is always administered over a long period of time….Some traditional medicines are very strong and make students dizzy. So they stay away from school until treatment is finished….Treatments using traditional medicine are done secretly and students tend to take such medicine from home*…….'

Both teachers and parents were in agreement that students who used traditional medicine actually stayed away from school due to the nature of the treatment. However statistical evidence from students indicated that this number of students was very insignificant.

Respondents were asked whether they were not allowed to touch anybody when on medical treatment using traditional medicine. The responses were presented figure 4.13 below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.13:Students not allowed to touch anybody during treatment

From the above statistical evidence, 54.0% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 23.8% disagreed that they are allowed to touch anybody during treatment. 15.8% of the respondents were not sure and 3.5% agreed that they are not allowed to touch anybody during treatment with traditional medicine. 3.0% strongly agreed. From the statistical information, overwhelming number of students totaling 77.8% did not accept that they were denied touching other people. This could be that they never used traditional medicine at all or the administering traditional medicine did not prevent them from touching other people. Only 6.5% accepted that they were not allowed to touch other people while on treatment. Again 6.5% is a very insignificant percent that could not cause poor students' academic performance.

Responses from teachers revealed that:

> '……*Some students stay away from others. They would be lonely. Others would not come to school at all….Sometimes the child goes away from school when getting traditional medicine….Students smear their faces with witch oil and use charms given by witch doctors. They have to follow specific instructions from the giver….Students dodge lessons to allow them administer medicine usually in hiding. Some are under instruction not to mix with others*…..'

Responses from parents revealed that:

> '*…..live in isolation. Some remain absent from school due to the nature of treatments. The medicine is administered in secret for fear of being seen. Some are given by witch doctors that have spiritual powers. ….mixing with other people reduces the strength of the medicine. No greeting people to make the medicine more effective….those who suffer from witchcraft effect use traditional medicine given by witch doctors and are instructed to keep away from people while on treatment. Such students are always absent from school…..*'

Both teachers and parents accepted that those students who were under treatment using traditional medicine actually stayed away from school. However the statistics from the students showed that the percentage of those who received treatment from traditional medicine was very negligible. Respondents were asked if being treated with traditional medicine made them stay isolated. The responses were as follows.

Table 4.13: StayingIsolated After Being Treated Using Traditional Medicine

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	7	3.5
Agree	14	6.9
Not sure	27	13.4
Disagree	57	28.2
Strongly disagree	97	48.0
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

Statistically, 48.0% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 28.2% disagreed that they stayed isolated when on treatment using traditional medicine. 13.4% were not sure and 6.9% agreed that they stay isolated meanwhile 3.5% strongly agreed that they stay isolated when under treatment using traditional medicine.

Of those who used traditional medicine, only 10.4% of the students agreed that they stayed isolated when on treatment using traditional medicine. 76.2% of the students did not agree to have stayed in isolation after receiving traditional medical treatment. The percentage of those

who stayed isolated when on treatment using traditional medicine was small enough not to create negative impact on students' academic performance.

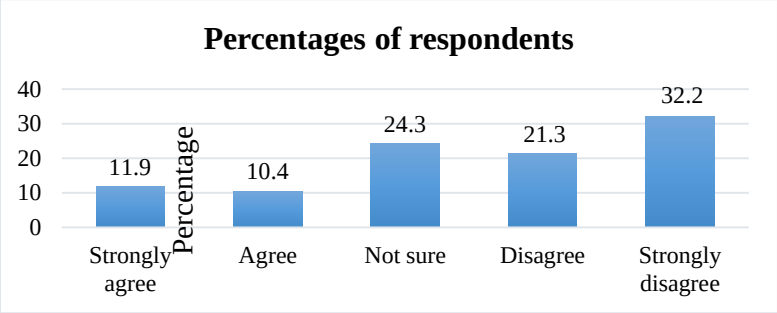
Responses from teachers revealed that:

> '……*Students under treatment using traditional medicine like going home whenever they are sick. In most cases they don't share their belongings…Some are unnecessarily too confident with themselves which make them not to mix freely with other students…….the medicine is bulky and students normally go home to get treated…… Traditional medicine makes some students sleepy so they keep away from classes for fear of being reprimanded……*'

Responses from parents revealed that:

> '…..*Some remain absent hence failing to focus in school……Some treatment involves burning herbs to chase evil spirits. This is usually done in a hut……. They spend longer time treating themselves in isolated places hence they are bound to miss lessons and exams……. It makes students dizzy and there is no time schedules for taking the medicine. Hence students usually go home for better management……..*'

Teachers and parents agreed that students stayed isolated when on treatment using traditional medicine because of the nature of treatments. However, the percentage of those students who stayed isolated when on treatment using traditional medicine was small hence the impact of their staying isolated could not have caused such a significant impact on students' academic performance.Respondents were asked if traditional medicine made them absent minded and they failed exams. The following data was collected and represented in figure 4.13 below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.14:**students who experienced absentmindedness after treatment**

Statistically, 32.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 21.3% disagreed that traditional medicine made them absent minded and made them failed exams. It was noted that 24.3% of the respondents were not sure while 10.4% agreed and 11.9% strongly agreed that taking traditional medicine made them absent minded and they failed exams.

The overall statistics showed that 53.5% of the students did not agree that traditional medicine made them absent minded and they failed exams simply because they did not use the traditional medicine and the had no experience. Whereas this was the case, 22.3% of the students agreed that traditional medicine made them absent minded and they failed exams. This could have been the reason why several students did not want to engage themselves in using traditional medicine. It followed that those who used traditional medicine agreed that the medicine made them absent minded.

The following information was obtained after the face to face interview with the teachers:

> '…..*Treatments by wearing animal parts, smearing the body with herbs and making cuts on the body disrupt concentration since the students are always thinking about the medicine….. Treatment is always done secretively. A student would spend more time protecting the cuts and concealing the traditional medicine hence lack of concentration and absent mindedness…Some students end up taking overdose of the medicine since there is no measure this can cause insanity or death….These students taking traditional medicine end up not performing well since their minds are taken up by the practice….Traditional medicine brings general body weakness majorly causing sleepiness and stomach pain…..*'

Responses from parents revealed that:

> '….*Using traditional medicine is trial and error. It the medicine does not cure the sickness, the student remained affected for long hence missing lessons and exams.*
> *…..they fail to read and fully rely on the medicine and therefore fail to pass in their exams….. Traditional medicine makes students dizzy and this causes students to miss classes and tests…..*'

Parents' and teachers' responses indicated that they were aware that students used traditional medicine and were aware of subsequent effects. The teachers and parents both agreed that traditional medicine affected the normal functionality of the students. However the percentage of students who used traditional medicine and experienced its effect was small compared to those who did not. This phenomenon could not impact on students' academic performance so much.

