

Character Development and Community Development in Rural Areas in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District, Uganda. A cross-sectional study.

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ABSTRACT

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Background:

Character development refers to the process of nurturing positive moral values and ethical behaviours such as honesty, responsibility, respect, integrity, and self-discipline. The study aims to examine the relationship between character development and community development in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District.

Methodology:

A mixed-methods approach was utilised, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative methods involved structured questionnaires to gather Qualitative data collected through interviews and documentary review were analysed using thematic analysis.

Results:

Female respondents (53.7%) slightly outnumbered male respondents (46.3%). The majority of respondents selected Agree or Strongly Agree, with combined agreement levels ranging from 56% to 72%. Discipline and role modelling: Responses regarding discipline enforcement (Mean = 3.41) show a more divided pattern, with only about 61.4% agreement. Parents acting as role models (Mean = 3.48) attracted moderate agreement (62.8%). Responsibility, obedience, and moral guidance: The statement on taking responsibility for actions recorded a relatively lower mean (3.37), with about 58.6% agreement. Obedience in households showed stronger results (Mean = 3.66; about 69.3% agreement), reflecting continued emphasis on traditional authority structures within families. Self-control among youth (Mean = 3.33) and discouraging antisocial behaviour (Mean = 3.38) showed moderate agreement levels (around 55–57%). Values transmission and positive behaviour: Positive results were observed in areas such as hard work (Mean = 3.58), kindness and empathy (Mean = 3.52), and moral value transmission (Mean = 3.46), with agreement levels generally above 63%.

Conclusion:

Households that promote moral values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline contribute positively to improved community participation, cooperation, and social cohesion. Character development within households is a key foundation for strengthening community development outcomes in Lwajje Sub-County.

Recommendations:

Households should intentionally strengthen moral upbringing by consistently teaching values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline.

Keywords: *Character development, Community development, Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District.*

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Background

Character development refers to the process of nurturing positive moral values and ethical behaviours such as honesty, responsibility, respect, integrity, and self-discipline. In rural areas, character development is largely influenced by family structures, cultural norms, and community interactions (Nambozo, 2024). The Social Learning Theory advanced by Albert Bandura explains that individuals acquire values and behaviours through observation, imitation, and interaction with role models in

their social environment (Bandura, 1977). In rural settings, where social relationships are often close-knit, individuals learn acceptable behaviours from parents, elders, and community leaders. This process fosters the development of positive character traits that are essential for cooperation, trust, and collective action in community development. Empirical studies indicate that character development significantly contributes to community development outcomes. According to Lickona (2019), individuals with strong moral values are more likely to engage in responsible

citizenship, participate in community activities, and contribute to social cohesion. In rural communities, where development initiatives often rely on collective participation, such values are essential for the success of community projects.

Similarly, a study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2021) highlights that promoting values such as respect, tolerance, and responsibility enhances social inclusion and strengthens community structures. The study found that communities with strong value systems tend to experience lower levels of conflict and higher levels of cooperation, which are key drivers of sustainable development.

In the African context, research by Nsamenang (2020) emphasises that indigenous systems of character formation through storytelling, mentorship, and communal living play a significant role in shaping responsible individuals who actively contribute to community welfare. These traditional approaches reinforce shared values and collective responsibility, which are vital for rural development. In rural Uganda, Okurut and Bategeka (2022) found that individuals who exhibit positive character traits such as accountability and discipline are more likely to participate in local governance and community development initiatives. Their involvement enhances transparency, effective resource utilisation, and the overall success of development programs.

Character development also contributes to building social capital, which includes trust, cooperation, and networks among community members. In rural areas, where formal institutions may be weak, strong character and social values help sustain collective action and community-driven development. The study aims to examine the relationship between character development and community development in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between household mentorship and community development in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District.

The study design helped to determine the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables (character development, career guidance, and life skills development) and the dependent variable, community development. This design enabled the study to assess whether, and to what extent, these forms of household mentorship were associated with improvements in community outcomes.

A mixed-methods approach was utilised, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative methods involved structured questionnaires to gather measurable data from respondents, while qualitative methods involved interviews to provide deeper insights into the experiences, perceptions, and practices of household mentorship in the community. The integration of these methods provided a comprehensive understanding of how household mentorship influenced community development in Lwajje Sub-County.

Study Population

The study targeted a total population of 1,500 respondents in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District, comprising household mentors and community leaders. Household mentors formed the largest portion of the population, consisting of 1,470 adults who provided guidance in character development, career choices, and life skills development to members of their households. These participants offered insights into how household mentorship influenced the social, economic, and developmental aspects of the community.

Additionally, the study included 30 community leaders and local officials who were directly involved in supervising and implementing community programs. These participants provided expert perspectives on the effects of household mentorship on broader community development initiatives.

