

THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' CULTURAL DIVERSITY ON THEIR SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MUKONO DISTRICT

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I NANYONDO SYLVIA hereby declare to the best of my knowledge and understanding that every information reflected in this research has been written and compelled by myself and it's my original work.

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DECLARATION

This study report is dedicated to my cherished mother, Babirye Georgina , whose steadfast financial provision and inspiration has been the cornerstone of my academic journey. Not forgetting my beloved sisters Nassazi Christine and Namata Olivia, my best friend Aseru Catherine, your constant belief in my potential and your guidance in all aspects of life have inspired me to persevere and strive for excellence. Thank you for being my support and for always being there for me.

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I sincerely appreciate the time and efforts he invested in reviewing my work providing constructive criticism, and always motivating me to strive for Excellenc. His mentorship has been a source of inspiration and I'm truly grateful for the Knowledge and Skills have gained under his supervision

Thank you, Mr. Mwije solomon, you so much for being a pillar of support throughout this research process.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UCU.	:	Uganda Christian University
DV.	:	Dependant variable
IV.	:	Independent Variable
SI.	:	Social Interaction
CD.	:	Cultural Diversity
KII.	:	Key Informant Interviews
FGD.	:	Focused Group Discussion
V&N.	:	Values and Norms
QDA.	:	Qualitative Data Analysis
SES.	:	Social Economic Status
IG.	:	Interview Guide

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ABSTRACT

Locally Uganda Christian University is a private institution which has diverse student body from different cultural backgrounds. According to (Mugny Gabriel; et al, 2010)explored how cultural diversity affects social interactions in many educational institutions in Kampala, they found out that students group themselves according to cultural and regional similarities and this can lead to social divisions and tribalism. The targeted population for the study were all students enrolled at Uganda Christian University who were twenty and lecturers as key informants were five totaling to 25 respondents., the researcher used exploratory research design for the study, this design helped the researcher to explore new phenomenon or area of where little was known, this design also provided a deeper understanding, identified patterns and discovered new insights.

The researcher concluded that at least in the context of the Uganda Christian University the majority of the faculty and students recognize their beliefs, biases, values and assumptions about human conduct and how these affect their perception of the students in culturally diverse classrooms, they demonstrate inadequate knowledge of the international students' values, norms and languages. The researcher recommended that Uganda Christian University should re-establish the culture of appropriate dressing codes that seemed to be on decline may be due to complacency of the policy implementers so as to promote the values of the university as one of the best institutions in Uganda Christian University. (Najjengo, 2017)

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented the background of the study, the problem statement, the objectives, the research questions, and the scope of the study. It further highlighted the significance and conceptual framework of the study as per the study topic, which is "The influence of Students' cultural diversity on their social interactions in Uganda Christian University Mukono."

The study aimed at addressing the extent to which cultural diversity influenced social interaction among students at Uganda Christian University Mukono District. Specifically, the study sought to understand how diverse cultural differences affected students' ability to interact with others.

1.1 BACKGROUND

According to UNESCO (2017), Diversity was defined as, "people's differences which they may relate to their race, ethnicity, gender sexual orientation, languages, culture religion, mental and physical abilities, class and immigration. According to (Review, 2025) Culture diversity refers to the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. Therefore Cultural diversity played a crucial role in shaping individuals behaviors due to differences in cultural values, beliefs, norms and languages, thus different individuals from unique cultures are influenced differently

Globally, the population of students in Educational institutions had become diverse due to increased migrations and globalization. According to Banks (2015), found out that, "in education, cultural diversity leads to intercultural competence which Assists undergraduates to navigate and appreciate cultural differences." However social divisions were seen when students interacted with their fellow cultural groups, boosting social ranking. Nieto (2017), argued that, educational institutions are the best potential sites for positive intercultural interactions, unfortunately there were still some systems of inequalities and biases which sometimes affected how students from different cultural backgrounds interacted. Leeman and Reid (2015), emphasized the importance of inclusive programme of study and institutional policies that promote intercultural exchange as a means to reduce cultural barriers and enhance social unity.

In Africa, cultural diversity is manifested in many educational institutions, this was so because many countries are made up of many ethnic groups, languages, and cultural traditions. This diversity is especially common in higher institutions where students from different cultural backgrounds come together. Erasmus and de Wet (2017), found out that cultural diversity created chances of a friendly environment across cultures, but also chances of social divisions where by students group themselves depending on commonalities. Ochieng (2019), found out that, social interactions of diverse ethnic students in Kenyan Universities played an important role in discovering social networks and social inclusion. Onwuchekwa (2018), looked into Universities and found that students sometimes experienced difficulties in piloting social spaces to fit in, since there are many divisions the institution due to lack of enough intercultural programs that can help to bridge out these ethnic divisions. (Emiko.S; Kashima et al, 2020)

A study by Kayiwa and Matovu (2020), explained how cultural diversity in Ugandan universities influence social interactions, many students form social groups basing on ethnic commonalities. These social grouping help in providing a sense of identity and belonging, although sometimes limit broader social integration. In another study by Nanyonjo and Mbabazi (2019), emphasize the significance of administering intercultural dialogue in Ugandan schools, this will help to reduce ethnic divisions and promote social inclusivity among undergraduates. Wamala and Kimuli (2018), discovered that educational institutions in Uganda embrace inclusivity and they also promote cultural exchange programs, where by these institutions faced limited social divisions but more positive social interactions.

Locally Uganda Christian University is a private institution which has diverse student body from different cultural backgrounds. According to Nakabugo and Nyanzi (2018), explored how cultural diversity affects social interactions in many educational institutions in Kampala, they found out that students group themselves according to cultural and regional similarities and this can lead to social divisions and tribalism. Mugume (2020), researched the role of school policies in promoting inclusive social interactions and found out that institutions that prioritize intercultural programs reduced challenges to social isolation of students, since these programs render inclusivity and social responsibility among students which interplays between cultural diversity and social interaction which is relevant. by examining how students navigate cultural

differences and build social connections, this research will contribute valuable insights in to benefits and challenges of cultural diversity in higher education.1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Educational systems and settings were developed to be responsive to diversity in the way that value equally all students. Where by everyone was entitled to participate in their local educational settings equally, creating a friendly learning environment that created a sense of belonging and school pride among students body, which helped to improve the development of social interaction all-round educational settings. According to (Adijesi, 2024), Uganda Christian University guild committee, in collaboration with the department of student affairs, organized activities such as the week of international students and cultural galas that serves as a valuable platform to celebrate diversity. These events facilitated regular intercultural dialogues, encouraged cooperation in the academic and extracurricular activities, to dismantle barriers such as language and cultural ignorance, and ensure all students regardless of their nationality, felt included and valued. These events included cultural exhibitions, shared meals and sports activities, promoted harmonious aspect of campus life, where cultural differences enrich social interactions instead of creating divisions. But in reality, actual social interaction experiences were insignificant between different groups with varying cultural affiliations due to the diversity existing among students at educational institutions. According to (Badescu Emmanuel; et al, 2012)educational systems were identified as the root cause of social divisions in schools due to segregations of children from early ages basing on standardized assessments. Creating misunderstandings, miscommunication, social divisions, conflicts and social exclusion resulting in to limited cross-cultural engagements. Therefore the interplay between cultural diversity and interaction was particularly relevant component of its community, since it recognizes the importance of intercultural dialogue, exchange and understanding in fostering creativity and innovation and social cohesion. Therefore it was against this background that the researcher tends to find out the influence of Students cultural diversity on their social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono. (Medhi Marot et al, 2019)

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research study aimed at investigating the influence of Students cultural diversity on their social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono with the focus of understanding the

factors that facilitate or hinder meaningful social interactions among students from different cultural backgrounds and develop recommendations for fostering a more inclusive and harmonious social environment at Uganda Christian University Mukono.

1.4 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- I. To find out how diverse languages influence students social interaction in Uganda Christian University.
- II. To find out how diverse values influence students social interactions in Uganda Christian University Mukono.
- III. To find out how diverse norms influence students social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- I. How does diverse languages influence students social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono.
- II. How does diverse values influence students social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono.
- III. How does diverse norms influence students social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono.