Respondents were asked whether they become sleepy during exams after taking traditional medicine. Table 4.14 below has the summary of the findings.

Table 4.14: Sleeping During Exams after Taking Traditional Medicine

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	13	6.4
Agree	17	8.4
Not sure	67	33.2
Disagree	41	20.3
Strongly disagree	64	31.7
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

From the table 4.14 above, 31.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 20.3% disagreed that they became sleepy during exams after taking traditional medicine. On the other hand 33.2% of the respondents were not sure meanwhile 8.4% agreed and 6.4% strongly agreed that after taking traditional medicine, they become sleepy even during exams.

The overall impact of this phenomenon is that many students could have been sleepy during exams due to many factors and could not associate it with taking traditional medicine. However, those students who did not sleep after taking traditional medicine constituted 52.0% and the percentage of those who were not sure was33.2%. The percentage of students who took traditional medicine and experienced the consequences constituted 14.8%. Overall 14.8% of students who actually experienced absent mindedness was small and the negative impact of this small percentage on students' academic performance was not significant.

Interaction with the teachers generated the following information:

> *'….For traditional medicine to work, a student must take it in large quantity. This can result into overdose which can cause dizziness in class and in exams…Burning herbs and putting it in the nostrils cause temporary dizziness and a student may end up being sleepy in class and in exams……. Some of the plants used for treatment are really poisonous. Burning the herbs and applying by incision caused dizziness and can cause a student to doze off even in exams…….Some students do chew herbs in their mouths. The herbs usually have slow and long lasting effects including causing one to fall asleep……*'

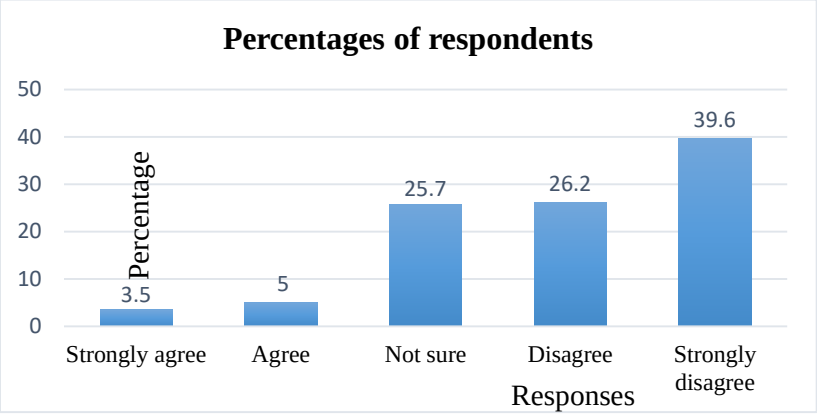
Interview with parents revealed the following information:

> *'……Some students take very strong concoction of medicine which results into their being sleepy….. If the sickness does not cure quickly, it means increasing the dose. This will become too much in the long run resulting into dizziness and sleeping……*'

Both teachers and parents agreed that traditional medicine had impact on students' behaviors. In this item, the number of students who were not sure was sufficiently high, standing at 33.2%. This implied that some students took traditional medicine and slept but could not associate the sleep with taking traditional medicine. However, the number of student who were affected negatively was found to be small hence the impact of taking traditional medicine and causing sleep was not sufficient to cause poor students' academic performance.

Respondents were asked whether the traditional medicine they took made them aggressive to

other students while as school. Their responses were summarised in figure 4.15 below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.15: Aggression against other students

From the graph, 39.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 26.2% disagreed that taking traditional medicine make them aggressive to other students while at school. 25.7% of the respondents were not sure meanwhile 5% agreed and 3.5% strongly agreed to have been aggressive after taking traditional medicine.

The statistics further revealed that a total of 65.8% of the students did not experience any kind of aggression after taking traditional medicine compared to a total of 8.5% who accepted to have been aggressive. The percentage of the students who became aggressive was not significant on other students' academic performance since most of the students took medication from home.

The teachers who were interviewed responded as follows.

> '……*Some students use traditional medicine in a different way. Some want to become supernormal persons causing fear in some students. They brag a lot in school and are*

> *very indiscipline….. Students using traditional medicine normally tend to be in isolation. They don't interact freely and they hate almost everybody…. Some traditional medicine makes students to possess extra courage to confront even the teachers! This creates indiscipline and fear…….*'

Responses from parents.

> '……*At home some of these children under treatment are handled very delicately. This creates some kind of big headedness in them and may be interpreted differently from school…. Yes some of the medicines are so strong and can make a child intoxicated and become aggressive…. Students taking traditional medicine are always teased from school. Naturally this makes them aggressive*……'

According to the teachers and parents, indeed some students who were treated using traditional medicine exhibited some form of aggression either while at home or at school. However the total percentage of these students was only 8.5% which was not significant enough to cause poor students' academic performance. Respondents were requested to give their degree of agreement or disagreement on whether they left school frequently and went home to take traditional medicine which made them miss tests. Table 4.15 below has the findings.

Table 4.15: Going Home Frequently to Take Traditional medicine

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	06	3.0
Agree	13	6.4
Not sure	31	15.3
Disagree	44	21.8
Strongly disagree	108	53.5
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

From the table 4.15 above, 53.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 21.8% disagreed. 15.3% of the respondents were not sure and 6.3% agreed while 3.0% strongly agreed that they

left school and went home frequently to take their traditional medicine and it made them miss tests. From the above statistical evidence, it can be seen that a total of 75.3% of the students did not agree to have gone home frequently with intent to take traditional medicine meanwhile a total of 9.3% of the students accepted that frequently they went home to take traditional medicine.

The percentage of students who left school frequently with intent to take traditional medicine was very small and could not have caused poor students' academic performance.

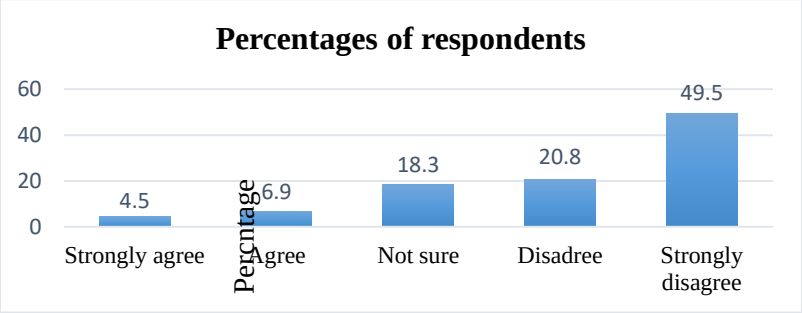
According to the interview with the teachers, the following came out:

> *'……Students who want traditional medical treatment usually go home because they fear being teased by others…. Some traditional medicines require application by experts hence students would go home to have it administered… It is secretive. Many students do it in secret places and the best place is at home where they fill relaxed and safe…..*'

