

DEPICTIONS OF SCHOOL LIFE IN BARBARA KIMENYE'S MOSES SERIES



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**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE
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MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE AND COMMUNICATION
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SEPTEMBER, 2024.

DECLARATION

I, Rugyenga Manzi Gordon, hereby declare that this dissertation, titled Depictions of School Life in Barbara Kimenye's Moses Series is my original work and has never been submitted by anybody to any institution for any award whatsoever.

Signature.....

Date.....16/09/2024

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to approve that this dissertation on Depictions of School Life in Barbara Kimenye's Moses series was carried out by Rugyenga Manzi Gordon under my supervision.

I hereby affirm that it is now complete and ready for submission to Bishop Stuart University as part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Literature and Communication.

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DATE.....*18th September 2024*.....

DEDICATION

To my wife, Mrs. Winfred Manzi; Mrs. Flavia Baguma, my praying mother; and my four daughters: Prime Ainamaani, Pearl Ahabyona, Precious Abamwesiga, and Providence Abasinguza.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Children Literature: The written work meant for children, and usually featuring child characters and themes.

Curriculum: The totality of programmed activities carried out within an institution.

Defamiliarisation: The style of presenting a familiar or common thing in a strange or unfamiliar manner.

Depiction: The way, style, image or picture by which a character, an event, a situation or an idea is shown or represented.

Estrangement: Making someone or something different or isolated from others because of appearing or behaving differently.

Gender hegemony: The attitude of viewing the control of women by men in a society as normal.

Gender Stereotypes: a generalised preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that should be performed by men and women.

Reader Response Theory: a literary theory that focuses on the reader's interpretation of the text as the most significant in the meaning of a text.

School life: Any part or the sum of experiences one has while attending an instructional institution.

School Administration: All persons of authority in a school including the student leadership, the teachers, top administrators and members of the school management committee or Board of Governors.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ms:	<i>Moses</i>
MM:	<i>Moses and Mildred</i>
MiM:	<i>Moses in a Muddle</i>
MT:	<i>Moses in Trouble</i>
MoES:	Ministry of Education and Sports.
SDG-4	Sustainable Development Goal four.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated how school life is depicted in selected texts authored by Barbara Kimenye in her Moses Series namely: *Moses*; *Moses and Mildred*; *Moses in Trouble* and *Moses in a Muddle*. The study's justification was that despite the centrality of school life in shaping character and personality in society, little research has been done in this area using Barbara Kimenye's works. The study's major objective was to find out how school life is depicted in selected novellas written by Barbara Kimenye and how these depictions are realised in terms of language and style. The two specific objectives were: to explore the dynamics of student characterisation in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses* series and to establish the relationship between the students and school administration as represented in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses* series; and the implications of these relationships to the running of contemporary schools. The study adopted a qualitative research design in order to explain the character attributes of student characters and how these attributes contribute to their interactions among themselves and the school administration. Data was collected through close reading of the selected texts using selective tools developed or adapted for that purpose. The subject matter of each selected text was analysed using Reader Response Criticism, with the researcher playing the role of the actual reader, to establish the possible interpretation of the texts. The results indicate that Kimenye uses humour and empathy in first person narratology to raise serious issues of student welfare and school administration. The behaviour of the student characters is depicted as troublesome but not overtly violent. The relationship between students and school administration is depicted as unpleasant, judged from the reader's point of view, with Mr. Karanja as the only model of good professional conduct and practice. Measured against the provisions of Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards, Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen is depicted as lacking in most aspects and can be used as a case study of undesirable practices and situations in school. The study recommends that Barbara Kimenye's *Moses* Series be included on the schools Literature set books for secondary schools to encourage as many students as possible to read the books so that they can be able to judge the impact of their own behaviour on their learning as well as appreciate the physical, human and learning environments that their schools are able to provide. It also recommends that *Moses* series be acted out into plays to benefit students who have a poor reading culture, and even those who are out of school.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1: Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide insight into the meaning of the topic of study and establish rationale for undertaking the study. It covers general introduction; background to the study; problem statement; purpose of the study; scope and delimitations of the Study; objectives of the study; Research Questions; Significance of the Study; Justification of the Study; and Theoretical Framework.

The study explores the depictions of school life in Barbara Kimenye's Moses series. The Moses series consists of eleven novellas, each with Moses as the narrator and main character. All the books are set around a fictitious Ugandan school in Post-colonial times, namely Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen.

School life is defined as any part or the sum of experiences one has while attending an instructional institution or the amount of time spent in such a program. It is "the synthesis of positive and negative experiences and feelings about school and its results" (Kuru, 2018).

School life encompasses all the memories one retains about one's stay in school (Marija et al, 2019). It takes into consideration three aspects: the physical environment, which comprises the facilities and infrastructure; the human environment, which is concerned with personal goal and interpersonal relationships; and the learning environment which is concerned with the curriculum and routine programs (Rusticus *et al*, 2022).

School life in a broad sense, refers to the period of a person's stay at school. It may be one's ideas and memories about one's stay at school. School life is qualitative in a sense that it refers to the quality of the interrelationships between pupils' background characteristics, their expectations of school, the perceived quality of both the formal school curriculum, the school environment and students' quality of life (Mo Ching Mok, 2002).

A heuristic definition of the concept of school life, therefore, can be that school life is the totality of all the quantitative and qualitative memorable experiences about one's stay at school. In the literary field, a number of authors have authored fictional literary texts with a school life setting. For instance, in Uganda, we have Mary Karooro Okurut's *Child of a Delegate*; *The First Daughter* by Gorret Kyomuhendo; and Isegawa's *Abbyssinian chronicles* among others. In other African Countries we have

Ndangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* from Zimbabwe; Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* from Senegal. Outside Africa we have Stevenson's *Treasure Island*; Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* and Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist* among other authors. In fact, these pieces of literature belong to a distinct literary genre referred to as Children's Literature. Although most of the books categorised as Children's Literature have been subjected to scholarly studies like Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* and Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist*, Kimenye's Moses series has not featured much in the studies despite its relevance to student life and popularity among students. The Moses series were written by Barbara Kimenye between 1968 and 1987 and maintain an underlying theme of school life and expose the experiences of school boys in a junior secondary school. Despite the fact that the texts in the Moses series were written at different times, all the stories in the series rotate around basically the same characters and are set at the same educational level of junior secondary school.

1.2: Background to the Study.

The topic of this study is the depiction of school life in Barbara Kimenye's Moses series. Depiction is a portrayal or the way something is shown or represented. Depiction has the sense of an image, a picture, impression or representation (Hopkins, 2024).

This study examines the way in which Barbara Kimenye exposes school life in the Moses series and the image or impression the exposition creates. This is not the first study on school life or about Barbara Kimenye as a writer. Other studies have been conducted such as Kyobutungi Jossy Alice's Doctorate thesis on the representations of Young Adult Characters in the Fiction of Selected Ugandan Women Writers (2021); Kiyimba's Male Identity and Female Space in the Fiction of Ugandan Women Writers, and others in Uganda and abroad, as I shall highlight later.

There are divergent views as to what constitutes school life. For Reimer (2010) school life, as depicted in Childrens Literature entails the confessions and experiences of girls and boys regarding their moral struggles not only at school but also before school. Reimer views school life as a moral struggle between adult authorities and young school goers. Epstein and McPartland (1976) hold a view that the quality of school life is defined by three dimensions of student reactions: satisfaction with school in general; commitment to school work and attitudes towards teachers. This view suggests that school life is best defined in the perspective of the student. It is this view of school life that I adopt for the purpose of this study on Barbara Kimenye's Moses Series.

A study about school life in literary works is important since school as a social institution is the training ground for morals and cultural heritage, and it fosters political and economic development of society. Authors can support schools in doing this didactic role through their literary works (Baratz & Haziera, 2012). As Khan (2014) asserts, literature and literary works play a crucial role in shaping and cultivating our beliefs, cultural aesthetic and moral senses. Baratz and Haziera (2012) observe that there is no better place to shape morals than in school. I agree with them in this regard. Therefore, this study relating literature to school life is crucial as it seeks to give insights on the extent to which a literary work achieves the didactic role of moral development in school.

In the world today, all countries are concerned with the quality of education they offer to their young citizens. Most countries are committed to provide learners with high-quality education (SDG 4). This they pledge to do by ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and goal-4 effective learning outcomes (Saini et al, 2023).

The formal school routine has two main elements: the school curriculum activities and the co-curricular activities. (Maradia, 2019.) School curriculum activities consist of all the planned activities that take place within the school. Co-curricular activities refer to the unplanned activities that pupils get engaged in, and these are often initiated by learners themselves as they interact with one another. These include games and sports, singing, clubs, scouting and others. We also have the third category of activities that constitute what is referred to as the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum comprises the unintended outcomes that students achieve as they interact with one another and the school environment (Scott, 2019). In my view, the moral, linguistic and social outcomes learners derive from reading various books is not different from what they get in participating in other aspects of the hidden curriculum such as clubs and other forms of interactions in school. The memorable experiences that come to one's mind as they reflect on their school days may vary from individual to individual depending on the person's interests. What then, is the element of school life that lasts longest in a student's memory? Is it what they studied? Is it the people they met? Is it the games they played? Is it what pleased them or what hurt them? The issues raised in literature featuring child characters can suggest answers to these questions (Miller, 1981). For instance, Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* relates the ordeal of a school boy at an orphanage (Lohnes, 2005). William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* provide us with the extent of the savagery that children are capable of when left by themselves away from homes and schools (Golding, 1954).

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (Bronte, 1847) also relates the life story of an orphan at a school in Ancient England. In all the above, we realize, it is the bad memories of the characters' mistreatment at school that give the novels the strong narrative stimulus. This study, among other things, seeks to establish the language and style used by Barbara Kimenye that make her narratives in the Moses series captivating to the reader.

In African Literature, the theme of school life is explored by a number of writers. Ndangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1998) for instance, gives us insights into the school experiences in Zimbabwe as well as the experiences of a Zimbabwean student abroad.

In Ugandan Literature, school life as a theme features prominently in the works of Gorretti Kyomuhendo's *First Daughter* (1996), Mary Karooro Okrut's *Invisible Weevil* (1998); Nansubuga's *Kintu* (2014); Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2001), et cetera. Previous studies suggest that most of the above African and Ugandan writers, especially female authors write from their own experiences, "indirectly, their autobiographies", as Schmidt (1978) puts it. What is not known is whether Barbara Kimenye, a female writer; who considers herself Ugandan but not by birth, could have written her own experience considering that she explores the experiences in a setting of a poor Ugandan boarding school for boys.

In Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2009 laid out minimum standards and basic requirements expected of all schools and educational institutions in order to operate. These requirements include adequate and qualified staff; permanent structures; security and child safety measures such as fences, among others. However, a number of upcoming private schools and even many of the public schools still operate without fulfilling some of these basic requirements regarding the management and organisation of staff, students, structures and facilities.

According to Leo (2020), School life, especially one's life as a secondary school student, is the period of one's life that one remembers and cherishes the most. The experiences encountered and the lessons learnt during school days stay with the person forever as their guiding light. Some of the experiences or memories of school life are good such as making friends, playing together, sharing, and making fun among others. Some of the experiences are, however, bad such as bullying, being away from home, being served little food, missing meals, losing property, being a victim of false accusations, corporal punishments and others. (Lynch, 2016)

The diversity of childhood experiences, emotions and fantasies have always made children a target audience for creative works ranging from children rhymes, myths, fairy tales, adventure stories, fables, make-believe narratives, ogre tales and others. As earlier mentioned, these are categorised under what is referred to as Children's Literature (Becker, 1974; Baratz & Haziera, 2012; Otoshi, 2014).

Kiyimba (2012) gives us a brief biography of Barbara Kimenye as one of the pioneer authors of Children's Literature in East Africa:

Barbara Kimenye (1929-2012) was born Clerk Holdsworth in Hallfox, West Yorkshire, England. She is regarded as the most prolific writer of Children's Literature in Uganda.

Kimenye attended Kingsley Girl's school before moving to London to train as a nurse. While on training as a nurse, she met many students from East Africa among whom was Bill Kimenye from Bukoba Tanganyika (now Tanzania) whom she married in the 1950's after the school. Their marriage was short-lived, and when they broke up, she crossed via Lake Victoria to join her friends in Uganda, bringing with her a toddler and another baby she was expecting. She then worked as a press secretary to Kabaka Mutesa 2 and her two sons, Topher and David became members of the Royal family.

In the above quotation, Kiyimba describes Kimenye as the most prolific write of children's literature by that time. He further explains how Barbara adopted the name Kimenye, although he does not explain when she dropped the name Clerk to become Barbara. Names notwithstanding, what comes out is that Barbara Kimenye came to Uganda via Tanganyika, and not directly from England. One wonders why she could not identify herself as Tanzanian. What is unique is the fact that upon coming to Uganda, she worked as a press secretary, not a nurse, which makes her an amazing person, considering that she is not reported to have studied journalism or communication media. Kiyimba goes on to explain:

Although she was born in the UK, she considers herself Ugandan. She studied nursing at Hammersmith, London but was practically a journalist, having published her own newspaper at the age of 11 years. She began to work for the Uganda National newspaper and later for the Kenyan Nation (1965). Between 1965 and 1975 she was staying in Kenya, but the books she wrote from Kenya still featured Ugandan characters and setting. She wrote many children books such as Kalasanda (1965), Kalasanda Revisited (1966), the Winged Adventure (1969) and several others, but she is most popularly known for her Moses series.

The Moses series, which consists of eleven novellas, relates the adventures as narrated by Moses, an adolescent Ugandan character. Other characters include his close friend Sabastian Mulu, referred to by his friends as King Kong; Rukia the Dorm Prefect and other junior secondary school students of the fictitious school known as Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen. The

institute is manned by Mr. Mukibi, the Headmaster (and owner) and Mr. Karanja, his deputy who does most of its day-to-day administration and management.

This study examined the dynamics of school life as narrated by Kimenye through the confessions of student characters in four selected novellas of the Moses series: *Moses*, *Moses and Mildred*; *Moses in Trouble* and *Moses in a Muddle*. My main premise was on the characterisation of students represented in the texts, the response of the school administration to the students and vice-versa and the lessons that can be learnt from the school life depictions in the selected texts.

1.3: Problem Statement

Barbara Kimenye dedicates eleven novellas to narrate school life in secondary schools. The Moses Series collectively offers a window into the challenges of Ugandan Education system a few years after independence. In the Moses series, Barbara Kimenye depicts African or Ugandan schools particularly represented by a fictitious school known as Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen. However, this fictitious school she constructs, the characters she creates and the school life motifs she narrates might leave readers wondering who her implied audience were. Consequently, her negative depictions might lead to misinterpretation of school life especially by young readers. A number of scholars and critics have written scholarly essays on Kimenye's works, such as Nancy Schmidt in her essay "The Writer as a Teacher" (1976), a text that emphasises the didactic roles of Children's Literature in learners' moral development; Kiyimba in his article *Male Identity and Female Space* (2008) concentrates on the how women writers, including Kimenye had taken over the hitherto male dominated literary landscape while Alice Jossy Kyobutungi Tumwesigye, in her paper titled "Young Adult Vulnerabilities in the Fiction of a Ugandan Woman Writer" (2022) addresses the need for young adults to be recognised as a demographic category; and Danson Sylvester Kahyana in his article, "The Uses of Humour in Barbara Kimenye's Moses Series" (2023) explains the roles humour does in Kimenye's works. However valuable these literary contributions are to scholarship, none of them has interrogated Kimenye's depictions of school life and the likely interpretation or misinterpretation of these depictions by students and their implication on the relationship between students and school administration. The challenge of potential misinterpretation of Kimenye's school life narratives, therefore, remains unaddressed. My study, which specifically focuses on school life in selected texts of the Moses Series was therefore vital, since in it, I critically analyse the portrayal of school life, specifically focusing on

student characterisation, the dynamics of student relationships with school administration, and the lessons derived from the characterisation and relationships. By examining these aspects, my research illuminates the significance of Kimenye's works in providing insights into school governance and management in contemporary educational contexts.

1.4: Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to use Kimenye's Moses series as a means to explore and expose the behaviour of students while at school, their relationship with the school administration and interactions among themselves and other members of the school and neighbouring community as addressed in Barbara Kimenye's Moses series, and find out the lessons that can be drawn by students, teachers and school administrators from the experiences and issues portrayed in the literary texts.

1.5: Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study primarily focused on the depiction of school life as portrayed in selected novellas written by Barbara Kimenye namely; *Moses*, *Moses and Mildred*, *Moses in Trouble* and *Moses in a Muddle*. The first three books were selected in their order in the series and the fourth book, *Moses in a Muddle*, was selected because of featuring a female character. The text helps us to compare the behaviour of the female student to her male counterparts and the interaction of the two. The study analysed the behaviour of the represented students and the relationship between those students and the school administration, especially the students' attitude towards corporal punishments and any other forms of discipline that the school employs. From these behavioural patterns and relationships, the study points out the lessons drawn from the author that can inform the running of contemporary schools and institutions.

All the eleven books of the Moses series were generally read but the discussion and analysis was based on four books selected: *Moses*; *Moses and Mildred*; *Moses in Trouble* and *Moses in a Muddle*. The four selected texts are hoped to be a good representative sample of the eleven novellas, all of which narrate school life in various aspects. The first three books were selected by their order in the Moses series, and the fourth text, *Moses in a Muddle* was purposively selected for featuring a female character, as I explain in details under methodology (See Methods and Sampling techniques, Chapter three).

1.6: Objectives of the Study

The study had one major objective and two specific objectives.

Major objective: To find out how school life is depicted in the selected novellas written by Barbara Kimenye and how these depictions are realised in terms of language and style.

Specific objectives:

- (i) To explore the dynamics of student characterisation in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses* series.
- (ii) To establish the relationship between the students and school administration as represented in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses* series and the lessons learnt from the portrayal of their relationship.

1.7: Research Questions

This study was guided by the following two questions.

What are the dynamics of student characterisation in the *Moses* series?

How do the selected texts depict the relationship between the students and school administration and what lessons can be learnt from the depictions?

1.8: Significance of the Study

This study is hoped to be a benchmark in the use of literary texts to understand the behaviour of students while at school. Specifically, it will benefit the following categories of people.

Literature students, teachers, scholars and critics will benefit from the insights raised from interacting with the selected texts. Literature students and teachers will widen their knowledge and deepen their understanding of the *Moses* series due to the insights shared. Consequently, teachers may apply the knowledge in school management while students may use the knowledge to devise coping strategies for school life challenges. Scholars and Critics will approach the texts with renewed zeal and interest, which may generate other insights that will ultimately contribute to Literary Theory.

Hopefully, policy makers on education will get insights into the basic requirements of an ideal school environment suggested by this study. Putting theory into practice will, therefore, bring about inaction of school policies that are student-friendly, which will promote inclusive education and learner retention in schools.

1.9: Justification of the Study

This study was justified because of the following.

First the subject of school life is key to the young and the old; the male and the female; people of virtually all walks of life. The old look back at their school life, often with nostalgic memories. The young look at school life with admiration and anticipation. The prevalence of corporal punishments as well as student dismissal in schools makes this study necessary. This study is crucial as it spells out the joint responsibilities of students, teachers and other stakeholders in improving the quality of school life.

The current campaigns regarding inclusive education, especially go back to school campaign called for a study of this nature using Barbara Kimenye's works as a case study to provide insights into the nuanced practices and approaches to students' behavioural management in schools.

1.10: Theoretical Framework

This study approached, explored, discussed and analysed the texts using the reader response theory.

This theory, which was popularised by Wolfgang Iser, Henry E. Fish and David Bleich in the 1960's focuses on the reader's or audience's reaction to a particular text and regards the reaction as important as the text itself or, perhaps, more important in constructing meaning (Mushengyezi, 2003; Benton, 2018).

The justification for selecting Reader Response Theory underpinning for my study stemmed from my problem statement: there was fear that Kimenye's negative depictions of school life as represented by her setting and characterisation might lead to misinterpretation of school life, especially by young readers.

The Reader Response theory has many scholars and tenets but I basically deployed four tenets as listed and explained below:

First, I deployed the tenet of Reader's Responsibility in Meaning Construction, developed by Wolfgang Iser. This specific tenet posits that readers actively participate in creating meaning through their interactions with the texts (Wolfgang, 1978). In this study I used this tenet to generate meaning from texts by critically looking at the choice of words and their meaning in context. At the same time, I stated my interpretation of the text based on my biases and experiences, identified the gaps and ambiguities within the texts and analysed the texts language, structure and narrative techniques to guide my deeper

interpretation and understanding of the text. According to this tenet of reader-response theory, the meanings of a text are a “production” or “creation” for all readers either of the linguistic parts or the artistic whole of a text (Brown & Pressley, 2023). In this study, I applied the artistic whole in deriving the meanings of texts in particular contexts. The justification for this application was that the literary genre was prose, where words do not work in isolation but as complete sentences and paragraphs.