1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study was conducted at Uganda Christian University located on plot 67-173 Bishops stage Tucker Road, PO.Box, Mukono District, Uganda. The area of study was chosen because it was one of the private institutions in Uganda which has culturally diverse students from different corners of the world, making it an ideal context to study intercultural and social interaction. Therefore this selected area helped me to investigate and explore how diverse cultures influence students social interactions in educational institutions. (Pauline, 2023)

This study investigated how students' cultural diversity influence their social interactions in Uganda Christian University. The study focused on undergraduates both male and female who joined in the year 2020 from the faculty of social sciences under the program of Bachelor's degree in social work and social administration in year 3 and yet to graduate as sample size, and administrators from social sciences faculty as my key informants.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION

I undertook this study "The influence of Students' cultural diversity on their social interactions in Uganda Christian University Mukono " because cultural diversity is a significant aspect of university life and understanding the impact on Social Interaction was crucial for promoting inclusivity and social cohesion. According to The Standard, a digital news outlet in Uganda Christian University(2024), argued that the university had promoted interactions among students from different cultural backgrounds like students from South Sudan, Kenya, Congo, Rwanda and so on, through actively creating space for cultural exchange, organizing events like International Students Week where students are free to show case their cultures through cultural exhibitions and shared meals, which was key factor in shaping social interactions at campus. And the reason why I choose Uganda Christian University Mukono is because it's a meeting point of students from diverse cultural contexts.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE

This study was intending to benefit culturally diverse students, the research was to help students better understand the dynamics of social interaction within a diverse setting, fostering a mutual respect, cultural exchange and improved communication. Students were to use this insight to navigate social spaces more effectively, to enhance their relationships and create inclusive peer networks.

Institutional Policy makers. The study provided valuable data for policy makers to design or modify policies that promote inclusivity, cultural awareness and equity opportunities for all students. This could influence campus activities, curricular and support services, ensuring that institutional frameworks support diversity and positive student engagement.

Researchers. The study helped researchers to build a body of knowledge on how cultural differences impacted students behavior, interactions and overall campus experiences. The study provided further studies on the relationship between cultural diversity and social interaction for future researchers who were to find the study useful.

Academicians. The study equipped educators with insights on how cultural diversity influenced classroom dynamics, student participation and collaboration, with this information educator can

adjust on their teaching methods to foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for diverse students.

1.9 THEORETICAL/ CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Social Interactionist Theory

Social interactionist theory emphasized the role of social interaction and communication in the development of an individual's identity and social understanding. It suggested that people create meaning through their interactions with others and that these interactions shape their social behavior and relationships. Hughes (2016) explored how symbolic interactionism can help individuals with Asperger's syndrome overcome social barriers, emphasizing the role of cultural symbols and communication in social inclusion. This study showed how understanding cultural symbols helps marginalized individuals integrate into broader social interactions, a concept relevant to your focus on culturally diverse students. According to (Marilia Mariano et al, 2018) the interactions between students and teachers and among students themselves—are mediated by cultural norms and symbols. In a multicultural setting, these interactions become more complex as individuals interpret symbols differently, depending on their cultural backgrounds. This creates both challenges and opportunities for social learning and interaction.

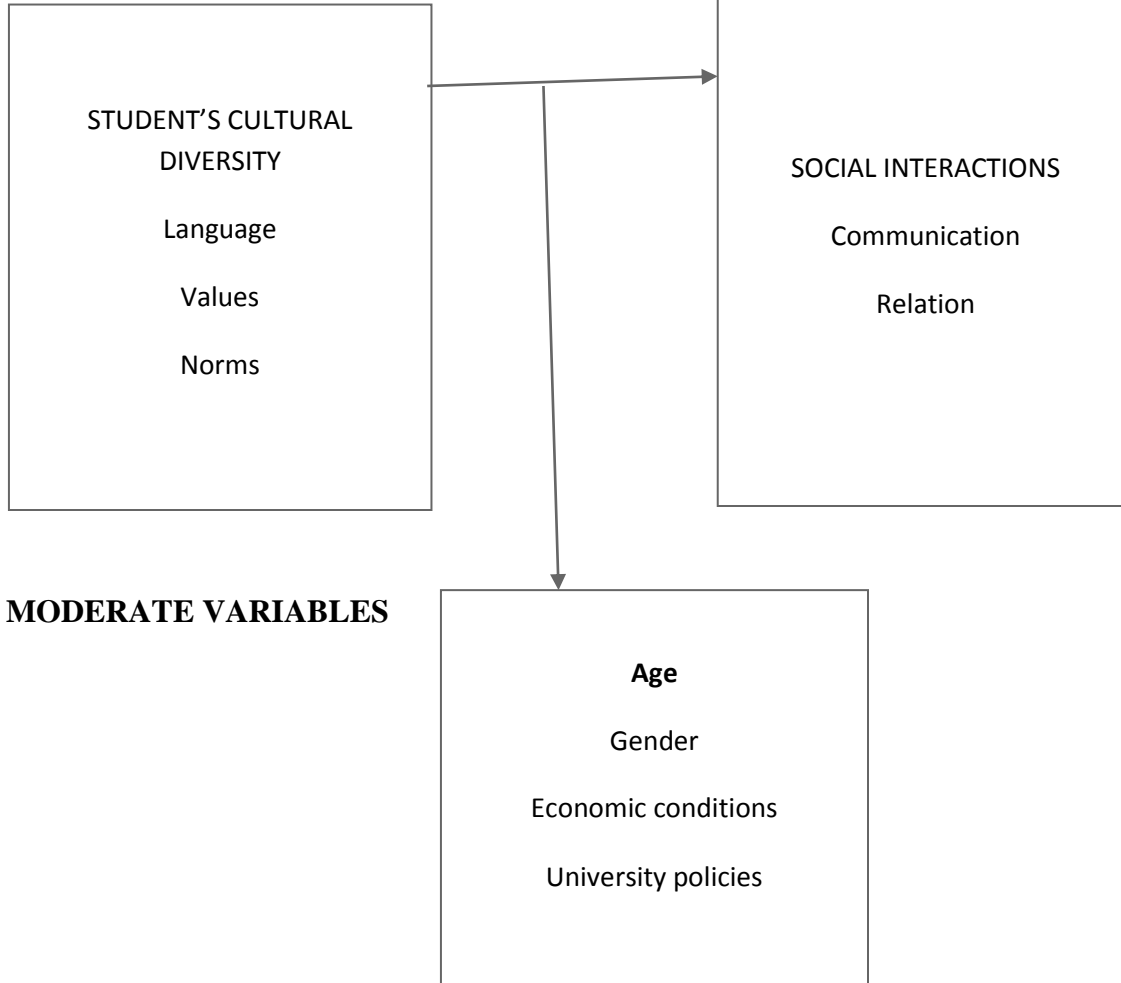
In the context of research study "The Influence of Students' Cultural Diversity on Their Social Interaction," social interactionist theory helps explain how students from diverse cultural backgrounds interact and influence each other's social behaviors and relationships. Cultural diversity can create different interpretations of symbols, gestures, and communication styles, which can influence how students interact in a multicultural environment.

I chose this theory because the research study focuses on understanding how students from diverse cultural backgrounds influence each other through social interaction. Social interactionist theory is ideal for studying this topic because it centers on how individuals interpret and create meaning through their interactions, which is critical in a multicultural student environment where diverse interpretations of social norms, communication styles, and behaviors come into play.

The conceptual framework

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE



The conceptual framework illustrated the influence of Students 'cultural diversity on their social interactions in Uganda Christian University Mukono, the students' cultural diversity is the independent variable which is measured using(languages, values and norms) and how they affect the dependent variables which are(communication styles, relations), and the moderate variables which are the other factors that can influence social interactions (Age,Gender, Economic conditions, University policies).

(language), how diverse languages influenced student's communication styles during their social interactions, According to Schwarzenthal et al.(2020), focused on the benefits of cultural diversity in classroom, emphasizing that students who are exposed to multiple languages develop better intercultural competence, which in turn enhanced their social interactions, the researcher found that classrooms with a positive cultural diversity climate, where multiple languages are embraced, provide with more opportunit to understand different backgrounds, led to more interactions.

How diverse values influence students relations during their social interactions. Alam (2020), explored the concept of cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity, noting that students who develop a high level of cultural intelligence through exposure to diverse values are better equipped to interact socially in multicultural settings.

(Norms), how diverse norms influence students relations during their social interaction. Chang et al. (2020) explored the complexity of cultural mismatch in higher education, focusing on how cultural norms influence the coping and help-seeking behaviors of first-generation college students. The study revealed that when there is mismatch between the cultural norms of students and those of the institution, it can hinder social interactions and contribute to feelings of isolation among students. However, when institutions actively work to align their norms with the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students, it leads to improved social interactions and more inclusive campus environment.

Moderate variables which include age, gender, economic conditions, and university policies.

