



# Assessment of Cultural Practices and Their Contribution towards Quality Education in Public Secondary Schools in Arusha District, Tanzania

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**Abstract:** The study assessed the cultural practices and their contribution towards quality education in public secondary schools. Objectively, the study examined the contribution of cultural practices towards quality education in public secondary schools and the strategies for improving cultural practices for quality education in public secondary schools. Cultural Capital Theory directed the study. A total of 94 respondents (18 teachers, 10 parents, 6 schools heads and 60 students) were selected to represent the target population of 1632. The study adopted Ethnography and cross-sectional survey design with mixed methods approach. The study used questionnaires and interviews guide to gather data. School heads and parents were purposively selected while stratified and simple random sampling was employed to select teachers and students. Two experts enhanced validity of instruments for collecting quantitative and qualitative data. Reliability of quantitative instruments were ensured using Cronbach alpha index;  $SQ=0.62$  &  $TQ=0.91$ . For qualitative instruments, reliability was ensured through triangulation of data sources. Descriptive statistics in the SPSS version 25 was adopted in quantitative data analysis while thematic analysis was utilized for qualitative data. The study exposed intercultural exchange, encouraging collaborative decision making and promotion of ethical values as cultural practices that contribute towards quality education. Educating the community, enactment of by-laws and enforcing them are strategies for improving cultural practices. In conclusion, the aspects of culture that negatively affects quality education should be looked at and appropriate by-laws formulated and implemented for guidance. The study recommends that cultural practices that negatively affect quality education in secondary schools should be prohibited.

**Keywords:** Cultural, Practices, Quality, Education, Schools, Arusha

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## 1. Introduction

Cultural practices (CP) refer to the traditions, customs, languages, values, beliefs, and achievements of a group of people. In the context of public secondary schools, cultural practices contribute to the quality of education by fostering

a positive school culture, promoting diversity, and supporting students' cultural competence and critical consciousness (Ruiz, 2023). However, Bayar and Mabingo (2019) found that, it is still challenging whether these practices are shaping individuals' identities and

experiences, influencing their understanding and making sense of the world around them.

While writing on quality education, Osaki (2019) asserts that quality education is one which the intensions of education are reasonable and up to date. It entails the education system from policy formulation, design and development of curricula and syllabuses as well as teaching and learning. Consequently, quality of education refers to the overall management of education system and the schools themselves alongside the experiences from various actors within the system and the schools. Will and Najarro (2022) mentioned reasons that affect the provisional of quality education in Africa to include early marriages, pregnancy and sickness, especially among girls. Reasons mostly cited for boys' poor performance include; job seeking, lack of school interest, dismissal and poor school discipline. Girls who are already married have new responsibilities to take care of their families and children, while boys struggle for employment in order to compete for high demands of life. Usually both have no intention of coming back to school.

In India, Sastriand Srikanta (2021) found that culture has an important impact on education just as education plays a role as a bearer or carrier of culture, the nature of culture in society is determined by education. The main task of education is to help the intellectual development of the human child and at the same time to acclimatize him to the cultural traditions of society. Man is not only a social being but also a cultural being. Humans' social life is determined by social culture. Just as culture has a special influence in determining the course of human life, similarly in the field of education, its influence can be seen in all aspects of what exactly the members of a society will learn, how much they will learn and what kind of education they will take to turn human beings into a mature people. Determining values and aims of life as the culture of the society regulates the attitude of the members of the society towards education.

Sub-Saharan African countries, including Tanzania, lag behind in terms of quality education. For example, on average, 30 per cent of the children are still out of school (UNESCO, 2022). The average enrollment ratio in all developed regions is 88 per cent, which is staggeringly high compared to the low enrollment ratio in some African countries (Joseph, 2019). To ensure quality education, Tanzania since her independence, Tanzania has been making efforts to implement policies that enhance quality education. Strategies, programs and education development plans have been developed since then to improve the quality of education in Tanzania. Masabo (2020) adds that, Tanzanian girls reported to experience regular sexual harassment and violence at the hands of males and even their participation and achievement in school is affected by socio-cultural norms that harm their

senses. Female gender in Tanzania has been challenged with poverty, pregnancy, ill health, lack of facilities, travel distance and forced early marriage by parents. The extent to which these CP contribute to the quality education in public secondary schools is a matter of substantial interest. Therefore, from this background, it was important to carry out this study in order to assess CP and their contribution towards quality education in public secondary schools in Arusha District.