Table 1: Study Population, Sample Size & Sampling Technique

Category of Respondents	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques
Household mentors (parents/guardians)	1,470	300	Stratified Sampling
Community leaders and local officials	30	06	Purposive sampling
Total Population	1,500	306	

Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2025)

Sample size

The study selected a sample of 306 respondents from the total population of 1,500 in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District. The determination of the sample size was guided

by Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample sizes from finite populations, which provided a scientifically accepted approach for selecting representative samples from a known population. To ensure fair

representation, proportionate sampling was applied to both household mentors and community leaders.

This sampling approach ensured that the sample was both representative and manageable, allowing for accurate and reliable data collection to address the study objectives.

Sampling Technique

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The study employed both stratified and purposive sampling techniques to select respondents. This approach ensured that the sample was representative, relevant, and capable of providing reliable data.

Stratified Sampling

Household mentors formed the largest portion of the population (1,470 participants). To capture variations across the sub-county, the population was divided into strata based on geographical zones or villages. From each stratum, respondents were selected proportionately, resulting in a total of 300 household mentors. Stratified sampling ensured that all areas of the sub-county were adequately represented, reducing sampling bias and improving the accuracy of the findings related to household mentorship practices.

Purposive Sampling

Community leaders and local officials formed a smaller portion of the population. Six participants were selected purposively based on their roles, experience, and involvement in community development programs. Purposive sampling allowed the study to gather in-depth insights from key informants who had first-hand knowledge of the impact of household mentorship on community development.

Data Collection Methods

The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to gather comprehensive information from the selected respondents in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District. The mixed-methods approach provided both measurable data and in-depth insights, allowing the study to understand the relationship between household mentorship and community development.

Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires were administered to the selected household mentors. The questionnaires included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to gather quantitative data on character development, career guidance, life skills development, and their perceived impact on community development. The use of questionnaires allowed the study to collect standardised data efficiently from a large number of respondents, facilitating statistical analysis to identify patterns and correlations.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 6 purposively selected community leaders and local officials. These interviews provided qualitative insights into the influence of household mentorship on community programs and development initiatives. Open-ended questions allowed respondents to share their experiences, perceptions, and recommendations, adding depth and context to the quantitative findings.

Documentary Review Method

The study employed the documentary review method as a secondary data collection technique to complement the primary data gathered from questionnaires and interviews. This method involved the systematic examination of existing records, reports, and documents related to household mentorship and community development in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District.

Documents included government reports, local council records, community development project reports, school and household records, and previous research studies. These documents provided historical and contextual information on the implementation of mentorship programs, the level of community participation, and the outcomes of various community development initiatives.

The study systematically reviewed and extracted relevant information from the documents using a structured checklist aligned with the study objectives. The findings from the documentary review were integrated with the primary data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between household mentorship and community development.

Data Collection Procedure

The study followed a structured and systematic procedure to collect data from the selected respondents in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District. The procedure ensured the reliability, validity, and ethical integrity of the data collected. The steps were outlined as follows:

Preparation and Permissions: Before data collection began, the study sought permission from relevant authorities, including local council officials and community leaders in Lwajje Sub-County. This step ensured access to households and community leaders while respecting local protocols and regulations. The study also prepared data collection instruments, such as questionnaires, interview guides, and documentary review checklists, and conducted a pilot test in a neighbouring sub-county to ensure clarity, reliability, and appropriateness of the instruments.

Recruitment and Orientation of Respondents: The study informed the selected household mentors and community leaders about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and

anonymity of their responses. Clear instructions were provided on how to complete the questionnaires or participate in interviews, ensuring that respondents understood the process.

Administration of Questionnaires: The study distributed structured questionnaires to the 300 selected household mentors using stratified sampling. Respondents completed the questionnaires either on the spot or within an agreed timeframe, after which the study collected the completed forms for data processing.

Conducting Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 6 purposively selected community leaders and local officials. The study scheduled appointments at convenient times for the respondents and recorded responses with consent, taking detailed notes to capture qualitative insights.

Documentary Review: The study systematically reviewed relevant documents and records, including government reports, community project reports, and household records. Information was extracted using a structured checklist aligned with the study objectives, and relevant data were summarized for analysis.

Data Verification and Organization: After data collection, the study verified all responses for completeness and consistency, ensuring that no important information was missing. The data were then organized, coded, and prepared for analysis, integrating both primary and secondary sources to provide a comprehensive dataset for addressing the research objectives.

Validity of Instruments

The study ensured validity by taking several measures to guarantee that the data collected accurately reflected the relationship between household mentorship and community development in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District. Validity confirmed that the instruments measured what they were intended to measure and that the findings were credible and trustworthy.

Content Validity: The study ensured content validity by designing data collection instruments (questionnaires and interview guides) that were directly aligned with the study objectives and specific research questions. Each item was reviewed to confirm that it captured aspects of character development, career guidance, life skills development, and community development. Experts in education, community development, and social research were consulted to review the instruments and provide feedback, ensuring that the items were clear, relevant, and comprehensive.