Frontiersin (2021), explored the relationship between Age, Gender and sensitivity to social rewards among adolescents and young adults, the study found that social reward sensitivity is high in late adolescents especially those with 21 years, where girls generally enjoy more prosocial interactions than boys. Boys and girls show similar levels of negative social behaviour during adolescence, but these patterns diverge later as girls exhibit decrease in negative behaviour. Oup(2021), examined how economic conditions influence social interactions, individuals from lower economic backgrounds often face barriers in social settings, affecting their ability to participate in group activities, economic hardships can lead to social isolation or reduced interaction opportunities. Oup(2020), examined how University policies like support services and code of conduct affect students interactions. The study found that supportive Policies that encourage inclusion, cultural exchange and equitable treatment tend to foster positive social dynamics among diverse student groups.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter covered other works from other literatures. Other literary works are covered in this chapter. In order to compare, validate, and highlight differences, it was crucial to examine more closely at related studies on the impact of students' cultural variety on their social interactions and to review some of the relevant literature. As a result, the review of numerous literatures deemed pertinent to the study was intended to be included in this chapter.

2.1 Concept of students' cultural diversity

The range of cultural backgrounds, races, languages, and customs that were represented among students referred to as their "cultural diversity," and it shaped their worldviews, values, and social interactions. Cultural diversity in educational environments is about more than just the existence of other cultures; it's also about the interactions and exchanges that took place between students from different cultural backgrounds. Interactions like these frequently improve students' intercultural competence, which was essential for navigating and understanding the complexities of a multicultural setting (Chima E Abimbola; et al, 2024) went on to stress that a diverse student body created a rich learning environment in which a range of viewpoints contribute to a greater grasp of global concerns, thereby preparing students for a world that is increasingly interconnected.

Ethnic variety among student populations had a big Influence on social interactions by causing gaps to widen or close between various ethnic groups (Maryam Hussain; et al, 2019) Students from a variety of cultural origins were more likely to feel a feeling of belonging when educational institutions actively support diversity and inclusion. This improved good social interactions and lessens the likelihood that they might have encountered discrimination Conversely, the lack of inclusive policies could have resulted into cultural mismatches, making it

difficult for students from minority cultures to assimilate and fully engage in the institution's social and academic life.

Furthermore, the notion of cultural variety among students went beyond simple demographic representation to encompass institutional practices and regulations that facilitate or obstruct cross-cultural interactions noted that a dearth of equity, diversity, and inclusion programs that recognise and cater to the specific requirements of international students, for example, frequently makes it difficult for them to adjust to new cultural situations. According to (Chima E Abimbola; et al, 2024) comprehended cultural diversity necessitated a multifaceted approach that takes into account intercultural sensitivity, competence, and cultural intelligence. These factors are crucial for promoting successful cross-cultural communication and collaboration among students. These elements played a critical role in establishing a learning environment where all students, from diverse cultural backgrounds, can flourish and make significant contributions to the academic community.

2.2 Concept of social interactions

(Conolly, 2024) Social interactions among students were fundamental aspects of their educational experience, A key component of students' educational experience was social contact, which was greatly influenced by a number of variables, including cultural variety) defined social contact as the process through which people in a social setting shape one other's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, all of which were critical to their success in school and in society. Further underlined those social interactions served as a means via which students established social networks and social capital, crucial for academic achievement and emotional well-being in higher education. These relationships not only help students feel like they belonged, but they also gave under-represented students the support systems they frequently lack. (Review E. R., 2020).

Social interactions were crucial role in creating a welcoming and encouraging learning environment in higher education. Johnson et al. (2023) stressed the importance of socially interactive, collaborative learning environments for students' development of cultural competency and decrease in prejudice. These interactions required more than just knowledge sharing; they also entailed emotional and psychological engagement, which helped students from different backgrounds build empathy and understanding for one another. Moreover, Caetano et al.

(2020) contended that social contacts enable students to express their viewpoints and engage in intercultural learning, both of which were essential for fostering an inclusive learning environment. These kinds of settings promoted the exchange of varied cultural experiences, which enhances learning in general.

Additionally, social contacts were essential for assisting students in bridging cultural gaps and forming deep bonds. Eren (2023) asserts that social interactions help pupils acquire the critical cultural sensitivity and awareness necessary for successful cross-cultural communication. For international students, who can feel alone or excluded because of cultural differences, these relationships are especially crucial. Tavares (2024) added more weight to this argument by pointing out that healthy social connections foster a sense of inclusion and belonging, both of which are critical for the wellbeing and academic achievement of students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. For this reason, encouraging inclusive and culturally aware social interactions is essential to students' general growth and success in higher education.

2.3 The influence of diverse language on students' social interaction

In their study, Abacioglu et al. (2020) looked at how teachers' multicultural attitudes and capacity for perspective-taking support culturally responsive teaching, emphasising how having a variety of languages in the classroom can improve students' social interactions by encouraging inclusivity and understanding among peers. They discovered that students from different linguistic backgrounds felt more accepted and are more inclined to participate in social activities when professors actively engage with multiple languages. This enhanced peer relationships and improves classroom dynamics overall. Similarly, Baber (2022) investigated the impact of language diversity in online learning environments and discovered that maintaining social distance during the COVID-19 epidemic magnified the relevance of linguistic inclusivity in establishing social relationships among students. The study found that when online platforms recognized and included a variety of languages were acknowledged and included into online platforms, students were more inclined to communicate socially, despite the physical barrier, suggesting that language variety is vital for preserving social bonds in virtual learning situations.

Schwarzenthal et al. (2020) emphasised that children who were exposed to many languages acquire higher intercultural competency, which in turn improves their social relationships. This

article focused on the advantages of cultural variety in the classroom. Researchers discovered that children have more opportunity to interact with classmates from diverse origins in classrooms that foster positive cultural diversity and appreciate numerous languages. This resulted in deeper social bonds between students and their peers. Similar to this, Vietze et al. (2020) looked into how peer culture socialisation affected minority students' social lives and found that students who biologically varied peer groups are more likely to feel satisfied with their lives and have a strong sense of cultural identity. It had been discovered that fostering this cultural identity through exposure to several languages enhanced pupils' capacity were discovered to have a favourable impact on pupils' social interaction skills since it offered a platform for forming bonds.

Tavares (2024) investigated the experiences of international students with respect to equity, diversity, and inclusion. They discovered that while language obstacles frequently impeded social connections, students improved their ability to connect with peers when these barriers were addressed through institutional support. According to the research, offering language support services to kids from diverse linguistic backgrounds like translation and language learning programs greatly enhanced their social integration. Alam (2020) conducted a study on the relationship between cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity. The findings of the study indicated that students with higher levels of cultural intelligence many of which are derived from exposure to multiple languages are better able to navigate social interactions in a variety of settings. According to Alam's research, linguistic diversity improved pupils' comprehension and respect of other languages in addition to facilitating communication but it strengthened pupils' comprehension and appreciation of cultural differences, resulted in more fruitful social interactions.

Mishra (2020) examined the connection between social networks, social capital, and academic achievements, emphasised that students who belonged to linguistically diverse social networks typically had higher levels of social capital, which has a favourable effect on their academic achievement. The study discovered that when children are able to communicate in various languages, they are more likely to create diverse social ties, which provides them with a broader support system and boosts their capacity to thrive academically. This result is consistent with research by Caetano et al. (2020), which looked at student voice and involvement in intercultural

education. They found that encouraging students to speak in their native tongues increases their sense of worth and inclusion in the classroom, which improves their social interactions and involvement in general.

Johnson et al. (2023) studied the role of collaborative teacher study groups in developing educators' cultural competence, found that when instructors are trained to respect and utilize multiple languages in their teaching, students' social interactions increased dramatically. The study highlighted the need of teachers who are tolerant of linguistic variety and culturally competent in order to foster secure classroom environments where children feel comfortable interacting with one another and developed stronger peer connections. In a similar vein, Hébert's (2021) investigation of the social and emotional lives of talented students revealed that multilingual individuals frequently possessed stronger social skills and were more adept at building relationships with their peers. According to Hébert's research, language variety benefits kids' cognitive capacities and is essential for their social development, especially in

Phillips et al. (2020) examined the enduring issue of cultural mismatch in higher education, emphasizing that, depending on how it is handled in the classroom, linguistic variety could have either reduced or increase social divides among students. According to the study, when linguistic diversity is valued and encouraged, it lessened cultural mismatch and fostered improved social relationships between students from various backgrounds. The research of Tibenda et al. (2021), who looked at how pedagogy may be adjusted to cultural contexts, supported this conclusion by showing that include students' home languages in the curriculum improves their capacity for social interaction with their peers. According to the study, children were more willing to participate in social activities when they saw representations of their languages in the curriculum and this improved their capacity for social interaction with classmates. According to the study, students are more inclined to participate in social activities and create a more welcoming and dynamic learning environment when they see representation of their languages in the curriculum.

Stahl & Maznevski (2021) looked explored how cultural variety affects multicultural work groups and discovered that social interactions within teams are greatly influenced by language diversity. The study found that while multilingual teams have more complex social dynamics overall, when handled well, this diversity fosters richer relationships and improved teamwork. The results of Lubaale (2020), who looked into gender disparities among students in Ugandan

higher education, support this. They discovered that, depending on how it is managed inside the institution, language variety can either increase or decrease social tensions. According to the study, encouraging linguistic inclusion and giving children the tools they need to acquire and utilized various languages helped lower social barriers and improved communication amongst students from different backgrounds.