## 1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the contributions of cultural practices towards quality education in public secondary schools in Arusha district?
2. What are the strategies for improving cultural practices for quality education in public secondary schools in Arusha district?

## 2. Literature Review

This study was grounded in the cultural dimensions approach developed by Geert Hofstede, a Dutch social psychologist, and researcher who studied the interactions between national cultures and organizational behaviour (Hofstede, 2001). The researcher reviewed this theory to highlight the contribution of cultural practices towards quality education and the strategies for improving cultural practices for quality education in public secondary schools.

### 2.1 Cultural Dimensions Approach

This approach is particularly relevant when assessing how cultural practices contribute to education in diverse settings. The key cultural dimension includes, Indulgence verses Restraint (IVR). This reflects the degree to which societies allow for the gratification of desires. In education, it may influence student engagement in cultural practices and the permissiveness of teaching styles. Another key cultural dimension is individualism versus collectivism which focuses on the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups and the cultural practices in those cluster.

#### 2.1.1 Strengths of Cultural Dimensions Approach

The theory helps in predicting how students, teachers, and educational administrators from different cultural backgrounds may behave or react within educational

settings. It is widely applicable across different countries and cultural settings, allowing researchers to compare and contrast cultural influences on behaviour, policies, and outcomes (Thomas and Peterson, 2017). It highlights the importance of considering cultural context when assessing educational outcomes, such as discipline, respect for authority, and group work dynamics.

### **2.1.2 Application of Cultural Dimensions Approach to the Current Study**

The theory provides a framework for understanding cultural differences across various societies. The theory would allow researcher to evaluate whether practices are culturally sensitive and aligned with local values, which is crucial for the successful implementation of educational reforms. It could facilitate comparisons between different regions or countries within the developing world, highlighting how cultural differences shape educational outcomes and identifying best practices that could be adapted across different cultural settings. It enabled the researcher to consider the level of freedom allowed in the classroom for self-expression, creativity, and student engagement, and its contribution to academic success.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

This section critically presents the empirical studies with respect to research themes derived from research questions.

### **2.2.1 Cultural Practices that Contribute Towards Quality Education in Public Secondary Schools**

Brandy et al. (2019) conducted a research on the truancy in the United States by examining chronological trends for cultural practices and correlates by race, age and gender. A total of 209 adolescents were randomly sampled that is, one fifth of the target population, from whom data was collected using questionnaires. Out of 209 questionnaires admitted to respondents, 190 were returned complete. The research conducted established that truancy was significantly correlated with some cultural values like the trend of parents to overload children with domestic chores which in turn lower children's academic engagement and school grades. Sharma, and Sharma, (2022), on the study conducted in India, came with the findings that culture provides the knowledge required to perform various physical, social and intellectual tasks in people's daily lives. Culture helps people to adapt to the changing environment and realize their true potential through appropriate knowledge and skills. That is, by being educated in appropriate education, the child can fulfil the highest aspiration in his or her profession in the future life.

To fulfil that responsibility, the child should be well-cultured from childhood.

The parental preference for a 'wife and mother' has influenced a great deal for early marriages and pre-marital pregnancies, thus affecting female participation in education. A study by Mwalongo (2020) has shown that many female pupils have dropped out of school in Tanzania due to pregnancy. A study conducted in Nigeria by Clarkey (2020) shows that parents in Nigeria allow their daughters to be married at the age of 12 for fear of possible conception outside of marriage. Parents were reported to still cherish the culture of marrying off under-age daughters for economic and social status. Along the coast of East Africa, the rites of passage and early marriages have adversely affected the enrolment and survival rates of the school girls predominantly among the Muslim communities. In such communities, school girls are forced to leave school as soon as they reach puberty.