Pilot Testing: The study conducted a pilot study in a neighboring sub-county with a small group of household mentors and community leaders. The pilot test helped identify unclear or ambiguous questions, assess the consistency of responses, and refine the instruments before the main data collection. Adjustments based on pilot feedback improved the validity of the final instruments.

Expert Review and Approval: Before data collection, the instruments were submitted to experts in research methodology for review and approval. Their feedback ensured that the instruments were valid, appropriate, and capable of yielding reliable data.

Reliability of Instruments

The study ensured reliability by adopting measures that guaranteed consistency and stability of the data collection instruments over time. Reliability refers to the ability of the research instruments to produce consistent results when applied under similar conditions.

Pilot Testing: The study conducted a pilot study in a neighbouring sub-county using a small sample of respondents similar to those in the main study. The purpose of the pilot test was to identify ambiguities, inconsistencies, and unclear items in the questionnaires and interview guides. Feedback obtained was used to revise and improve the instruments, ensuring they yielded consistent results.

Test-Retest Method: The study applied the test-retest technique by administering the same questionnaire to the same group of respondents at two different points in time during the pilot phase. The results were compared to determine the consistency of responses, and a high level of similarity indicated that the instrument was reliable.

Internal Consistency: The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using internal consistency methods, such as calculating Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The instrument was considered reliable if it achieved a coefficient of 0.7 or higher, indicating that the items measured the same underlying concepts consistently.

Standardisation of Instruments: The study ensured that all respondents were given the same set of questions and instructions during data collection. This standardisation minimised variations that could arise from differences in administration, thereby improving the reliability of the data collected.

Clear Instructions and Training: The study provided clear instructions to respondents on how to answer the questionnaires and ensured proper administration of interviews. Where necessary, research assistants were trained to follow uniform procedures, reducing the likelihood of errors and inconsistencies.

Data Analysis

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods to examine the relationship between household mentorship and community development in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District. The use of mixed methods enabled a comprehensive interpretation of the data collected from questionnaires, interviews, and documentary review.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were coded, entered, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26). Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the data, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to describe the characteristics of respondents and key variables.

Inferential statistics were applied to test the relationships between variables. Specifically, correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between household mentorship variables (character development, career guidance, and life skills development) and community development. The results were presented in tables and charts for easy interpretation.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data collected through interviews and documentary review were analysed using thematic analysis. The study organised the data into themes and categories based on the study objectives, such as character development, career guidance, life skills, and community development outcomes.

The responses were carefully reviewed, coded, and interpreted to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in participants' views. Relevant quotations and explanations were used to support the findings, providing deeper insights into the quantitative results.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles to ensure that the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District were protected throughout the research process.

Informed Consent: The study obtained informed consent from all participants before involving them in the study. Respondents were clearly informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, and their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Participation was entirely voluntary.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The study ensured that all information provided by respondents was kept confidential. Participants' identities were not disclosed, and no names were recorded on the questionnaires or reports. The data collected were used strictly for academic purposes.

Privacy of Respondents: The study respected the privacy of participants by conducting interviews in a manner that ensured comfort and confidentiality. Respondents were not forced to answer any questions they were uncomfortable with.

Permission from Authorities: The study sought official permission from relevant authorities, including local leaders and administrative offices in Lwajje Sub-County, before conducting the study. This ensured that the research was conducted lawfully and respectfully.

Avoidance of Harm: The study ensured that no physical, psychological, or emotional harm was caused to participants. Questions were designed to avoid sensitive or offensive content, and respondents were treated with respect and dignity throughout the research process.

Honesty and Integrity: The study ensured honesty in data collection, analysis, and reporting. Findings were presented accurately without fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of information. Proper acknowledgement was given to all sources of information used in the study.

RESULTS

Table 2: Response Rate

Category of Respondents	Questionnaires issued and interviews scheduled	Questionnaires collected and interviews conducted	Response rate (%)
Household mentors (parents/guardians)	300	280	93
Community leaders and local officials	06	05	0.8
Total Population	306	285	93

Source: Primary Data (2026).