2.4 The influence of diverse values on students' social interaction

Eren (2023) investigated how different cultural values affected students' social interactions. He found that participating in cross-cultural interactions, like tele collaboration, greatly raises students' awareness of cultural variety and strengthens their social skills. According to the study, when students from various cultural backgrounds work together on collaborative projects, they are exposed to a wider range of values, which helps them understand each other better and have more meaningful and productive social interactions. This finding is reinforced by Mishra (2020), who did a systematic review of social networks and social capital in higher education. Mishra's research highlighted the social capital of students who are exposed to a variety of cultural values within their social networks tends to grow, which has a good impact on both their social and academic relationships. Incorporating varied values into kids' social contexts enhances their social experiences and gives them the skills they need to flourish in multicultural environments.

Tavares (2024) investigated the experiences of international students and discovered that a variety of cultural values are vital in forming students' social interaction skills and sense of identity. According to the study, kids from different cultural backgrounds feel more appreciated and included when their schools actively support equality, diversity, and inclusion. This improves the students' social relationships. However, children frequently feel excluded when their varied values are disregarded, which makes it difficult for them to integrate socially and interact with their peers. Alam (2020), who studied cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity, echoes this conclusion by pointing out that students who acquire a high degree of cultural intelligence through exposure to a variety of values are better prepared to participate socially in multicultural contexts. Alam's research highlighted the significance of developing cultural intelligence was highlighted by Alam's research as a way to promote more harmonious social interactions between students from various cultural backgrounds.

Hébert (2021) investigated the social and emotional lives of talented students and found that social skills and peer interaction are greatly improved by exposure to a variety of cultural values. According to the study, talented kids who are supported in embracing and comprehending a variety of values are more likely to grow in empathy and intercultural competency—two qualities that are essential for positive social relationships. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Chang et al. (2020), who looked at the impact of cultural mismatch in higher education on first-generation college students. According to Chang's research, children who are exposed to a variety of values in the classroom are more likely to ask for assistance when they need it and to form social networks that support their academic and social success. They are also more equipped to deal with cultural incompatibilities.

Hussain & Jones (2021) examined the experiences of students of colour in higher education and discovered that social connections between students from various cultural origins can be severely limited by prejudice and a lack of awareness about diversity. The research found that when institutions fail to recognise and integrate varied values, students of color typically feel alienated, leading to lower social connections and a diminished sense of belonging. On the other hand, kids are more likely to connect positively with others and form a greater sense of community when varied values are actively promoted and embraced. Cuyjet et al. (2023), who covered the significance of multiculturalism on campus and the function of varied values in fostering inclusive educational environments, lend support to this viewpoint. Their research revealed that establishments that place a high priority on multiculturalism and the incorporation of varied values are better at encouraging social relationships between students with different ethnic origins.

Baber (2022) investigated the significance of varied values in virtual learning settings, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and discovered that preserving social distance increased the value of cultural inclusion in promoting social connections. The research indicated that when varied values were introduced into online learning platforms, students were more likely to engage in meaningful social connections, despite the physical separation. Phillips et al. (2020), who investigated the persistence of cultural mismatch in higher education and its effects on first-generation students, verify this finding. According to Phillips' research, first-generation students do better academically and socially when varied beliefs are incorporated into the

classroom. This is because they are more adept at navigating cultural incompatibilities and are more likely to build strong social networks which support their achievement in school and in society.

Caetano et al. (2020) emphasised the importance of varied values in fostering social connections and student voice and engagement in multicultural education. The study discovered that kids are more likely to engage in social activities and build deep relationships with their peers when they are given opportunities to display their varied cultural values. Stahl & Maznevski's (2021) research, which looked at how cultural diversity affected multicultural work groups, supports this conclusion by demonstrating that incorporating different values into a team fosters more meaningful social relationships and improved teamwork. According to the study, team members are more likely to participate in positive social interactions that advance the group's performance as a whole when they are encouraged to accept and value differences in values. They are more inclined to participate in positive social interactions that advance the group's success as a whole.

Najjuma et al. (2022), examined how institutional practices shaped the lives of refugee students in Ugandan higher education, and they found that promoting social relationships between students from various cultural origins requires the integration of multiple values. The study discovered that refugee students are more likely to feel included and participate in social interactions that improve their academic and social experiences when institutions adopt policies that acknowledge and encourage varied cultural values. Lubaale (2020), who investigated gender disparities among students in Ugandan higher education, agreed, pointing out that fostering relationships and bridging social divides between students with varied gender and cultural backgrounds can be achieved through promoting diverse values.

Tibenda et al. (2021), concentrated on modifying pedagogy to fit cultural settings, emphasising the value of incorporating a range of values into teaching methods to improve student-to-student social interactions. According to the research, teachers who take into account the varied cultural values of their students' students not only increase student involvement but also promote healthy peer relationships. Abacioglu et al. (2020), who investigated the function of teachers' intercultural attitudes in culturally responsive education, corroborate this conclusion. According to their research, educators who actively embrace a range of beliefs foster classroom

environments where students feel comfortable and motivated to socialise, which fosters stronger peer relationships and a more inclusive educational experience.

2.5 The influence of diverse norms on students' social interaction

Schwarzenthal et al. (2020) looked at how different cultural norms affect how students interact with one another in classes with varied cultural backgrounds. According to their research, students were more likely to acquire intercultural competence—which improved social interactions between various ethnic groups—if they were exposed to a classroom setting that actively encouraged cultural variety. This study emphasises how crucial it is to foster a welcoming environment for cultural diversity in classrooms in order to improve students' social skills while interacting with classmates from other backgrounds. Similar to this, Hussain & Jones (2021) looked into how diversity and prejudice in educational institutions affected students of colour's experiences. They found that when different standards were favourably enforced, it greatly enhanced these students' sense of belonging and promoted healthier social connections.

Vietze et al. (2020) examined how minority students preserve cultural identity and improve social interactions through peer cultural socialisation. According to their research, peer interactions that uphold the cultural values of minority kids result in higher life satisfaction and stronger school values, both of which improve social interaction in the classroom setting. Furthermore, Tavares (2024) examined how equity, diversity, and inclusion affected international students. She found that when educational institutions embrace norms that welcome students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, international students feel more accepted, which greatly enhances their social interactions with local and other international students.

Alam (2020) examined how students conceptualize cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity and how that influences social interaction in learning environments. According to Alam's research, kids with high levels of intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence are better able to navigate and respect a variety of cultural norms, which improves their social interactions with classmates from other backgrounds. In a different study, Stahl & Maznevski (2021) looked at how cultural diversity affects multicultural work groups and discovered that different norms in educational settings help students learn to value and integrate other cultural perspectives, which improves team dynamics and social interactions.

Chang et al. (2020), examined the complexities of cultural mismatch in higher education, with particular attention to the ways in which first-generation college students' coping and help-seeking behaviours are influenced by cultural norms. Their research showed that social interactions among students might be hampered and feelings of isolation can be exacerbated when there is a discrepancy between the cultural norms of the school and those of the students. On the other hand, better social interactions and a more inclusive campus climate result when institutions deliberately seek to match their norms with the many cultural backgrounds of their students (Chang et al., 2020). Similarly, Cuyjet et al. (2023) emphasised how multiculturalism on campus, when effectively integrated into institutional standards, increases understanding and inclusion, resulting to more favourable social interactions among students from various cultural backgrounds.

Mishra (2020), conducted a systematic review with a focus on the contribution that social networks, social capital, and social support make to under-represented students' academic success. Mishra discovered that norms that support students' growth of social networks and social capital improve their social interactions and help them succeed academically in educational institutions. Johnson et al. (2023) investigated the augmentation of teachers' cultural competency via cooperative teacher study groups. They discovered that these endeavours enhance teachers' comprehension of varied cultural norms, thereby favourably impacting students' social interactions in the classroom.

Abacioglu et al. (2020) investigated the connection between educators' intercultural attitudes and their capacity to deliver instruction that is sensitive to cultural differences. According to their research, educators who have a strong global mindset and the capacity to see things from other angles are better at fostering classroom environments that respect and incorporate a variety of cultural norms, which enhances student social connections. Hébert (2021) also investigated the social and emotional lives of talented students and discovered that improved social relationships and emotional well-being are fostered in educational environments when norms are adopted that recognise and encourage brilliant students' distinct cultural origins.