The second tenet I employed was Reading as a Hermeneutic Circle, still popularised by Wolfgang. Wolfgang Iser argues that reading is a cyclic process of filling gaps, going through the stages of anticipation, frustration, retrospection, reconstruction and satisfaction (Wintersgill, 2020). At each process, the reader's motivation is to “fill gaps” and will only stop when there is satisfaction. This is the process Mushengyezi (2003) describes as the hermeneutic circle. As such, according to Wolfgang, literary texts always permit a range of possible meanings. Because some readers are more competent than others, some of the readings are better than others. Aware of this fact, as a researcher, I aspired to be my best as a reader in order to bring out the best meaning from the text. In this study I used the hermeneutic circle to explore student characterisation as the starting point, then I used the same character attributes to establish the relationship between students and school administration; and finally used the relationships to expose the lessons learnt from the depictions of student characters and their relationship among themselves and between them and the school administration.

The Reader Response theory puts emphasis on the role of the reader in actively constructing texts other than passively consuming them. In this study I critically analyse the quoted texts to generate meaning according to my interpretation. As Mushengyezi (2003) observes, the author must be “presumed dead” to allow the reader to interpret the text without any authorial influence.

Reader response theory argues that the text has no meaning before the reader experiences or reads it. In other words, the text is not a self-contained entity that generates its own meaning. The reading process makes a reader a co-creator of the novel. In this study, I used the tenet of reader responsibility to generate insights to the text based on personal interpretation.

The third reader response tenet I used was Subjective Criticism by David Bleich (1978). Bleich’s subjective criticism highlights the importance of the reader’s personal experiences and biases in shaping their interpretation of the text (Bleich, 1978). In this study, I used this tenet to reflect on and bring my personal connections to the text’s themes, characters or events, especially as I dug out the implications of the relationships between students and school administration. As I read the texts, I would

be mindful of what was pointed out by David Bleich (1975) one of the key reader response theorists, that every reading is a subjective process determined by the distinctive personality of the individual reader, and that the notion of objective reading is a lie. Harold Bloom (1978), holds a similar view about reading where he declares that all reading is misreading, the difference being that there is a strong misreading and a weak misreading. This tenet suggests that no two people can read the same literary text exactly the same way. The weak misreading may lay in such things as tone and accent while the strong misreading is one with semantic implication resulting from misinterpreting parts of speech of words or paying little attention to meanings associated with different spellings. In my study, I used the tenet of subjective criticism in reviewing discourse from primary and secondary sources in order to establish knowledge gaps.

As a researcher, however, my aim was not to classify previous readings of the text as strong or weak but to make my contribution in constructing meaning. I endeavoured to position myself between the implied reader and the text in order to suggest possible meaning of the text in context.

The fourth and equally important tenet I used in this study was the notion of Interpretive Communities developed by Stanley Fish, which Mushengyezi (2003) refers to as the “community of readers”. This tenet posits that those readers who share certain assumptions about a text tend to use similar strategies to draw meaning from the text (Fish, 1978). In this study, I made an attempt to derive the possible interpretation of a particular text by different readers. Whereas this tenet of Reader Response Literary Theory focuses on finding meaning in the act of reading itself and examining the ways individual readers or communities of readers’ experience texts. In this study I used my interpretation as an individual reader. The justification for this choice was not to conflict with the notion of presumption of the author’s death.

Again according to Fish, interpretation is not the art of construing but the art of constructing. Interpreters do not decode texts: they make them. This tenet suggests that the readers make a text alive by giving it the meaning, which may be different from the meaning originally intended by the author. In this study, I took the role of the actual reader to construct the meaning of the selected texts in various contexts.

According to Mart (2019:78), Reader Response Theory is based on the assumption that a literary work takes place in a mutual relationship between the reader and the text within a particular context. Mart asserts that readers assume multiple roles when responding to a variety of forms of literature. It calls for

emotional and intellectual participation in the text. As such, readers engage in dialogues to pose literal and inferential questions to explore a range of possible meanings and to foster cognitive development and comprehension. In this study, I took on the role of the reader, and at times, the role of the author in figuring out what she suggested by using a certain word or phrase in a particular context.

According to Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), Reader Response Literary Criticism, unlike other theories like New Criticism, Formalism and Psychoanalysis, obtains meaning from outside the text based on historical and cultural influences. Reader Response Criticism also puts into consideration the attitude of the author towards the reader, kinds of reader, and the roles of different readers in determination of meaning, the relation of reading conventions to textual criticism and status of a literary text. Meaning in a text is a result of interaction between reader, text and the author. As such, readers should be aware of the author's intentions. This view of Reader response, as I already mentioned, conflicts with the notion of the "death of the author and birth of the reader" as Mushengyezi (2003) observes. In my study, I tried as much as possible to avoid the influence of Kimenye's authorial intention in my interpretation and analysis of her texts in the Moses series.

Much as reader response theory was the dominant literary theory I had planned to use, I was aware that there is a thin layer between some literary theories and others. For instance, the psychoanalytic theory and the Marxist theory were leaned upon in my criticism and analysis of some issues. I was conscious of the likely inclination to these theories because psychoanalysis, especially the tenet of ego and the unconscious, seek to investigate the mind set of author and characters while the Marxist literary theory, particularly the tenet of class struggle, concerns itself with the conflicts resulting from struggles for power and control between the leader and the led; the oppressor and the oppressed, which also exist in schools between students and the administrators, which include prefects, teachers, the non-teaching staff and top school administrators.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.0: Introduction

In this chapter I reflect on what other writers, researchers and literary critics have written about school life in their scholarly publications. This was not the first study on Barbara Kimenye's works. A number of other scholars and literary critics in Uganda and abroad had carried out research projects featuring Barbara Kimenye as a writer, Moses series as a text or school life as a subject. In this section I review some of them. I appraise and assess the studies in order to establish the gaps that my study seeks to fill.

2.1: Student Characterisation in the Moses Series

Schmidt J Nancy has carried out a number of studies and made several publications about Barbara Kimenye and her works. The publications include *African women writers of Literature for Children* (2008); "The writer as a Teacher: a comparison of the adventure stories of GA Henry, Rene Guillot and Barbara Kimenye." (1976) in which she notes among other things that:

Adventure stories along with other fiction are just as powerful teachers about Africa as are professional educators.

The above quotation from Schmidt emphasises the importance or relevance of adventure stories in general. In this study, I put them into the perspective by tailoring them towards school life.

Lightfoot Cynthia (1997) in her book titled *The culture of Adolescent risk-taking* asserts that risk taking is a "a necessary part of growing up". I found this assertion quite contestable, for it would suggest that there should be avenues of risk-taking provided to adolescents to facilitate their growing up. Using the Wolfgangs tenet of gap feeling in Reader Response Literary Theory, I sought to examine the extent to which the culture of risks taking as depicted in the student characters in the Moses series contributes to their growin up.

Abasi Kiyimba (2008) also conducted a study exploring the works of Ugandan women writers including Barbara Kimenye. In Kiyimba's (2008) journal article entitled "Male Identity and Female Space in the Fiction of Ugandan Women writers, Kiyimba observes:

The last fifteen years or so have seen the emergency of new writing in English by Ugandan women considerably altering the picture of a hitherto male-dominated Ugandan literary landscape.

While I agreed with Kiyimba that the number of Ugandan female writers has significantly increased, altering the picture of male domination in Ugandan literary landscape, it is important to realise that Kimenye, as a pioneer Ugandan woman writer had made outstanding record as far as Children's Literature is concerned. Kiyimba's study focuses on gender identity and domination of men or boys in and outside school, but my study focused specifically on the dynamics of school life as generalized for both males and females.

Kimathi in his Master's Thesis titled "There are Many Ways of Being a Boy: Barbara Kimenye's Imagination of Boyhood Masculinities in Selected Storybooks from the Moses Series" (2009) analyses Kimenye's language and style in narrating school life thus:

Kimenye's use of humour characterised by terms such as "sickening mess" and "cowshed" to refer to food from the school's dining hall and the school in general highlights her satirical representation of boarding school. She ridicules the idea of a boarding school as an institution to socialise young people into admirable members of society.

Kimathi, in the above quotation argues that the use of descriptive words by Kimenye to describe the appearance of the school and the quality of the food have a humorous effect. While I agreed that the use of such words have a humorous effect, in this study I sought to interpret such words in terms of what they suggest about the characters' behaviour and relationship with the school administration.

Kimathi (2009), in the same study goes further to comment on Kimenye's imagination of boyhood masculinities thus:

Kimenye portrays Holy Moses, King Kong and Rukia as intelligent, violent and politically powerful respectively. I argue that these traits constitute dominant masculinity in the selected texts because they have control over other boys due to the above traits. The above representation indicates that much of what they do is against the laid down school rules. This highlights juvenile delinquency which is not the preserve of the three boys only.

In this extract, Kimathi passes judgment on the conduct of the boys and concludes that they are juvenile delinquents. While Kimathi's focus is on the student characters' control over their colleagues, my study focuses on the effect of their relationship with school administration.

Further insight is drawn from Oldfield Elizabeth (2010) as discussed in her book chapter titled, "Creative Dialogue, Signification, Gender and Space – Talking through Contemporary Children Stories." This is the fifth chapter in the book, *Transgressing Boundaries: Gender, Identity, Culture and the 'Other' in Postcolonial Narratives in East Africa*. Commenting on the intertextuality in the *Moses*

stories, Oldfield observes that they are a parody of the story of a fictitious William in Richmal Crompton's (1922-1970) stories. This is how Oldfield puts it:

In the Moses series, one can detect Kimenye's intertextual echoing of the William stories through her repetition and revision of school boy motif. William is arguably the most famous school boy in English literature. Similarly, Moses has become possibly the most famous school boy in the African children school/ adventure genre.

The above extract perhaps solves the mystery behind Kimenye's ability to narrate close-to-real-life experiences of school boys, despite being a female herself. This suggests that Kimenye was most likely influenced by the William Series to some extent. In my study, I wished to focus more on the language and the styles employed and their contribution to meaning construction of the texts in context rather than concentrate on what experiences inspired Kimenye, as an author to narrate the school boy motif the way she did.

Oldfield (2010) comes to the conclusion that Kimenye is a heterogeneous and hybrid writer in both language and culture when she writes:

Kimenye's identity and the innovative space she occupies are similarly founded upon heterogeneity. Both socially and culturally hybrid, the context of her life is informed by the combining of European and African influences. Thus, her "Kizungu" imagination is significant and her writing represents a new emergent form of textuality that transgresses European and African narrative boundaries to draw on and combine African and European influences.

In the above extract, Oldfield attributes Kimenye's literary language and style to her cultural, social and linguistic background. However, she mentions "narrative boundaries" in a way that suggests that the narratives of one continent are, ideally, marked for the audience of that very continent. I found this view quite contestable, but found comfort in the fact that Oldfield's study is comparative. Since my research is descriptive in nature, as a researcher I set out to establish more relationships between the language used, the context in which it is used and the interpretation it suggests.

Regarding Students' behaviour as a challenge of school life, one may not be able to appreciate a challenge without background knowledge of the ideal situation. There are five aspects of school life which, according to literature, work together to create a safe and caring climate in a school: school wide climate and practices; teaching and learning; community partnership; prosocial student culture and strategies; and aggressive student culture. (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2011)

Lynch, in his online article titled “Challenges our Students Face in School Today” (2016), presents nine heuristic challenges students face today. They include poverty; homelessness; child abuse and neglect; bullying (including cyber bullying); violence; obesity and eating disorders; sex and pregnancy; suicide; drugs and dropping out of school.

Belle in his article entitled “Factors that Influence Student Behaviour in Secondary Schools” (2017) exposes the factors thus:

Factors that are related to the external system of the student life namely the school, the family, the peer pressure, the community and the new media negatively impact on the Students’ behaviour and the same system should endeavour to teach socio-emotional skills to students to enhance their social competence. Socio-emotional challenges require socio-emotional approaches to solve them.

In the above quote, Belle urges schools to endeavour to teach socio-emotional skills, and it is left for the school to devise the appropriate socio-emotional approaches to use to solve the socio-emotional problems. In my study, I specifically appeal to the use of literature, especially children’s literature as an approach to understand student discipline which, in my view, is one of the ways to solve such socio-emotional problems.

Pita Fulgensia Yul in a study entitled “A Descriptive Study of the Teacher’s Technique on Controlling the Students’ Misbehaviour” (2017) identifies the major student-based challenge as having to do with their behaviour in and around school. She enlists thirteen types of student misbehaviour as inattention, apathy, needless talk, moving about the room, annoying others; disruption; lying; stealing; cheating; sexual harassment; aggression and fighting; malicious mischief and defiance of authority. These are heuristically generated types of misbehaviour and this study will attempt to put them into the context of Kimenye’s narratives in the Moses series. While Pita’s study focuses on the teacher, my study focuses on the student. Furthermore, the above heuristic school life and student behavioural challenges are presented from the parent-teacher- community perspective. My study, utilising the reader response adopted views the challenges both critically from my perspective as a reader and empathetically from the perspective of the affected students.

Naula, *et al* in their article entitled, “An Analysis of Bullying in Schools as Presented by Two Ugandan Novels” (2018) state that education transmits vices to learners depending on their socio-cultural and political contexts, prominent among which is that of bullying. In their article, which focuses on Goretti

Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter* (1996) and Mary Karooro's Okurut's *The Invisible Weevil* (1998), they write that:

Both boys and girls are bullied, and it affects their emotional, social and physical well-being. This behaviour is probably a result of global influence in our school system. Traditional Ugandan Education was characterised by close social ethical, collective orientation and ensured progressive character development of the child. Some of the values transmitted in traditional Ugandan education community-orientation. Love and respect for others. The vice of bullying is likely to have originated from the formal type of education, which is more individualistic oriented.

While Naula and fellow researchers seem to blame the school system for transmitting vices to learners in a way that suggests that the schools are infested with those vices, this study seeks to examine the causes of students' (mis)behaviour in schools, how the teachers and school administration respond to the (mis)behaviour and the lessons that can be learnt from the responses and interaction of the students and school administration.

About the uniqueness of language and style employed by Kimenye in Moses series and how the language helps her to construct school life, some scholars give insights. Evain et al (2018) in their journal entitled "Ugandan Literature: The Question of Identity Voice and Context" proclaim as follows

Literature is generally understood as a form of art, but for many writers and readers, literature is also a cultural and socio-political vanguard in a nation's identity quest.

The above quote resonates with Akhter's (2019) view that literature is a mirror of society. It suggests that the way of life of a given people: their cherished values; their interests; their fears and even their aspirations are communicated through literature. In the same way, this study builds on the understanding that literary texts represent the experiences of people in real life. In the context of this study, the fictitious setting of the school and the students represented in the texts should resonate with the real school life experiences of the time. My study, in a comparative way, juxtaposes the experiences of the late 1960's and early 1970's to establish the growing trends and the cherished valued retained over the time.

Mwalimu Andrew (2020) in his book review, "Moses, the School Bad Boy of Our Time" points out:

The use of the first person narrator, Moses, enables us to see and read the minds of the young ones: their thoughts, their fears, their aspirations, their Outlook in life and their dreams, and how they see adults.

Mwalimu, just like Kimathi quoted earlier, appreciates the effect of Kimenye's diction on the reader. Where they differ is that while Mwalimu views Kimenye's use of the first person narrator as a deliberate effort to make the reader identify with and empathise with the narrator, Kimathi believes it is meant to add humour to the interpretation. In this study, I will not focus on language and style for their aesthetic effect but go further to establish the underlying implication of the diction in the portrayal of student behaviour and their attitude to school life. Unlike Mwalimu who looks at Kimenye's language as a means of enabling the reader to identify with the feelings, fears and aspiration of young people, in my study I try to interpret the language used in order to analyse the behaviour of student characters.

Alice Jossy Kyobutungi Tumwesigye (2021) conducted a study titled "*Representations of Young Adult Characters in the Fiction of Ugandan Women Writers*", where Barbara Kimenye was one of them and some of the texts of the *Moses* series were analysed. The study established, among other issues that young adults as depicted are marginalised and vulnerable to dangers such as authoritarian leadership in homes and schools, abduction, prostitution and others. The study further established that in most cases, the young adults feel oppressed as their opinions are often not respected by adults in homes and schools.

While Kyobutungi's study features Barbara Kimenye and the *Moses* series and brings out insights meant to recognize young adults as a demographic category, advocate for recognition and appreciation of their opinions in schools and homes and call for improved relationship between the young adults and those in home and school authority, her scope is wider. It covers other two Ugandan women writers and looks at other issues of young adulthood, which limits her attention to school life. In this study, I make all effort to pay full attention to school life, an area Kyobutungi's study never gave specific attention to.

Dan Sylvester Kahyana (2023) contributed a book Chapter titled, "The Uses of Humour in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses*", in which he explains the various uses of humour in literary texts: entertainment and capturing attention being the major ones. While Kahyana focuses on the uses of humour drawing from humour theories, my study deploys the reader response literary theory, which is flexible and permits a wide range of possible meaning to expand the coverage of exposition and insights from the texts regarding the dynamics of student character ad characterisation.

2.2: Relationship between Students and School Administration

The relationship between students and school administration is often seen from the form of punishment that schools employ to keep order. Some schools reach the extent of using suspension and, in extreme

cases, expulsion. Harwood (1969) distinguishes between suspension and expulsion as forms of dismissal from school:

Dismissal from school has two concepts: expulsion being more or less permanent in nature, probably involving direct school board action, and suspension, a more temporary separation usually directed by the school administration, in most cases the principal.

We note from Harwood's explanation that the two forms of student dismissal require school authorities at different hierarchies. Notwithstanding the justification for student dismissal, this study intends to use the Moses Series to establish the cause-and-effect relationship between students and school authority at Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen that would have made dismissal inevitable and whether and/ or how dismissal may be avoided in schools using Mukibi's as a case study.

Another form of punishment common in schools is corporal punishment. Yell (1990:100) in her study titled, "The Use of Corporal Punishment, Suspension and Timeout with Behaviourally Disordered Students in Public Schools: Legal Considerations", discusses the disturbing effect of corporal punishments by teachers in public schools. He seeks to explain why some teachers resort to the cane as a means of behaviour control:

Some believe that corporal punishment is a necessary component of behaviour control and progress while others believe that the punishment should be eliminated.

In the above statement, Yell's discursive statement draws the readers' attention to the fact that there are mixed reactions to corporal punishments, even among teachers themselves. While Yell approaches the issue of corporal punishments from the teachers' point of view, in this study I wish to approach it from the point of view of the students and assess how it affects the relationship between the students and the school authorities as portrayed from their word and actions as reflected in the Literary texts studied.

Ngwokabuenui, in his article entitled "Students' Indiscipline: Types, Causes and Possible Solutions: The Case of Secondary Schools in Cameroon" (2015), distinguishes the influence of individual Students' behaviour from their collective behaviour. According to Ngwokabuenui (2015), the most familiar and common forms of Indiscipline is disobedience to the school authority, especially teachers and school prefects. Student misconducts, according to Ngwokabuenui include collective misconduct of students and unacceptable habits. Ngwokabuenui classifies causes of student misbehaviour as student-based, society-based and school-based causes. He suggests possible remedies as moral leadership; moral education /instruction; education orientation and behaviour-accountability policy implementation.

While Ngwokabuenui's ideas about causes and possible solutions to student misconducts are illuminating, they seem to be extrinsically motivated. Through employing literature, my study hopes to suggest intrinsically motivated remedies through student interaction with texts in the Moses series.

Gultekin and Dougherty in a study titled "The Relationship between Servant Leadership Characteristics of School Teachers and Students' Academic Achievement" (2021) stress the importance of servant leadership of teachers towards the academic achievement of their students. They put school administrators as responsible for ensuring servant leadership among teachers towards their students:

School administrators who aim to improve the performance of students should work on improving the servant leadership values of their teachers through seminars and workshops.

The above excerpt from Gultekin and Dougherty emphasize the two-way relationship between the teachers and their students. While I agree with Gultekin and Dougherty that servant leadership of teachers leads to students' high academic achievement, it is important to note that their study was quantitative in nature, aiming at establishing relationships, my study is qualitative and in it, I seek to explore the dynamics of student-teacher relationships, especially in their social interactions and behaviour.

Regarding lessons drawn from literary texts that can impact school life in schools, it is important to note that all literature is always relevant not only to the target audience but also to the entire society. Enqdahl (1975) in his essay "Do Teenage Novels Fill a need?" explains the importance of teenage novels to adolescents:

Increasingly, the adolescents of our time are interested in questions: questions about life and its meaning; about the future of civilisation; about man's place in the universe? No author can give them all the answers, but I feel that books directed toward the young can encourage them to go on looking for the answers, which surely, is one of the major goals of education.

The quote above explains the nature of children: inquisitive, curious and ambitious. It also argues that books can guide the search for knowledge. This is true to the texts about school life. My study, like Enqdahl's, intends to focus on some of the above questions though it will not exhaust the endless questions raised by Enqdahl in the above portion.

Schmidt gives us more insights in her journal article entitled “African Women Writers of Literature for Children” (1978) as in the extract below:

Barbara Kimenye’s adventure stories about Ugandan children are rooted in contemporary history on one level and are ahistorical on another level. Her novels include many details of school life and curriculum, police activities, social work; transportation facilities and health care along with references to recent events such as space missions and living persons such as Miriam Makeba which identifies the setting as that of contemporary Africa.

The above extract expresses the views of a literary critic of a “contemporary” writer in the “contemporary” context. However, with almost half a century elapsed, some of the views, quite understandably, have been overtaken by time. In my study, I focus on the ahistorical stories and attempt to pick lessons that can be applied in contemporary schools to improve the quality of school life.