According to the parents;

> *'….in most cases, student perform poorly due to frequent movement home for treatment using local medicine…. Some students fall sick very frequently and desire to go home for treatment instead of going to the hospital… It is all about belief. Many students who remain sick for more than three days usually think that it is the medicine man at home who would handle such sickness. They would go home frequently under instruction of the person applying the traditional medicine……*'

From the interview with teachers and parents, those who participated accepted that majority of students who took traditional medicine did so from home and as a result, they could not attend classes. However the number of students who were frequently absent as a result of traditional medical treatment was only 9.3%. This percentage was found to be very small and could to cause any significant negative impact on students' academic performance. Respondents were asked whether their fellow students teased them for taking traditional medicine and the teasing made them stayed out of class. The findings depicted in figure 4,16 below were as follows.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.16: Teasing for Taking Traditional Medicine

From the graph, 49.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 20.8% disagreed that their fellow students teased them for taking traditional medicine and it made them perform badly. 18.3% of the respondents were not sure while 6.9% and 4.5% agreed and strongly agreed respectively.

The statistical findings showed that a total of 70.3% of the students did not associate taking traditional medicine with being teased at school. Only 11.4% of the students accepted that they were teased at school for taking traditional medicine. This percentage was found to be small and could not impact negatively on students' academic performance.

During the interview with the teachers, the following came out.

> *'....Most of the students take traditional medicine either at home or in secret. It is difficult for someone to agree to be taking traditional medicine.... Students taking traditional medicine are feared when discovered. Some use it to intimidate others.....*'

On the side of the parents,

> *'.....Traditional medicine is taken in large quantities and it would be very bulky for a student to carry it to school. So most students prefer taking it from home.... Method of taking the medicine may restrict movements and may involve some extra rituals. It is more convenient for students to take the medicine from home where teasing does not arise.....*'

Whereas both teachers and parents agreed that students took traditional medicine, they differed on where the medicine was taken from. Teachers said the traditional medicine was taken secretly

while at school meanwhile parents contented that due to the nature of treatment, students preferred to take the medicine from home. This implied that the number of students who took their traditional medicine from school was small as indicated by only 11.4%. This small percentage could not significantly cause poor students' academic performance.

Respondents were asked whether they felt a lot of discomfort when they took traditional medicine which made them perform badly in exams. The finding were as recorded.

Table 4.16: Feeling a Lot of Discomfort after Taking Traditional Medicine

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	27	13.4
Agree	15	7.4
Not sure	47	23.3
Disagree	38	18.8
Strongly disagree	75	37.1
Total	**202**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2019)

From the table 4.16 above, it was evidently clear that 37.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 18.8% disagreed that they felt a lot of discomfort when they take local medicine. 23.3% of the respondents were not sure meanwhile 7.4% and 13.4% agreed and strongly agreed respectively.

The statistical evidence further revealed that a total of 55.9% of the students did not feel discomfort after taking traditional medicine meanwhile 20.8% agreed to have felt discomfort after taking traditional medicine and it was the cause of their poor performance. From this evidence, 20.8% was significant enough to cause poor students' academic performance.

Interview with the teachers revealed the following:

> *'.....some traditional medicines involve incisions so there is always discomfort where body cuts are involved. As the wounds heal, such a student would be absent from school…. Due to large volume of the medicine taken, there is discomfort definitely. Some of the medicines are bitter, others cause nausea meanwhile some require someone to stay in the sun for a long time for the medicine to be effective. If such sickness occurs during exams, the student obviously misses the exams……*'

The parents shared a common comment with the teachers as revealed below:

> *'…….Discomfort results from cuts. There are some major cuts inflicted on the patients that take a bit of time to heal…. Some of the medicines are applied on the body and cause a lot of pain. Body cuts and putting concoctions that are really painful…..Some of the pains are sociological. A patient is not allowed to talk or greet anyone and has to sit alone not even sharing food…..*'

From the above findings, both teachers and parents agreed that there was discomfort as a result of taking traditional medicine and the students who took the medicine experienced the discomfort. 20.8% of the students agreed to have felt the discomfort after taking the medicine. This percentage was significant to have caused poor academic performance.

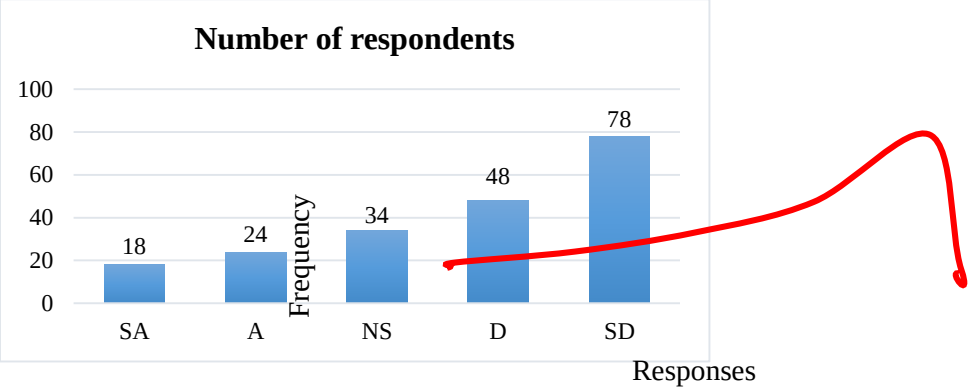
The overall result for respondents in line with this study on the effect of cultural practices on academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District was as summarised in the table below.

Table 4.17: Summary of responses on cultural practices

	SA	A	NS	D	SD	**Total**
Witchcraft	6	9	12	17	24	**68**
Superstition	9	11	9	15	24	**68**
Trad. Medic. practices	3	4	13	16	30	**66**
Total	**18**	**24**	**34**	**48**	**78**	**202**

Source: Field Data (2019)

Let SA represent Strongly agree, A represent Agree, NS represent not sure, D represent Disagree and SD represent Strongly disagree. The figure showing the cumulative number of respondents for each response is as below.



Source: Field Data (2019)

Figure 4.17: General results of the findings

From the graph above the frequency curve is negatively skewed. The negatively skewed curve means that majority of the students did not agree that cultural practices affected their academic performances. Hence from the graph, it can be concluded that cultural practices did not affect academic performance of students in Nebbi District.

4.7 Results of Hypothesis testing

The hypothesis of the study stated that:

Ho: There is no statistically significant effect of cultural practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District.

Respondents were categorised class by class after being asked whether cultural practices affected their academic performance. The table below is a summary of the findings.