Eren (2023) examined how telecollaboration affects pre-service teachers' future classroom interactions by helping them become more critical culturally aware. According to Eren's research, telecollaboration exposes pre-service teachers to a variety of cultural norms, raising their

awareness of cultural differences and enabling them to engage in more inclusive and productive social interactions with students from different backgrounds. Furthermore, Baber (2022) investigated how social interaction affected the efficiency of virtual learning, specifically with preserving social distancing amongst the COVID-19 epidemic. Baber discovered that students are more likely to participate meaningfully with their classmates in online learning settings that integrate norms that support social interaction and cultural inclusion. This results in improved learning outcomes and greater social bonds

2.6 Summary and literature gap

The literature study stressed the significance of students' cultural variety, language diversity, and various values in structuring social relationships within educational settings. It highlighted how intercultural competency and inclusive practices could promote healthy social relationships amongst students from different backgrounds. Even though previous research had extensively examined how cultural diversity affects social interactions, more investigation was necessary to fully understand how these dynamics specifically impacted minority and international students' academic success and social integration in various educational contexts.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented the research design, study population, sample size, data collection methods, sampling procedures, research tools as well as the reliability and validity of instruments. These components collaboratively outlined the methodology that was employed to explore the influence of Students cultural diversity on their social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Jenkin, et, al (2017), a research design "is the set of steps you take to collect and analyze your research data." This meant that the research design outlines the overall approach or blueprint that guided the researcher to conduct research. It determined the methods and procedures for gathering and interpreting data. The researcher used exploratory research design for the study, this design helped the researcher to explore new phenomenon or area of where little was known, this design also gave a deeper understanding, identified patterns and discovered new insights (Swedberg, 2020). The exploratory design employed open-ended questions which allowed the discovery of new themes and patterns, it allowed small sample size as the goal was to gain depth rather than breadth of understanding. The design employed qualitative methods which consisted of interviews because they enable the respondents to explore and broadly express their ideas about the topic.

3.2 AREA OF STUDY

The study focused on Ugandan Christian University. It was chosen because it's one of the private institutions in Uganda which had culturally diverse students from different corners of the world. Making it an ideal context to study intercultural relations and social interactions

3.3 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The study used primary source of information in order to explore the influence of Students cultural diversity on their social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono.

Primary data

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), primary data is “the data collected specifically for a research project at hand, often using methods like surveys, experiments, or interviews, which provide firsthand, unique information to answer research questions.”

3.4 POPULATION

The study focused on undergraduate both male and female who joined in the year 2020 from the faculty of social sciences under the program of Bachelor’s degree in social work and social administration in year 3 and they were yet to graduate as sample size and administrators from the faculty of social sciences as my key informants.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method also known as selective or subjective sampling. This is a form of sampling where the researcher selected elements or informants that he/she believed were appropriate or connected to the study (Creswell, 2014). It was mainly used on respondents who were more knowledgeable on the topic of study. This technique helped a researcher to select culturally diverse students who knew how culture influenced their social interactions at the University.

3.6 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researcher obtained necessary ethical clearances and permissions from relevant authorities such as the supervisor, University Admission, institutional review boards

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Social Sciences in Uganda Christian University, after which he was seeking for permission from Administration to approach

various respondents to conduct interviews and distribute the questionnaires after the respondents had consented.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS/METHODS

Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant interviews helps to get in-depth information from the key informants, an unstructured informant interview guide will be employed as a tool. The interview guide will provide a summary of current events and questions that were investigated during the interviews. The questions in the guide will be designed to elicit opinions regarding the topic under study. Key informant interviews were used because they offer detailed information that may not be possible to gather when utilizing a questionnaire, as recommended by (Mugenda, 2003).

Focus Group Discussions interview guides. Were used to collect data from the students as the research respondents to answer and meet the research questions and objectives.

3.8 Data collection tools/ instruments

The study employed one data collection tool. It comprise interview guide, which is briefly detailed in the subsection that follows.

Interview Guide

An interview guide is a data collection instrument that supports the researcher by directing an interview process toward the objectives and issues regarding the study (Etyang, 2018). An interview is a qualitative research method that relies on asking questions in order to collect data (George, 2022). Interviews involved two or more people, one of whom was the interviewer asking the questions. The interview guide assisted the researcher to assess whether all questions have been asked or not.

3.9 DATA PROCESSING/ ANALYSIS

Data analysis

Data analysis is the act of converting raw data into usable information, usually provided in the form of a published analytical piece, in order to increase the value of the statistical output (Amin, 2005). The following subsections provided a detailed explanation of the analyses.

Analysis of qualitative data:

To create relevant phrases, qualitative data was rearranged. A thematic method was utilized to evaluate qualitative data (Graue, 2015). The findings were presented together with a few direct quotations from participants to provide examples of the recurring themes that were identified in relation to each of the interview's guiding questions.

Data editing:

This required the researcher to edit the data by examining the collected raw data to detect errors and omissions. Therefore, the researcher undertook careful scrutiny of the completed questionnaires. Editing was of help to ensure that the data was accurate, consistent with other facts gathered, uniformly entered, and well arranged to facilitate coding and tabulation.

Coding refers to the process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories or classes. The researcher will ensure exhaustiveness and mutual exclusiveness (a specific answer is placed in only one cell in a given category set). Coding was necessary for the efficient analysis, as several replies were reduced to a small number of classes, which contained critical information required for analysis.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher got ethical clearance from the School of Social Sciences (Social Work Code of Ethic, 2014). However, administrative approvals were obtained in order to carry research within Uganda Christian University Mukono. Informed consent was obtained from respondents after explaining adequately the aim, procedures and anticipated benefits of the study. It was explained to the study participants that their participation was voluntary with no payment involved and they

were free to withdraw consent at any time during the study. Finally, confidentiality where the information got from the field was used for academic purposes.

3.11 METHODOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS.

Language barriers the researcher found a challenge when the participants did not share a common language or when their proficiency levels differed significantly. Therefore these barriers led to miscommunication, misunderstandings, and inaccurate responses during interviews

Self-reported data bias, the researcher faced a challenge when participants provided inaccurate, skewed information when asked to self-report during interviews or questionnaires. This bias steamed from various factors, including memory recall issues, desire to present oneself in a positive light, or misunderstanding the questions

It was also possible that the research tools developed by the researcher may have not had standards. Hence, in order to create a reliable assessment of the research variables, a validity and reliability test was performed

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the findings of the study based on the data collected. It is structured based on the flow of the research questions as follows, To find out how diverse languages influence student's social interactions in Uganda Christian University Mukono, To find out how diverse values influence students social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono, To find out how diverse norms influence students social interaction in Uganda Christian University Mukono. This chapter also presented interpretation, the response rate, demographic characteristics and discussion of the results. The demographic information and the empirical findings were presented in a narrative format.

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1.1 Demographic information.

The following information was collected according to the demographic data of the respondents, and they were requested to write their age, they were found to be between the ages of 20 -26 years of age. The key informants' ages were not recorded including some of their other biography information because of the need to ensure confidentiality about the age of the lecturers.

4.1.2 Information of the key respondents.

The only key informants who participated in responding to the questions of this research study were the lecturers from Uganda Christian University main campus Mukono. The lecturers who responded to the research questions were five in total making the total number of respondents to be twenty-five and their responses were recorded in the next chapters including the students' responses.

4.1.3 Age of the student respondents

From the above field findings it was clear that majority of the respondents were from the age of 20 to 26 years maximum meaning that the data was collected from respondents who had adequate experience about the influence of students' cultural diversity on social interaction. There were 5 respondents aged 20 years, 7 respondents or students were aged 22 years of age, 2 were aged 26 years old, 2 was aged 24 years old and also the other 4 respondent was aged 23 years of age.

4.1.4 Gender of respondents.

The gender of the respondents was crucial factors in investigating the influence of students' cultural diversity on their social interactions in Uganda Christian University Main campus Mukono. The researcher considered inclusivity through collecting data from both the male and female gender.

The findings indicted that majority of the respondents were the female who dominated the men in responding because the researcher discovered that the female gender were more interested in answering the research questions. Therefore, the females dominated with a number of 12 female respondents and 8 men only responded to the research questions.

4.1.5 Distribution of the students.

The students who volunteered were approached and interviewed according to their tribes since the study was majorly focusing at cultural aspects. All of the students were from Uganda Christian University pursuing Bachelor's degree in social work and social administration who joined in 2022 now in their third year.

4.1.6 Religious demographic information.

Despite the factor that Uganda Christian University is a Christian Based Institution, the findings reflected that the university was not only accessible to Christians only but also to other religions such as the Catholics and Moslems. Though the Christians were still dominant as participants in responding to the research questions. The Christians registered a total number of 10 respondents,

the Moslems were represented by 4 and the Catholics were the least with 6 representatives out of the 20 total number of respondents.