In his essay entitled “The Structure, Relevancy and the Teaching of Literature”, Jewkes (1979) has this to say:

I can think of several ways in which the study of literature can be seen to have a direct and powerful relevance to students. In the first place, there is their own personal life. If I am right to think that most of the most perplexing, anxiety ridden problems input students' lives (and indeed, often in our own) is how to find and preserve an individual and entity in the shelter of conflicting desires, attractions and claims on their energies and loyalties, then the story of search for an inheritance, an identity and a power over life, offers them a shaping principle for their own daily progress through the maze of experience.

In the above quotation, Jewkes points out that the most important function of literature to students is to enhance their own self-identity. In other words, students (and indeed, all people) see themselves in the light of the issues raised in the text. Putting it into the perspective of my study, literature on school life helps students score themselves against the standards set by the text. I agree with this statement, and through this study, wish to make it more relevant and applicable to contemporary secondary school students.

Nash Hannah in her Research Thesis entitled *A Novel Approach to Education* (1997) explains the role of writers as follows.

Writers and orators have long been recognised as mouthpieces of society, able to think and express visions of their communities in story telling or creative writing.

The above quotation generalises the relevance of literature in society. The inclusion of orators expands the relevance to include oral literature as well. While I agree with Nash about the relevance of literature,

I realise that Nash's scope of relevance is heuristic and goes beyond schools. In my study, I try to restrict myself to school life basing on Barbara Kimenye's *Moses* series.

Mwazemba, in his essay entitled "Writing Lessons from Moses, the Boy who Hated Authority" (2012), points out the portrayal of the character of Moses as Kimenye's deliberate construct to paint a picture of a boy with a negative attitude towards school and school authority when he states that;

By zeroing on the boy's troubles with the school authorities, Kimenye captivates the audience by addressing what they can directly identify with. By choice of words, she grades vocabulary and selects words carefully so as not to alienate the young reader.

The above extract highlights the relevance of literary and narrative devices in making children's literature more appealing to secondary school students. It is important to note that there may be several written materials that the students interact with regularly in school. They may include the bible, the rules and regulations, announcements on notice boards and other written materials from school authorities and peers. However, few of these may have the artistic touch of experienced and talented creative writers. In my study, I seek to explore the language used by Kimenye in the *Moses* series and highlight the relevance of her creative works on students' moral development in schools.

Kwama in his article entitled "Barbara Kimenye; Author whose Works Remain Fresh (2013), echoes the same idea about the character of Moses in Kimenye's narratives:

Moses possesses all the good, bad and curious qualities of a teenager. Those who enjoyed the series would remember his classmate and best friend at Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen: King Kong who was too big for his age and whose only dream was to marry South African songstress, Miriam Makeba.

The above extract from Kwama (2013) points out one of the outstanding characteristics of adolescent boys, which is fantasy. This study will make an attempt to establish how literature can make use of this fantasy to speak to the misbehaviour in schools in a bid to promote moral development.

Namutebi Kabali-Kagwa in an article entitled, "Seeing Self in Story is Vital for Kids" (2016) gives her personal confession about Kimenye's *Moses* series when she writes:

At 11 I was introduced to the *Moses* series written by Barbara Kimenye. These are a series of books about Moses and his friends who attend Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen. We loved them. And when my daughter was in school in Cape Town, on one trip to Uganda, I found her books from the series.

In the above confession, Namutebi suggests the cross-generational relevancy of the Moses series to contemporary school life. Much as Namutebi does not tell us the age of her daughter when she got books for her, the age when Namutebi was introduced to the series suggests that good books know no boundaries. In this study, I intend to explore the books to extract lessons that can be applied to schools in a bid to improve the quality of school life from the perspective of students, teachers and school administrators.

Mwalimu Andrew, in his article entitled “Moses, the Bad School Boy of our Time” (2020), takes a judgmental approach to the Moses Series thus:

While Moses breaks so many school rules that would have him expelled or at least suspended in other schools, everything goes at Mukibi. And therein lies Barbara's point: That the commercialization of education has made the new African societies throw away standards, as expelling Moses, or his friend King Kong, would have denied Mukibi revenues.

Mwalimu's view of the commercialization of education is important both as an indicator of student behaviour and as an index of the relationship between students and school administration as represented in the Moses Series. This claim may, however, be contestable depending on the details that may be available in the texts regarding the fees payment at Moses' former schools. This study will look out for such details to supplement or challenge Mwalimu's argument.

2.3: Conclusion

In this chapter, various sources have been reviewed focusing on Kimenye as an author; school life as a theme; student character and behaviour as a concern and the effectiveness of Kimenye's language and style in making her writing appealing to her audience. The gaps have been identified in research designs, the focus, the time lag, and the content analysed in the reviewed works. This lays a foundation and paves a way for selecting the suitable design and approach for my study, as I explain in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0: Introduction

This chapter is a description of the methods I used in this study, each corresponding with the research activity being handled. It covers research paradigm, research approach, research design; Sources of Data; Data Collection methods and sampling techniques; data collection tools; data analysis; and Citation Style.

3.1: Research Paradigm

The research was guided by the interpretivist paradigm by indepth reading of te selected texts to examine the issues of school life by looking at the dynamics of student characterisation, the relationship between the students and school administration and the lessons that can be drawn from the interactions between the students and the school administration that can inform the running of schools (Bloomberg, 2022).

3.2: Research Approach

The study used the textual analysis approach to explore the dynamics of student characterisation, their relationship with the school administrationand the lessons that can be drawn from their interaction within the school setting (Hemnink et al, 2020).

3.3: Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative design to examine the quality of school life depicted in the selected texts; the language used to depict the issues and the style used to present the issues.

I then used the Interpretative design to discuss and analyse the school life challenges raised by the author in the text (Bloomberg, 2022).

3.4: Sources of Data

Sources of Data were basically interaction with the reading materials, both in print and online. Journal articles and books written by other literary scholars and critics about Kimenye's works and the Moses series were also studied for purposes of cross-referencing and insights. The study closely analysed primary texts by Barbara Kimenye written between 1967 and 1970, but relevant secondary sources from 1969 to 2023 were also reviewed. The primary texts by Barbara Kimenye were written in East Africa

but texts reviewed are drawn from any part of the world according to their relevancy. While the primary field of study is Literature, a few texts from other fields such as Psychology, as well as general policy books were consulted.

3.5: Methods and Sampling Techniques

For data collection, data was generated majorly from a close reading of primary sources which consisted of the selected story books of Barbara Kimenye's Moses series: *Moses*, *Moses and Mildred*; *Moses in Trouble*; and *Moses in a Muddle*. Other relevant secondary sources were consulted for more insights on the topic and the specific objectives.

The sampling technique used was purposive (Suri, 2011). The first three books in the series: *Moses*, *Moses and Mildred* and *Moses in trouble* were selected due to the assumed interrelatedness of their major events happening within and around the school. The fourth book, *Moses in a Muddle* was selected for featuring a female character. So, I believed that sampling four out of the eleven novellas for close reading would give a sufficient image of the portrayal of school life by the author of the series. This is not to claim that the other novellas of the series are not relevant. They were also read for general insight and impression but were not analysed for discussion in this study.

Secondary sources were selected depending on the objective being handled. They included journal articles written about Kimenye as an author or school life as a subject. Books about Reader Response Theory were also consulted.

Data collecting instruments included note books, note cards, a pencil and a rubber, a textual checklist, a four-quire counter book; a smart phone and a computer tablet. These were collectively used for convenience. A computer, smart phone and computer tablet would often be used concurrently for purposes of cross-referencing and sharing data via Bluetooth.

3.6.0: Data Collection Tools

For the purposes of this study, I developed specific tools for collecting data in addition to the routine obvious tools used in writing such as note books, pens, pencils, a smart phone, a tablet and a computer. The tools that are attached in the appendix section include the following:

3.6.1: Character Behavioural Attribute Analytical Tool:

This was the tool I developed specifically to capture data relating to the behaviour of student characters as depicted in each text in order to collect the data as required by objective one of this study: the

behaviour of the student. It constitutes a tabular template capturing the aspects of text title, character, behavioural attribute, whether it is positive or negative, the support evidence and the page where it is found.

3.6.2: Literature Review Gap Identification Template.

This tool was specifically developed to help me identify the gaps in the literature reviewed. It is a tabular template with the elements of objective, scholar, the study, year of the study or publication; and possible gap to be filled by my study.

3.6.3: Intertextual Comparison of Relationships between Students and School Administration.

I developed this tool specifically to guide me in collecting data relating to the relationship between students and the school administration as required by the second specific objective. It is a tabular template with the elements of an aspect of administration such as top administrators, the similarity and the differences in the depiction of the aspects in the two texts, *Moses* and *Mildred and Moses in Trouble*.

3.6.4: School Basic Requirement and Minimum Standards Checklist.

This is a tool I developed to assess the extent to which the fictitious school as depicted in the selected texts would meet the basic requirements as stipulated if it were to be judged by the same standards. The data generated was used to discuss the lessons that can be drawn from Kimenye's *Moses* series regarding the running of contemporary secondary schools in Uganda.

3.7.0: Data Analysis.

Data was analysed using descriptions and illustrations in form of quotations from the primary and secondary sources consulted. The excerpts from primary and secondary sources were interpreted using Reader Response theory particularly the four tenets: Reader Responsibility in Meaning Construction (Wolfgang, 1978); Interpretive Communities (Fish, 1980); Reader Subjective Criticism (Bleich, 1978); and Circle of Hermeneutics) as I explained in Chapter One (See Theoretical Framework). The following were the steps and methods taken to analyse data.

3.7.1: Textual comparison

Using the textual comparison template, data from different texts was analysed in terms of difference and similarities in respect of specific aspects. This was the method used to compare the characterisation of students across the given novellas and where characters change in terms of behaviour and attitudes.

3.7.2: Content analysis

The content from primary and secondary sources was analysed in terms of the themes explored, arguments raised and conclusions made. From such conclusions, inferences would be made regarding the aspects under study.

3.7.3: Discourse Analysis

This involved the interpretation of excerpts from texts to generate insight on the topic of study. The choice of words and their effectiveness in serving the intended purpose were analysed and conclusions made basing on what the discourse suggested.

The discussion and analysis of data was guided by the ideas of Reader Response theorists, particularly the tenets of active meaning construction (Wolfgang, 1978); reader subjective criticism (Bleich, 1978) and Socio-cultural context of reading (Fish, 1980).

3.8: Citation Style.

For ethical considerations, all works reviewed are cited appropriately both in text where their works appear and in the reference section at the end of the dissertation. Cited works are basically presented using MLA 7th edition; but some online sources with auto generated citations will be found to appear in MLA 8th edition and some appear in MLA 9th Edition.

3.9: Conclusion

In this literary research which fits within the interpretivist paradigm, the qualitative research design was used, employing the textual analysis approach to explore and expose the dynamics of student characterisation in the Moses Series; the relationship between students and school administration and the lessons that can be drawn from the depiction of that relationship. Close reading of the text was done and data collected using specific tools in form of templates and checklists. From the data, analysis was done and insights and inferences drawn as they are presented in details in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1: Student Characterisation in the Moses Series

4.1.0: Introduction

In this chapter I explore and expose student characterisation as depicted in the *Moses* series. The character traits for each of the characters in two of the selected novellas are exposed respectively. The two novellas I analyse for behaviour are *Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle*. The selection was motivated by the centrality of social behaviour in each of the novellas. I examined the school life issues that emerge as the students in the selected texts interact with one another and with the school authorities. In *Moses* I explored and expose behaviour of male student characters while in *Moses in a Muddle* I used the female character to compare the behaviour of the female student with her male counterparts and the interaction of the two.

My analysis of student characterisation is guided by the principles of Reader Response Literary Theory, particularly the tenet of subjective criticism popularised by Bleich (1978). Reader response criticism posits that the meaning of a text is not fixed but emerges from the interaction between the reader and the text. The meaning, according to reader response, is subjective and varies depending on the reader's experiences, cultural background and personal belief. In this study, I used my experience and interpretation as a reader to comment on the various school life motifs depicted and their implication on student behaviour.

4.1.1.0: Student Characterisation in *Moses*.

Moses as a novella features five male student characters, all of whom are students of Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen. In examining the behaviour of the student characters, I bring out a particular character's attributes and traits and show how these attributes affects his life at school and his interaction with other student characters. A consistent portrayal of a behavioural attribute in a particular character helps the reader either to identify with the character or judge the behaviour, thereby understanding the depiction better.

Analysis of students' behaviour came with its own challenges. In the first place, it is not easy to draw a straight demarcation between children's personality (which is mainly hereditary) and character which is

gradually accumulated and consciously built through interaction with others in a particular environment. Secondly, behaviour at school is complex and it puts into consideration such aspects as academic performance; social behaviour; cherished beliefs and values; attitude towards education; family background; peer pressure; gender roles; leadership qualities; learning difficulties and disabilities and ethical and moral behaviour (Renzulli, 2021). In my analysis of student behaviour, I base on their words and actions as reflected by the narrator. Considering that individual students exhibit subtle differences in behaviour even when they seem to have comparatively similar behavioural patterns, I analyse the overt behaviour of individual student characters as reflected in their interaction with others.

In *Moses*, the protagonist Moses Kibaya, nicknamed Holy Moses by his fellow students, is a fifteen-year-old boy who has been expelled from six Ugandan schools. He is brought to Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen, a school that is known for accepting boys expelled from other schools and promising their parents and guardians that the school will be able to "make men" of them. On seeing the state of the structures of the school, Moses decides that he will not have to wait to be expelled from this very school. He embarks on a mission to run away from the school together with Sebastian Muluu, alias King Kong, a friend he has made at Mukibi's. This first book in the Moses series narrates what they go through in a failed mission to escape from the school, where circumstances keep preventing them from escaping beyond the school gate.

The five male student characters I analyse are Moses Kibaya (Holy Moses); Sebastian Muluu (King Kong); Makumbi; Ahmed Juma and Rukia. I discuss the positive and negative attributes of each of the five male student characters, and bring out what, in my view, each character represents in a school setting.

4.1.1.1: Character Attributes of Moses Kibaya

Moses Kibaya, alias Holy Moses is the main character and narrator in *Moses* and the other novellas in the Moses series. Through the observations and first person narrative of Moses as a character, the text paints an image of a dilapidated, poor and mismanaged school in Uganda a few years after independence. In the character of Moses Kibaya in *Moses*, I observe a young man that has five positive attributes of ambition, resilience, compassion; determination and obedience. In this study, I analyse how the five qualities manifest in the character of Moses Kibaya as he interacts with fellow students and adults around him.

Among the positive character attributes of Moses Kibaya is optimism. At the very opening of the book he narrates that he had just been expelled from the sixth school, but states that he was lucky to have had opportunity to always get readmitted in other schools despite the expulsions:

What other boy, I wondered, could boast of having been expelled from six different Ugandan schools? I mean, some chaps have an awful lot of difficulty getting themselves admitted at only one. (Ms:3)

The use of the word “boast” in the above extract to refer to talking about the chance of being readmitted to one school after being expelled by another, in my view, highlights the fact that Kibaya values education and, as long as he gets another school after being expelled from one, his journey of education is still possible and chances of achieving his goals are still open. In this we see hope and optimism in the character of Moses Kibaya.

I also consider compassion as another positive character attribute that Moses Kibaya exhibits in *Moses* as a story book. Compassion is the quality of treating people in a way that will ensure their comfort (Isobel and Margaret, 2022). Kimenye portrays Kibaya as a compassionate person, Kibaya is depicted as someone who never seeks revenge. For instance, when he gets punished by the headmaster for fighting with Mlutu, he does not attempt to seek revenge against him; but instead accepts the fate and the two end up in the Sanatorium to be treated of the injuries inflicted on them by the headmaster.

Kibaya’s compassion is again displayed in the way he treats the baby left in his hands by a woman that they later get to know as Makumbi’s sister who eventually turns out to be Makumbi’s wife. The baby is placed in Kibaya’s hands in the night and abandoned there by his mother. An indifferent person, especially a boy in that kind of situation would probably have left the baby there and run for his own safety. In the first place, he knew he and his friend Mlutu would be a subject of ridicule from the rest of their colleagues if they just showed up with a baby in the middle of the night. Secondly, where would they end with the baby if the mother stubbornly refused to come for it? Finally, how were they to explain to the deputy headmaster how they had come across the baby? Despite all that, Kibaya does not consider abandoning the baby even when the confusion, fear and uncertainty surrounding the interference of an unknown woman with his “escape scheme” would have left him with little else to do apart from abandoning the baby at the gate before it cried to alert everyone that something wasn’t going right at Mukibi’s. Kimenye could have designed the interference of a baby as a technique to delay the escape scheme and help her achieve suspense, which she excellently does; but the kindness exhibited in the character of Moses Kibaya in that situation cannot be ignored.

I also examine Moses Kibaya's attribute of ambition. Ambition refers to the state or quality of desiring or aspiring to be more successful, rich or powerful (Hirschi and Spurk, 2021). Ambition is a positive attribute, especially among school going children and young adults. I read Kibaya as an ambitious boy with big dreams. For instance, he intends to become a famous actor emulating Sydney Poiter. His ambition is enhanced by a high level of self-esteem. For instance, Kibaya is not comfortable with his second name, Moses, and he intends to change it to Elvis as soon as he is famous. The fact that he says "as soon as I am famous", not "if" suggests optimism. Optimistic ambition, which is one of the common characteristic of children, helps to capture and sustain the attention and interest of adolescent readers.

As an ambitious character, Kibaya does not give up on education, thanks to the support given him by his guardian, Uncle Silasi. Even when he has been expelled from six different schools, Moses Kibaya does not lose hope but still believes he can make it in life.

Determination is yet another attribute of Moses Kibaya as a character. Kibaya's determination is reflected, among other things, in the way he pursues his escape scheme. Kibaya conceives the idea of escaping from Mukibi's while in Sanatorium with his friend Muluu after being assaulted unreasonably by the headmaster, Mr. Mukibi.

Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen was one school that would not need to expel Moses Kibaya. I had made up my mind to save them the trouble by running away, and I was still planning ways and means of doing this when at last I fell asleep

(Ms:2).

The above statement suggests to the reader that Mukibi's was probably the worst of the schools Moses Kibaya had attended. It is indicated earlier on that the headmaster has neither plans nor interest in improving school life at Mukibi's considering that he insists that the institute is "a place of learning and not a tourists' hotel" (Ms:6). One is tempted to empathize with the character of Kibaya and find Kibaya's intention to escape justified. This idea sets the ground for the escape scheme which is the mission that propels suspense in the plot of the novella *Moses*.

However, Moses Kibaya as a character exhibits some negative attributes, four of which are ingratitude; alcoholism; impatience and being over-adventurous as explained below.

Moses Kibaya as a character demonstrates ingratitude from the way he talks about the adults in his life. At the beginning of the text *Moses*, the character narrates his unlucky ordeal of having been expelled from the sixth school. We are not given many details regarding the circumstances under which the narrator and protagonist gets expelled from the six schools but what we gather from Kibaya's personal reflection indicate that he is neither sorry nor apologetic. For instance, he boastfully considers it a positive attribute to have been expelled from six different Ugandan schools. The way Kibaya describes the tears shed by his uncle's wife, for instance, shows that he does not take her concerns about his behaviour serious. Those who appreciate the role played by Uncle Silasi in ensuring that Kibaya attains some level of education will find the description very disturbing.

Additionally, Kibaya is depicted as being fond of alcohol and smoking. However, from the way smoking is presented, one may take it as normal considering that even the headmaster himself often smokes some cigarettes confiscated from the students. From this viewpoint, one would have been tempted to conclude that smoking is normal, but two incidents rule this out. First, Kibaya describes smoking behind a locked door as 'peaceful' which suggests that in public or elsewhere at his uncle's house, smoking is prohibited. Secondly cigarettes are confiscated from students by school authority which confirms that smoking is not encouraged in school.

Another negative trait depicted by Moses Kibaya as a student is being a fan of alcohol. He confesses this during his home confinement, where he says:

I would not have minded a glass of beer too, but there wasn't much hope of that in my uncle's house. (Ms:1)

From this statement, two arguments can be advanced about the students' behaviour. The first is that the schools attended by Kibaya are less strict with students' behaviour than their homes are. The second argument is that the students assume different behaviour while at home from the behaviour displayed while at school. This suggests either that the upbringing at Uncle Silasi was such that children were not allowed to take alcohol or that the family are abstainers from alcohol, and therefore, drinking was not to be expected in the house since drinks were not available. Either way, one wonders where Kibaya learnt the habit of drinking alcohol from, and this points at schools as breeding grounds for undesirable behaviour including alcohol and other substance abuse.

Kibaya is again depicted as impatient. Impatience refers to inability to wait but instead try to make hurried decisions in certain situations (Mehta, 2023). Kibaya as an impatient character does not wait to

finish school but instead attempts to run away to go to America to be a film star. One would even have argued that you do not have to go to America to become a film star considering that there exist film stars even on the local scene, but considering that this was in the late 60s when the film industry was dominated by American film stars, Kibaya's dream and fantasy are justified.