Table 4.18 Responses by Class on the Effect of Cultural Practices on Academic Performance

Class	**Agree**	**Not sure**	**Disagree**	**Total**
S3	16	13	48	**rt = 77**
S4	26	21	78	**rt =125**
Total	**Ct = 42**	**Ct = 34**	**Ct = 126**	**Gt= 202**

Source: Field Data (2019)

CT = Column Total, RT = Raw Total and GT = Grand Total

Percentages of respondents who agreed $= \frac{42}{202} \times 100$

$= 20.8\%$

Percentages of respondents not sure $= \frac{34}{202} \times 100$

$= 16.8\%$

Percentages of respondents who disagreed $= \frac{126}{202} \times 100$

$= 62.4\%$

It follows that 20.8% of the respondents agreed that cultural practices influenced their academic performance meanwhile 16.8% of the respondents were not sure and 62.4% of the respondents did not agree that cultural practices influenced their academic performance.

A further statistical analysis was done by performing the χ^2test as follows.

Table 4.19: Observed and expected frequencies

Class	**Agree**		**Not sure**		**Disagree**	
	f_o	$f_e = \frac{CT \times RT}{GT}$	f_o	$f_e = \frac{CT \times RT}{GT}$	f_o	$f_e = \frac{CT \times RT}{GT}$
S3	16	16.01	13	12.96	48	48.03
S4	26	25.99	21	21.04	78	77.97
Total	**42**	**42**	**34**	**34**	**126**	**126**

Source: Field Data (2019)

Where f_o = observed frequency, f_e= expected frequency, **C**t = column total, **r**t = raw total and **g**t = grand total.

$$\chi^2 obs = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

Whereχ^2obs = observed χ^2

It follows that

$$\chi^2 obs = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$= \frac{(16 - 16.01)^2}{16.01} + \frac{(26 - 25.99)^2}{25.99} + \frac{(13 - 12.96)^2}{12.96} + \frac{(21 - 21.04)^2}{21.04}$$

$$+ \frac{(48 - 48.03)^2}{48.03} + \frac{(78 - 77.97)^2}{77.97}$$

$$= 0.00000625 + 0.00000385 + 0.0001235 + 0.0000760 + 0.0000187$$

$$+ 0.0000115$$

$$= 0.0002398$$

$$= 0.00024$$

At 5% level of significant with degree of freedom (df) = (2 – 1) (3 – 1) = 2,

$\chi^2_{5\%}(2) = 5.991$

But

$$0.00024 < 5.991$$

The observed χ^2 (χ^2obs) was 0.00024 while the χ^2 critical value (χ^2cv) at level of sign $\rho = 0.05$ and degree of freedom (df) = 2 was 5.991. Since the χ^2obs was less than the χ^2(cv), the results were statistically insignificant. Therefore, the stated null hypothesis was retained, while the alternative hypothesis was rejected. This implies that cultural practices do not affect students' academic performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study was conducted in order to examine how cultural practices affect students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. This Chapter presents the discussion of the results presented in Chapter Four. The discussion dwells on the theoretical foundations of this study as presented in Chapter Two and the empirical evidence presented in Chapter Four. The Chapter also provides a summary of the study findings, general conclusion and recommendation basing on the research objectives.

5.1.0 Summary of the Study Findings

In this study, the summary of the study findings was presented objective by objective as follows.

5.1.1 Influence of Witchcraft on Students' Academic Performance

The first study objective was to find out the influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. The study used questionnaires for

students and interview guides for both teachers and parents. In Chapter Four the study found out that whereas 50.00% of the teachers and 76.92% of the parents who participated in the study agreed that students actually use witchcraft while at school for the purpose of protection and inflicting suffering on their classmates, majority of the students (41) constituting 60.3% denied the use of witchcraft at school. Although there was denial among the students, the undertone of the denial was that they were aware of the existence of witchcraft practices at school.

5.1.2 Effect of Superstition on Students' Academic Performance

Objective two of the study was to investigate the effect of superstition on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. The majority of the students (39) representing 57.4% did not agree to have been involved in superstitious behavior yet they accepted that other students use superstitious belief at school. From the sample of teachers, 65.91% agreed that students practice superstition while at school meanwhile 91.67% of the parents accepted that indeed students used superstitions; a practice which they claimed to have originated from the community.

5.1.3 Impact of Traditional Medical Practices on Students' Academic Performance

The third study objective was to find out the impact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. Just like with witchcraft and superstition, majority of the students (46) representing 69.7% did not agree to have used traditional medicine and did not agree that traditional medicine had any effect on their academic activities.

Whereas this was the case with students, teachers and parents had contrary views. 63.60% of the teachers who participated in the study agreed that students use traditional medicine while at school meanwhile 85.47% of the parents accepted that students use traditional medicine while at

school. The study further showed that although the students denied the use of traditional medicine, they actually knew that other students used it secretly.

But at the end of it all the results of hypothesis testing indicated that they were statistically insignificant. Therefore, the stated null hypothesis was retained, while the alternative hypothesis was rejected. This implies that cultural practices do not affect students' academic performance.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Influence of Witchcraft on Students' Academic Performance

The first objective of the study was to find out the influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. Statistical evidence from figure 4.2 indicated that majority of the students represented by 40.1% were not sure whether evil spirits were being used on them. Whereas this was the case, 39.6% disagreed compared to 20.3% who agreed that evil spirits attacked them while at school. The study findings revealed that majority of the students were not aware of evil activities at school. The findings, therefore, implied that attack by evil spirits was a significant factor that causes poor students' academic performance and agreed with Harish (2010), that the idea of witchcraft is central to the day to day experience of an African and permeates every aspect of life in Sub-Saharan Africa.

From table 4.2, majority of the students represented by 52.0% disagreed that they frequently feel unexplained fear during examination time meanwhile 35.6% agreed that they frequently felt unexplained fear during examination time. Unexplained fear is associated with evil forces as a result of witchcraft and the number of students affected by unexplained fear was significantly large. This finding, therefore, concur with those of Teklemariam & Nyenze(2002) who found that in schools, witchcraft continues to dominate the minds of many teachers and students especially during moments of crisis when they are looking for answers to vexing issues.

Critically analysing figure 4.3, the general view of this finding indicated that 53.4% of the students did not agree that their failing to settle in class was due to somebody doing evil on them. Only 16.4% accepted that their failing to settle in class was due to somebody doing evil on them. The findings were in agreement with Mbogo (2017) who asserted that witchcraft is usually directed to someone by close relatives and neighbors who may have ongoing interpersonal conflicts.

From table 4.3, the overall implication of this finding indicated that overwhelming majority of the students constituting 66.8% did not disagree that they experienced unexplained sickness that prevented them from attending tests compared to only 26.7% who agreed. The percentage of students who experienced unexplained sickness was high. This was in agreement with Teklemariam and Nyenze (2002), who found that witchcraft practices also aimed at inflicting arm against a reveler especially where there is competition.