4.1.7 Demographic Information on Tribes.

The researcher collected data from 8 different tribes that were represented by the respondents in Uganda Christian University showing the university's diversity in cultures. The most dominant tribes that were represented with the highest number were the Basoga and Banyankole both represented by 4 respondents, followed by the Alu and Swahili people both with 2 respondents.

Then the least represented tribes were the Lugba, and the Bakiga were all represented with 1 respondent each and lastly were the Baganda with a total of 5 representative.

The results shows that the researcher was able to gather information from different tribes which gave unique points of view. Each and every person who represented the above tribes preferred their local languages though they reported that it was better for them to commonly use a unifying official language while at the university and the language was English.

4.2 To find out how diverse languages influence students social interactions in Uganda Christian University.

A female respondent (X:) was recorded saying *"I always use my mother language (lugbara) with people who know it and i always enjoy it because of the passion I have for my language. She went on and said I strongly feel strong attachment to those who spoke the same language. She further said, am very uncomfortable around people who speak a language i doesn't understand and it normally hinders my interaction with other people. And for the university to overcome the challenge of Language barriers it should focus on English as a unifying language to a bid students"*. Therefore, the respondent argued that many students have more sense of attachment and interaction with the people with whom they share the same language.

A male respondent (W1) agreed to the fact that different languages greatly affects communication and also converted to the argument that *He said, "most students are more comfortable with people they share with similar language and those who come from the same tribe, and of which was similar to many respondents, who argued that it's important to stick to*

the unifying official language (English) in order to avoid challenges of language barrier amongst the students".

Key informant known as (Q1) was reported saying that *"it really very true that students always interacted more with the students with whom they share a similar language"*. The respondents identified the strategy of sticking to the official language which was English in order to engage in social activities and discussions because many students understood the English language.

Key informant known as (Q 2) reported that *,"students struggle to fully express their ideas or comprehend other's perspectives if English isn't their strongest language"*. Another male respondent (W3) was recorded saying, *" in most cases i tend to get interpreted who can help him translate what's happening during discussions especially when other students joke in Luganda since a Somalia. And this hinders my social interactions due to language differences"*.

4.3 To find out how diverse values influence students social interactions in Uganda Christian University.

Through qualitative analysis, several key themes emerged, providing insights into the role of values in shaping relationships, group dynamics and academic collaboration among students. The findings derived from participants interviews, revealed how differences in values either fostered connection or created barriers in social interactions.

Many students reported that shared values such as greetings, respect for elders which promoted polite and communication and interactions among students and respect for authority was more observed, values encouraged more of listening than talking and values were reported that they promoted human relations which enhanced social interactions for example Male respondent (W2) argued *that "the value of respecting everyone regardless of the different status helped me to smoothen my social interactions with my fellow colleagues within the University including both the teaching and non teaching staff"*.

The other male respondents known as (W3), was recorded saying that *"values help me to set boundaries with people with the main aim of sustaining interaction and respect for each person, like cultural values guide me to respect everyone, promoting human relationships"*.

Therefore the, values encouraged self-expression and the values teach positive interactions for instance female respondent (W4) was recorded stating that "*in my culture as a muganda, one has to compose him/ her while talking to others and most especially the girls, you don't just stand out of the blue and start shouting at one*" she noted. Therefore cultural values encouraged the students to speak with discipline when interacting with students.

Key informant known as (Q3) emphasized that, "*students from similar backgrounds find it easier to interact and form study groups because they already have similar values shared which make it easier for them to cope with*".

Differences in values especially regarding personal freedom, academic integrity and social behaviour often led to misunderstandings and social exclusion. A female respondent known as (W5) was recorded saying "*i some times feel judged and isolated when my values differed from those of my peers*". *The respondent noted that in some circumstances students of specific ethnic group assume they inhibit a high level of academic integrity, in that they cannot easily allow others to join them and incase you join them in their discussions you can feel judged at some point because they feel you were letting them down*".

A female respondent know as (W6), argued that, "differences in values play a big role in barring social cohesion and interactions as it brings about sense of ignoring other people, **she said i personally enjoy interacting with my own tribemates and this has always affected my ability to concentrate on academic work especially when i meet with them during group discussions, we first start jazzing stories**". it leads to cultural differences encouraged some students to interact more with other students to learn their cultures. The other respondents urged that it helps to understand the difference between the cultures of other students and how it influenced their human relations.

Respect for elders, honesty, cooperation, kindness, friendliness, hard work, mutual respect, appropriate dressing code and religious values were identified by the respondents as the key values that were found to be common amongst the students which helped them to interact with each other. For instance the religious value of spiritual nurturing was manifests among the religious students who consistently attended the community worship program and this in particular enhanced their cohesion since they felt united by fellowshiping together. For instance

one respondent named Y said " *I have always attended community worship from my children school and I kind feel wired if community worship is on and I fail to attend, and that's why I enjoy the company of those who value community worship*".

Other values enlightened by some of the key informants included christ centeredness, community worship, diligence, integrity, religious values, respect, dignity, love, honesty, forgiveness and teamwork were identified as the commonest values that students shared at Uganda Christian University. key informant known as Q5, argued that, these "*values greatly informed inform and influence the different activities within the university for example the value of respect is manifested during cultural gallas where all the different tribe groups are given opportunities to showcase their culture in form of music, dance and drama*", this greatly revealed that there is high consideration and respect for all the people regardless of their indigenous differences.

Several students highlighted that exposure to diverse values broadened their perspectives and helped them develop cross-cultural communication skills. Others mentioned that while they struggled with value differences, they eventually learned to navigate them through compromise and mutual understanding. Coming to terms with the fact that we are different and therefore need to accept people the way they are other than judging them hence improving the social cohesion and social interaction. A particular respondent from one part of the southern region know as Qk said that " *I have always thought people from the north and West Nile all speak the same language but this exposure has widened my understanding now*".

4.To find out how diverse norms influence student's social interaction in Uganda Christian University.

The following were the ways how diverse norms influenced students' social interactions and they included, not holding grudges, the norms influenced formal greetings, influenced respect, reserved interaction, norms impact social interaction positively, emphasized kindness and it promoted social order during the interaction.

The Christian norms of, greeting others, politeness, mutual support, respect and collaboration where identified by the respondents as the commonly shared norms among the students of Uganda Christian University. One respondent X noted that" *We as Uganda Christian University*

students we have inhibited good norms that guide our daily life and i honestly feel proud of being a student of Uganda Christian University''.

The cultural norms positively impact the social interaction among the students, some people greet others casually, different cultural norms brought about misunderstandings, different view and approach to each other were determined by the difference in cultural norms. Many of the respondents reported that it was common within the students to have misunderstandings and heated tensions due to different cultural norms. For example other respondent from Northern Uganda known as W8, argued that *students who come from West Nile and Northern Uganda believe in handshake which isn't the case with those from the central region, this differences always cause a sense of discomfort incase one intended to handshake and is ignored, they would feel undermined and overlooked or even discriminated due to the difference in the norms. " If i give you a hand shake and you ignore i feel offended because that's how we normally greet others and according to our values if you ignore me it means I have bad intentions (witch) that's why we value handshake''.*

Many students reported that common social norms such as greetings etiquette, respect for authority and group collaboration, strengthened their interactions especially you came across a person shared the same norm. Participants also noted that when students adhere to similar behavioural expectations; friendships and academic teamwork were more seamless. This is because the similarity in norms created a conducive environment for all of them to feet in hence promoting their social interactions.

Organizing the cultural galas was the most appropriate approach used by the Uganda Christian University to solve the challenge of integration of diverse norms. Cultural appreciation events, workshops, exchange programs, cultural orientation program, and emphasized the appropriate dressing code which promoted and solved the challenges of diverse norms to encourage social interaction among the students. Another respondent know as W9 noted that *"the cultural gallas organised helped to inform us of the different people on how different we are and the need to respect each person in their various capacity without any form of stimatization and discrimination basing on our cultural differences''.*

Differences in social norms such as perceptions of personal space, communication styles and religious practices are reported to occasionally lead to misunderstandings " participants A was recorded stating " Different social expectations regarding eye contact, dress code, or group etiquette can lead to misunderstandings, like some students might view prolonged eye contact as a sign of respect while others see it as confrontation. And further said misunderstandings like these are often addressed through open conversations or cultural workshops. For instance respondent z said " *If a someone is looking at length i feel they are talking about me and I always want to confront them*".

Participant known as X also said social norms widely differ, especially around gender interactions and social etiquette, further said there have been cases where these differences led to misinterpretation such as when students from more reserved cultures misinterpret extroverted behavior as overly assertive. Some students felt excluded when their personal norms did not align with the dominant campus culture. For example another male known as A, noted that "*students who came from Northern Uganda, South Sudan and West Nile are more assertive which at some times would be misunderstood for rudeness or disrespect yet to them it is normal as long as they can justify their actions*". This literally made relating with them very technical in that you needed to understand them for you to have a smooth relationship.