When Kibaya is locked up in a room at his uncle's house, he does not wait to stabilise the mind but instead rushes to smoke which results in him almost setting the house on fire when the cigarette drops from his mouth onto the bed. Considering that the smell of tobacco could even be detectable from another part of the house making it easy to trace its origin, it suggests that Kibaya was risking being caught in attempting to smoke in a room at his uncle's house, but addiction left him with no other choice. One can as well argue that it was impatience that urged him not to wait until he got released from confinement.

Again Kibaya, like any other child, has a life of fantasy and ambitious dreams. Some of his dreams may appear very unrealistic. For instance, he believes he can go to America with neither passport, visa nor money for a flight ticket. His esteem gives him such confidence that he feels he is capable of anything at his age. He bases on the fact that he was able to climb trees since he was five years of age to believe that he can ably fly a jet aircraft considering that he does not fear height. One can only imagine the danger created by such unrealistic fantasy and confidence. An insight into the behavioural attributes of Kibaya, as the main character, helps one to understand and appreciate why he behaves the way he does. It helps the to understand the cause-and-effect relationship of the interactions between Kibaya and his colleagues in and around school.

4.1.1.2: Character Attributes of Sebastian Mulu

The second equally prominent character whose behavioural patterns need observation is Sebastian Mulu alias King Kong. Four Positive behavioural attributes to Mulu are that he is strong, co-operative; friendly; exhibiting leadership qualities. Among the negative attributes are that he is arrogant; mischievous; a bully and an escapee.

Mulu is depicted as physically strong. Aged fifteen, Mulu is regarded too big for his age. While physical strength may be viewed as independent of behavioural attributes, it should be noted that strength often facilitates, or rather motivates negative behaviour in certain situations. The fact that Mulu makes a conscious effort to restrain himself from fighting often and, instead restricts himself to threats qualifies his strength to be categorised as a positive behavioural attribute.

Mulutu uses his strength to fight the thieves that have broken into the headmaster's house in his absence and are about to make off with unspecified household items. The combination of physical strength and tact is all it takes for him to bang the heads of the thieves together and render them unconscious. Here Mulutu is depicted as not only strong but also daring.

Mulutu is also depicted as a cooperative member of the school family. In *Moses* as a text Mulutu shows the extent of his cooperation when he joins the escape scheme and does not just fit in it but owns it as if it were his own initiative. For instance, he comes up with all sorts of suggestions all aimed at enabling him and his friend Kibaya to successfully go to America to pursue their ambitious missions.

He further exhibits high levels of cooperation when he accepts a baby from Kibaya even when he knows it is going to be an inconvenience and stumbling block to their intended mission of crossing the border at night. The introduction of the baby in the plot brings an interesting diversion from the readers' expectation and has a comical effect to the narrative while at the same time helping Kimenye to achieve suspense.

Mulutu's physical strength makes him complain less about hard labour, one of the alternative punitive options to canes at Mukibi's. Although this is not explicitly expressed in the text and one may argue that it is more out of attitude rather than physical strength that Mulutu never complains about hard labour, I wish to point out that physical strength makes it easy for a person to endure physical labour and therefore minimises complaints.

Mulutu is further depicted as friendly. This is evidenced among other things, in the way he treats and interacts with others. For instance, he chooses to forget the disagreements he has with Kibaya when they together get punished by Mukibi for fighting in the dormitory. The time they spend in the sanatorium and the story they share enable Mulutu to earn the trust of Kibaya, and the two remain friends for the rest of their stay at Mukibi's.

Mulutu's friendship is not restricted to the students but extends to the non-students. For instance, one of his close confidants is Kigali, the gatekeeper. Close friendship with a gatekeeper, in my opinion, is not strange. It is a survival skill that every student requires, in order to avoid trouble. Although the text does not express the interaction of the gatekeeper with the rest of the students, we can still attribute the interaction of Mulutu and the gatekeeper to Mulutu's outgoing behaviour and social skills as earlier mentioned.

Again Mulutu is depicted as a potential leader due to the ambitious nature with which he approaches the newly introduced election of school prefects, where he misses initial nomination and later loses the elections to Rukia. In this Mulutu is depicted as unpopular among fellow students which, in my view, may be because of his bush-baby acts in the identity of King Kong.

As a socially outgoing personality, Mulutu is depicted as an entertainer who takes advantage of any delay or advance finishing of a timetabled activity to sing his favourite song King Kong to his colleagues whenever there is delay or flopping of any kind affecting whatever has been timetabled or scheduled.

However, there is a number of negative behavioural attributes assigned to the character of Mulutu. I will expound on only four which are: arrogance; mischief; bullying and escaping tendency.

Mulutu is arrogant, especially before his fellow school boys. This arrogance is perhaps attributed to the fact that he regards himself superior considering that he is too big for his age of 15. The arrogance is again traceable in the fact that he can ably perform a parody of a popular Music under the title King Kong, which he performs so often that he gets nick named *King Kong* by his colleagues.

We experience the first bit of Mulutu arrogance when he refuses Kibaya to sit next to him in class, well aware that as a new student, he is supposed to sit wherever he finds space in class. Not that Kibaya has forced himself to sit in that particular space, but he has actually been invited over by Makumbi, who happens to share the desk with Mulutu and another unnamed boy. In this, Mulutu is depicted not only as arrogant but also disrespectful. To him, the other occupants of the desk have less rights over it than he himself does. He feels so entitled to it that he questions Makumbi's audacity to invite a new comer to join their desk probably without consulting him first.

Additionally, Mulutu gives way to his arrogance by fighting Kibaya in the dormitory. One may notice that the fight is provoked by just a rhyme from Kibaya in response to one that Mulutu had creatively composed to mock Moses Kibaya whom he nicknames Holy Moses. In the rhyme, Mulutu chants:

Holy Moses smells of Roses

But should be taken in small doses.

(Ms: 14)

Looking at the meaning of the words in the rhyme, one even wonders whether the rhyme was meant to annoy anyone. First, Moses is described as “Holy” in the poem and, from the Christian perspective, something or someone holy is someone pure or righteous; and would have no negative interpretation, except where the tone suggests that it has been used ironically. It is the reactionary rhyme from Kibaya that possibly annoys Mulutu to the extent of engaging in a physical fight. This is the rhyme from Kibaya:

Old King Kong had a terrible pong

A terrible pong had he that people... thought he wasn't sanitary.

(Ms: 14)

I notice from the above extract that Kibaya's rhyme and the words used were aimed at silencing Mulutu, but being the arrogant type he is, he instead gets enraged and confronts Kibaya in a Physical fight which creates the two boys' problems with the headteacher, Mr. Mukibi. Still physical fighting would not have been necessary if it weren't for Mulutu's arrogance that tempts him to believe that he can never be a loser in anything.

Mulutu is mischievous as a character. This mischief plays out in the incident where he pours sugar on Rukia's bed to encourage ants. In this mischief portrayal, Mulutu is depicted as creative and cunning. I, however, note that there could have been other alternatives that Mulutu could have used to harm Rukia, say throwing his books down a pit latrine, cutting up his clothes or beddings, but he chooses to have ants climb into his bed and probably bite him.

Mulutu is depicted as a bully. Bullying refers to the physical or emotional disturbance to new students by old students of a school. The reader recognises that bullying is done by old students, especially those who have been in senior one the previous year. Where the reader would expect bullying to be done publicly, the depiction in *Moses* shows Mulutu as the only student interested in bullying Kibaya as a new student at Mukibi's. The bullying can also be in form of verbal threats, insults, misleading “advice” and any other form of deliberate disturbance to individual students. Mulutu's habit of thumping the chest further depicts him as a bully who wishes to intimidate fellow students into doing or not doing things. A case in point is when he threatens the dorm 4 boys into playing Poker dice with Kibaya and him.

Still as a bully, Mulutu threatens the life of Makumbi to the point of fearing to go to the dormitory without Kibaya for fear of being harmed by Mulutu. While one would have ignored the warning as just a threat, and Makumbi's fear as cowardly, Mulutu actually confirms Makumbi's fear when he fights Kibaya.

The last negative behavioural attribute that I wish to discuss is the escaping tendency. Mulutu is fond of escaping from school often, an attribute, in my view attributable to the weakness of Kigali, the gatekeeper. Mulutu usually pays frequent visits to the village bar to buy alcohol for the old gatekeeper, who usually returns the courtesy by preparing special meals of matoke and beans or meat for Mulutu to enjoy. It is even mentioned that Mulutu uses his own money to buy alcohol for his friend, the gatekeeper.

Mulutu does not hesitate to join Kibaya's escape scheme when it is presented to him. While one might argue that curiosity is a characteristic of all normal children, I wish to point out that a child fond of escaping from school and not returning home but running to another town or place is a troublesome child. For Mulutu's and Kibaya's case, they are even attempting to run to another continent altogether.

Mulutu's role in funding the proposed escape scheme is also significant. It is noted that Mulutu engages in gambling in order to raise the money to transport him and his friend across the border in their quest to travel to America.

4.1.1.3: Character Attribute of Makumbi

I will now discuss the behavioural attributes of Makumbi, both positive and negative. On the positive part, Makumbi is peaceful, respectful and ambitious. On the negative side, Makumbi is improvident and dishonest. I will explain them one by one in the order in which I have presented them; beginning with the positive behavioural attributes.

Makumbi is peaceful: he would rather give safe space than encourage or withstand confrontation. For instance, when he is confronted by Sebastian Mulutu accusing him of inviting Kibaya to share a desk with them, he does not fight back, but instead opts for peace. Later, when faced with family challenges and his wife invades the school looking for support from him, he opts to hide from the wife instead of facing her which would possibly cause a fight considering that his wife had abandoned their baby in the hands of strangers in the middle of the night.

Makumbi is respectful as a student character. The respect is shown in how he treats his fellow students. In the first place, Makumbi volunteers to offer a seat to Kibaya on the day he joins Mukibi's as a new student. Note that Kibaya comes to school and finds all the seats in class occupied and even some students standing as they attend classes.

Secondly, as a married student, he listens to Mr. Karanja when he sits him down with his wife and apparently advises him to leave school and take up a job so that he is able to take care of his family. The suggestion to leave school is not explicitly stated in the text, but readers may interpret it from the context and the cause-and-effect relationships of the events within the plot.

Makumbi is also ambitious. The ambition may not be in his words but embedded in his choices. For instance, Makumbi is eager to sacrifice for education though married. Considering that Mukibi's is a private school where all learners pay school fees, it is a big sacrifice for a married man to prioritise furthering education which accordingly is expensive. It is mentioned that Mukibi usually charges double the school fees paid in other schools because his school accepts boys expelled from other schools and pledges to "make a man" of each of them. We are not told who pays school fees for Makumbi, but if he pays for himself, then he is making a big sacrifice to attain education. The wife reaching the extent of threatening to leave the baby in the school unless and until Makumbi provides money suggests that Makumbi's economic background is a humble one.

Ultimately, Makumbi bows to economic pressure of the family and leaves school to take on a job in order to be able to support his wife and child. We are not told the circumstances under which Makumbi gets to marry while still in Junior secondary but the depiction of his life points at the challenges of young parenthood. The threats by Makumbi's wife to leave the baby at school can be interpreted that Makumbi could have been in school against the wife's consent. In this depiction of the desperation of the young mother, Kimenye suggests that the education of the girl child has more challenges than that of the boy child considering that the Makumbi issue can be interpreted as a case of teenage pregnancy on the part of Makumbi's wife. All the same, in all this, Makumbi is depicted as futuristic which is an element of being ambitious.

However, Makumbi is depicted to exhibit some negative behavioural attributes which are partly character related and partly circumstantial. I will discuss only two of them: improvidence and dishonesty both of which, I wish to argue are circumstantial

Makumbi is improvident. Improvidence is a state where a head of a family does not provide for his family the way he should have done (Morris, 2023). We are not told the circumstances under which Makumbi gets married while at the same time keeps in school. The situation presented in the plot can be interpreted either as a situation of a husband who chooses to return to school after getting married, or a student who is forced by circumstances, say impregnating someone's daughter, and ends up forced by circumstances to get married to the lady he has impregnated. Either way, it remains the husband's responsibility to provide for his family, and if he fails to fulfill the responsibility as would be expected of him, he is seen as improvident.

Again Makumbi is depicted as dishonest. First, he appears to have promised to deposit some money at the school gate for his wife to collect. What remains unclear in the plot is why Makumbi's wife chooses to come to pick the money in the middle of the night. This can be interpreted to suggest that Makumbi had probably promised to deliver the money earlier but when he failed, it enraged the wife to come to the school gate in the middle of the night and abandon the baby with Kibaya mistaking him for the gatekeeper. Moreover, Makumbi deceives that Baby Alfonse is his nephew, his mother being his sister, yet Alfonse is simply his biological son and the mother his wife as she boldly points out in front of the deputy headmaster, Mr. Karanja. When borrowing money to help his family, he disguises that he is giving it to his sister in order to accept the baby back. One wonders whether and why it would be the responsibility of a school boy to look after the child of his sister. This may prompt one to jump to a conclusion that the child was probably a result of incest between Makumbi and his sister. Makumbi also portrays dishonesty and trickery when he pretends to be sick, thereby avoiding being punished for coming to class late for lessons. He malingers so convincingly that he spends days in the sanatorium with his food delivered to him all this time.

4.1.1.4: Character Attributes of Rukia

Next I discuss Rukia's behavioural attributes. The positive ones are that he is popular, principled and high self-esteem. Among the negative ones are that he is dictatorial and proud.

Rukia is popular. Whereas popularity may not be an explicit behaviour that can be attributed to Rukia as his own making, it should be noted there must be certain endowments or character traits that makes a person popular among his peers. Rukia is described by his fellow students as the most boisterous. He is said to often rub Vaseline over his upper lip to encourage a moustache. His stories of self-praise make him so popular among his fellow students that they vote him dorm prefect of dorm 4. Rukia is also

outgoing in sense that he likes gathering crowds and entertaining them with his adventure stories of self-praise.

Rukia is principled. Being principled means following the ideal almost in every situation. As a leader, he is obsessed with success and does not want anyone to spoil the good image of the dormitory he is leading. For instance, when Mr. Karanja introduces the idea of a prize for the dorm with the best behaved students as well as a black mark for any student that portrays negative energy as far as school routine and obedience to authority are concerned, Rukia becomes stricter with the discipline of his Dorm 3 members than he had been before.

Rukia is further depicted as a strict disciplinarian. Once he is made dorm prefect of Dorm 3, he is in total charge of ensuring order in everything the students do and the way they do it. For instance, he ensures that nobody is up once it is time for lights out. In fact, when he overhears Kibaya and Mulutu whispering about escaping from school to go to America, he does not even wait to hear the details but only cuts in asserting that nobody runs away from Dorm 3 as long as he is the dormitory prefect.

Rukia is highly self -esteemed. He is motivated by this self-esteem to work hard to make sure that his dormitory is recognised as the best performer, especially in terms of discipline. This is what he says in response to Kibaya's and Mulutu's intention to run away from school:

If I hear any more talk of running away, I shall report you both to Mr. Karanja. He is awarding a Cup for Merit to the dormitory with the best record of good behaviour and discipline at the end of the term and Dorm 3 is going to win it. I won't have you two spoiling things for the rest of us.

(Ms:47)

However, on the negative side, Rukia is depicted as dictatorial. He is so obsessed with power that he expects nothing to take place in Dorm 3 without his permission. He used to be an easy going boy before being voted into power but he can no longer be described as friendly by any of his subordinates in dorm 3: Kibaya has this to narrate about him:

My first impression of him was of an ordinary easygoing boy. But the moment Mr. Karanja pinned that little prefects' badge on his chest, he was transformed into a despotic tyrant. Because of him, life in Dorm 3 soon took on a close resemblance of a prison camp (Ms:49).

It is noted from the above quote that Rukia, once a loving and popular boy has been corrupted by power to behave undesirably towards his fellow students yet they are the source of his strength.

Rukia is also depicted as proud. The way Rukia conducts himself suggests that he regards himself superior to others. This can be interpreted as a sense of pride. This pride is a negative behavioural attribute since it leads to being unapologetic. Note that there are four dormitory prefects for the four dormitories, but Rukia probably stands out as the proudest. When Rukia accidentally falls off a branch and gets injured while the school is out on a Sunday for some fieldwork, it is later rumoured that someone has actually pushed him off the branch, perhaps deliberately. This shows the extent of the hate the boys have towards Rukia. We are not surprised to learn that at the end of the text *Moses* the same boys that had voted Rukia are now determined to vote Mulutu, alias King Kong.

4.1.1.5: Character Attributes of Ahmed Juma

Lastly, I wish to discuss the behavioural attributes of Ahmed Juma. Ahmed Juma is a minor character who happens to be named. Juma's attributes include that he is friendly and peaceful. The negative attributes include that he is too reserved and he possibly could have left school.

Juma is friendly. The friendliness is reflected in the way he hangs around Kibaya on the latter's first day at Mukibi's. On the instructions of Mr. Mukibi, Juma shows Kibaya the class he has been allocated and even volunteers to escort Kibaya back from the class to carry his belongings to the dormitory later.

However, Ahmed Juma is depicted as too reserved. For instance, as Kibaya the narrator points out,

Later I did see him in the distance, but I don't think we have ever talked to each other, since that day. Now I am not going to pretend that Ahmed was the sort of boy I should like for my best friend. (Ms:9)

From the above quote, we deduce that friendship formation is subtle since students have choices when it comes to the "sort of boy I should like for my best friend". Ahmed is too reserved and perhaps isolated by most of the students. If given names are anything to go by, Ahmed Juma may be interpreted as a symbol for the Muslim minority in Ugandan Christian schools of the time.

4.1.2.0: Lessons Drawn from Moses

Moses, the first novella in the *Moses* series was written in 1968, six years after Uganda had got independence. It focuses on a troublesome boy who has been expelled from six schools and how fate and conditions conspire to keep him at the seventh school. Wolfgang (1976) assigns readers an active role in constructing the meaning of the text. I will execute my role as a reader by interpreting the text in

line with the school life concerns raised in the selected texts and their relevance to the running of contemporary schools and institutions.

4.1.2.1: The Place of Expulsion as a Disciplinary Measure

Expulsion is one of the deterrent measures that schools use to manage discipline in schools (Cameron, 2006:220). In *Moses*, the narrator is depicted as having been expelled from six Ugandan schools when he was still in Standard Five. The term “Standard” by current nomenclature is used in Kenya to correspond to the term “Primary” used in Uganda to indicate the class. Another common word used for “class” is “form”. Being expelled from six schools in a period of five years suggests that, on average, the student was being expelled in a school each year. The text does not state explicitly how long the expulsions had taken, but what is implied in this is that expulsion is rampant in schools. It is obvious that Kimenye was writing for the audience that lived in the 1960s, since she possibly had no idea that her books would be this popular. Note that she wasn’t a teacher, which implies that she was writing to communicate her wishes, concerns, fears and aspiration about the education systems and practices at the time. Indicator 10 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards outlines the provisions for management of student discipline. The very first provision requires that every student gets stipulated rules and regulations with modes of punishment for non-adherence attached. What is implied by this heuristic indicator is that the rules and regulations are customised by the schools and therefore, any form of punishment decided by the Board of Governors can be applied depending on the core values of that particular school.

In contemporary Ugandan Secondary Schools, the school Board of Governors still reserves the right to punish students who have committed grievous offenses. These grievous offenses, as I mentioned earlier, vary from school to school in line with their priority core values. For instance, in some schools where religion is a core value, shunning prayers is regarded a grievous offense, and may be punishable by expulsion or suspension. Other grievous offenses include getting pregnant, stealing, drinking alcohol in school; having sex in school; fighting; disobedience to school authority; escaping from school; bullying; and in some cases, cheating exams.

The concerns in *Moses* are relevant to the running of contemporary schools as they act as a whistleblower on the dangers associated with expulsion. In my view, some expulsion may be inevitable in case of a grievous offense like in the case of February 2023 in western Uganda, where a student at some school was alleged to have tied up a new senior one student in a dormitory before setting the entire

dormitory on fire and burning him to death (Daily Monitor, February 27, 2023). However, on the whole, students should be given a chance to change and cases of expulsion should be minimised as much as possible.

4.1.2.2: Influence of Home Background on Behaviour

Indicator 8 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (MoES, 2009) lists the requirements and evidences for organisation and development of institution-parent/ Community interaction. Among the provisions is the requirement that parents, the community and community leaders should be invited at least once a year to attend school activities such as Music, Science and Technology Fair, Sports and games or an emergency response show. What is depicted by Kimenye in *Moses* and other texts in the *Moses* series is that the schools do not give such activities due attention, yet they are key in popularising the school and its programs among the community members.

The indicators go on to provide for a need to orient all new parents and new school entrants at the beginning of the term. While this happens to be the minimum standard and basic requirement, it is noted that Mukibi's does not prioritise it as already mentioned in Chapter Four (see Reception of Students from Holiday). Consequently, we realise the importance of orientation of new students and reorientation of continuing student after recess as the program of the school resumes.

4.1.2.3: Self-discipline versus Imposed Discipline

Discipline is such a delicate issue that even experts do not have a common stand when it comes to what constitutes good disciplining mechanisms. At times, discipline or disciplining is taken to mean punishment, yet the two are quite different. Discipline is a form of program or strategy of training people, especially children, to follow expected patterns of behaviour. Punishment, on the other hand is the mechanism of discouraging an undesirable behaviour through deterrents or negative reinforcement by inflicting pain or suffering (Oxley, 2021). By self-discipline I mean that the individual has reasons or motives for working towards avoiding or retaining a certain behaviour.