### **2.2.2 Strategies for Improving Cultural Practices for Quality Education in Public Secondary Schools**

A study in rural Pakistan conducted by World Bank (2018), confirmed that children whose parents received education are more committed to education contrary to those whose parents did not receive education. The study explained that community members in the study area lacked awareness on the importance of education, some of them did not attend school and therefore were not aware of any good example to relate to when it comes to the importance of education. It also revealed that, when male students see some of their friends dropping out of school and making money from artisanal gold mining, they easily become attracted to get involved in artisanal gold mining.

A study conducted by Markowitsch (2019) in Cambridge University, UK reported the common belief that certain aspects of the organizational culture may hinder or encourage quality management (QM) in medical field. The study also revealed that for quality management to be implemented requires relevance based on at least two important underlying assumptions. One is that culture can be changed in a way that facilitates the implementation of quality management practices. The other is that quality management in schools has positive effects on school performance. Schools that embrace a culture of continuous improvement are more likely to adapt to changing educational needs, integrate new technologies and explore innovative teaching methods. Jidanva (2022) conducted a study on the challenges of poor negative effects of cultural practices in secondary schools, using a sample size of 145 respondents obtained through both probability and non-probability sampling techniques show that; there is need to

put forward some mechanisms. First, is training teachers in seminars, workshop and panel discussion. Second, is to ensure that the schools have the school laboratories for facilitating teaching of science subjects. These would provide opportunity for learning real practical instead of hypothetical or alternative practical. An idea of American academic of paediatric may probably be helpful for parents and teachers to talk with girls on issues troubling them especially those related on gender gaps.

Martin, (2023) on the study called good education for all, reported the findings based on questionnaire and observation tools for data collection from 250 sample size around capital city of Namibia. The researcher suggested that students' culture needs to be valued all the time, every day, not only on specific target months, and value student languages, racial ethnicity, value how they learn, how they reproduce information and being able to do that in multiple ways because students learn in different ways. Also, let students have a say, have them set some rules, release some power, and include students in organizing and forming what their responsibilities in the classroom may be; in other words, hold everyone accountable. In these different ways, culture can be implemented to show students that they take part in their development as learners.

Mensah, (2020) investigated the influence of socio-cultural values on dropout rates of secondary school students in Tanzania and discovered that the socio-cultural values influence secondary school dropout among girls and boys. It was found that many parents believed that girl child is a source of wealth so, some of them forced girls to get married, provide their children with a lot of home chores, including farming, hence they lack enough time to do their studies. The researcher would also consider other strategies such as inclusive Curriculum, teacher training, community engagement, language support as well as culturally relevant pedagogy. Mushi (2021) on the study conducted in Musoma District, Tanzania about the effects of harmful cultural practices among girl student in Primary schools. The study used 150 respondents to collect data through questionnaire and interviews guides. The study found that many countries employ several efforts to reduce if not eliminating factors undermining female students in acquiring education, such as educating parents about girls' education, allowing NGO and other private groups to provide services to girls. Moreover, female life may start since childhood to adulthood by educating and not segregating them on gender issues so as to improve equality from since the childhood.

### 3. Methodology

The study adopted Ethnography and Cross-sectional survey design with mixed methods approach. Ethnography

design is qualitative research that enables the researcher to focus on interrogating and describing the culture of a group of people (way of life of a people). In this study, the researcher identified the essential components of cultural practices in a population and purposively sampled the respondents. from which the required data was collected On the other hand, Cross-sectional design allowed the researcher to get information at one point in time concerning cultural practices so as to describe the current characteristic of the sample or different groups compared at the same time (McCombs and Bhandari, 2021).The study used questionnaires for quantitative data and interviews guide to gather qualitative data. According to Pirosika (2014), the calculation of sample size was based on Yamane Formula which states: sample size (n) =  $\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$ .