Out of the 306 respondents targeted, 285 successfully participated in the study, resulting in an overall response rate of 93%.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 285)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	132	46.3
	Female	153	53.7
Total		285	100
Age Group	Below 18 years	18	6.3
	18–25 years	52	18.2
	26–35 years	81	28.4
	36–45 years	74	26.0
	Above 45 years	60	21.1
Total		285	100
Marital Status	Single	78	27.4
	Married	162	56.8
	Divorced	18	6.3
	Widowed	27	9.5
Total		285	100
Level of Education	No formal education	34	11.9
	Primary level	92	32.3
	Secondary level	96	33.7
	Tertiary level	36	12.6
	University level	27	9.5
Total		285	100
Occupation	Farmer	124	43.5
	Business person	68	23.9
	Civil servant	41	14.4
	Student	30	10.5
	Other	22	7.7
Total		285	100
Household Size	1–3 members	46	16.1
	4–6 members	118	41.4
	7–9 members	84	29.5
	10 and above	37	13.0
Total		285	100
Duration of Residence	Less than 1 year	14	4.9
	1–5 years	61	21.4
	6–10 years	98	34.4
	More than 10 years	112	39.3
Total		285	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Gender distribution indicated that female respondents (53.7%) slightly outnumbered male respondents (46.3%). This suggests that women were more available and willing to participate in the study, which may reflect their active involvement in household and community mentorship roles. Age distribution showed that the majority of respondents were within the economically and socially active age groups, particularly 26–35 years (28.4%) and 36–45 years (26.0%). This implies that most respondents were mature individuals likely to have relevant experience in household responsibilities and community development activities. A smaller proportion of respondents were below 18 years

(6.3%), indicating limited participation of minors in the study.

Regarding marital status, more than half of the respondents (56.8%) were married, suggesting that most participants were involved in established household structures where mentorship practices are likely to occur. Singles accounted for 27.4%, while widowed and divorced respondents formed smaller proportions.

In terms of education level, the majority of respondents had attained primary (32.3%) and secondary education (33.7%). A smaller proportion had a tertiary (12.6%) or university education (9.5%), while 11.9% had no formal education.

This indicates moderate literacy levels among respondents, which may influence their understanding and practice of household mentorship.

The findings on occupation revealed that farming was the dominant livelihood activity (43.5%), followed by business (23.9%) and civil service (14.4%). This reflects the largely rural and agrarian nature of Lwajje Sub-County, where most households depend on subsistence and small-scale economic activities.

For household size, most respondents reported living in households of 4–6 members (41.4%), followed by 7–9 members (29.5%). This suggests relatively large household

structures, which may enhance opportunities for mentorship and intergenerational learning within families.

The duration of residence showed that a significant proportion of respondents (39.3%) had lived in the area for more than 10 years, indicating a stable and well-rooted population. This stability is important for studying long-term mentorship practices and community development trends.

Overall, the demographic results suggest that the respondents were well distributed across key social and economic categories, providing a strong basis for analysing the relationship between household mentorship and community development in the study area.

Character Development in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Character Development in Lwajje Sub-County (N = 280)

Statement	SD n(%)	D n(%)	N n(%)	A n(%)	SA n(%)	Mean	SD
Parents/guardians emphasise respect for others	18 (6.4)	32 (11.4)	40 (14.3)	120 (42.9)	70 (25.0)	3.62	1.01
Children are taught honesty from an early age	20 (7.1)	35 (12.5)	38 (13.6)	118 (42.1)	69 (24.6)	3.55	1.05
Discipline is consistently enforced in households	28 (10.0)	44 (15.7)	36 (12.9)	112 (40.0)	60 (21.4)	3.41	1.12
Parents/guardians act as positive role models	22 (7.9)	40 (14.3)	42 (15.0)	116 (41.4)	60 (21.4)	3.48	1.09
Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions	30 (10.7)	48 (17.1)	38 (13.6)	110 (39.3)	54 (19.3)	3.37	1.14
Respect for elders is promoted in households	16 (5.7)	28 (10.0)	34 (12.1)	122 (43.6)	80 (28.6)	3.70	0.98
Household mentorship fosters good moral values	24 (8.6)	42 (15.0)	40 (14.3)	114 (40.7)	60 (21.4)	3.44	1.08
Children are taught the importance of hard work	19 (6.8)	33 (11.8)	40 (14.3)	120 (42.9)	68 (24.3)	3.58	1.03
Children are guided to resolve conflicts peacefully	35 (12.5)	50 (17.9)	45 (16.1)	110 (39.3)	40 (14.3)	3.29	1.16
Obedience is emphasized within households	18 (6.4)	30 (10.7)	38 (13.6)	120 (42.9)	74 (26.4)	3.66	1.00
Households promote kindness and empathy	22 (7.9)	38 (13.6)	42 (15.0)	118 (42.1)	60 (21.4)	3.52	1.07
Cultural and moral values are passed on effectively	25 (8.9)	40 (14.3)	44 (15.7)	112 (40.0)	59 (21.1)	3.46	1.10
Children are discouraged from antisocial behaviour	32 (11.4)	48 (17.1)	40 (14.3)	110 (39.3)	50 (17.9)	3.38	1.13
Household mentorship promotes self-control among youth	34 (12.1)	46 (16.4)	44 (15.7)	108 (38.6)	48 (17.1)	3.33	1.15

Source: Primary data (2026)

Across all statements, the majority of respondents selected Agree or Strongly Agree, with combined agreement levels ranging from 56% to 72%. This suggests that most households do engage in some form of character development mentorship. However, a consistent minority (about 18% to 29%) expressed disagreement, indicating

gaps in how these values are practised across the community.