According to Michel Foucault (2008), prisons cannot be separated from the societies they serve. I borrow this metaphorical statement from the adult world where prisons are facilities for punishing wrong doers. Adapting this to fit the world of children, I wish to argue that it is not the existence of prisons that stops people from committing crime. Rather, it is the good that people see in living law-abiding lives that motivates them to avoid crime. This is exactly the message conveyed or implied in

Moses. Despite the endless canings and other forms of punishment that the boys receive from the deputy headmaster, it cannot be claimed that any of the boys has changed because of the fear of being punished. Mr. Mukibi makes it worse when he canes the boys so hard that he himself ends up passing out before the very students he is caning.

Overall, we see a combination of humour, irony, hyperbole and suspense used to assert that while imposed discipline may last for a moment, it takes self-discipline to cause relatively permanent behavioural change among students. For instance, it is not the expulsion from the six schools that motivates Kibaya to change and ultimately make up his mind to settle at Mukibi's. On the contrary, it is the feeling of self-efficacy that was instilled in him by Mr. Karanja after identifying him as a good actor and engaging him in acting activities that motivates him to stay and "help Mr Karanja start a Dramatic Society in the school".

4.1.2.4: Place of Leisure in Discipline Management

Indicator 5 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards provides for Management of co-curricular activities by schools and institutions. In *Moses*, Kimenye depicts Mukibi's as a school initially with no co-curricular program until the bird watching expedition organised by Mr. Karanja on a Sunday. The activity is cut short following an accident that sees Rukia, the Dorm 3 Prefect sustain an injury. It is later that Mr. Karanja introduces Music and Drama, a move that boosts Kibaya's self-esteem and self-efficacy and he drops the escape scheme in anticipation of advancing his acting career first before going to America. Here, we see children's fantasy being used to comment on the relevance of co-curricular activities in nurturing children and young adults by developing their talents.

Kimenye emphasises the significance of co-curricular activities in moral development by making it a turning point in her plot. Note that Kibaya and Muluu had insisted on running away from Mukibi's until Karanja captures their interest by tapping into their talents of acting and singing respectively.

4.1.2.5: Is Corporal Punishment a Necessary Evil?

The cane has been so associated with the teacher that if children in Uganda were collected to role play casually, the one playing the role of the teacher would spontaneously look for a cane as a prop. A lot of intervention has happened in Uganda by concerned NGOs such as UNICEF and Save the Children but

the cane has persisted despite the government policy banning corporal punishment and all forms of violence against children in schools and homes (Cameron, 2006:219).

Indicator 8 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (MoES, 2009) lays out modalities of disciplining children in schools but does not explicitly outlaw the use of the cane in schools. Looking at all the thrashings depicted in the Moses series, one wonders whether a school cannot be parted with the cane. I notice that Mr. Karanja is a model of professionalism and good practices in school. He is, however, the one that is responsible for almost all the caning in the school, apart from the headmaster who, according to the narrator, uses the cane badly due to his bad temper. Is corporal punishment therefore a necessary evil in schools? This is what is suggested by the selected texts regarding school life as represented by Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen.

The text does not present the cane as the only means of punishing or rather disciplining students. There are other alternatives, the commonest of which is subjecting them to hard labour by making them dig in the garden. The text doesn't show whether there are any rules and regulations displayed to sensitise the students on the offenses and mode of punishment attached to them and neither is there indication of a disciplinary committee by students or the staff.

There are basically two lessons that schools can learn from Mr. Karanja's disciplining policy at Mukibi's. The first good practice is that the students are never thrashed in class; but instead asked to wait outside the deputy headmaster's office. Secondly, the deputy headmaster gives the students an opportunity to explain themselves and takes time to make them understand the implication of their actions or omissions before finally punishing them. In this, school life is depicted as a situation where punishments are inevitable but where the purpose of the punishment has to be understood by students if such a punishment is to make an impact on them.

4.1.2.6: Better Late than Never: The Question of Overage Learners

The age of the learner is important in their learning. In the beginning levels of education, the activities are attached to age (Blewitt et al, 2020). These are called age-appropriate developmental activities. In fact, according to the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy in Uganda (MoES, 2018:11), the maximum age for qualifying to be in the pre-primary level of education is six years; which same age happens to be the minimum age for joining Primary One.

However, much as there is minimum and maximum age for being in the pre-primary level of education, there is no age limit for being in primary school or secondary school. Despite the policy or rather practice of automatic promotion currently advocated for in Ugandan Public schools, there are some inevitable situations that often cause pupils to delay to complete particular cycles of their education. In March 2020, for instance, the education sector worldwide was hit hard following the closure of schools due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. In Uganda the Education Sector remained in total lockdown until October 2020 when there was partial reopening beginning with candidate classes. The reopening went on in a staggered manner, and some classes never returned to school until January 2022 when the education sector was reopened. This shows that some pupils never went back to school at all for two years! The Ministry of Education and National Curriculum Development Centre developed the Abridged Curriculum to be implemented to cater for knowledge gaps after allowing automatic promotion of all learners to the class next to the one they were in at the time of the lockdown. Upon reopening, the schools were required to offer psychosocial support to learners because it was obvious that they were now different from the way they had left school two years earlier due to change in age and experience.

A similar issue is presented in *Moses* as a novella, where Makumbi one of the students, happens to be married and his wife keeps coming to school to look for him and seek financial support. The boy or man is in dilemma since he does not have the money to give the wife for support. In the end, the student is advised to leave school and is helped to join the world of work.

I wish to point out two good practices in the way the school handled the Makumbi issue that can serve as lessons to contemporary school managers. The first is the confidential and respectful manner in which the case was handled by the deputy headmaster. This is narrated thus:

“I am Makumbi’s wife”, she began, “and I can prove it. You tell him to....”

The deputy head pulled himself together and interrupted the tirade.

“You two boys will have to stay here in the dormitory for the time being. I shall have supper sent to you, so don’t go to the dining hall, and don’t discuss this business with anybody. I shall see you both in my office when I have dealt with Makumbi”

(Ms: 59)

The above excerpt highlights the importance of confidentiality when handling matters pertaining student welfare. Not only does Mr. Karanja warn Kibaya and Mulutu not to discuss the Makumbi wife business

with anybody but he also arranges to have supper brought to them in the dormitory to minimise their interaction with other students at meal time.

The second lesson is the role Mr. Karanja played in offering Makumbi connection in the world of work. Note that Mr. Karanja after talking to Makumbi, and probably giving him the options to choose from, secures a job for Makumbi which gives him hope for a reasonably stable future. There are two exit points after secondary school: further studies and the world of work. Often times, schools get interested in knowing where a certain learner has gone for further studies, but little interest is shown in supporting those who have joined the world of work due to inevitable challenges.

4.1.3.0: Student Characterisation in *Moses in a Muddle*

Moses in a Muddle is the only novella in the Moses series that prominently features a female Character. The other book *Moses and the Pen-pal* features the female in disguise in a case of mistaken identity, where the narrator had been misguided by the surname Kibuka to believe that he was interacting with a fellow boy, yet she was a female. In *Moses in a Muddle* I explore the behavioural influences of a female student in a boys' school. I will discuss the behavioural attributes of Julie Sekabanja, both negative and positive, and explain how her presence influence the behaviour of the students at Mukibi's.

4.1.3.1: Anticipated Behaviour versus Actual Behaviour in Gender Perspective.

Moses in a Muddle, relates the story of Moses, King Kong and Julie Sekabanja and their experience with the spies that are operating in the school neighbourhood. The three set out to catch the spies hoping to get a reward from police in appreciation of their work. However, the assumed offenders end up being the offended.

The behaviour of the boys at Mukibi's may not have been described as desirable but the admission of a female student at the school is something some members of staff cannot readily come to terms with. Kimenye assigns the female character such masculine attributes that it is difficult to distinguish her behavioural attributes that she exhibits due to gender from those that she portrays irrespective of her gender. While Sekabanja is assertive, strong, daring, determined; influential, friendly and strict, she is highly aggressive; naughty; obstinate and disrespectful as explained in details below.

In this section, I show how the texts locate student behaviour within the existing stereotypes judging from the events as they unfold, and show instances where the behaviour exhibited by the student is contrary to expectations as influenced by gender stereotypes.

First, the title is either ironical or a deliberate understatement. While you would expect the story to be centering on the activities and experiences of Moses as a character, his role in the said Muddle is, in fact, that of the narrator. Even then, rather than the first person singular, the narrative is dominated by “we” referring to either Moses Kibaya (Holy Moses) and Sebastian Mlutu (King Kong) or the two together with Juli Sekabanja. If the muddle was the school students into the affairs of the “spies”, then it surely wasn’t Moses that muddled but Juli Sekabanja. That is the first indicator of gender stereotyping, understandably due to the fact that the series has all along been the Moses series, with Moses as the first title and all the subsequent titles beginning with “Moses and....” In this, the female student is given dominance over the male in terms of string behavioural attributes. Kimenye, in my view, deliberately constructs the character of Juli Sekabanja to speak to the biases based on gender stereotypes in schools. In the character of Juli, we see a female with male dominant attributes which Schippers (2007:85) refers to as gender hegemony.

Secondly, the idea of having one girl in a school of hundreds of boys strikes everyone as unusual. We are not told the background of where Juli has been studying from and what has happened but her admission is met with mixed reactions, even from within the staff. Mr. Karanja, who has always been the epitome of ideals and principles cannot hide his shock:

You can’t be serious sir! He was exclaiming in tones of utter disbelief. A girl student in a place like this would be scandalous (MiM: 1).

It can be deduced from this statement that it was feared that the “place” would pose a danger to the girl student, but as it later turns out, it was the girl student that actually posed a danger to the place. Kimenye deliberately twists the facts to challenge the readers’ expectation of the girl child as perceived by society. For instance, on her first day of school, where you would expect the girl child to be shy and nervous among boys, Juli stands out confident, leads conversations at dining table and even chooses who to dine with. She is a no-nonsense girl who ensures that she begins the way she wishes to continue. She makes her boundaries clear in her words and actions.

Although, Juli Sekabanja's arrival as a new student is announced in advance, the way they would announce an important visitor to the school, she does not show off but presents herself as simple on the

first day. She is not proud as to avoid interacting with some students or to be overtly selective in her interactions with them. The advance announcement of Juli's admission is probably done to curb the excitement of the students ahead of the girl's arrival, but the way she presents herself suggests that advance declaration might not have been necessary. She gets so free and relaxed among boys so promptly that nobody would have identified her as a new student. Mr. Karanja, in his wisdom had set the climate where he made the announcement that ended with this emphasis:

I know many of you have sisters, so there is no reason why you should find anything unusual in working beside a girl. (MiM: 4)

Juli Sekabanja presents herself as an aggressive fighter even before she comes to school. For instance, on the eve of her arrival, she bushes Kibaya and Muluu down a tree branch for talking ill of her even when she knew they were just gossiping out of their imagination or simply echoing what they had heard other boys say. What disturbs her as she is eavesdropping on them from the same tree she has climbed before them is to hear Muluu remark that there must be something wrong with her if her parents can only get her a place in a school like Mukibi's (MiM:6). Under such circumstances, you would expect a new person interested in making a good first impression of herself to have restrained herself from any violence at least until later. By attacking the boys, therefore, Juli only confirms their hypothesis that there must be something wrong with her.

Having attacked Muluu and Kibaya, they recognize her by the initials on her sweater which she forgets suspended up the tree as she flees having violently pushed them down the tree. Despite the anger of the two when she arrives, Juli has no trouble winning them over to her team. She convinces them to join her at the known place under tree for a secret meeting in the night. One can only imagine how fearless a girl can be to walk around in the night all by herself. We realise that in Juli, Kimenye constructs a fearless and extremely daring girl that will grow up into an amazing heroine. (MiM: 12)

Despite being a new student, Juli presents herself as knowing virtually everything about everyone. She knows their names including nicknames, their hobbies and even their fantasies. As such she does not feel out of place at all. She does not hide her true colours as a no-no sense girl. For instance, when a boy tries to make fun by shooting beans out of his mouth at the dining table, Juli empties her plate of food on the boy's head without fearing what the repercussions can be. She even adds that she cannot bear beastly table manners (MiM: 16).

Juli can lead, influence and manipulate the rest of the boys into helping her to achieve her objective. For instance, she blackmails Mlutu into joining her mission to catch the spy by threatening that she would write to Miriam Makeba and frustrate his engagement to her claiming that he is a failure and already married with ten hungry children (MiM: 24).

At the same time, Juli later demonstrates unthinkable masculine potential when she singlehandedly arrests the “spy”, who turns out to be Mr. Kangi. This she does with the help of a hunting net. She even goes an extra mile to punch him in the eye. This is an indicator of great courage, considering that the “spy” had already shown that he is armed. Such daring traits would be expected of males but Kimenye assigns them to Juli, a female character. (MiM: 30)

Juli is not frightened by the presence of the police and even when arrested to give a statement, shows neither fear nor remorse. She still insists that Mr. Kangi is certainly a spy:

“Well, you are a spy! She broke away from the constable holding her, and pointing an accusing finger at the man added, “And you tried to shoot us with a gun – me and King Kong and Holy Moses. (MiM: 53)

To demonstrate that there is nothing wrong with her, Julie’s parents defend her against all the accusations levied on her. By coincidence, her parents find the boys drinking alcohol when they come to school, apparently on the summon of the police to intervene in their daughter's case. Mrs. Sekabanja, Julie mother is particularly hysterical:

How dare you blame my daughter? She was a good quiet child before she came to your school! And after one day here, she ends up in the hands of the police. (MiM: 58)

While the above statement may be seen as a mere defence of a parent to her child, it highlights the fact that some students show a different behavioural face at home than they exhibit at school. The use of the word quiet is significant as it shows the expectation of the parents and community from a girl child. It also presents an irony considering that the parent admits that the girl has actually been in the school for only one day.

As such, having proved her abilities enough in only one day at Mukibi's Juli's parents take her to study in UK in a school she describes as a “very nice school for girls”. In this, Kimenye demonstrates that it does not require a long time and neither does it require big numbers for females to make an impact in a male- dominated space. This still challenges the reader’s expectations. While you would expect new

students to first hide their true colours for some time, Juli does not have to wait. She portrays her actual behaviour and initiates friendship with those she believes have matching interests.

Juli is depicted as a girl of surprises to all: fellow students, the community and even her parents. However, if her presence at Mukibi's is considered to have given a temporary feel of co-education and the influence of the presence of female students on the behaviour of the male students, we can discuss the impact that Julie's admission has on the behaviour of the boys at Mukibi's. The impact is not only on the boys as individuals but also collectively on the whole group.

First of all, the admission of Juli Sekabanja as the only girl student in a school of boys causes excitement and concern among students and the staff respectively. While the students are excited to the extent of generating rumour that twenty girls are to be admitted and five allocated to each boys' dormitory, the staff members are concerned about what life at Mukibi's will become when some girls come into the picture. Kigali, the gatekeeper does not hide his pessimism:

Mark my words, this will be the end of Mukibi's Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen. The headmaster has enough trouble with you boys. Now that he is admitting girls he'll soon find its more than he can handle. (MiM: 4)

From the above excerpt it is realised that Kigali is sceptical about co-education. This may be interpreted to mean that, as a male elder, his opinion represents the negative attitude of the male elders towards the education of girls. It can also mean that, as a gate keeper, he has had trouble containing boys in a single-sex school, and cannot imagine what will happen when the school is mixed and boys and girls have to be managed in school.

On a positive note, Juli does not engage in any sexual activity or any relationship with any of the boys during her stay at Mukibi's. While it might have been feared that a girl that moves away from her father's house at night is perhaps up to something related to sexual immorality, the text does not suggest anything related to that about Juli and her interactions with the boys. Note that the boys on their part are excited and anxiously waiting for her arrival as shown from the way they tidy up their bodies and the premises as well as look for the cleanest clothes to put on as though they were to attend a special party. The boys' behaviour suggests that they were making deliberate effort to create a good impression of themselves before the new and only female student in the school. Juli, however ignores them and their suggestive behaviour only to approach Mlutu and personally suggest a meeting with him. Juli's assertiveness of initiating a meet-and-talk with a boy beats the expectation of the society as far as boy-

girl relationship is concerned. In this act we see an illustration of the confidence that a feeling of innocence brings to an individual.

Also, Juli knows almost all the boys' names. Considering the fact that Mukibi's is a boarding school for boys where you would expect them to have little or no personal interactions with the community, one wonders how Juli happens to know all the names of the boys at Mukibi's. One would possibly interpret this as an indicator that the boys had frequent visits to the community, possibly with the school neither aware nor suspicious. What makes it hard to explain is that while Juli knows the names of all the boys at Mukibi's, none of them knows her until her arrival at Mukibi's. This suggests that she has been eavesdropping on the boys from within and around the school premises. This behaviour of Juli constitutes an irony considering that she is set out to catch a spy yet she is a spy herself. It also raises concern about the security of the school since it is clear that Juli does not pass through the school main gate to access the school premises.

On the negative side, Juli's admission to Mukibi's causes more harm than good as predicted by Kigali, the gatekeeper and Mr. Karanja the deputy headmaster. Within just hours of her presence at the school, Juli shows her no-nonsense attitude by emptying a plate of food onto the head of a boy who tries to impress her by shooting food from the mouth across the dining room. Much as Juli does this to prove to the others that she cannot tolerate beastly table manners, taking the law into her hands is not the most appropriate action considering that she is not even a prefect. Juli's violent behaviour in the dining is not justified and I wish to attribute it to the following possible causes. In the first place, her father is the head teacher's good friend and therefore Juli could have felt that there is nobody who can stop her from doing whatever she wants. Secondly, she is apparently seeking attention from the students. There are things that adolescents and young adults do to seek attention and recognition from their colleagues and comrades which include doing weird things like dress and other forms of showing off. Considering that Sekabanja is the only girl at Mukibi's, one might argue that she is doing aggressive acts to attract the attention of boys and prove superior to them. However, this might not be the case since her reactions vary from situation to situation and she is only aggressive in response to behaviour she regards disrespectful. Kimenye is careful in her narrative not to mention anything to do with the background of the schools that Juli has attended before joining Mukibi's and what responsibilities she has been holding; but from the confidence she exhibits, it is possible that she might have been in a position of leadership. Even if that was the case, it would not justify her aggressive behaviour. In fact, one wonders

which one is a worse table etiquette between throwing food from the mouth and pouring food on someone's head in the school dining hall. However, all these depictions are gender stereotypes and there are no specific gender-inclined regulations when it comes to conduct during school meals. In my view, a bully is a bully, irrespective of their gender.

Juli's Sekabanja's overall behaviour is generally questionable. For an adolescent girl to leave her fathers' house in the night and go by herself to roam around in the neighbourhood to discover what is taking place, she should be not easy to understand. However, this is the construction that Kimenye makes for us in the character of Juli Sekabanja. First, she leaves her father's house without company; then she moves to isolated places to spy on people she doesn't know much about. I interpret this portrayal of Sekabanja as too much boldness and courage assigned to an adolescent girl which, in my view, is unjustified.

Sekabanja's mission at Mukibi's constitutes a form of disobedience to parents considering that she has probably not sought permission from her parents to carry out the task. The narrative has it that the parents are in a Kampala when Sekabanja and schoolboys at Mukibi's set out on a mission to catch the spy.

Sekabanja is also depicted as negligent and careless. We are told in the narrative that she has been entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of her brother, as the parents go to a party in Kampala. We are not told whether she accepts the responsibility willingly or reluctantly, but the fact that she has accepted the responsibility of keeping the brother and later abandoned him alone in the house constitutes irresponsibility.

Still, Sekabanja endangers herself by championing a mission to spy on strangers at night. We are not given details of what she has been up to when she first encounters the suspected spies. In case she first saw the signalling light at night while she was at home, she would be ideally expected to ask the parents or any other available adult what that light was for instead of venturing alone into the night to find out what it was and the possible purpose. In the character of Juli Sekabanja, we see a fearless girl, but I wish to interpret the girl's action as self-endangering under the circumstances.

Juli Sekabanja is depicted as a girl who hangs out with boys at night. While this may be interpreted as open interaction of boys and girls through the assertiveness and openness of Sekabanja as a female student character, I wish to point out other possible interpretations of the message. First, Juli's

involvement with boys in the night could be interpreted as a form of ignorance of the harm that boys can be capable of causing to the girl child if clear boundaries are not drawn regarding their interactions. Secondly, it could portray her as a stubborn girl who does not want to heed to the advice and guidance of elders. This argument presupposes that at least one of Sekabanja's parents has taken time to talk to her about the dangers of careless interaction with the boys. In fact, Sekabanja makes advances to boys as suggested by the incident where she suggests a meeting with Mulu, which he was to confirm by dropping a pencil on her desk as he is on her way out of the class. However, one may interpret Juli's assertiveness and boldness as the removal of gender stereotypes. Juli, as a girl knows what she wants and will not allow her gender to become a barrier in her effort to achieve it.

4.1.3.2: Parent-Caused Student misbehaviour.