Where: n= required sample size, N=total population and e= margin error (0.1 or 10%)

$$n = \frac{1632}{1 + 1632(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1632}{1 + 1632(0.01)}$$

$$n = \frac{1632}{1 + 16.32}$$

$$n = \frac{1632}{17.32}$$

$$n = 94.2 \approx 94$$

Therefore, the sample size was 94 respondents comprising of 18 teachers, 10 parents, 6 Head of schools and 60 students who were selected to represent the target population of 1632. Simple random sampling was used to select 6 public secondary schools and 3 teachers each from six schools to make 18 respondents. Stratified sampling was used to ensure that each subgroup (gender) was represented in the sample, which helped to reduce sampling error and increase the accuracy of the results. Considering both genders that is, male and female also eliminates doubt about the information given by respondents towards the study area. Similarly, simple random sampling technique was employed to select 10 students (5 girls and 5 boys) each from each school. The researcher randomly selected two students each from form one and two while three students each were selected from form three and four. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 6 heads of schools and 10 parents. Two experts were used to enhance validity of instruments for collecting quantitative and qualitative data. Reliability of quantitative instruments were ensured using Cronbach alpha index; SQ=0.62 & TQ=0.91. Descriptive statistics in the SPSS version 25 was adopted in quantitative data analysis while thematic analysis was utilized for qualitative data.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

The findings were discussed according to themes derived from research questions.

### **4.1 Quantitative Findings on the Contribution of Cultural Practices towards Quality Education in Public Secondary Schools in Arusha District**

This research objective was to determine the contribution of cultural practices towards quality education in public secondary schools in Arusha District. Questionnaires were administered to the sampled secondary school teachers and students using five Point Likert Scale, where; 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Undecided 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagree, they were required to indicate their level of agreements with the 8 items which were in the questionnaires. Table 1 presents the summary of quantitative data obtained using questionnaires.

**Table 1: Responses from Teachers and Students on the Contribution of Cultural Practices towards Quality Education in Public Secondary Schools in Arusha District**

Responses	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	S f(%)	T f(%)	S f(%)	T f(%)	S f(%)	T f(%)	S f(%)	T f(%)	S f(%)	T f(%)
Early marriages affect survival rate of girls & the quality education.	31(51.6)	11(61.1)	17(28.3)	7(38.9)	9(15)	0	2(3.3)	0	1(1.6)	0
<b>Good CP contribute towards creating awareness to students</b>	39(65)	15(83.3)	20(33.3)	3(16.6)	6(10)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>CP should encourage collaborative decision making</b>	18(30)	7(38.8)	18(30)	9(50)	13(21.6)	2(11.1)	2(3.3)	0	7(11.6)	0
<b>CP should embed interest in personal academic development</b>	17(28.3)	7(38.8)	25(41.6)	9(50)	10(16.6)	2(11.1)	4(6.6)	0	3(5)	0
<b>CP contribute towards encouraging intercultural exchange</b>	17(28.3)	6(33.3)	13(21.6)	8(44.4)	20(33.3)	2(11.1)	3(5)	1(5.5)	7(11.6)	1(5.5)
<b>Good CP should help in addressing social justice and equity</b>	31(51.6)	11(61.1)	17(28.3)	7(38.9)	9(15)	0	2(3.3)	0	1(1.6)	0
<b>CP should contribute in promotion of ethical values</b>	30(50)	16(88.9)	26(43.3)	2(11.1)	4(6.6)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>CP should contribute in encouraging growth in personality</b>	26(43.3)	16(88.9)	26(43.3)	2(11.1)	4(6.6)	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Field Data (2024), S= Students, T= Teachers, f = frequency, % = Percentage

Data from table 1 indicate the need for cultural practices to emphasize the early marriages affects survival rate of girls in school and quality education they should receive when they maximize their presence in school. In this regard, 31(51.6%) of students and 11(61.1%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement, 17(28.3%) for students and 7(38.9%) teachers agreed, another 9(15%) students were neutral while 2(3.3%) students disagreed and only 1(1.6%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The findings implied that there is a need for the society to expose students to cultural practices that emphasize the importance of education as opposed to early marriages. In other words, students should be allowed and be guided to identify cultural practices that promote quality education in the society. This is because when girls do not remain in school for the required period, they obviously fail to acquire quality education that those who remain in school for the required period normally receive. A study conducted in Nigeria by Clarke (2020) is in agreement by showing that early marriages have adversely affected the enrolment and survival rates of the school girls predominantly among the Muslim communities. In such communities, school girls are forced to leave school as soon as they reach puberty.

The findings are in line with data from interview sessions conducted with parents and Head of schools.