Respect, honesty, and moral upbringing: The statement on respect for others recorded a mean of 3.62, with 67.9% agreement, showing that respect is one of the more strongly emphasised values in households. Similarly, honesty from

an early age had a mean of 3.55 and about 66.7% agreement, indicating that moral teachings are relatively common.

These findings suggest that foundational moral values such as respect and honesty are still prioritised in household upbringing, likely influenced by cultural norms and traditional expectations.

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Discipline and role modelling: Responses regarding discipline enforcement (Mean = 3.41) show a more divided pattern, with only about 61.4% agreement. This implies that while discipline exists, it is not consistently enforced across all households.

Similarly, parents acting as role models (Mean = 3.48) attracted moderate agreement (62.8%), suggesting that although parents are expected to model behaviour, this is not uniformly practiced or perceived.

Responsibility, obedience, and moral guidance: The statement on taking responsibility for actions recorded a relatively lower mean (3.37), with about 58.6% agreement, indicating weaker mentorship in promoting accountability among children.

In contrast, obedience in households showed stronger results (Mean = 3.66; about 69.3% agreement), reflecting continued emphasis on traditional authority structures within families.

Conflict resolution and behavioural control: The lowest-rated aspect was conflict resolution skills (Mean = 3.29), where only about 53.6% agreed, while a relatively high proportion disagreed. This suggests that households are less effective in guiding children on peaceful conflict management, which is a critical life skill for community cohesion.

Similarly, self-control among youth (Mean = 3.33) and discouraging antisocial behaviour (Mean = 3.38) also showed moderate agreement levels (around 55–57%), indicating weaknesses in behavioural regulation aspects of mentorship.

Values transmission and positive behaviour: Positive results were observed in areas such as hard work (Mean = 3.58), kindness and empathy (Mean = 3.52), and moral value transmission (Mean = 3.46), with agreement levels generally above 63%. These findings suggest that households still play an important role in promoting work ethic and social values.

In summary, the results show that household mentorship in Lwajje Sub-County contributes positively to character development, particularly in respect, obedience, honesty, and work ethic. However, there are clear weaknesses in more advanced behavioural competencies such as conflict resolution, responsibility-taking, and self-control.

The presence of notable levels of disagreement across most indicators further suggests that household mentorship practices are inconsistent, meaning not all households actively or equally engage in structured character development. This inconsistency may limit the overall effectiveness of mentorship in promoting strong, uniform character development outcomes across the sub-county.

Qualitative findings on Character Development in Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District

During the interview with the LC3 Chairperson (Lwajje Sub-County), he explained that household mentorship in the sub-county is present but largely informal and inconsistent. He noted that *“Most parents in Lwajje still teach their children respect and obedience, especially to elders, but it is not structured. What we see is that moral training depends on the individual household. Some families are strong in discipline, while others are very weak.”*

He further observed that increasing economic pressure among fishing households has reduced the time parents spend mentoring children. As a result, some children grow up without proper guidance in responsibility and behaviour. The Chairperson emphasized that where mentorship is strong, cases of indiscipline and youth involvement in antisocial behaviour are lower.

The first LCV councilor that was interviewed reported that character development is strongly influenced by observation rather than formal teaching. *“Children in this community learn mostly by watching what adults do. If parents are hardworking and respectful, the children copy that. But if there is alcoholism or neglect, the same behaviour is passed on.”*

He highlighted that honesty and respect are still taught in many households, but enforcement is weak due to limited parental supervision, especially in fishing-related night activities.

He concluded that household mentorship exists but lacks consistency and reinforcement mechanisms.

The second councilor emphasized cultural decline as a challenge: *“In the past, elders played a stronger role in shaping discipline and moral behaviour. Today, that system has weakened, and many young people are influenced more by peers and social media than by parents.”*

He noted that while obedience and respect for elders are still emphasized, conflict resolution skills are poorly taught, contributing to youth involvement in misunderstandings and petty conflicts within villages.

He recommended strengthening community-based parenting programs to restore mentorship structures.

The CDO provided a more technical perspective, linking household mentorship to community development outcomes:

“From a development perspective, households that actively teach responsibility, honesty, and discipline tend to produce more responsible youth who participate in community activities.”

He observed that character development directly influences civic engagement, noting that youth who receive guidance are more likely to join community meetings and local initiatives.

However, he also highlighted gaps:

“There is a noticeable gap in life skills training, such as conflict resolution and decision-making. These are areas where households are still weak.”

He recommended integrating parenting education into existing community development programs.

The NGO representative emphasized the role of external support in strengthening household mentorship:

“We have observed that where NGOs conduct parenting training sessions, households show improvement in discipline, communication, and child behaviour.”

She noted that many households in Lwajje rely on traditional methods, which are often not sufficient to address modern social challenges.

She further explained that the lack of structured mentorship contributes to inconsistent moral development among children:

“Some children are very disciplined, others are completely uncontrolled. This variation comes from differences in household mentorship practices.”