Parents play a primary and profound role in the behaviour and discipline of their children. The parents set role models in what they do and the mother is particularly the first teacher of a child (Wiese and Freund, 2011). On this premise, I wish to examine the influence of parenting on Sekabanja's behaviour, in and out of school.

On the positive side, Sekabanja's parents provide for her welfare. This is evidenced by the fact that she is given all school needs, driven by her father to school in the morning and picked in the evening. We are told that Sekabanja's father has even paid school fees for the whole year in advance before the child reports to school. When the parents are called to school, and later to the police station to handle disciplinary issues involving their daughter, Sekabanja, the parents oblige. While this provides a window into parental involvement of the school, other possible interpretations can be figured out regarding issues of parenting.

In the first place, Sekabanja's frequent visits to Mukibi's in the night are either unnoticed or ignored by the parents. We are not told whether it is before or after supper that she does leave home. If she leaves home before supper, that means she has shunned the role of helping in the preparation of supper. If she leaves after supper, then it suggests that she leaves a bit late, and possibly in the darkness. Either way, we notice the carelessness of the parents, especially the mother, since she is supposed to be with the girl guiding her on the basics of food preparation. This points out parental negligence as the cause of Sekabanja's absence from home at night.

Secondly, the parents leave the children by themselves at home as they go some distance to attend a party. Much as we are not told how many other times Sekabanja has been left alone at home, we realise

that the parents were jointly irresponsible to have left children by themselves and are seen as a potential cause of child misbehaviour.

Thirdly, the tendency of the parents to side with their children when blamed at school is depicted as a potential cause of children misbehaviour in school. In the character of Mrs. Sekabanja we see a mother who does not see any fault with her daughter. As noted above, it could be an issue of impression versus reality whereby Sekabanja puts on a mask of innocence while at home and displays opposite behaviour while at school. Alternatively, it could be the blind parental love that often corrupts the parents' judgement of their children's behaviour. Either way, Mrs. Sekabanja makes no behavioural gain from attempting to defend her daughter and push all the blame to the school and the rest of the students.

Also, we notice the parents' belief that it is the school that makes the child, but not the children who jointly make a school. We are not given any details about Sekabanja's previous schools or the circumstances under which she gets enrolled at the school known for dealing with students that have been expelled from other schools. However, Sekabanja's father has so much confidence in Mukibi's that he pays school fees for the whole year as a sign of commitment to have his daughter study at Mukibi's. In a way, this decision suggests that he has already made up his mind to have his daughter study at Mukibi's. We are further told that he is a good friend to Mr Mukibi, the director and headmaster of the school. The decision raises the issue of the relevance of friendship in service delivery. Still, the friendship and commitment can be interpreted as having caused the behaviour portrayed by Sekabanja at Mukibi's.

Another issue worthy of mention is the decision of Juli's parents to enroll her in a male dominated school. One wonders whether it was a well thought after plan or whether she had also failed to cope up with the behavioural expectations and standards in other schools. Whatever the circumstance prior to Juli's admission to Mukibi's was, her parents, in my view, have their share of blame in what happened to her at Mukibi's. One may argue that if she had been enrolled at a girls' school, chances of getting fellow students to involve in dangerous missions would have been minimised.

Finally, the attitude of the parents and teachers towards co-education is worthy of mention. We are not provided details into what parents discuss with their children about co-education, but from the evidence got from the dialogues of the staff and students, co-education is not popular in the historical setting of the text. The text does not tell us about the sort of school Sekabanja last attended before joining Mukibi's but her letter to Mulu and Kibaya describes the next school as "A Very Nice School for

Girls” which is in Europe. This may be interpreted to suggest that the school was distant, and therefore, Sekabanja would not get chance to interact with the boys whom Sekabanja’s parents accuse of being a negative influence to her. One can, however, interpret this to suggest that there is no nice school in Uganda and whoever wants a good school has to go abroad. Such an interpretation, while it cannot be contested, would be problematic as it would render the author racist, yet she considers herself Ugandan based on the settings and characters she would give in most of her works. If Mukibi’s is taken to represent all private secondary schools in Uganda at that time, then the readers of the Moses series in the United Kingdom, for instance, would probably never imagine their children studying in Uganda. The idea of having such a dilapidated school and assigning it the name “Mukibi’s Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen”, therefore, might not be easy to comprehend.

4.1.3.3: School-Caused Student Misbehaviour

The school set up and programs can be potential causes of student misbehaviour. There are a number of school based factors that influence student behaviour, and these include but are not limited to structures, programs, culture and personnel. In the context of my study, structures and personnel are noted to have jointly conspired to cause student misbehaviour in the two selected novellas of the Moses series.

As far as the structures are concerned, Mukibi’s as a school is depicted as having a porous fence which facilitates the entry and exit of the students as they go to and from the village bar to get alcohol and cigarettes at night. The buildings are said to be dilapidated, which generally affects the students’ attitude towards the school. In classes and even in the dining room, the furniture is fewer than the students, which causes the students to congest on the available desks, and sometimes sit on open windows. All these facilitate students’ misbehaviour as they scramble for these few structures and facilities, often pushing one another because they cannot fit.

As for the personnel Kigali, for instance, is a very old and unprofessional gatekeeper who makes friends with students and does not keep an administrative distance from them. He, on many occasions, is depicted in *Moses* as giving Mulutu and Kibaya some food expecting to be rewarded a bottle of alcohol which the boys usually sneak out to buy from the village bar. In a school where the gate keeper connives with the students to allow them to escape from school at night, behavioural challenges are expected. To make matters worse, Kigali is often so drunk that he leaves the school gate open while he goes to sleep

in his hut, an action that jeopardises the security of the school and which may facilitate misbehaviour of students since there is nobody managing the gate.

4.1.4.0: Lessons Drawn from *Moses in a Muddle*

Moses in a Muddle, Kimenye's novella written in 1970 is the only one in the series that features a female main character in the name of Juli Sekabanja. When the news of her admission to Mukibi's is declared, it is greeted with fear mixed with excitement. The excitement is short lived and the fear is soon confirmed as Juli's presence at Mukibi's becomes more regrettable each passing day. In the end, Juli receives the honour of being the first student ever to be expelled from Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentleman. In the sections that follow, I analyse the lessons drawn from *Moses in a Muddle* by contemporary schools and institutions.

4.1.4.1: The Place of Co-Education

Co-education, is the education of girls and boys in one institution which are commonly known as mixed schools. In *Moses in a Muddle* Kimenye depicts co-education as problematic from the views of the adults in the school community. Whereas Mr. Mukibi supports the idea of co-education and has already received school fees from Juli's father, Mr. Karanja does not support the idea and keeps asking Mr. Mukibi to reconsider the decision. Kigali, the gate keeper keeps remarking that a girl student amongst boys will be the end of Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen. Kigali here represents the views of traditional Ugandans who thought the education of girls was a wastage of money. The text does not give details of what happens in other schools outside Mukibi's but, when things fail at Mukibi's, Juli is taken to a school in England which, in a letter to Kibaya and Mulu, she only describes as "a very nice school for girls.". This description, in my view, suggests that Juli's parents probably attribute all the challenges she encountered at Mukibi's to the boys.

4.1.4.2: Gender Stereotyping, Sensitivity and Inclusion

There is notable gender stereotyping in Kimenye's *Moses in a Muddle*. Beeghly (2021) defines a gender stereotype as a feature, attribute or characteristic that attaches certain behaviour exclusively to men or women by virtue of their biological make up. Looking at all attributes that Kimenye assigns Sekabanja as a new female student at a boys' school and the only female student in the school, one will observe that her key purpose of writing *Moses in Trouble* was to demystify the existing stereotypes.

Moses in a Muddle is still as relevant to contemporary schools as it was to its first readers inasmuch as it contributes to the current debates on gender issues in schools: gender equality; gender equity and affirmative action. For instance, Sekabanja is able to fit among the boys and lead what she thinks is a mission to help police arrest spies. In Sekabanja, we see a young female student that satisfies the common adage that whatever a man can do, a woman can do better.

4.1.4.3: School-Parent Correspondence

Indicator 8 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum standards (MoES, 2009: 26) outlines the evidence and actions needed for the organisation and development of Institution – parent /Community interaction, involvement and participation, which requires among other things, that the school should be organising open days, sports days, concerts and such other social events where members of the community are invited to take part as spectators. This is meant to foster positive relationship between the school and the neighbouring community. However, the relationship between Mukibi's and the community is depicted as being at stake, thanks to the boys at Mukibi's led by their colleague, Sekabanja. At the same time, the relationship between Sekabanja's parents and the school gets so acrimonious that Mukibi is prompted to expel Sekabanja, even when it involves refunding a year's worth of school fees that had already been paid at once.

There are two lessons to learn from the words and actions of Sekabanja as well as the reactions of the authorities towards Sekabanja's "masculine" character as Kimathi calls it (Kimathi, 2009: 28). The first one is that the power to lead and influence is no longer monopolised by males or females by virtue of their biological make up, but by individual competences and ability. The second one is that we should not jump into conclusions when blaming or defending children in our capacity as teachers or parents.

It is important, according to what the text implies, that parents co-operate with the school in order to shape the future of the child through guidance and counselling, career guidance and positive discipline. As Darma et al (2023) assert, the realisation of a child friendly school requires the support of various parties, namely the family and the community which are indeed, the closest educational centres for children.

4.1.5.0: Comparison of Student Characterisation in *Moses* and in *Moses in a Muddle*.

In attempting to describe and compare the individual character attributes of students in *Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle*, I will not draw boundaries between behaviour and character, considering that an

individual's behaviour has a strong bearing on their character. I shall only show the change in the individual character attributes of the student characters that feature in both texts: Kibaya, Muluu and Rukia.

Moses Kibaya has changed attitude when you compare his view of the school and staff in *Moses* with the same in *Moses in a Muddle*. While Kibaya's descriptions of the school structures, staff and programs in *Moses* are characterised by negativity and bias, he describes the same in a more matter-of-fact form in *Moses in a Muddle*. Much as the interpretation of one text may not depend on the other, since these are texts of the same series with *Moses* preceding *Moses in a Muddle*, a reader who has read the texts in order may interpret the change of attitude to mean that Kibaya has grown mature enough to come to terms with the conditions at Mukibi's in order to achieve his purpose of attaining education.

The two texts, *Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle* look at Student behaviour in different perspectives. As earlier mentioned, while in *Moses* the central conflict is between Students and a school they think is not good enough to offer them the future they desire and deserve, the central conflict in *Moses in a Muddle*, in my view, is between what is convenient and what is recommended in a school setting. These two conflicts influence and provoke different student behaviour as discussed in respect of the student characters in each text. In this section I will compare the behaviour of the student characters in the two texts, categorised as individual and collective.

4.1.5.1: Individual Behaviour of Student Characters in *Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle*.

There are three key student characters that *Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle* have in common: Moses Kibaya, alias Holy Moses; Sebastian Muluu, alias King Kong; and Rukia, the Dorm 3 prefect. I will compare the depiction of their behavioural attributes as represented in the two respective texts for purposes of understanding the depictions of school life as exhibited by the student characters.

Moses Kibaya the narrator and main character in both texts has unique behavioural attributes compared to his friends as depicted in the two texts.

Kibaya's attitude towards the school in *Moses in a Muddle* has changed for the better. His attitude towards Mukibi's in the novella *Moses* has been so negative that he spends the entire novella attempting in vain to escape from the place. In fact, when the head teacher at one time falls sick and is taken away from school for treatment, the deputy head teacher asks the students if they have ideas that can ensure the smooth running of the school during the head teacher's absence. Kibaya narrates that he had only

one suggestion to give, and that was to burn the school down and send all students home. Kibaya now describes the school programs with interest and excitement. For instance, when he hears that the first ever female student is to be admitted to Mukibi's, Kibaya cannot hide his excitement and rushes to break the news to his colleagues. This is in contrast to his description of Mukibi's as a pathetic place with unbearable suffering that nobody can be able to cope with.

The admission of Sekabanja as the only female student at Mukibi's is received with excitement from students but the excitement is short lived as Sekabanja confirms the fears of the pessimists and frustrates the expectations of the hopefuls. Sekabanja is depicted as a short girl who behaves contrary to what would be expected of her: she smokes; goes alone in the night and even attacks men.

For Sebastian Mulu, he actually jointly features throughout the plot of the text, in such a way that when Kibaya the narrator says "we", Mulu is in most cases among the persons being referred to as "we". Mulu gets his share of Sekabanja's roughness when, together with Kibaya they get pushed down the mango tree by Sekabanja in the night. His attitude towards Sekabanja grows from negative to surprise and finally to indifference. Mulu gets blackmailed by Sekabanja who claims that she will tell Miriam Makeba that he is already married, which influences him to follow through with her plan of catching "spies."

Rukia, the dorm prefect of Dorm 3 has a high sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Initially Rukia shows interest in Sekabanja, but when he realises that Sekabanja probably is not as interested in him as he is in her, he gives up. In this, Rukia is depicted as humble in *Moses in a Muddle* compared to his proud character in *Moses* where he doesn't seem to give up on anyone or anything.

4.1.5.2: Comparison of Collective Behaviour of Student Characters in *Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle*.

While in *Moses* Kibaya uses the first person singular "I" to talk about his experiences, the same narrator and main character in *Moses in a Muddle* frequently uses "we" to talk about the joint experiences of the boys and the new girl faced with what they think are spies in the school community. The idea of spies can best be understood by putting the text into historical perspective. It should be noted that the word spy or espionage as an activity became very dangerous and criminalised in Uganda in the 1970's during the reign of President Idi Amin. To be a spy is to disguise as somebody else in order to gather some information and secretly send it to the "enemies" (Kiyimba, 1998). To President Amin, being a spy was one of the most serious crimes a person could commit in Uganda, and it would be punishable by death

(Decker,2010). It is therefore important to note the contextual relevance of the theme of espionage to the understanding of the text, considering that Kimenye wrote *Moses in a Muddle* in 1970.

The collective behaviour of student characters in *Moses* is characterised by low self-esteem and uncertainty for the most part. I wish to argue that individual behaviour influences collective behaviour significantly. For instance, there is also intrigue between students and their leader which breeds mischief. Rukia as a new prefect of Dorm 3 is seen by others as a tyrant dictator who does not want to respect the others. In response to this dictatorial attitude towards his subjects, Rukia receives hatred to the extent that when he accidentally falls from the tree as they are out bird watching, it is alleged that he has actually been pushed by one of the fellow students whose identity cannot be disclosed.

Similarly, because of Muluu behaviour of thumping his chest and threatening to beat whoever does not serve his interest, he loses opportunity to be elected Dorm Prefect for dorm 3. In fact, his nomination is rejected by Mr. Karanja the deputy headmaster, simply because he and Muluu have come late for his Maths lesson. One would have expected the students to plead for their colleagues to be allowed to take part in the voting, but probably they have conspired to let them miss considering that they are considering voting Rukia back into office. However, there is little cooperation among students and only on rare occasions have the students been depicted as coming together to jointly solve a problem but instead create a problem for one another. In this, school life is depicted as a struggle for survival and to avoid or minimise trouble, even if it means causing trouble for others.

In both novellas, the students' social trends have not changed much. Note that there is a new student received in both *Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle*. Moses Kibaya who is received as a new student in *Moses* is received with bias on the part of the administration. In fact, Kibaya is welcomed with a slap on the head from the headmaster as soon as his uncle leaves the school gate.

“That is to remind you of the fact that boys in my school are not allowed either to smoke or to drink alcohol,” he said. “Neither do they entertain women in the dormitories.” (Ms: 8)

The reception accorded to Kibaya in *Moses* is in sharp contrast with the one given to Sekabanja by the same headmaster and director. While the headmaster calls one of the boys to take Kibaya for lunch and later take him to class, he does not introduce him to his class mates and teachers. For the case of Sekabanja, the headmaster even chooses for her where to sit and asks the occupants of the favourite seat to vacate it and leave it for her.

Old Mukibi now ordered the three boys sitting at the good desk to quit it in favour of Juli Sekabanja. At least, he asked them in what he in no doubt imagined was a good-humoured bantering tone “if they would be so gallant as to vacate their seats for a charming young lady” (MiM: 10)

While the above extract and the one preceding it do not directly show the behaviour of student characters, I wish to argue that they present a potential cause of misbehaviour. In the case of Kibaya, the unpleasant welcome could have triggered the thought of escaping from Mukibi’s which he attempts to carry out throughout the text of *Moses*. Likewise, the pampering welcome that Sekabanja receives from the headmaster in full presence of the classmates could have led to the high esteem, assertiveness and dominance that she exhibits right from the start.

At the same time there is a student leaving Mukibi’s in each of the texts. Makumbi who leaves Mukibi’s in *Moses* has probably been advised by the deputy headmaster of the same school to leave school and take care of his family, considering that he is married and his wife has been invading the school to look for him. We may interpret this excommunication of Makumbi’s as a form of indirectly expelling him from school in order to prevent him from becoming a bad influence to others. On the other hand, Juli Sekabanja who leaves Mukibi’s in *Moses in a Muddle* has actually been publicly expelled and her one year worth school fees refunded to her parents. So, much as Mukibi’s as an institute is meant to prioritise retention of students in school, even those that have been expelled from other schools, what we see here is that leaving school is, at times inevitable. In this, school life is depicted as having an entry and providing an exit under inevitable circumstances.

4.1.6: Conclusion.

In line with the first objective of this study which was set out to explore the characterisation of students in the *Moses* series in respect of the two selected texts (*Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle*), I wish to conclude that the students exhibit various negative and positive character attributes. The attributes can be described as individual or collective. The negative behavioural attributes of student characters depicted in *Moses* are mainly felt within the school community whereas those in *Moses in a Muddle* extend to be felt by the community outside the school and affect the relationship between the students and the community neighbouring the school.

The diction and ideas assigned to Kibaya as a narrator in both novellas, in my view are too advanced for a fifteen-year old boy in junior secondary school, standard five. I wish to point out that the ideas that

Moses as a character advances through his narratives and dialogue with others are Kimenye's and the character only acts as the mouthpiece

Despite the behavioural challenges, the students are credited for never attempting to revolt or disobey school authority. The details of the depictions regarding the relationship between the students and the school administration will be explored in the next chapter.

4.2: Relationship between Students and School Administration

4.2.0: Introduction

Literature is a mirror of society (Akhter, 2019). Authors write to share their experiences, aspirations, fears and insights with a view of improving human welfare (Duhan, 2015). In this section, I explore and expose the nature of the relationship that exists between students and the school administration in the selected novellas of the Moses series, how this relationship impacts on school life, and discuss the lessons that can be drawn from the literary texts explored as well as their relevance to the running of contemporary secondary schools. My views on the running of secondary schools are informed by the provisions of the Ministry of Education's Minimum Standards as stipulated in a policy document entitled, "Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards Indicators for Education institutions" (MoES, 2009). The document outlines thirteen indicators and lists the documents or items that a school should possess and show as evidence of meeting the minimum standards. These indicators include a well streamlined management structure; availability of well managed structures and facilities; well organized and qualified staff; well organized and managed teaching/ learning process; effective organisation and development of co-curricular activities; effective learner organisation and development; an effective finance generation and management system; Organisation and development of institution/ parent and community; organisation and development of health, sanitation and environment; and discipline management and development. The novellas I analyse for the purpose of establishing the relationship between students and school administration are *Moses and Mildred* and *Moses in Trouble*. The former novella was selected so as to introduce the relationship between school holiday life and school life and the role that the school administration ought to play as students are reporting back from school holidays. The latter novella is set around the school and its neighbourhood and has been selected to capture the role of the school administration in ensuring student welfare. The analysis and discourse in this chapter is still guided by Reader Response literary criticism, particularly the tenet of intertextuality which asserts that there is a triangular transaction between the reader, the text and the content. I use this

principle to establish the relationship between students and school administrations based on what is written, its interpretation and what it suggests in relation to previous or subsequent events in the plot.

The concept of school administration is not without problems. It is not easy to establish, for instance, whether school prefects are part of the school administration or not. Similarly, it may not be obvious for student to know whether or not the non-teaching staff such as the night watchmen, the school matrons, the gate keepers and other such persons are counted under school administrators or not. Students might be tempted to disregard them as not being part of the school administration, yet they are part.

The concept of relationship is also broad in perspective. In the context of my study, relationship is the nature of interactions between students and the school administration through words, action and attitude as well the way they respond to one another.

4.2.1.0: Relationship Between Students and School Administration in *Moses and Mildred*

Moses and Mildred relates the story of Moses Kibaya and how he discovers a snake near her uncle's home toward the end of the school holiday and decides to tame it, bring it to school and keep it as a pet snake. One by one, the students get to know about the snake but somehow keep the information away from the school administration except for the dorm prefects. In the end, the snake gets the students in trouble when it is spotted on the grass thatched roof of the dormitory and the roof collapses as they are trying to kill it not knowing it is not dangerous at all.

Below are the depictions of the relationship between the students and school administration, the attitude of the students towards school authority as judged from their speech and action; and the way they respond to one another in both formal and informal situations.

4.2.1.1: *Moses and Mildred* as an Allegory

Kimenye uses the voice of a student, Kibaya to expose the administrative weaknesses at Mukibi's and how students take advantage of the weakness to carry out their mischief. For instance, one of the students returns with a snake and others return with loads of drinks some of which are alcoholic. It is not known where they pass with those items but if they pass through the main gate as it is supposed to be, then it suggests that the checking is not thorough.