To start, while responding to how cultural practices such as early marriage contributes towards poor quality education girls in public secondary schools in Arusha District, parents responded as follows:

*Culture provides the necessary knowledge in various aspects of our daily life. Good culture specifically helps people adapt to change in their environments and refine their behaviour through appropriate knowledge. Similarly, cultural practices such as early marriages interfere with girls' education. However good CP determines what, how much, and what kind of education members of a society will learn. Subsequently, the culture of the society governs the attitude of the people in the society towards education. A special function of education is to prepare the child for future life. There is an inextricable interaction between education and culture. Studying the sociology of education gives an idea of the importance of culture in education (Personal interview on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024).*

Further, during interview session on the same question, the Head of school Y responded as follows;

*Society creates and rains interest in acquiring knowledge among individuals. Culture also plays*

*a helpful role in curbing this interest of socialized people. In fact, culture among group members is intended to polish our thinking, consciousness, and knowledge. However, culture such as early marriage that impact negatively on education should be re-evaluated (Personal interview on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024).*

The responses from school heads, indicates that the society views cultural practices as means to complementing the provision of quality education. As such, cultural practices that don't support the provision of quality education should be discarded. The findings concur with Mensah, (2020) who found that many parents believed that girl child is a source of wealth so, some of them forced girls to get marriage, provide their children with a lot of home chores, including farming, hence they lack enough time to do their studies. Gay (2021) who argues that culture has an equivalent meaning such as values, attitudes, and beliefs, customs and traditions, heritages and contributions, or experiences and perspectives. This helps understand that within culture, families influence educational decisions due to obligations or financial reasons. It is essential to clarify that parents' involvement in students' academics is presented in a different way than the traditional ways that schools expect.

Data from table 1 on good CP contribute towards creating awareness to the students was supported by 39(65%) of students and 15(83.3%) teachers who strongly agreed with the statement, 20(33.3%) students and 3(16.6%) teachers agreed with the statement, while 6(10%) students indicated neutral. The findings implied that students need to understand their culture, since it rationalizes the behaviour of individuals in group life and makes them responsible. Culture specifically governs the behaviour of individuals belonging to a group. Students become aware and conscious when they understand well their culture, when awareness and consciousness is increased, it is associated with the good performance among students in secondary schools. Families have a great role in ensuring that school attendance is maintained despite cultural practices at home. Schools and families should create a better learning environment and make sure that children go to school on time and remain there. Teachers have also a duty to make sure that students remain in school throughout the allocated time. According to Roscoe (2019) education meaning and goal setting society culture plays a special role in shaping individuals with ideals, values, and ways of life and society. In short, as the culture of the society is contributing towards the provision of quality education, so is the students' action and parents support towards achieving the goal of education.

In addition, cultural practices should encourage collaborative decision making. In this regard, table 1 revealed that; 18(30%) of students and 7(38.8%) of teachers indicated strongly agreed with the statement, 18(30%) students and 9(50%) teachers were in agreement, 13(21.6%) students and 2(11.1%) teachers were neutral, 2(3.3%) of the students disagreed and 7(11.6%) students strong disagreed. The findings showed that when cultural is practiced in effectiveness ways, it promotes linked between students, parents and school management. Quality education is the product of inter-connection between the core elements like cultural activities. Not only that but also students themselves when they collaborate well on education matters, they can perform well on their subjects. The findings correspond to Cultural Dimensions Approach, developed by Geert Hofstede that guided this study. The theory provides a framework for understanding how cultural values influence behaviorscollaborative and decision making in different settings, including education. The theory outlines whether individuals prioritize personal achievement (individualism) or group harmony (collectivism). In schools, this affects teaching methods, collaboration, and assessment (Geert, 2018)

When responding to whether community participation in cultural practices contributes to quality education, one parent pointed out that:

*Parents should realize that children are motivated or encouraged when they work together in different social activities. Therefore, their guidance is essential. With proper guidance, culture promotes unity and when there is unity most activities in school are done effectively without any contradictions and misunderstanding, hence they perform well on education matters (Personal interview on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024).*

Also, the head of school Z while answering the same question respondent that:

*Collaboration between parents and school administration on matter of shaping behaviour of our children, help to maintain discipline, whenever there is discipline there is a likelihood of provision of quality education that would result in good academic performance among the students. Discipline and education are two un-separable elements (Personal interview on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024).*

The response from the respondents clearly shows that good CP both at school and home emphasizes competition and achievement or cooperation and care and how these values

influence the educational environment and student outcomes.