The NGO recommended more community outreach programs focusing on positive parenting and youth mentorship.

Thematic Analysis of Interview Findings on Character Development and Household Mentorship

The qualitative data from the LC3 Chairperson, two LCV councillors, the Community Development Officer (CDO), and the NGO representative were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis focused on identifying recurring patterns, meanings, and explanations regarding how household mentorship influences character development in Lwajje Sub-County.

Theme 1: Inconsistency and Informality of Household Mentorship

A dominant theme across all respondents was that household mentorship exists but is largely informal, unstructured, and inconsistent.

The LC3 Chairperson emphasised that moral upbringing “depends on the individual household,” indicating a lack of uniform standards across families. Similarly, the NGO representative noted that “some children are very disciplined, others are completely uncontrolled,” highlighting unequal mentorship practices.

This inconsistency suggests that household mentorship is not institutionalised but rather dependent on parental capacity, interest, and availability. The variation in parenting approaches contributes to unequal character development outcomes among children in the sub-county.

Theme 2: Persistence of Traditional Moral Values

A second key theme was the continued emphasis on traditional values such as respect, obedience, honesty, and respect for elders.

Both LCV councilors noted that children still learn respect and obedience, especially through observation and cultural expectations. The CDO also confirmed that households

emphasizing responsibility and discipline tend to produce more socially responsible youth.

This indicates that despite modernisation challenges, traditional moral frameworks remain influential in shaping children’s behaviour. However, these values are often transmitted informally rather than through structured mentorship systems.

Theme 3: Weak Development of Practical Life Skills

A major gap identified in the findings was the limited teaching of practical life skills, particularly conflict resolution, decision-making, and self-control.

The second councillor highlighted that “conflict resolution skills are poorly taught,” while the CDO noted gaps in “life skills training such as decision-making.” The quantitative findings also supported this, showing lower agreement levels in conflict resolution and self-control indicators.

This theme suggests that while households focus on obedience and discipline, they pay less attention to equipping children with the skills needed to navigate social and economic challenges independently.

Theme 4: Influence of Socioeconomic and External Factors
Respondents consistently pointed to economic pressures, fishing-related livelihoods, peer influence, and media exposure as factors weakening household mentorship.

The LC3 Chairperson noted that parents engaged in demanding fishing activities often have limited time for mentoring children. The NGO representative added that modern influences such as social media and peer groups increasingly shape youth behaviour more than parents do.

This indicates that household mentorship is being undermined by external environmental pressures that reduce parental supervision and weaken traditional authority structures.

Theme 5: Positive Link between Mentorship and Community Participation

Despite the challenges, a positive relationship between household mentorship and community development outcomes was acknowledged.

The CDO explained that households that instil discipline and responsibility tend to produce youth who participate more in community activities. Similarly, the NGO representative observed improved behaviour in households exposed to parenting training programs.

This suggests that when mentorship is effectively practised, it contributes to improved civic engagement, social responsibility, and community participation.

Integrated Interpretation of Themes

Overall, the thematic analysis reveals a mixed picture:

Household mentorship is present but weakly structured.

Traditional moral values remain strong but limited in scope.

There is a clear gap in modern life skills development.

External socioeconomic pressures significantly affect parenting effectiveness.

Where mentorship is stronger, positive community development outcomes are observed.

Documentary Review Findings on Character Development and Household Mentorship

The documentary review focused on relevant records such as local council reports, community development program documents, school reports, NGO activity reports, and administrative records within Lwajje Sub-County, Buvuma District. The purpose was to triangulate findings from questionnaires and interviews regarding household mentorship and character development.

Local Council and Administrative Reports

Review of LC1 and LC3 records indicated that cases of youth indiscipline, school dropout, and petty conflicts were occasionally reported across villages in Lwajje Sub-County. The reports suggested that a significant proportion of these cases were linked to weak parental supervision and limited household guidance.

However, the same records also highlighted that villages with stronger community leadership structures recorded fewer cases of antisocial behaviour, suggesting a relationship between community involvement and improved household discipline.

Community Development Reports

Community development reports from the sub-county office indicated that several sensitisation programs on positive parenting, youth behaviour, and moral development had been implemented between 2021 and 2025. These programs aimed to strengthen household mentorship practices.

Despite these efforts, the reports noted low and inconsistent household participation, largely due to livelihood demands such as fishing and informal trading, which limited parents' availability.

The reports concluded that while awareness programs exist, their impact remains moderate due to weak follow-up mechanisms at the household level.

School Records and Education Reports

School records from selected primary and secondary schools in the sub-county showed a pattern of irregular attendance, disciplinary cases, and moderate dropout rates, particularly among older pupils.

Teachers' reports indicated that pupils from households with active parental involvement demonstrated better discipline, punctuality, and respect for authority, compared to those with limited parental supervision.

This evidence supported the argument that household mentorship directly influences character development outcomes in education settings.