The statistical evidence from figure 4.4 showed that majority of the students constituting 76.7% did not accept that they heard voices of people they could not see. Only 12.9% of the students accepted that they heard voices of unseen persons while they were studying. This small percentage was found to be insignificant to cause poor students' academic performance.

The summary from table 4.4 showed that 55.9% of the students did not accept that they saw vision that interrupted their concentration while 28.7% accepted. The percentage of those who accepted was significant enough to contribute to poor students' academic performance.

A total of 83.7% of students overwhelmingly denied that they had strange behaviour associated with evil spirit as shown in figure 4.5. Whereas 11.9% were not sure, only 4.5% of those of the students generally agreed. The display of strange behaviour associated with evil spirits was very insignificant so much that it could not have caused very poor students' academic performance.

Although 51.9% of students agreed that some students used evil spirit to fail others as indicated in table 4.5, a total of 25.3% indicated that students disagreed although 22.8% of students were not sure as indicated by the column of not sure. On the contrary, however, the findings from the parents and teachers who agreed that students actually practiced witchcraft at school. Many students did not want to be associated with the use of evil spirits as asserted by Jill,(2009) that 'the accused children faced abuse by their parents, relatives or pastors who attempt exorcism through tactics such as withholding food or water and burning'. This finding showed the use of evil spirits by students on other students was significant enough to cause poor students' academic performance.

From figure 4.6, whereas receiving gift was common 66.3% of the students did not associate these gifts with evil intentions. However, 18.3% related the gifts to evil intentions of failing them. According to Julien (2012) under disguise, witches exert some powers over the receiver of gift. The percentage of students, who related the gifts to evil intentions of failing them though small, was significant to cause poor students' academic performance.

Findings in table 4.6 showed that overwhelming majority of students with 83.2% denied the practice of astral projection at school. Equally, teachers and parents did not witness such phenomena at school as well as in the community.

5.2.2 Effect of Superstition on Students' Academic Performance

The second objective of the study was to investigate the effect of superstitions on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. Findings depicted in figure 4.7, indicate that majority of the students constituting 81.2% associated prayers with requesting for Godly intervention but not with evil intentions. Meanwhile 8.9% of the students did not believe in prayers before exams. This 8.9% did not believe in God and they associated their successes to something else. The percentage of students who did not believe in prayers

before exams was insignificant and could not be the cause of students' poor academic performance.

From the table 4.7 and figure 4.8, overwhelming majority of the students agreed that their passing of exams were influenced by faith as shown by 58.9% who passed their exams by good luck as indicated in table 4.7. Also in figure 4.8, a total of 67.8% of the students based their performance on spirit medium through dreaming. Hence the beliefs in prayers, luck and dreams about successes or failures before sitting for exams dominated the minds of the students. This was in agreement with Sharma (2014) who found that in a number of cases, students based their reasoning on their beliefs about coins on luck or control. Superstitious beliefs in luck is learnt either from elders or a person can develop a unique belief.Dependency on superstitious beliefs such as good luck, bad luck, perceived effect and impending danger forced students to seek fortune tellers to explain some their difficult situations. Owing to this, it followed that students' beliefs in good luck, bad luck, perceived effect and impending danger was very significant to poor academic performance.

Furthermore, in table 4.8, the statistical summary indicated that 46.6% of the students did not accept that their academic results were influenced by forces they could not control and 35.1% agreed that their academic results were influenced by forces they could not control. These percentages indicate that the students neither accepted nor denied being influenced by forces they could not control. Parents and teachers generally agreed that some students felt that other students were using some invisible influence on them. Teachers and parents attributed poor performance to evil forces being used on students by other students. The teachers and parents associated this situation with superstitions.

The statistical summary as shown in figure 4.9 indicated that 81.2% of the students did not attribute their poor academic performance to possessing charms or amulets. Meanwhile only

5.5% attributed their poor academic performance to possessing charms or amulets. This statistics further showed that possessing amulets or charms was insignificant to poor academic performance of students. The finding did not concur with Ezeife (1993) cited in Undie, Durumaku, Agaba, & Undie (2015),who asserted that in African societies, such superstitious beliefs are intentionally imbued in the minds of the young child through tradition, culture and religion.

Results in Table 4.9 showed the statistical summary which indicated that a total of 88.7% of the students denied that they performed rituals before sitting exams. Only 4% accepted to have performed some rituals before sitting exams. The percentage of the students who agreed to have performed some rituals was very insignificant and could not be considered as the cause of poor students' academic performance.

Statistical findings in figure 4.10 further showed that 77.6% of the students did not associate sweeping rubbish out of the room at night with sweeping away luck to pass exams. Only 7.5% of the students associated sweeping rubbish out of the room at night with sweeping luck. Again the percentage of students who did not sweep rubbish out of their rooms at night was very small and could not be linked to poor students' academic performance. However, on the contrary, Undie, Ushie, Blessing, & Duruamaka(2018) asserted that superstitious beliefs still have a significant influence on the academic performance in early childhood science irrespective of sex of the pupil.

Whereas a total of 56.9% of the students did not associate certain events that occurred to them with bad luck as indicated in table 4.10, it was noted that 20.8% of the students actually did. The percentage of students who associated certain events that occurred to them with bad luck was significant to this study especially in students' social life. This was in agreement with

Ezeife (1993) who further asserted that even superficial interaction with an African child will reveal him as superstitious. The teachers and parents being people with greater experiences agreed with Ezeife (1993) too.

Findings from figure 4.11, revealed that a total of 76.7% of the students did not associate passing exams with greeting some specific people while a total of 6.5% associated greeting some people with the luck of passing exams. The percentage of students who associated greetings with luck was very small and could not contribute much to the poor students' academic performance.

Statistical evidence in table 4.11 indicated a total of 87.6% of the students did not associate putting on special dressings with luck to pass exams. Only 6% of the students associated some specific dressings with luck of passing exams. Putting on special dressings with luck to pass exams did not contribute to poor students' academic performance. This seems to be in disagreement with Undie, Ushie, Blessing, & Duruamaka (2018) who found that superstitious beliefs still have a significant influence on the academic performance in early childhood science irrespective of sex of the pupil. In all, superstitious behaviour associated with passing exams had little effect on students' academic performance.

5.2.3 Impact of Traditional Medical Practices on Students' Academic Performance

The third objective of this study was to find out the impact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance in selected schools in Nebbi District. From the study findings in figure 4.12 a total of 86.7% of the students did not agree to have used traditional medicine very frequently. The percentage of students who agreed to have used traditional medicine was 6.5% and this was very insignificant to contribute to poor academic performance of students. However, this does not concur with Kamatenesi & Oryem-Origa (2005)who found that in Uganda, traditional medicine usage for day to day healthcare needs is reported to be close to 90% and that women and children form the bulk of people reliant on herbal medicine.