Several students mentioned that they adjusted their behaviour to fit into diverse social circles, learning to navigate different cultural expectations over time. Therefore for one to thrive in a community of thousands of people you have to set your mind to not only understand and respect but also know the boundaries as in you don't have to change yourself but rather value and respect others the way they are. In circumstances where your culture overlooks other cultures there is room to unlearn and learn new values and norms that promote social cohesion hence improving social interactions.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter provided a discussion of the research findings, conclusion and recommendations from the researcher. The chapter presents the comparison between the literatures, theories and the data collected from the field to show how the findings relate with the literature reviewed and theories that guided the research.

5.1 Discussion of demographic information

The field data indicated that the respondents were in an appropriate age (20-26 years of age) to respond to the research questions which provided information from informed respondents. The information was collected from 20 respondents who successfully provided information that related with the research objectives and questions. Both the male and gender participated in the research which enabled the researcher to have insights from the male and female who had different cultural knowledge.

Religion being part of culture at the area of study which was Uganda Christian University, the researcher also identified the religions as displayed which enabled the researcher to meet the objectives especially about the religious factors. The respondents were also from different tribes which provided understand and new knowledge about the cultures of different students which was in line with research study.

5.2 Discussion of empirical findings

Relationship between findings, literature review and the objectives

5.2.1 OBJECTIVE ONE: To find out how diverse languages influencing student's social interactions in Uganda Christian University

The first respondent commented that she uses her mother language (lugbara) with people who know it and always enjoyed it because of the passion she has for her language and strongly felt a

strong attachment to those who spoke the same language. The respondent went a head to say, she is very uncomfortable around people who speak a language she doesn't understand which normally hinders her interaction with other people. The respondent argued that many students have more sense of attachment and interaction with the people with whom they share the same language. However the respondents commented that in a bid to overcome the challenge of Language barriers. She appreciates that we are different and focuses on using a unifying language which is English. The field finding alignes with Caetano et al. (2020), research, which looked at student voice and involvement in intercultural education. They found that encouraging students to speak in their native tongues increases their sense of worth and inclusion in the classroom, which improves their social interactions and involvement in general. According to the researcher, language diversity should be recognised as a powerful factor in student's interaction. While mother tongue create strong binds, institutions should also intentionally promote inclusivity practices such as language appreciation events, group discussions in common languages, or intercultural dialogues to ensure no student feels excluded. Therefore fostering both identity and unity can help to improve social cohesion among students from different backgrounds.

According to feld finding, respondent agreed to the fact that different languages greatly affects communication and also converted to the argument that most students are more comfortable with the people they share with similar language and come from the same tribe, similar to many respondents, many respondents argued that it's important to stick to the unifying official language (English) inoder to avoid challenges of language barrier amongst the students. Lubaale (2020), who looked into gender disparities among students in Ugandan higher education, support this. They discovered that, depending on how it is managed inside the institution, language variety can either increase or decrease social tensions. According to the study, encouraging linguistic inclusion and giving children the tools they need to acquire and utilized various languages helped lower social barriers and improved communication amongst students from different backgrounds. According to the researcher, Uganda Christian University should adopt new strategies that promote linguistic sensitivity and equip students with communication skills necessary for navigating multilingual environment. Even though English serves as practical solution for unity, the value of indigenous languages in building identity and mutual respect

should not be overlooked .A balanced approach that respects diversity while promoting a shared mode of communication is key to fostering healthy social interactions on campus.

According to field finding, respondent reported that , "students struggle to fully express their ideas or comprehend other's perspectives if English isn't their strongest language Forinstance, respondents was recorded saying, " in most cases he tends to get interpreted who can help him translate what's happening during discussions especially when other students joke in Luganda since he is a Somalia and it brings discomfort and some times conflicts. The finding aligned with literature from Johnson et al. (2023) studied the role of collaborative teacher study groups in developing educators' cultural competence, found that when instructors are trained to respect and utilize multiple languages in their teaching, students' social interactions increased dramatically. The study highlighted the need of teachers who are tolerant of linguistic variety and culturally competent in order to foster secure classroom environments where children feel comfortable interacting with one another and developed stronger peer connections. According to the research, institutions of higher learning must recognise that linguistic differences are not just communication challenges, they are also emotional and social challenges. Therefore, beyond promoting English as the medium of instruction, University should train both educators and students in cultural and linguistic Inclusivity. This will ensure that all students, regardless of their background, feel valued and build meaningful connections with their peers.

5.2.2 OBJECTIVE TWO: To find out how diverse values influence students social interactions in Uganda Christian University.

According to field finding, many students reported that shared values such as greetings, respect for elders which promoted polite and careful communication and interactions among students and respect for authority were more observed, values encouraged more of listening than talking and values were reported that they promoted human relations which enhanced social interactions for example some respondents argued that the value of respect everyone regardless of the different status help to smoothen their social interactions with fellow colleagues within the University including both the teaching and non teaching staff. The finding match with the literature of Eren, 2023 revealed that different cultural values affected students' social interaction in a more positive manner through enhanced collaborations and exposure to a wider range of values among the students. The findings in the secondary data were similar to the findings from

the field, which revealed that students benefited in the same way as revealed in the literature review. Some of the benefits of diverse values included promoting social interaction, positive social relationships, intercultural competency and respect for authority which reflects that the findings.

According to field findings, respondents were recorded stating differences in values especially regarding personal freedom, academic integrity and social behaviour often led to misunderstandings and social exclusion. The other respondent said that some times she felt judged and isolated when her values differed from those of her peers. The respondent noted that in some circumstances students of specific ethnic group assumed they inhibited a high level of academic integrity, in that they couldn't easily allow others to join them and in case you joined them in their discussions you would feel judged at some point because they felt you were letting them down. The findings matches with the literature reviewed by Hussain & Jones (2021), examined the experiences of students of colour in higher education and discovered that social connections between students from various cultural origins can be severely limited by prejudice and a lack of awareness about diversity. According to the researcher, the findings underlined the need for deliberate instructional efforts to acknowledge, validate and harmonise different value systems within the student body without this, cultural pride can quickly shift into social divisions and the very values that should enrich diversity instead become source of tension. Therefore promoting open discussions, peer learning initiative and intercultural relationship programmes could bridge these gaps, reduce stereotypes and foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

From field findings different respondents argued that differences in values played a big role in barring social cohesion and interactions as it brought about sense of ignoring other people, For example respondent reported that differences in values led to arguments because a friend failed to keep time during the project group work and cultural differences encouraged some students to interact more with other students to learn their cultures. The other respondents urged that it helps to understand the difference between the cultures of other students and how it influenced their human relations. According to literature from Lubaale (2020), who investigated gender disparities among students in Ugandan higher education, agreed, pointing out that fostering relationships and bridging social divides between students with varied gender and

cultural backgrounds can be achieved through promoting diverse values. According to the researcher, even when values differences create tensions they can also open opportunities for learning and stronger human connections.

According to field findings, several students highlighted that exposure to diverse values broadened their perspectives and helped them develop cross-cultural communication skills. Others mentioned that while they struggled with value differences, they eventually learned to navigate them through compromise and mutual understanding. Coming to terms with the fact that we are different and therefore need to accept people the way they are other than judging them hence improving the social cohesion and social interaction. The finding aligned with the literature, Caetano et al. (2020), emphasised the importance of varied values in fostering social connections and student voice and engagement in multicultural education. The study discovered that kids are more likely to engage in social activities and build deep relationships with their peers when they are given opportunities to display their varied cultural values. However, the findings also suggested that this process is gradual and often requires international institutional support. Without spaces that encourage dialogue, reflection, and shared experience, students may continue to struggle in silence or fail to see the values differences may initially appear as barriers, when supported by inclusive practices, as emphasized by Caetano et al., they become bridges to stronger social bonds and enriched student interactions.

From the field findings, several students highlighted that exposure to diverse values broadened their perspectives and helped them develop cross-cultural communication skills. Others mentioned that while they struggled with value differences, they eventually learned to navigate them through compromise and mutual understanding. According to Chang et al. (2020), children who are exposed to a variety of values in the classroom are more likely to ask for assistance when they need it and to form social networks that support their academic and social success. According to the researcher these students who are exposed to diverse values are more equipped to deal with cultural incompatibilities which helps them to thrive in their life journey.