Another statement found in table 1 on the contribution of cultural practices towards quality education was that it should embed interest in personal academic development. On this one, respondents responded as follow; 17(28.3%) students and 7(38.8%) teachers indicated strongly agree, 25(41.6%) students and 9(50%) teachers agreed with the statement, 10(16.6%) students and 2(11.1%) responded as neutral, 4(6.6%) of students disagreed while only 3(5%) strongly disagreed. Children are taught how to cook, how to be respectful to other members in the society and how to be responsible. These elements strengthen personal academic development, the career development and different innovations that allow children to be skilfully and knowledgeable to master their future life. Society creates and rains interest in acquiring knowledge among individuals. Culture also plays a helpful role in curbing this interest of socialized people.

The findings from interviewees revealed that:

*Cultural practices aim to teach children on developing their talent which helps them to master future life. Children are taught how to master their environment so as to get what they want to get in personal academic development (Personal interview on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024)*

Moreover, head of school X remarked that:

*Good cultural practices make an individual to be true human being and a proper social mortal through living the real life based on their talents and professionals. If a person is kept outside society and culture, one express himself as a real person. Individuals have to live socially as social beings. Certain qualifications and qualities are absolutely essential for personal academic development (Personal interview on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024).*

Generally, the above findings indicate that professional development has great positive impact on academic achievements. Nowadays most parents in the society support their children towards education either in private or public schools. This has enhanced the quality of education provided. The study concurs with Srikanta (2021) who argued that good culture binds all the members of the group in a bond of love on what they would prefer to be. An environment that allows children to perform what



they need to do enhances their freedom and cultural practices with limits for quality education.

## 4.2 Findings on Strategies for Improving Cultural Practices for Quality Education

Another specific objective on this study was to determine the strategies for improving cultural practices for quality education in public secondary schools in Arusha district. Questionnaires were administered to the sampled secondary school teachers and students using five Point Likert Scale, where; 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Undecided 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagree. They were required to indicate their level of agreements with the 7 items which were in the questionnaires. Table 2 presents the data of quantitative findings through questionnaires.

**Table 2: Findings on Strategies for Improving Cultural Practices for Quality Education in Public Secondary Schools in Arusha District**

Responses	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	S f(%)	T f(%)	S f(%)	T f(%)	S f(%)	T f(%)	S f(%)	T f(%)	S f(%)	T f(%)
<b>Creating awareness among community members</b>	31(60)	11(61.1)	21(35)	7(38.9)	8(13.3)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Formulation of school cultural clubs</b>	29(48.3)	9(50)	19(31.6)	9(50)	6(10)	0	5(8.3)	0	0	0
<b>Providing motivation</b>	18(30)	7(38.8)	18(30)	9(50)	13(21.6)	2(11.1)	2(3.3)	0	7(11.6)	0
<b>Enact by-laws</b>	30(50)	16(88.9)	26(43.3)	2(11.1)	4(6.6)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Mentoring good cultural ambassadors</b>	26(43.3)	10(55.5)	20(33.3)	8(44.4)	11(18.3)	0	3(5)	0	0	0
<b>Promotion of intercultural dialogue</b>	18(30)	6(33.3)	17(28.3)	7(38.9)	17(28.3)	5(27.7)	2(3.3)	0	6(10)	0
<b>Student's culture should be included in classrooms</b>	33(55)	17(94.4)	26(43.3)	1(5.6)	1(1.7)	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Field Data (2024), S= Students, T= Teachers, f = frequency, % = Percentage

From table 2 show the measures to be taken so as to prohibit the negative cultural practices that affect students' academic performance in secondary schools in Arusha District. In this regard, creating awareness among community members was identified as one of the strategies for improving cultural practices for quality education in public secondary schools in Arusha district. From the

responded, table 2 exhibit the following; 31(60%) students and 11(61.1%) teachers strongly agreed, 21(35%) students and 7(38.9) teachers agreed and 8(13.3%) of the students were neutral. From these responses, many respondents were in agreement that creating awareness among community members is necessary to sensitize them on cultural practices and their contribution towards quality

education in public secondary schools. In this case, the respondents assert that, sensitizing the community may improve their understanding about cultural practices that should be retained and those that should be discarded. Similarly, through creating awareness, they may distinguish between practices that negatively affect quality education. It is true that education helps to provide cultural awareness for both students and community members to avoid harmful cultural practices that still take place within the societies. Through social events, seminars and workshops community members may acquire the relevant education on how to preserve the cultural practices which have positive impact and to avoid negative cultural practices.