Results in Table 4.12 showed that majority of the students represented by 85.6% did not accept to have stayed away from school after being treated using traditional medicine. From the previous item, majority of the students denied using traditional medicine. This implies that the 6.5% representing those who stayed away from school after treatment using traditional medicine, were the ones who received treatment using traditional medicine.

From the statistical evidence depicted in figure 4.13, overwhelming number of students totaling 77.8% did not accept that they were stopped from touching other people. This could have been because they never used traditional medicine at all or administering traditional medicine did not prevent them from touching other people. Only 6.5% accepted that they were not allowed to touch other people while on treatment. Again 6.5% is a very insignificant percent that could not cause poor students' academic performance.

In addition, study findings in Table 4.13 showed that of those who used traditional medicine, only 10.4% of the students agreed that they stayed isolated when on treatment. 76.2% of the students did not agree to have stayed in isolation after receiving traditional medical treatment. The percentage of those who stayed isolated when on treatment using traditional medicine was small enough not to create negative impact on students' academic performance. This is in agreement with Vedavathy (2003) who found that traditional medical knowledge is thought to be within every one's reach and WHO report 2003 that said, up to 80% of the population rely on the use of traditional medicine

The overall statistics in figure 4.14 showed that 53.5% of the students did not agree that traditional medicine made them absent minded and did not make them failed exams. This could also imply that these students did not use the traditional medicine at all and had no experience. Whereas this was the case, 22.3% of the students agreed that traditional medicine made them absent minded and made them to failed exams. Summarily, the percentage of those who used

traditional medicine and agreed that the medicine made them absent minded was significant to cause poor academic performance.

Statistical evidence reflected in table 4.14 revealed that the overall negative impact of sleeping after taking traditional medicine was minimal as shown by 14.8% of students who actually experienced sleep. However, those students who did not sleep after taking traditional medicine constituted 52.0% and the percentage of those who were not sure was 33.2%. The percentage of students who took traditional medicine and experienced the consequences constituted 14.8%. Overall the negative impact of this small percentage on students' academic performance was not significant.

The statistical data from figure 4.15 revealed that 65.8% of the students did not experience any kind of aggression after taking traditional medicine compared to 8.5% who accepted to have been aggressive. The percentage of the students who became aggressive was not significant to cause negative impact on other students' academic performance since most of the students took medication from home.

From the statistical data depicted in table 4.15, it was clear that a total of 75.3% of the students did not agree to have gone home frequently with intent to take traditional medicine meanwhile 9.3% of the students accepted that they frequently went home to take traditional medicine. The percentage of students who left school frequently with intent to take traditional medicine was very small and could not have caused poor students' academic performance.

Furthermore, statistical findings from figure 4.16 showed that 70.3% of the students did not associate taking traditional medicine with being teased at school. Only 11.4% of the students accepted that they were teased at school for taking traditional medicine. This percentage was found to be small and could not impact negatively on students' academic performance.

Statistical evidence from table 4.16 revealed that 55.9% of the students did not feel discomfort after taking traditional medicine meanwhile 20.8% agreed to have felt discomfort after taking traditional medicine and it was the cause of their poor performance. From this evidence, 20.8% was significant enough to cause poor students' academic performance. This was in agreement with Jasvir, Satvinder, & Anu(2013) who found that interaction between drugs and herbal medicine can result in unexpected concentration of drugs and can also cause undesired effects.

5.3 Conclusions

This study was conducted in order to examine how cultural practices affect students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. Conclusions arising from the study findings were made in light of the study objectives.

5.3.1. Influence of Witchcraft on Students' Academic Performance

Highlighting on the influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance, the study concluded that the influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance was associated with evil spirits attacks and unexplained fear which made students unsettled in class. Whereas witchcraft is rampant in Alur sub region, the influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance was insignificant. Students might have been practicing witchcraft in schools but the impact of this practice did not contribute much to the poor academic performance. Students who practiced witchcraft did so secretly with varying intentions.

5.3.2. Effect of Superstition on Students' Academic Performance

As regardsthe effects of superstition on students' academic performance, the study concluded that superstitious beliefs in prayers, lucks and dreams about successes or failures before sitting exams dominated the minds of the students and these affected their academic performance.

Although students practiced superstitions more than witchcraft, still the effect of superstition on students' academic performance was not so pronounced to have affected students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nebbi District. Superstition is practiced by almost everybody and students in secondary schools in Nebbi are no exception.

5.3.3. Impact of Traditional Medical Practices on Students' Academic Performance

On theimpact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance, the study concluded that whereas evil spirit, prayers, lucks, dreams about successes or failures in exams, absentmindedness and discomfort in class due to overdose of traditional medicine affected students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nebbi District, traditional medical practices have little impact on students' academic performance

5.4. Recommendations

The study was purposely carried out to examine how cultural practices affected students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. This section of the report presents the recommendations arising directly from the study findings as follows:

There should be a deliberate effort to harmonize cultural activities with school activities by strengthening guidance and counselling especially peer to peer counselling. Parents should be enlightened and encouraged to participate actively in school decision making process. The school managers should develop programs to help all parents to establish home environments that support children as students. This would enable parents to create awareness of own and others' challenges in parenting.

Nebbi District Local Government through the Education department and other stakeholders should design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about

school programs and children's progress. This would enable both parents and students to broaden their understanding of school policies on behavior, attendance and other areas of students conduct. In turn school managers and parents would be in better position to respond effectively to students' problems. Also parent and teacher interactions would ease communication among themselves.

Strong school-community relation should be developed to identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. This would address superstitious practices especially those linked with taboos should be explained to students so that they may appreciate cultural as well as scientific values.

Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including holiday programs for students, service integration through partnerships involving school; civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation and other agencies and organizations should be incorporated into school work plans. As part of school programme, parents especially those with good knowledge on culture should be invited to school to talk to students about cultural practices and how such practices can link to academic activities.

5.5. Suggested Areas for Further Research

This study was conducted in order to examine how cultural practices affect students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. It is, therefore, suggested that another study could be conducted to investigate the influence of parental involvements on academic performance of students in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. In addition, a study could also be conducted of the effect community influence on academic performance of

students in Nebbi District. Finally, an investigation could also be carried out on the impact of parents' level of education on students' academic performance.