5.2.3 OBJECTIVE THREE: To find out how diverse norms influencing students social interaction in Uganda Christian University

According to the findings, respondents were recorded stating that "The Christian norms of, greeting others, politeness, mutual support, respect and collaboration are the commonly shared norms among the students of Uganda Christian University. Further said, these cultural norms positively impact on the social interaction among the students, since some students greet others casually. But differences in social norms within the university setting brought about misunderstandings. For example respondents from West Nile and Northern Uganda believed in handshake which wasn't the case with those from the central region, this difference would always cause a sense of discomfort in case one intended to handshake and is ignored, they would feel undermined and overlooked or even discriminated due to the difference in the norms. Therefore, the finding aligned with the literature of Alam (2020), he examined how students conceptualize cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity and how that influences social interaction in learning environments. According to Alam's research, kids with high levels of intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence are better able to navigate and respect a variety of cultural norms, which improves their social interactions with classmates from other backgrounds. The researcher noticed that shared norms united students and fostered a collaborative environment, promoting learning and empathy. On the other hand, students lacked intercultural awareness which brought about conflicts and exclusion. Therefore, the presence of diverse norms both strengths and challenges social interactions among students.

According to field findings, Organizing the cultural galas was the most appropriate approach used by the Uganda Christian University to solve the challenge of integration of diverse norms. Cultural appreciation events, workshops, exchange programs, cultural orientation program, emphasized a unifying cultural norm of appropriate dress code and other cultural integration programs which promoted and solved the challenges of diverse norms to encourage social interaction among the students. Another respondent noted that the cultural galas organized helped to inform the different people about different cultures and the need to respect each person in their various capacity without any form of stigmatization and discrimination basing on our cultural differences. The field data aligns with the literature of, Tavares (2024), examined how equity, diversity, and inclusion affected international students. She found that when educational

institutions embrace norms that welcome students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, international students feel more accepted, which greatly enhances their social interactions with local and other international students. According to the researcher, the university deliberate efforts to create platforms for cultural exchange significantly bridged these gaps. These activities not only improved social interactions but also nurtured a campus culture rooted in acceptance, learning. And institutionalizing such cultural programmes can play a vital role in transforming cultural diversity from a potential point of tension in to valuable education and Social asset.

According to the field findings, several students mentioned that they adjusted their behaviour to fit into diverse social circles, learning to navigate different cultural expectations over time. Some respondents argued that it was important to learn to appreciate diversity norms because cultures are different. Therefore for one to thrive in a community of thousands of people he/she had to set one's mind to not only understand and respect but also know the boundaries as in you dont have to change yourself but rather value and respect others the way they are. In circumstances where your culture overlooks other cultures there is room to unlearn and learn new values and norms that promote social cohesion hence improving social interactions. Of which the field finding alignes with the literature of Vietze et al. (2020), examined how minority students preserve cultural identity and improve social interactions through peer cultural socialisation. According to the research, peer interactions that uphold the cultural values of minority kids result in higher life satisfaction and stronger school values, both of which improve social interaction in the classroom setting. Therefore, while the field data aligns with the literature, that learning and Unlearning norms promotes social cohesion, one should put into consideration that there is emotional and social complexities students face during this process. Forexample, respondents where recorded stating that they felt excluded when their personal norms did not align with the dominant campus culture. Therefore i ntegration through beneficial, can place hidden emotional burden on students between cultural expression and social acceptance.

5.3 Conclusion

The research concludes that's , at least in the context of the Uganda Christian university, whereas the majority of the students under the program of social work and social administration year 3 recognize their beliefs, biases, values and assumptions about human conduct and how these

affect their perception of the students in culturally diverse classrooms, they demonstrate inadequate knowledge of the international students' values, norms and languages.

However the study showed that Uganda Christian University attempted to create a caring academic environment and classroom climates that are conducive to learning for culturally diverse students' culture.

The researcher also recommends that the faculty across the disciplinary of social work and social administration should also adopt different forms of communication to facilitate the exchange of information with students from culturally diverse backgrounds and employ various teaching styles to accommodate the learning styles of different cultural groups.

5.4 Recommendation

Social policy

Policies should focus on the most promising culturally responsive classroom managers and teaching practices and policies. Uganda Christian University should learn about students' cultural experiences and the type of cultural content that should be provided. The lecturers and students should learn how to alternate their management and communication strategies to accommodate students coming from tribes with unpopular cultures to accommodate diverse cultures and the same way work on their own biases (Kaweesi et al., 2023). The researcher also recommends that Uganda Christian University should re-establish the culture of appropriate dressing codes that seemed to be on decline may be due to complacency of the policy implementers so as to promote the values of the university as one of the best institutions in Uganda Christian University.

Social policy should support the development of peer mentorship programs that pair students from different cultural backgrounds to foster cultural dialogue, reduce stereotypes and encourage collaborative learning and healthy social interaction.

Further research

The researcher recommends that future researchers should investigate on the impact of values to the social behaviors of students in higher institutions of learning.

The researcher recommends that future researchers should investigate how social media digital platforms influence student's ability to connect across cultural boundaries, especially in a post pandemic learning environment.

The researcher recommends that future researchers should delve into the emotional and mental health effects of cultural value clashes among students, including issues of identity, self-esteem and academic performance.

The researcher recommends that future researchers should focus on how lecturers and administrative staff either support or hinder integration of diverse cultural norms within the university setting.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview guide for students

I am NANYONDO SYLVIA a student a student from Uganda University Mukono. Am conducting a study on influence of cultural diversity on students social interaction and this interview will focus on how diverse languages, values, and norms shape interactions among students. Your responses will be anonymized and used for only study purposes. All information shared shall be kept confidential and you can choose to withdraw research at any time.

BIO DATA

Name (pseudo)

Age

Sex

Religion

Tribe

Language

How does diverse languages influence student's social interactions.

1. Can you describe your native language and how you use it in social interactions?
2. Have you encountered situations where speaking different languages help or hindered your communication with other students.
3. In your experience, how do language differences affect your interaction with other students at campus.
4. Do you think students tend to interact more with those who speak the same language as them? Why and why not.
5. How do you manage language barriers when engaging in group work or social activities.

How does diverse values influence students social interaction,?

1. Can you describe your cultural values and how they influence your communication skills.
2. Can you recall any instance where differences in values affected your interactions with other students? How did it play out.
3. Are there certain values that you believe unite students regardless of their cultural backgrounds?
4. Do you feel that there are common set of values that students at Uganda Christian University share? If so, what are they.

How does diverse norms influence students social interactions?

1. Describe your cultural norms and describe how they impact on your social interactions?
2. In your opinion, how do different social norms (greetings, dress code, behaviour) impact impact your interactions.
3. Have you ever experience a situation where differences in social norms created tension or misunderstanding between you and other students? How was it solved.
4. Are there any common norms that most students at Uganda Christian University adhere to regardless of their cultural backgrounds?
5. How does the university facilitate or challenge the integration of student's diverse norms into the campus culture.?

Values: These are the beliefs or principles that guide people's behavior and decision-making. Values shape what individuals consider important and influence how they interact with others (e.g., respect of each other, independence, teamwork)

Norms: These are the unwritten rules or expectations that guide how people should behave in social situations (e.g., greetings, dress code, communication).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LECTURER

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather your perceptions about the influence of cultural diversity on students' social interactions. The insights you provide will contribute to understanding how language, values, and norms shape social interactions in a diverse student population.

Influence of diverse languages on students' social interactions:

1. Can you describe the dominant languages spoken on campus and how they impact students' social interactions?
2. Have you observed situations where speaking different languages either helped or hindered communication among students?
3. From your perspective, how do language differences affect students' interactions, both socially and academically?
4. Do you believe that students tend to form stronger social connections with peers who speak the same language? Why or why not?
5. How do students typically manage language barriers when engaging in group work or other social activities, and what role does the university play in facilitating this?

Influence of diverse values on students' social interactions:

1. How do you observe students' cultural values influencing their communication skills and social interactions on campus?
2. Can you recall any instances where differences in cultural values affected students' interactions? How were such differences handled or resolved?
3. Are there specific values that you believe unite students across diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering better social cohesion?

4. In your opinion, are there common values shared by the student body at Uganda Christian University? If so, what are they, and how do they impact interactions?

Influence of diverse norms on students' social interactions

1. From your experience, how do different cultural norms (e.g., greetings, dress code, and behavior) impact students' social interactions on campus?

2. How do social norms differ among students, and have you observed any tensions or misunderstandings due to these differences? How such situations are typically resolved?

3. Are there shared social norms that most students at Uganda Christian University adhere to, despite their diverse cultural backgrounds?

4. How does the university support or challenge the integration of diverse cultural norms into campus life, and what impact does this have on students' social interactions?

Values: These are the beliefs or principles that guide people's behavior and decision-making. Values shape what individuals consider important and influence how they interact with others (e.g., respect of each other, independence, and teamwork)

Norms: These are the unwritten rules or expectations that guide how people should behave in social situations (e.g., greetings, dress code, and communication).

Thank you for sharing your insights and time. Your responses are invaluable to my research on cultural diversity and social interaction among students. If you have any questions or would like to receive a summary of the findings, feel free to reach out.