If *Moses and Mildred* were to be read as an allegory, then the interpretation of the snake can be taken on differently by different readers who identify and empathize with the different characters and events in the texts.

To the students, the chief snake is probably the headmaster and proprietor of the institute, Mr Mukibi. He is depicted as a person whose interest is mainly to get money from parents of troublesome children and pledge to “make a man” of them. The school that comes under the names of Mukibi’s Educational Institute for the sons of African Gentlemen is in such a sorry state that one wonders what category of African gentlemen the school is intended for. The snake is also symbolic of students and student leaders who lack solidarity and report their colleagues to the school administration behind their backs.

The snake could also be interpreted to mean education in general. Note that the narrator in the opening paragraph confesses that on seeing the snake, the first instinct is to kill her, but on a second thought, curiosity leads him to wait and see how it will all end, especially when the snake has shown no signs of hurrying to glide away. In the same way, the initial instincts of Africans regarding western education and religion, and colonialism that came with it gave rise to resistance, but it was later realised that western education was eventually not as dangerous as it was initially feared to be (Johnstone and Lee, 2022).

Kimenye uses a witty blend of irony, estrangement and familiarization, foregrounding, humour, suspense and dialogue to narrate school life experiences as an extension of or transition from holiday to school days. The snake appears out of nowhere, causes considerable excitement and trouble to a section of students and finally disappears to an unknown place. The narrative juxtaposes the student interests with the administrative and academic demands of the school and narrates them alongside the snake, Mildred.

4.2.1.2: Reception of Students at School from the Holidays.

The role of the school administration in helping student settle and transit mentally from the school holiday to the school routine cannot be underestimated. The time lag of the narrative *Moses and Mildred* is just the one week of school opening and all the excitement suggests that academic work at the school is not yet seriously engaging or demanding. However, an administrative hitch in the way the students are reoriented back into school is noted.

In the first place, there doesn’t seem to be a mechanism in place to check any unauthorised items being brought back to school from the holidays. What is also realised is that some parents do bring their children by themselves, which tosses the blame back to the parents because they should also have scrutinised what their sons pack as they get ready for school to ensure that no unauthorised or dangerous items are carried to school. Kimenye narrates:

The boys in Dorm 2 were throwing a party. One of them, called Ojera, had a father who kept a bar in Kampala. He had returned to school with several bottles of some dark red stuff called “Good Luck Cocktail” and everybody was sampling it. It tasted a bit like sweetened vinegar but it was better than nothing. (MM: 11)

The excerpt above, while it traces the origin of the beer from home and does not show whether it was actually packed for the said student by his father from his bar, stresses the need for the students’ luggage to be checked as they are being received from home.

Another issue of concern is the way new students are oriented in the school. It would be ideally expected that the new students are oriented into the school culture by the school administration by introducing them to the rest of the students or delegating the prefects to do the orientation on behalf of the higher school authority. What we see in *Moses and Mildred* in the character of Thomas Magara, one of the new students, is a situation where the new student uses his physical power to bully the other. He is not even allocated a bed and only usurps the one he deems suitable for him. Magara takes over the bed originally allocated to Kibaya, the narrator, even when there is one left by Makumbi the married student who, it is known, left Mukibi’s last term to join the world of work. Using estrangement and defamiliarisation, Kimenye exposes the weakness of the school prefects represented by Rukia in using the new student to their advantage. Estrangement is the presentation of a phenomenon in such a strange way that the audience cannot fail to take note. It can be achieved by use of strange situations, colours, and at times sounds. Defamiliarisation, on the other hand, is the presentation of a familiar aspect in a strange way. It is strange how Makumbi, who was perceived as young ends up being a married man who is disguising his status. It is also unnatural how Magara, the bully happens to disappear from school and the deputy headteacher mounts a search for him without contacting the gatekeeper to find out whether the student has passed via the gate or not.

It is noted also that Rukia who has been in hospital following an accidental fall from a tree (which he insists was actually caused by a push from some unidentified student) is temporary out of office and it is currently held by Mulutu pending fresh elections.

Two questions arise from this phenomenon. The first one is why Rukia cannot automatically regain his role as the dorm prefect now that he is back and ready to serve. The second one is, if the office of dorm prefect has been officially filled by Mulutu, why can’t he be allowed to act? What transpires at the end of the day answers both questions: all the other dormitories are also voting their dormitory leaders which confirms that it is probably the school administrative policy for students to hold prefect elections at the

beginning of every term. Employing the theory of intertextuality in reader response borrowed from Bakhtin (2019), I am reminded that the school prefect system was actually initiated by Mr. Karanja, the deputy headmaster upon gaining interim control of the school following the hospitalisation of the headmaster Mr. Mukibi at the end of the previous term as narrated in Kimenye's first novella, *Moses*. This implies that the school prefect system has not been in operation under Mukibi. There is no reason given in the text to justify Mukibi's mode of administration and it is not known whether the initiative was a delegated responsibility from the headmaster himself or not. Whichever was the case, one only wonders how a school can be administered without student leadership.

We realise throughout the text and generally from the attitude of the students towards Mr. Karanja, the deputy headmaster that Mr. Mukibi's as the owner of the school plays the role of overall administrator and decision maker in the school but the day-to-day running of the school lies in the hands of the deputy headmaster, Mr. Karanja. Mr. Mukibi handles the finances of the school personally considering that there is no office of the bursar mentioned. In this, Mukibi's is depicted as a school that is not organised when it comes to reception of students back from school holidays, and this makes school life lose focus as students take longer to settle than they should.

4.2.1.3: The Role of Non-Teaching Staff in Student Order and Welfare.

The non-teaching staff list at Mukibi's consists mainly of the gate keeper, the kitchen staff and probably the cleaners, but it is only the gate keeper that features much in the narrative. The school employs no school nurse but instead there is a female teacher in charge of the sanatorium. The text doesn't indicate whether she is trained as a nurse, but it suggests that she is not trained as a teacher either, since according to what is known, Mr. Karanja, the deputy headmaster is the only qualified member of the teaching staff.

Kigali the school gatekeeper is depicted as an old man who is friendly to the two students that feature predominantly in *Moses and Mildred*. Kimenye portrays him as a weak old man who is easily compromised by students. In fact, he is so friendly to the students that they even know his secrets. For instance, the narrator, who is a student knows that Kigali is courting some rich widow somewhere in the village. The text does not indicate how the narrator got the information, but it is possible that the gatekeeper himself could have told the students since he often sends them on errands in the village, especially to buy him alcohol in exchange for food that he often serves them.

4.2.1.4: The Relationship between Students and the Teaching Staff

The teaching staff at Mukibi's as depicted by Kimenye is dedicated to work, evidenced by their attending to students following a time table. There is no evidence in the text that students have not been attended to by a particular subject teacher. However, if the attitude of the narrator and protagonist is taken to represent that of all the students there is a problem with the way the teachers handle their content or how the students perceive the content delivery of almost all the teachers apart from Mr. Karanja, the deputy headmaster. For instance, the students describe Mr. Lutu's lessons as boring and Miss Nagendo's expression as scornful.

Mr. Lutu was not conducting his usual boring lesson. Instead, Miss Nagendo sat at the teacher's table, and when we entered the classroom, she tried her best to look scornful, her nose twitching slightly as though she expected to smell the reek of alcohol. Clearly she considered us a pair of thoroughly evil characters.

(MM: 29-30)

Three concerns about teacher-student relationship can be pointed out from this excerpt. First of all, the student respect their teachers by mentioning them by their official names and formal titles, unlike in some schools where teachers are referred to by nick names, whether the teachers are liked by students or not. Secondly, the teacher "tries her best" to look scornful, suggesting that she endeavours to show the students and the class that she does not like those particular two students.

Finally, the students do not learn much from the teacher's attitude, judging from the way the narrator describes it. This raises the issue of self-awareness and its role in character building and behaviour change. Mr Lutu, for instance, is depicted as being so unprofessional that he accepts drinks from students at a bar outside school, even when the students have gone out without permission, moreover at night. The narrative goes:

With each fresh drink, Mr. Lutu grew livelier. He gave us a tune on Magara's mouth organ, and he sang a traditional hunting song. Finally, he tried to do a trick which he told us he had once seen done by a magician. It resulted in three glasses getting broken, and got us all turned out of the bar. (MM: 22)

This spectacular part of the narrative demonstrates Kimenye's power of humour and vivid imagination, but exposes the unprofessional conduct of the teacher. One wonders what impression the teacher's conduct makes to the community and whether the community can be able to respect such a teacher. The

narrative goes on to indicate that the drunk teacher later falls in a ditch and gets injured as he is being supported back to school by the same students he has been drinking with.

Much as the students at Mukibi's are credited for respecting their teachers, there are incidents when students play tricks to teachers as in the case of the deception of Miss Nagendo by Kibaya and Muluu intended to divert her so that the students can be able to get Mildred out of her house before she gets scared to death by the reptile (MM: 49).

Another relationship concern worthy of mention is the "silent treatment" syndrome whereby students conspire and agree to deliberately refuse to talk to the person they consider to have behaved in an undesirable or unfriendly way to them. This practice is generally employed by students to show individuals that they have done something against the good of the group. It is a form of disciplinary measure at start, but it turns political when it shifts from Muluu to Rukia shortly after the latter has regained the title of dorm prefect.

The prefects, if the conduct and attitude of Rukia represents all of them appropriately, are depicted as practising double standards and slander in the way they exercise their authority. A case in point is where Rukia designs a weekly dorm cleaning rota that begins with Muluu and Kibaya and compels them to clean up the mess of a dormitory party they have not been invited to attend. At the same time, Rukia is physically present when Magara is bullying fellow students into doing his prep for him and beating up those who object. Kimenye narrates:

"You will do as you are told," Magara threatened. He grabbed one of my wrists and twisted it until I had to bite my lip to prevent a cry of pain from escaping.

"Yes, Holy Moses, I think you would be wise to do as you are told," Rukia laughed.
"Come on, Magara, Let's get back to the classroom and put the rest of the mob in their places.

(MM: 54)

The above excerpt points out the attitude of Rukia towards fellow students. We are not told much what goes on between prefects of other dormitories and their subjects, but Rukia's conduct here suggests that power and authority can be misused. Magara uses power in form of physical strength while Rukia misuses authority by using Magara as a sort of co-prefect, which neither the students who elected him nor the higher school administrators to whom he reports would approve of.

There is unfair treatment of students by some prefects. However, individual students do not respond uniformly to this unfair treatment. For instance, when Rukia makes Mulu and Kibaya to clean up the dormitory in which a party has been held excluding the two, Mulu is hell-bent not to accept such kind of torture, but Kibaya advises his friend that they do it since it is their responsibility by virtue of being the ones on the cleaning rota for that week. Mulu declared that he won't clear the mess of a party he has not attended, even if it means getting expelled for refusing to (MM: 39). Kibaya convinces him to comply, reminding him that the two of them would never be favoured by the deputy headmaster considering that they have already received last warning from him.

The relationship between students and school authority is also depicted as exploitative. For instance, Miss Nagendo exploits Kibaya and Mulu by subjecting them to lifting heavy crates of assorted stuff into her house. Mr. Lutu is also seen to enjoy the drinks of a group of students he finds at the bar within the school neighbourhood, who he promises to buy for them a few other drinks for, but later changes his mind and doesn't fulfil his pledge.

4.2.1.5: Relationship between Students and Top School Administrators

The relationship between students and top administrators of Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen is characterised by orders on the part of the headmaster as well as a mixture of fear, respect and resentment on the part of the students. All the students fear the headmaster, Mr. Mukibi. For instance, Mukibi's return to school after some long absence due to illness is seen as judgement day. The students resent the headmaster and some of the unprofessional teachers like Mr. Lutu. It is only Mr. Karanja, the deputy headmaster that the school students accord respect.

Another important issue to note is that Mr. Mukibi gets little opportunity to interact with the student. As such, he is unpopular in a school he owns. For instance, as Mukibi is recovering from the illness that was a result of thrashing students, he meets another accident whereby a student mistakenly hits him mistaking him for a snake emerging from the thatches that had collapsed.

At the same time, the top administrators of the school are depicted as trusted by the students. This trust is mostly vested in the deputy headmaster who is depicted as the best administrator that has the students interest at heart. The students' attitude towards the deputy headmaster compared to towards the headmaster can confirm it. For instance, when Magara is bitten by Mildred, the pet snake, he believes he was bitten by a green mamba and therefore, runs desperately calling out to Mr. Karanja for help. He does not call out Mr. Mukibi or any other school administrator. (MM: 60)

When it comes to Mr. Mukibi, he is portrayed as unpopular among the students who describe him with all sorts of negative attributes not only in appearance but also in character. For instance, the narrator describes him as ugly:

Looking down, I saw the surprised faces of Mr. Karanja and the headmaster, Mr. Mukibi staring up at me. Mr. Mukibi was no beauty when seen at ground level, but seen from a height he was even uglier than I remembered.

(MM: 61)

It is clear here that Mr. Karanja is the more favoured of the two. This is further elaborated during the accidental collapse of the dormitory roof, where the protagonist is glad that Mr. Karanja is unharmed.

I was glad to notice that Mr. Karanja had escaped unscratched, although I began to wonder what he would have to say to me later on. However, at the moment he was busy shepherding the other boys to safety.

(MM: 65)

The top administrators, of which Mr. Karanja is part, are depicted as showing concern for the safety of the students. For instance, when Magara escapes from school and runs home following a bite from Mildred, the pet snake, we are told that it is Mr. Karanja himself who leads the search for him. (page 68)

The uncontrolled cheer of the school boys after being told that Mukibi isn't returning to school points to the fact that there is a negative relationship between the headmaster and the school boys. We are for instance told the students cannot help but break out into loud cheers. The narrative goes:

We couldn't help it. We broke out into loud cheering. And to our utmost astonishment, we realized, that the staff, too were winking and smiling among themselves. Mr. Karanja, shaking his head slightly, and desperately trying not to grin, hurried out of the dining hall and the other members of the teaching staff rapidly followed him.

(MM:71)

This excerpt demonstrates that Mukibi, as a proprietor of a school, is not popular among the students and seems not to attract much sympathy from the teaching staff as well.

4.2.2.0: Lessons Drawn from *Moses and Mildred*

Moses and Mildred (1968), the second novella in the Moses series was written in the same year as *Moses*. It features a schoolboy named Moses Kibaya and his adventure with a pet snake he names Mildred, which he returns with to school from home without the knowledge of his guardian or

permission from school authorities. The presence of the snake, once a secret, is later made known and gradually gets known to the students but not to the administration. In the end, provoked by the bullying tendencies of one of the boys, the snake turns violent and causes substantial trouble among students before mysteriously disappearing. In the pages that follow, I discuss the lessons that can be learnt from the presence of a snake in school.

4.2.2.1: School Security Systems

Indicator 12 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum standards (MoES, 2009: 32) provides for the organisation and management of the school safety and security which states among other things that the school should have functional school safety and security committees that will ensure the safety of every member of the school community. It again advises that the school should have measures to control access to its premises as well as mechanisms to manage indisciplined and criminal minded teachers and learners. Much as the Minimum Standards had not come into force by the time the novella was written, the views in the narrative remain as relevant to contemporary schools as they were at the time of writing, since they highlight the dangers of omission of the minimum standards.

At the same time, indicator 13 provides for the management and organisation of boarding facilities which, among other things stipulates that there should be appropriate human resource personnel like a matron of appropriate age and health conditions; guards to provide 24-hour surveillance and with basic knowledge. Considering that all these requirements are lacking at Mukibi's, I wish to attribute the security challenges expressed to lack of appropriate facilities and personnel in the school. As such, the narratives become relevant to the running of contemporary secondary schools as they provide a window into the situation of an inefficient school which can be used as a reference of the undesirable conditions and practices of learners, teachers and the school administration.

4.2.2.2: Student Leadership

Indicator 6 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (MoES, 2009: 22) which provides for the organisation and development of learners lays out the yardsticks against which the success or effectiveness of an institution can be judged or assessed. In addition to ensuring retention in school and completion of the cycle by every learner, the institution is charged with the responsibility of providing guidelines for election of prefects and class monitors as well as putting in place a prefects' body with all

the required prefects. The minimum standards require each school to have at least nine prefects on the prefects' body, all of whom should be democratically elected. The nine recognisable posts on the prefects' body are outlined: Head boy or Head girl; a deputy head boy or deputy Head girl; prefects in charge of academic affairs; discipline; co-curricular activities; health, sanitation and environment; safety and security; religious affairs; entertainment and time management.

Assessing the student leadership at Mukibi's, one realises that the system is inconsistent with the provisions of the minimum standards. In fact, the only prefects that are at Mukibi's are the dorm prefects, whom the basic requirements do not provide for, probably due to the fact that schools are basically supposed to operate as day schools. The Basic Requirements and Minimum standards (MoES, 2009:22) advises that an institution can add to or subtract from the list according to the need.

Despite the short comings identified about the prefectural body, a number of lessons can still be drawn from the practices at Mukibi's. I will mention only three. In the first place, we recall that the prefect system was an initiative by Mr. Karanja as a means of easing school administration during Mr. Mukibi's absence (Ms: 26). In this we note that every good thing has a starting point. Secondly, it is noted that the prefects body is not balanced since most of the posts do not have prefects to occupy them. There are only dorm prefects, who are four in number, which makes it inappropriate considering that every committee should have an odd number of members to cater for decisions that require voting. Lastly, there is no head boy or Head girl, and, therefore, there is no leader responsible for unifying the others, yet we all know that what belongs to everybody belongs almost to nobody.

The above omissions in the depiction of African schools provide a window into the administrative shortfalls against which the standards can be judged. My interpretation is that the absence of those elements of student leadership are responsible for whatever does not go well about student welfare and discipline at Mukibi's. They are therefore as relevant to contemporary schools as they were to the schools and readers at the time the text was first written.

4.2.2.3: School Infrastructure

According to the narrator, the structures at Mukibi's are all in sorry state apart from the headmaster's house which is described as the most beautiful on the hill. Using the first person narrator, Kimenye satirizes the state of affairs in the running of private schools in post –independent Uganda, where the

owners of the private schools use the school fees collected to enrich themselves at the expense of the students and their poor parents.

Indicator 2 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum standards (MoES, 2009:11) concerns itself with the provision and maintenance of structures and facilities. Among the basic structures are the school signpost; Institutional buildings, health and sanitation facilities. Mukibi's has most of such facilities and structures in place; only that they are not in good condition. We are told that most of the structures are grass thatched and the thatches need repair. It comes as no surprise when towards the end, the roof to one of the dormitories caves in as Kibaya is on top of it trying to get his pet snake out of danger of being killed by angry and scared boys.

4.2.2.4: Professionalism

Indicator 3 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum standards (MoES, 2009:14) provide for staff organisation and management. It stipulates among other things that every institution should have the staff establishment as per the ministry of Education. However, it does not give the details of the professional qualifications and ethics. I suppose, it pre-supposes that whoever is to be given a job in a government institution must have qualified in order to meet the requirements for recruitment. That works for government institutions, but even then, there are two limitations. The first limitation is that there is some subtle difference between academic qualifications and professional ethics of individual teachers. The second one is that things keep changing and people should change with them. The dilemma in private schools is that the directors can hire and fire staff as they wish, so the qualification of a member of staff may majorly be the ability to do what the head teacher or school director wants.

What plays out at Mukibi's is that there is only one qualified member of staff, who happens to be the deputy headmaster. No wonder all the good attributes are reflected in him. The deputy headmaster being the only qualified member of staff implies that even the headmaster himself is not qualified.

The concerns raised in the texts about the professionalism of staff in schools in newly independent Uganda are still relevant to the contemporary schools, especially private schools where you find that it is only the headmaster that is qualified on the whole staff. The lesson that can be learnt by school proprietors is that it is important to have trained and qualified staff in order to ensure good performance. Unqualified personnel cannot offer the best services since they cannot give what they do not have.

4.2.2.5: Child Labour

A child in Uganda is any person below the age of eighteen. Among the forms of violence against children is the use of children to do work that is supposed to be done by adults. This is what constitutes child labour according to UNICEF (2021). Kimenye portrays incidents of child labour in the Moses series but in *Moses and Mildred*, the one that stands out prominently is the one where a female teacher took students to lift heavy luggage into her house:

Well what she had in them I shall never know, but they weighed about half a ton each. King Kong and I nearly broke our backs trying to heave them even a couple of inches. We struggled with them for about ten minutes.

(MM: 42)

In this excerpt, which constitutes a hyperbole, Kimenye narrates the dilemma of child labour: the two children are being asked to carry a load that is five times their weight added together. Even when they fail and suggests that they open the cases and carry the contents one at a time, Miss Nagendo refuses the suggestion insisting that they keep trying. The narrative goes on:

She refused to this suggestion. “Oh I’m sure you can do it if you try. Perhaps if you tilt the crates a bit, you will be able to manage better.”

(MM: 42)

The above statement shows the teacher is more interested in the security of the crates more than the health of the students that have volunteered to help her. I argue that she probably wishes to spare her own energy of repacking the contents in case they get unpacked by the students. By using the first person narrative point of view, the text helps the reader to feel what the students feel about the teacher and her attitude.

The lesson that can be drawn from this exposition is that students are not happy when adults in their lives decide for them by refusing to listen to their suggestions.