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APPENDIX I

RESEARCH WORKPLAN 2019

Activity	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Drafting proposal										
Submitting draft proposal										
Defending proposal										
Correcting proposal										
Final submission of proposal										
Data collection										
Data analysis and report writing										
Submitting draft report										
Correction										
Submitting final report										
Defending report										
Binding and delivering report										

APPENDIX II

RESEARCH BUDGET

SN	Item		Quantity	Unit cost	Total cost
01	Research assistant		2	100,000	200,000
02	Cost of printing Draft and final proposal		6	10,000	60,000
03	Internet cost		-	-	40,000
04	Transport	(i) Data Collection	-	-	300,000
		(ii) Meeting supervisor	3	100,000	300,000
		(iii) Submissions of reports	2	100,000	200,000
05	Printing	(i) Draft report	3	15,000	45,000
		(ii) Final report	3	15,000	45,000
06	Binding report		3	100,000	300,000
07	Miscellaneous		-	-	200,000
	TOTAL				**1,690,000**

APPENDIX III

Questionnaire for students

Dear respondent

This questionnaire is intended to collect data on the influence of cultural practices on academic performance in selected secondary schools in Nebbi District. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help me gather the available relevant data on this topic. Your contribution will be treated with utmost confidence and respect. Kindly accept to be involved in this study and respond to the questions in the following sub sections by ticking in the box provided. Thank you

Otti Nyeko Walter (Researcher)

Section A

Respondent's Biodata

Respondent's biodata (please tick where appropriate)

1. Gender

   Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Class

   S.3 ☐ S.4 ☐

3. For how long have you been in this school?

   1 year ☐, 2 years ☐, 3 years ☐, 4 years ☐, 5 years ☐.

4. Age ☐ 12 – 15 years, ☐ 16 – 20 years, ☐ 20 years and above

Section B: Influence of witchcraft on students' academic performance

(1) There are some students who use evil spirits against me while I am at school.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagrees ☐.

(2) Frequently, I feel unexplained fear during examination time.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree Strongly Disagree ☐.

(3) I fail to settle in class because somebody is doing evil thing on me, due to witchcraft.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(4) I experience unexplained sickness that prevents me from attending tests.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(5) I hear voices during study times but I am not able to see the person talking.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(6) I see vision that interrupts my concentration during exams.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(7) My fellow students say that I have strange behaviour associated with evil spirits.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(8) There are some students who use evil spirits to fail other students.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

(9) I received gifts from my fellow student and I failed to concentrate in class later.

Strongly agree , Agree , Not sure , Disagree , Strongly disagree ☐.

(10) My fellow students disappear and reappear suddenly and make me fail in exams.

Strongly agree , Agree , Not sure , Disagree , Strongly disagree ☐.

Section C: Effect of superstition on students' academic performance

(1) Praying before going for exams makes me pass.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(2) I pass exams by good luck.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(3) I dream about my success before actually sitting for the exams.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(4) Many times my academic results are influenced by forces I cannot control.

Strongly agree ☐ , Agree ☐ , Not sure ☐ , Disagree ☐ , Strongly disagree ☐ .

(5) Wearing charms or amulets makes me perform better in exams.

Strongly agree ☐ , Agree ☐ , Not sure ☐ , Disagree ☐ , Strongly disagree ☐ .

(6) I usually perform some rituals before sitting exams.

Strongly agree ☐ , Agree ☐ , Not sure ☐ , Disagree ☐ , Strongly disagree ☐ .

(7) I don't sweep rubbish out of the room at night because I would sweep away my luck of passing exams.

Strongly agree ☐ , Agree ☐ , Not sure ☐ , Disagree ☐ , Strongly disagree ☐ .

(8) I associate certain events with bad luck that should not happen to me during exams.

Strongly agree ☐ , Agree ☐ , Not sure ☐ , Disagree ☐ , Strongly disagree ☐ .

(9) I pass my exams when I greet some people before.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(10) There are some specific dressings that I put on to make me pass exams.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

Section D: Impact of traditional medical practices on students' academic performance

(1) I use traditional medicine very frequently.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(2) During traditional medical treatment I stay away from school for a long time.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(3) I am not allowed to touch anybody when on traditional medical treatment using traditional medicine.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(4) I have been treated using local medicine and it makes me stay isolated.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(5) Traditional medicine makes me absent minded and I fail exams.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(6) After taking traditional medicine, it makes me sleepy even during exams.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(7) The traditional medicine I take makes me aggressive to other students while at school.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(8) I leave school and go home frequently to take my traditional medicine and it makes me miss tests.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

(9) My fellow students tease me for taking traditional medicine and I stay out of class.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly agree , Agree , Not sure , Disagree , Strongly disagree ☐.

(10) I feel a lot of discomfort when I take local medicine and it makes me perform badly in exams.

Strongly agree ☐, Agree ☐, Not sure ☐, Disagree ☐, Strongly disagree ☐.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION.

APENDIX IV

Interview guide

Date of interview …….

Time of interview ……

Participating institution ……

1. In your opinion do you think students practice witchcraft at school?

   Please explain.