While giving answer to the question asked by the researcher during interview conducted with parents, one parent remarked that:

*“Provision of education on oppressive cultural practices helps community members and students to avoid it and to concentrate on their studies. Admittedly, this will help them perform well in their academics (Personal interview on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024).*

Head of school “Y” added that:

*Parents should be educated about the importance of developing positive cultural practices. Students should acquire education after support, motivation and encouragement by their parents. Such situation will reduce challenges students are facing and increase students’ academic performance. When the outdated cultures are discarded, school administrators will experience minimal interference from parents hence improved quality education given students (Personal interview on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024).*

The excerpt from respondents indicates that the main task of education is to help intellectual development of the human child and at the same time to acclimatize with the cultural traditions of the society. Schools play an important role as the main means of transmitting culture, the function of education is to transmit the society values and ideas to the young and capable members of society.

Formulation of school cultural clubs is also captured in table 2 as a strategy for improving cultural practices. In this case, the respondents responded as follows; 29(48.3%) of the students and 9(50%) of teachers strongly agreed, 19(31.63%) for students as well as 9(50%) teachers who agreed with the statement, 6(10%) students were neutral while 5(8.3%) students disagreed. School cultural clubs is the combination of students from different cultures with the aim to preserve student culture and to fight against those

who practice harmful cultural like girls’ circumcision, early marriage and child labour. School clubs are important to the school community. These clubs may help students to gain a lot of knowledge that would help them achieve academically. For its success, schools should ensure that this session become part of the school timetable. This gives a room to the students to concentrate and take their academic work seriously.

In correlation of this study with interview answers from the respondents, the head of school X also noted that:

*School cultural clubs help the student to promote unity and solidarity within the school and also promote students’ togetherness in different matters. When these cultural clubs are well maintained, we preserve our culture, promote quality education and good academic performance is realized in public secondary schools (Personal interview on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024).*

The data shows that formulation of school cultural clubs could be a measure towards strategies for improving cultural practices for quality education in public secondary schools in Arusha district. However, it is necessary for school management to put measure in place to ensure that the clubs remain focused to their purpose. The schedule of the clubs should be well drawn and teachers should be assigned the responsibility to mentor them. In line with the argument advanced by Boon (2019), social clubs shape instruction behaviours, if they are developed in a positive and constructive way, in that form, competence will build confidence, and success will create success. Adequate conservation is essential for the circulation of great culture. The education system of society fulfils this important responsibility of preserving the culture with special care. Therefore, it is important to preserve the culture preserved by cultured people for the next generation.

Additionally, providing motivation was identified as another strategy for improving cultural practices for quality education in public secondary schools. Table 2 illustrate that; 18(30%) of students and 7(38.8%) teachers strongly agreed, 18(30%) students and 9(50%) teachers agreed while 13(21.6%) of the students and 2(11.1%) of the teachers were neutral, 2(3.3%) students disagreed and 7(11.6%) students. To ensure that, there should be the special rewards for those who appreciate the efforts of different people showing their interest on promoting and enhancing the prohibition of negative cultural practices in the society. The reinforcement encourages and motivates other people to continue with the fight against negative cultural practices. School management together with community members should motivate students who perform exemplary well in promoting and fighting against negative cultural practices.