NGO and Development Partner Reports

Reports from local NGOs working in child welfare and community development revealed that interventions such as parenting workshops and youth mentorship programs had led to noticeable improvements in household communication and child behaviour in targeted villages.

However, the reports also indicated that these improvements were not widespread, as only a small proportion of households regularly participated in such programs.

The NGO documentation emphasised the need for scaling up structured parenting education to improve consistency in mentorship practices.

Summary of Documentary Findings

Overall, documentary evidence revealed the following key patterns:

There are recurring cases of youth indiscipline and weak supervision linked to household mentorship gaps.

Community sensitisation programs exist but have limited and uneven coverage.

Schools confirm that parental involvement positively influences student behaviour and discipline.

NGO interventions show positive but localised improvements in household mentorship.

Socioeconomic pressures continue to limit the effectiveness of structured mentorship programs.

Community Development in Lwajje Sub-County

Descriptive findings on Community Development in Lwajje Sub-County

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on Community Development in Lwajje Sub-County

Statement	SD n(%)	D n(%)	N n(%)	A n(%)	SA n(%)	Mean	SD
Members actively participate in local development activities	62 (22.1)	80 (28.6)	55 (19.6)	55 (19.6)	28 (10.0)	2.67	1.23
Youth are engaged in productive community activities	58 (20.7)	85 (30.4)	50 (17.9)	52 (18.6)	35 (12.5)	2.62	1.22
Community members cooperate to solve common problems	55 (19.6)	78 (27.9)	52 (18.6)	60 (21.4)	35 (12.5)	2.80	1.19
Household mentorship contributes to responsibility	50 (17.9)	75 (26.8)	55 (19.6)	65 (23.2)	35 (12.5)	2.88	1.17
Development initiatives improved infrastructure/services	48 (17.1)	70 (25.0)	60 (21.4)	65 (23.2)	37 (13.2)	2.93	1.15
Reduction in poverty due to community initiatives	70 (25.0)	85 (30.4)	55 (19.6)	45 (16.1)	25 (8.9)	2.54	1.26

Effective conflict resolution mechanisms exist	68 (24.3)	82 (29.3)	50 (17.9)	50 (17.9)	30 (10.7)	2.57	1.24
Local leadership encourages participation	52 (18.6)	75 (26.8)	55 (19.6)	65 (23.2)	33 (11.8)	2.85	1.18
Communities benefit from vocational/skills programs	60 (21.4)	80 (28.6)	55 (19.6)	55 (19.6)	30 (10.7)	2.66	1.22

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics on community development in Lwajje Sub-County, based on responses from 280 participants. Overall, the results indicate that community development outcomes are generally limited, as most mean scores fall below 3.0, suggesting disagreement with positive statements on development.

The results show that community participation in development activities is relatively low, with a mean of 2.67. A total of 50.7% of respondents disagreed that members actively participate in local development activities, while only 29.6% agreed or strongly agreed.

This indicates weak civic engagement and limited involvement of community members in the planning and implementation of development initiatives.

Youth engagement in productive community activities recorded a mean of 2.62, the lowest among all items. More than half of the respondents (51.1%) disagreed that youth are actively engaged in productive activities that benefit the community.

This suggests that many young people are not fully integrated into structured community development or income-generating programs, potentially increasing dependency and unemployment levels.

The findings show moderate but still low levels of cooperation among community members, with a mean of 2.80. About 47.5% of respondents disagreed, while only 33.9% agreed, indicating that collective problem-solving is not strong.

This reflects limited social cohesion and weak collective responsibility in addressing community challenges.

Household mentorship was perceived to contribute moderately to responsibility among community members, with a mean of 2.88. Although 35.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, a larger proportion (44.7%) disagreed.

This suggests that while household mentorship has some influence, its overall impact on community responsibility remains weak and inconsistent.

Perceptions regarding improvements in infrastructure and services show a mean of 2.93, the highest among the variables, but still below the acceptable midpoint. About 36.4% agreed or strongly agreed, while 42.1% disagreed.

This indicates that although some development projects exist, their impact is not widely felt across the community.

The statement on poverty reduction recorded a mean of 2.54, indicating a very weak perceived impact. A significant proportion (55.4%) of respondents disagreed that poverty has been reduced due to community initiatives.

This suggests that economic conditions remain a major challenge in Lwajje Sub-County, with limited improvement from development interventions.

Conflict resolution mechanisms were rated poorly, with a mean of 2.57. More than half of respondents (53.6%) disagreed that effective mechanisms exist.

This reflects weaknesses in governance structures and the limited effectiveness of local dispute resolution systems.

Local leadership encouragement of participation recorded a mean of 2.85, showing a mixed perception. While 35.0% agreed or strongly agreed, a larger proportion (45.4%) disagreed.

This suggests that although leaders attempt to mobilize communities, their efforts are not sufficiently effective or consistent.