2. What are the signs of a bewitched student?

3. How does witchcraft practices affect students' concentration in class?

4. How do students react to other students practicing witchcraft?

5 In your opinion do you think students practise superstition at school? Please explain.

6 In your own opinion, what are the effects of superstitious beliefs on students' termly academic grades?

7 What are the signs of a superstitious student?

8 How do students react to other students affected by superstitious beliefs?

9. In your own opinion do you think students use traditional medicine at school?

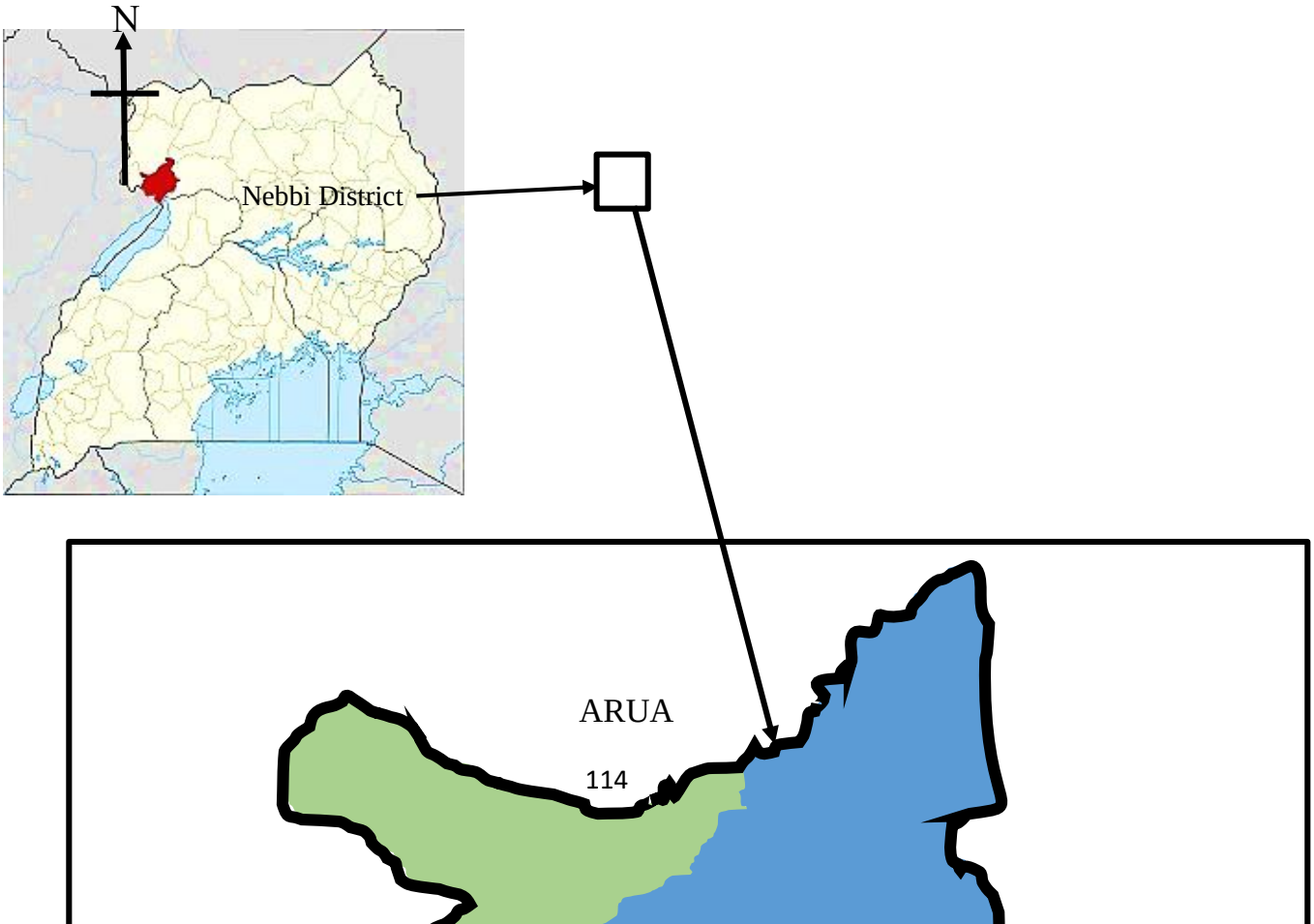
10. How do you identify a student who is undergoing treatment using traditional medicine?

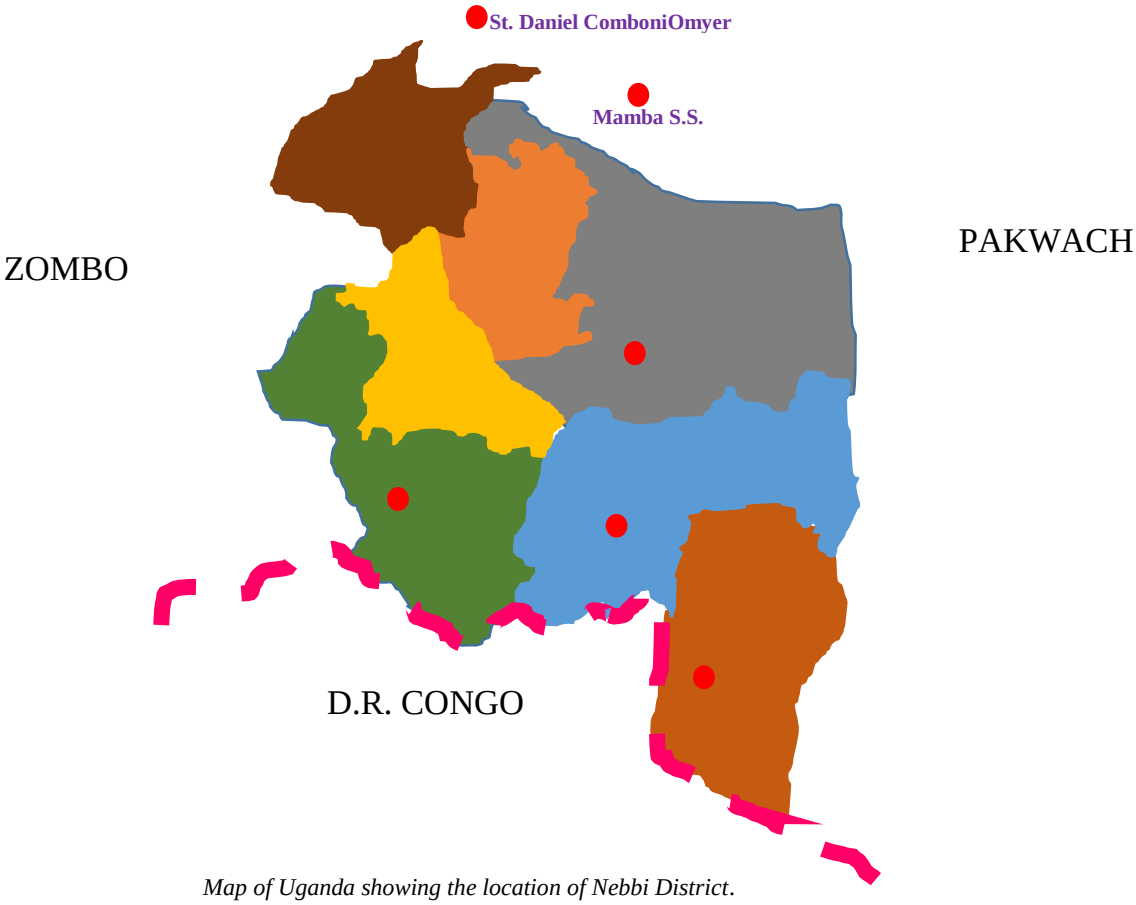
11. In your own opinion how does treatment using traditional medicine affect academic performance?

12. Kindly comment on the different types of traditional medical treatments commonly used by students.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION.

APPENDIX V





Map of Uganda showing the location of Nebbi District.

Source:*National Population and Housing Census 2014*

UNIVERSITY OF KISUBI

(Formerly known as Kisubi Brothers University College)

In Virtue We Educate

10th September, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCING OTTI NYEKO WALTER

I wish to introduce to you **Otti Nyeko Walter (17MAEL0009)** He is our student on the **Master of Arts in Education Leadership** programme that is being offered at the **University of Kisubi.**

He is carrying out a study on the topic: **"Cultural Practices and Students' Academic Performance in Selected Secondary Schools in Nebbi District"**

The purpose of this letter is to kindly request you to accord him such assistance as may be necessary to enable him access and obtain the data he might need for his study.

It is my hope that his findings will not only be useful for academic purposes but will also be of much benefit to the general public.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

UNIVERSITY OF KISUBI * Office of Graduate Studies and Research * P.O. Box 182, Entebbe

12 SEP 2019

Dr. Ongodia Simon Peter

Director, School of Graduate Studies and Research

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