In support of the findings during interview session, one parent noted that:

*Nowadays many students love to play football, schools managements and community members should prepare a league for both sex; male and female students. The aim of this league should be to promote cultural education and rewards for the winners. Similarly, athletics bring people together and when they are combined it become easy for them to pass knowledge to the community about the effects of harmful cultural practices. Rewards obtain from sports and music cultural festivals should be awarded to students to encourage them also in their academic work (Personal interview on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024).*

The response shows that extra curriculum activities such as sports and music cultural festivals can be used to encourage students to divert their attention from oppressing cultural practices. In support, Kisobo et al. (2019) conducted a study among the students in secondary schools in Kwanza division in Kenya to establish the effects of cultural factors on secondary schools towards quality education. Adopting cross sectional design on 891 respondents, a sample of 275 participants was chosen. The result of the research showed that influence of variables such as culture and parents' motivation affected quality education.

In addition, table 2 on the enacting by laws, respondents reported that; 30(50%) students and 16(88.9%) teachers were strongly agreed, 26(43.3%) students and 2(11.1%) teachers agreed while 4(6.6%) of the students were neutral. The findings revealed that about 54.4% of the respondents agreed. In order to help students academically, it is necessary to enact by-laws that could help students particularly girls against people who have sinister intention that may spoil their dreams. Punishment through law enforcement against those who practice negative cultures will be the cure for promoting awareness and consciousness among students and society members in general. Also, language used on those by-laws should be clearly for everyone, as a component of culture carries that knowledge base through education.

The finding corresponds to the information from interviews with the head of schools and parents. In this regard, one respondent submitted that:

First, one parent noted that:

*No one is above the law, we must formulate by laws against outdated cultural practices, and when it is formulated, we must make sure that each one is held responsible. When one commits an offence against the law, the offender should be punished according to the law regardless of*

*whom one is in the society (Personal interview on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024)*

Also, as supported by Head of school Y, the respondent remarked that:

*Society members themselves tend to break the by-laws which are formulated against negative culture practices. Some who have committed crime related to cultural practices are not reported to law enforcers instead the matter are secretly and privately handled traditionally. This affects the education of students particularly girls (Personal interview on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024).*

From these responses, the study found that by reporting those who violate laws and regulations, it will act as a deterrent. Therefore, law enforcement will help to reduce societal crime against girls. Furthermore, Dimbiss (2019) insisted that on law implementation, some cultures belittle students and doom them to eventual failures. Culture influences students' academic achievement, but socio-economic factors are also strong factor. Culture influences student's aspirations and family cultural aspects such as parent's socio-economic status affect academic performance.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the current study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The study has shown that culture exert a strong influence on education and is at the root of educational stagnation in Arusha District. The aspects of culture that negatively affects quality education should be looked at and appropriate by-laws formulated and implemented for guidance. This needs to be urgently done in order to uphold quality education. Negative culture would produce nothing but educated unemployable graduates; graduates that cannot stand tall among other graduates in other parts of the world. That is, by being educated with appropriate cultural practices, the students can fulfil the highest aspiration in their profession in the future. To fulfil that aspiration, students should have acquired quality education that enhances academic performance and decent reasoning. This achievement will enable them advocate for cultural practices that are generally for the progress of the society. Outreach efforts should be put to target women who get married before 18 years as potentially in need of assistance. Parents should be convicted for accepting their children to drop out of school on cultural reasons such as early marriages. Village by-laws about dropout should be

introduced to ensure that pupils who drop out of school have legal actions taken against them and advised to rejoin school if possible.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the study put forth the following recommendations:

1. Cultural practices that affect quality education in secondary schools should be prohibited and parents should understand that they have responsibility to make sure that their children are protected and perform well academically. Orientations courses for the parents should be provided so as to allow parents to gain knowledge and skills on how to combat against the negative impacts of cultural practices to students' quality education.
2. In order to eliminate unfavourable behaviour exercised in society towards children, local government and all members of the community should enact by-laws that safe guard students against negative cultural practices that affect students' education. Likewise, it is necessary to improve social services in rural areas; parents should contribute money for food programme in schools both for lunch and breakfast and also through building hostels whenever an urgent need arises such as to safeguard the interest of girls. The government should also provide conducive environment to NGO's that conduct different campaigns against negative cultural practices and the importance of embracing education in the society.
3. Teachers, school administrators and other school members need to build a community that makes students feel part of it, that they can learn in an environment where they don't feel alienated from their homes, their languages, identities, and families. Students culture needs to be valued as a factor that influences their academic achievement and teachers need to give support in their institutions to serve the needs of the students.

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