The findings show that access to vocational and skills development programs is limited, with a mean of 2.66. About 50.0% of respondents disagreed that communities benefit from such programs. This indicates inadequate exposure to skills development opportunities, which may limit youth empowerment and economic diversification.

In general, the descriptive findings reveal that community development in Lwajje Sub-County is limited and unevenly distributed. Most indicators, such as youth engagement, poverty reduction, conflict resolution, and participation in development activities, show low mean scores and high levels of disagreement.

This suggests that despite the presence of some development initiatives, their impact remains constrained. Weak household mentorship, limited youth participation, and governance challenges appear to be key factors contributing to the slow pace of community development in the sub-county.

Inferential Findings of the Study

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Analysis between Household Mentorship and Community Development in Lwajje Sub-County (N = 280)

Variables	Character Development	Career Guidance	Life Skills Development	Discipline	Household Mentorship Index	Community Development
Character Development	1					
Community Development	0.69**	0.66**	0.64**	0.71**	0.72**	1

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Note: p < 0.01 (2-tailed)

Character development showed a strong relationship with discipline ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$).

Regression Findings

Table 7: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Household Mentorship, Discipline, and Community Development in Lwajje Sub-County (N = 280)

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	0.812	0.241	—	3.37	0.001
Character Development	0.241	0.062	0.235	3.89	0.000**

Character Development ($\beta = 0.235$, $p < 0.01$) also has a strong positive influence, suggesting that moral upbringing and values significantly contribute to improved community engagement and social responsibility.

DISCUSSION

The study findings revealed that character development plays a significant role in influencing community development in Lwajje Sub-County. The descriptive results indicated that most respondents agreed that households emphasise values such as respect, honesty, obedience, responsibility, and moral guidance, although the level of enforcement and consistency varied across households. The correlation results further confirmed a strong positive relationship between character development and community development ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that improvements in moral upbringing are associated with better community participation, cooperation, and social cohesion.

These findings are consistent with the arguments advanced by Nambozo (2024), who emphasised that character development in rural settings is largely shaped by family structures, cultural norms, and daily social interactions. Ntuli et al. (2010) argue that moral values learned within households significantly influence individuals' attitudes toward collective responsibilities, which aligns with the study's finding that households promoting respect and responsibility tend to have more socially engaged members. The findings are also strongly supported by Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977), which explains that individuals learn behaviours through observation, imitation, and interaction with role models. In the context of Lwajje Sub-County, the study established that parents, guardians, and

community elders serve as key role models whose behaviours are likely to be copied by younger members. This supports the observed association between household mentorship and improved character outcomes, which in turn enhance community participation.

The study further aligns with Lickona (2019), who found that individuals with strong moral foundations are more likely to participate in civic and community activities. In Lwajje Sub-County, respondents who reported higher levels of character development also reported better engagement in community cooperation and responsibility, confirming that moral values are essential for collective development efforts.

In addition, the findings correspond with UNESCO (2021), which highlighted that values such as respect, tolerance, and responsibility promote social inclusion and reduce conflict. The study revealed that households that promote these values tend to experience better cooperation among members, which contributes to improved community harmony and reduced antisocial behaviour.

The results also reflect Nsamenang's (2020) view that African indigenous systems of mentorship, including storytelling and communal upbringing, are central to shaping responsible citizens. In Lwajje Sub-County, qualitative findings showed that traditional mentorship practices still influence behaviour, although they are weakening in some areas due to modernization and economic pressures.

Similarly, the findings are consistent with Okurut and Bategeka (2022), who established that individuals with strong character traits are more likely to participate in local governance and development initiatives. In this study,

communities with stronger household mentorship practices reported higher levels of participation in community activities and better cooperation in development programs. The study confirmed that households promoting strong moral values contribute to higher levels of trust and cooperation within the community, thereby strengthening collective action for development.

However, the study also reflects the challenges highlighted in the literature, particularly the weakening of traditional value systems, economic pressures, and limited educational support in rural areas. These factors were observed in Lwajje Sub-County, where, despite the presence of moral teachings, their consistent application is affected by livelihood demands such as fishing and limited institutional reinforcement.

Conclusions

This means that households that promote moral values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline contribute positively to improved community participation, cooperation, and social cohesion.

Therefore, character development within households is a key foundation for strengthening community development outcomes in Lwajje Sub-County.

Recommendations

Households should intentionally strengthen moral upbringing by consistently teaching values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline.

Local leaders, schools, and faith-based institutions should collaborate to reinforce character education through community sensitisation programs.

Community mentorship programs should be established to promote positive role modelling, especially among youth.

Parents and guardians should be encouraged to actively participate in shaping the behaviour of children through guided supervision and example-based learning.

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List of abbreviations

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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Data availability

Data is available upon request.

Author contribution

Florence Nyanzi Kabanda collected data and drafted the manuscript of the study.

Dr. Doreen Akunda supervised the study.

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