4.2.2.6: Administration and Delegation

In the plot of *Moses and Mildred*, we are presented with situations that keep Mr. Mukibi, the headmaster, off the scene in order to allow Mr. Karanja, the deputy head to exercise full administrative power and authority in order to show his leadership potential and capacity. As I already mentioned, Karanja is a model of the ideal teacher in terms of professionalism and leadership. Mr. Mukibi, for instance, has been hospitalized as the term begins. He returns to school only to get an accident almost

immediately he sets foot at the school. The accident is the result of his own failure as he is hit with a stick by one of his students mistaking him for a snake emerging from the thatches from the dormitory roof that has just carved in on the headmaster and some students.

I wish to point out two lessons that schools can learn from this experience. Firstly, Mr. Karanja as the delegated school administrator has done his best to manage the school routine effectively. This is a big lesson to the administrators who do not give their deputies an opportunity to do anything to prove their skills and abilities. Such leaders and managers need to know that at times situations might inevitably compel one to entrust the leadership of the institution to their deputies and should therefore offer those deputies opportunity to practice leadership in order to gain proficiency. Secondly, the delegation has limitations since the deputy has not been able to repair a leaking dormitory even when he is aware of its condition and how it is affecting student welfare. My interpretation here is that Mr. Mukibi has probably delegated duties without delegating the funds to cater for emergencies.

4.2.3: Relationship Between Students and School Administration in *Moses in Trouble*

Moses in trouble relates the series of predicaments that befall the protagonist as he tries to negotiate his welfare and survival at Mukibi Educational institute for the sons of African gentlemen. The boys have been sending dead cockroaches they find in school food to the ministry of education which has prompted the headmaster to castigate the cooks and tell them he won't be increasing their salary. The cooks have gone on strike and it is now the students to take turns to prepare meals for themselves and the rest of the school. Below are the depictions of the relationship between school boys and school administration as narrated by the protagonist.

Mukibi is depicted as an administrator who usually makes rare appearances before the students. He usually leaves most of the administrative work to his deputy, Mr. Karanja. You would expect that when such a central person in an institution does not appear to the students very often, his appearance would be greeted with excitement and cheers but this is not what we see. His rare appearance is actually greeted with silence, which I argue suggests fear and pessimism on the part of the students as he does not usually deliver pleasant news whenever he makes such an appearance. Besides, as a boss and proprietor of the institution, he usually leaves the routine update to students in the hands of his active and trustable deputy, Mr. Karanja. The narrative captures the details as follows:

Then one morning, our headmaster, Mr. Mukibi made one of his rare appearances in the school dining hall. There was no need for Mr. Karanja, the deputy head to rap sharply on a

table for silence since we all sopped eating and talking the moment the old vulture darkened the doorway. We stared like frightened rabbits at the tall, gaunt figure with hooded eyes, wrinkled, sagging cheeks and tight, cruel mouth to whose care our loving families had so willingly entrusted us. (MT: 1-2)

The above excerpt constitutes not a mere description of the headmaster but also reveals the students' attitude to him as represented by the protagonist. Kimenye uses irony and sarcasm to bring out the students' attitude towards Mr. Mukibi.

Mukibi is also depicted as a crafty clever leader whom takes advantage of learners' mistakes to extract free labour from them. For instance, he subjects all the students to kitchen duty as a punishment, yet in actual sense he has refused to pay the cooks and they have had no choice but to go on strike and since this is a boarding school, there is no way he can keep the students without providing meals to them. The clever and manipulative way Mukibi can think of to manage the crisis is to subject them to kitchen duty as "punishment":

"Well, if no boy is man enough to come forward and admit to this disgusting trick, all of you must be punished." He licked his dry lips. "Yes, all of you. As from tomorrow, each dormitory in order of dormitory numbers will do one week's kitchen duty. Kitchen duty will include the preparation and serving of every meal, from breakfast to supper, as well as the washing up and cleaning of kitchen utensils.

(MT: 2)

Another depiction worthy of mention that reflects or influences the relationship between the students and school administration is gossiping. The gossip between the students and some of the members of the school administration is another characteristic of relationship that I wish to describe as informal and unprofessional. For instance, there is extensive gossip between the gatekeeper, Kigali and the two school boy friends, Kibaya and Mulutu.

"Here," he said, "you'll be needing a decent meal inside you, now that the school cooks have gone on strike!" (MT: 3)

The above statement is from the gatekeeper to students. What is suggested in the statement is that the students are not aware of the crisis in the school until they visit the gate. It also implies that the strike was not violent or at least was handled not to escalate into violence. It could also suggest that the location of the kitchen, and probably the dining hall is some distance from the classrooms where the students spend most of their time. However, the gossip about the staff whether teaching or non-teaching would be expected between staff and staff or between student and student, but not from staff to student

and vice-versa since it undermines the respect accorded to the staff member that is the subject of the gossip.

Moreover, Mukibi is depicted as a selfish opportunist who takes advantage of the students' mistake to exploit them into offering free labour to the school. This is what the protagonist narrates:

I interrupted him with, "Oh Kigali, you've worked for Mukibi long enough to know he won't care what happens if he is getting cheap labour. We have played straight into his hands by getting up to a piece of silliness which gives him a real excuse for making us do all the kitchen work, and, incidentally, save money on staff wages."

(MT: 5)

It is noted from the above excerpt that the students are cynical about Mr. Mukibi. One can as well argue that they understand him as a mean administrator who takes advantage of the students' mistakes. In this, the relationship between Mr. Mukibi and the students is depicted as exploitative. We note that the students are aware, but they have nothing to do about it.

Mukibi is also depicted as an improvident school administrator. For instance, he provides ingredients which are barely enough for the students on kitchen duty to use to prepare meals, and expects students to make do with what has been provided. Similarly, even when the students on kitchen duty run short of supplies, Mukibi castigates them for being wasteful, insisting that he bought enough supplies for a month and cannot be expected to order for more. The teacher in charge of stores, Miss Nagendo has no say in determining how and when the stores are to be refilled. The narrative goes:

The headmaster did nothing to help the matters when, after making a spot check on the amount of food being thrown away, he gave Gekonyo a good telling off for being wasteful. Gekonyo then threatened the rest of us with all sorts of tortures if we did not eat everything on our plates at every meal.

(MT: 10)

From the above excerpt, it is seen that students had lost confidence in the ability of Mr. Mukibi to provide for their welfare. To them it is about survival for the fittest. Note that the prefects extend torture and threats to the rest of the students whenever they get threatened by the headmaster as the highest authority in the school.

There is notable disrespect for some of the teachers from how they are described and responded to. For instance, where students fight for food in the dining hall in total disregard or oblivion of the presence of the teacher on duty, Mr. Bakole as narrated below:

Everybody had forgotten the teacher on dining hall duty, and it was something of a surprise when Mr. Bakole bravely appeared in our midst, stopped the fight and sent us to wait outside Mr. Karanja's office.

(MT: 15)

Here a situation where students can afford to forget that there is an administrator overseeing an activity is displayed; which, I argue is an indicator of disrespect. The fact that students take it upon themselves to solve their disagreements through violence could point to the fact that they have lost confidence in the fairness and justice systems the school authorities employ. We note also that the teacher does not demand an explanation why the students are fighting but instead sends them to wait outside Mr. Karanja's office, which probably suggests that Mr. Karanja is the only administrator beside the headmaster that has authority to directly punish the students.

Mr. Karanja uses both violent and non-violent means in handling student discipline. For instance, he uses verbal admonition and guidance but finally employs the cane as well. Kimenyi narrates:

He sent the cooks back to the kitchen and as soon as they had filed out, smirking maddeningly at us, the deputy head reached for the familiar cane. Everything was over in a few minutes but the stinging pain of the strokes he gave us lingered on for the rest of the afternoon.

(MT: 16)

This excerpt captures the traumatising effect of corporal punishment on students (Heekes *et al*, 2022). Note that the cane is described as familiar, which reminds us that it is a routine practice at this school for students to be caned as a punishment. The narrator's declaration that everything was over in a few minutes, yet the pain lingers on suggests that the students do not reflect on the warnings and advice of the authorities, and therefore cannot remember them the way they remember, or rather feel the pain inflicted by the strokes of the cane.

The administrative involvement at the handover of weekly kitchen duty from one dormitory group to the next is depicted as ineffective. For instance, the outgoing kitchen duty students hand over directly to the incoming without the presence of any adult in authority. Likewise, the kitchen store inspection is

conducted by the incoming kitchen duty group led by the teacher in charge, but in the absence of the outgoing duty group, yet it should have been done in the presence of the outgoing group representative (page 18). In this, school life is depicted as chaotic and slanderous when the administrators are not keen to ensure order and minimise student mischief.

As for the relationship between students and school administration at dormitory level, it is depicted as smooth and strong. The students work efficiently under the leadership of their dormitory prefects. For the case of Rukia of Dorm 3, he even leads the way when they are out to steal pawpaw from the headmaster's *shamba* (MT: 19).

Regarding students' attitude towards the headmaster, their words are inconsistent with their actions. For instance, while the students claim to fear Mr. Mukibi as demonstrated by their silent tension whenever he shows up in the dining hall, they still dare to steal pawpaw from his garden and then serve it to the whole school. Even Mr. Karanja does not question where the students got the pawpaw from. There is no mention of fearing to be questioned when they have served fruit to the school, yet they had been afraid while taking the fruit from the garden. I am at this point reminded of Johnson Denise's view of children literature that it stimulates imagination and creativity, inviting young readers to explore new worlds and ideas (Johnson, 2023). It is not clear whether Mr. Mukibi is aware of the stolen fruit but somehow chooses to ignore; whether the students do not care what the headmaster makes of their stealing as long as they are serving the whole school and not just themselves as individuals or whether it is the students' deliberate action to show the headmaster that there is hardly any food left in the food store. Whatever is at the back of the students' minds, the text does not explicitly point out; and as Iser Wolfgang asserts, (Wolfgang, 1976: 90), reading is the process of gap filling by the reader beginning with anticipation and ending with satisfaction. It is left upon us as readers to figure out, which adds interesting suspense to the plot of the narrative.

Again the rather unprofessional personality of individual teachers is commented on by Kimenye in the narrative of *Moses in Trouble*. For instance, Miss Nagendo fails to hide her attitude or manage her temper when she directly insults Kibaya for accidentally throwing a pawpaw to her. (MT: 28). Students wait for her to get out and then begin to laugh instead of feeling sorry.

The student's attitude toward the deputy head as a model administrator is depicted as deteriorating as time goes on. The protagonist, for instance begins to describe Mr. Karanja's advice as sermons as in the excerpt below:

There followed the usual sermon, or rather list of threats which were as well known to me as the National Anthem, complete with the inevitable “final warning”. I was relieved though that there was no mention of corporal punishment

(MT: 31).

Here is a situation where the verbal warnings are taken as mere preliminaries to corporal punishment. Mr. Karanja has been so much associated with corporal punishment that it becomes a relieving surprise to end any interaction with students in his office without using a cane on them. This is the extent to which the use of corporal punishments can spoil the relationship between students and administrators.

However, corporal punishment is not the only mode of punishment employed by the school as drawn from *Moses in Trouble*. There are other alternatives the most common of which is digging in the *shamba*. For instance, when Kibaya accidentally hits Miss Nagendo in the face with a piece of pawpaw, he is subjected to hard labour to dig in the shamba for lunch vegetables as punishment. (MT: 32)

Karanja’s policy of not criticizing other members of staff before students makes him a role model in professionalism and school leadership (MT: 33). However, he at times offers no solution but leaves it in the hands of students. Here we see a school in crisis.

“Hmmm!’ he said at last. “Yes, I can see your difficulty. I had no idea that stocks were so low. Of course the store is really Miss Nagendo’s responsibility.” Then, because he remembered his personal policy never to criticize other members of staff in front of us students, he hastily added, “I suggest you do what you can with what is here, and meanwhile I shall see Miss Nagendo and find out what arrangements are made for getting fresh supplies.”

(MT: 33)

The above extract constitutes a shift in narrative style from first person narrator to omniscient narrator. Much as we realise the need to maintain a good image of Mr. Karanja as an epitome of professionalism, the shift raises concern of how the narrator, who is a student can possibly know the personal policies of individual members of staff. I wish to argue that the author realised that she had erroneously attributed to Mr. Karanja some unprofessional trait of gossiping to students about staff and was quick to rectify it.

Miss Nagendo’s error of judgement is also worthy of mention. She is depicted as making decisions based on what one would describe as illogical conclusions. For instance, when she finds the boys with running noses cutting onions, she bundles them up and takes them to the school sanatorium as having

severe flu. One would only wonder what she would expect from boys cutting onions without soaking them in water first. (MT: 36)

Gender bias is also discernible in the narrative especially from the way the relationship between the students and the school administration is depicted. The deliberate twist of the boys' attitude to introduce the idea of gender when Mulutu, the protagonist's friend is describing their confinement to the sanatorium by Miss Nagendo is unmistakable:

“Yes” King Kong put in, “and if we hadn't gone to the deputy head about you, you would've been in the San for a week. Like all women, Nagendo will die rather than admit to a mistake. She swore that you all had temperatures!”

(MT:39)

From the above excerpts we note the students bias on a member of staff based on their gender. This is probably the only time in the entire novella where a teacher is addressed by surname without a title. She is described as Nagendo unlike elsewhere where she has been addressed as Miss Nagendo.

There are also inconsistencies and double standards when it comes to the treatment of students. While the students who felt unwell in the first week were given a special diet of milk, those who fell sick in week 3 were instead taken to the sanatorium and given no attention apart from isolating them on suspicion of them having flu. Note, however that they are not given any special attention while they are in the Sanatorium. In fact, they are not even given food and they miss it because their colleagues have not even been notified, and therefore, have no idea of their whereabouts. They are regarded as having abandoned duty since they have not sought permission to leave their assignment. (MT: 36)

Added to the list of accusations to Miss Nagendo regarding her error in judgement is the inconsistency in the treatment of students. For instance, we are told that the students from Dorm One who feel unwell in the very first week of kitchen duty are taken to the Sanatorium and put on a special diet of milk while those from Dorm 3 who are suspected to be having flu are confined to the San but not given much treatment.

There are also verbal insults to Rukia by the boys who have been detained in the San due to hunger and neglect. The narrator confesses:

For about five minutes we stood there calling Rukia and King Kong every horrible name we could think of until King Kong said, “Oh, be quiet. How were we to know you were

locked up in the San? Come on, let's go to tea and we'll make sure you have a good meal at supper time. (MT: 40)

This kind of exchange would have passed as ordinary inter-peer complaint if the subject was not a person in authority. However, Rukia is the dorm prefect of dorm 3, the dormitory on kitchen duty of the week. The reader would expect a leader in such a capacity to be seeking out for solutions that ensure student welfare in a balanced and inclusive way, but Rukia decides to be part of the group and not make much initiative regarding student welfare.

Nicknaming Mukibi as an old fox is highly notable. Nicknaming is not new among students; but it is not a habit of students at Mukibi's to nickname people in authority. We notice that the description of Mr. Mukibi by the narrator is mostly negative. One would take it as an indicator of bias on the part of the narrator, but I wish to argue that it is not bias, considering that all the students unanimously regard Mr. Mukibi not only physically ugly but also morally questionable. However structurally, one observes that the description constitutes more of a metaphor than a mere nick name. Mr Mukibi is described as an old fox is his den probably to refer to his exploitative behaviour of students to save finances. Like a fox, his hunger for financial gains is so insatiable that he charges the parents highly but does not want to spend on buying food or paying staff.

Mukibi is also depicted as not only a poor administrator but also poor at problem solving. The excerpt below from *Moses in Trouble* attests to that:

"Don't lie, boy," he hissed at last, and I was sure he was going to strike us when King Kong blurted out, "But it's true, sir. There isn't enough food in the store to feed the school for another day"

"And what do you expect me to do about it, eh? The headmaster's mouth was jerking in a way which indicated that he was fast losing his temper. "I told you that each dormitory on kitchen duty was to take full responsibility for everything. I bought a month's supply of food, and I don't intend to buy any more."

(MT: 43)

It can be noted here that the headmaster is deliberately abdicating his duty of ensuring the welfare of the students by threatening them instead of advising them on what to do. A good administrator would, for instance, have the teacher on kitchen duty measure out food rations and give them to the student cooks at the beginning or close of each day, so that the rate of consumption is continually and consistently

monitored and assessed. Secondly, declaring that he does not intend to buy more food would suggest that he is deliberately starving the students. This is interpreted as simply refusing to solve the problem.

Some of the teachers are depicted as having bad memories. For instance, Mr. Bakole does not remember whether he has left his door open or has remembered to lock it; so he has to send a student there to check. At about the same time, Miss Nagendo remembers that she has mislaid her pulse at the village *duka* and is seeking for someone to escort her back so that she can be able to check. I interpret this as mental instability on the part of the teachers, probably due to the goings on at Mukibi's. I wish to argue that this may affect the relationship between the students and those teachers, especially the way they respond and react to the teachers considering that they now question not only their memory but sense of judgement.

The case of Miss Nagendo and the mislaid pulse constitutes some sort of controversy. A female teacher clinging on a male student for company late in the evening might raise some eyebrows. We recall that Miss Nagendo has shown open apathy for Kibaya as a person due to the recent disagreements. It is, therefore, not likely that Kibaya could have been the most preferable boy for company, especially with no third person present. The protagonist narrates:

I looked at her in horror and drew back.

“What? Now? Tonight?”

She was too quick for me, though. Clutching my arm, she cried, “Come, it won't take long _ and it's not safe for women to walk alone along that road after sunset.”

(MT: 47)

The above excerpt points out three controversial issues regarding the relationship between the students and the school administration. First, the relationship is situational and, as long as it is convenient and beneficial to the teacher, there is no point a teacher holding grudges with a learner. Secondly, it demonstrates the social dilemma surrounding women in a male dominated space. For instance, Miss Nagendo considers it safer to be escorted by a boy of fifteen years of age than to walk alone after sunset. Finally, it illustrates, in a subtle way, the trust that this female teacher has towards the male student despite the unsteady interactions the two have recently had. Ultimately, it can be seen as a point of reconciliation between student and teacher, a conspiracy of events to cause the teacher and pupil to focus on the positives and ignore their difference in character and personality. Like Kahveci (2023) points out, the negative attitude of a teacher towards students hinders their academic progress.

Overall, there is evident irresponsibility regarding students' welfare and security. For instance, the entire dormitory gets out of school on three occasions, each without being noticed by the gate keeper or any other person in authority.

The deception of the school administrators regarding the quality of school life at their particular schools also features in the depictions narrated in *Moses in Trouble*. For instance, Mr. Mukibi resorts to deception about how he feeds his students well:

He was in the adjoining room, but every word he said could be clearly heard.

“But Doctor,” he was whining. “I assure you my boys have all the possible attention. My school is run on the most modern lines. I take a personal interest in every boy placed...

(MT: 71)

The above excerpt indicates the extent to which administrators can go to make a false impression. It also makes it clear that they know the ideal situation; but the actual situation they present in schools is contrary to what is claimed or expected. For the case of Mukibi's, the deception is extended practically and temporarily at school when the police inspector visits the school some time later. Mukibi does all it takes to create a good impression about the school and student welfare. However, after being sure that a good impression has been successfully created, he makes it clear to the student that things are to return “back to normal”. The reader can't help but wonder what feature of Mukibi's he regards as normal.

4.2.4.0: Lessons Drawn from *Moses in Trouble*

Written around 1970, Barbara Kimenye's *Moses in Trouble* narrates the school boys' experience of cooking for themselves due to a strike by cooks following the headmaster's failure to listen to them and honour their request of salary increment. The students take weekly duty turns in order of their dormitories to cook their own food; but in the end, conditions conspire to see some students land in one trouble after the other. In the pages that follow, I explain the lessons to be drawn from the students' experiences under the key factors of either student mischief; student exploitation; effective leadership and crisis management; violence and dispute management; school inspection; and school health management systems.

4.2.4.1: Student Mischief

The very beginning of the trouble in *Moses in Trouble*, according to the narrator was when the students got together and “tried to make life a bit more interesting at Mukibi's Educational Institute for the Sons

of African Gentlemen”. Kimenye captures the attention of the reader by pointing out the students’ mischief that they started as a joke. We realise that it was not just for fun, since they involved authorities, basically the minister of education. That is why I wish to argue that it is just mischief, and not fun. Note that the narrator indicates that they collected all the insects they found in the food and sent them with the headmasters “compliments”. This constitutes an irony, since a compliment is supposed to be something good.

The lesson to learn from this is that the mischief that students plan usually comes round to affect them. All the trouble that the students go through is because of the mistake they either jokingly or mischievously started. In a way, the author uses irony to comment on the destructive mischief that students engage in as fun. The message passed on to the first audience in school is as relevant to contemporary schools as it was at the time, considering that such mischievous acts are still practised by students in school.

There are incidents in school when the mischief of the child ends up punishing the parent. For instance, when the students engage in violent strikes and destroy school property, it is the parents that pay. In fact, the bill is at times distributed to all the parents, in case the destruction is too big for the few identified culprits to afford to pay. Despite what the students go through at Mukibi’s the students do not engage in any strike or direct rebellion to school administration. I interpret this as administration of justice to the innocent parent by sparing them the consequences of their children’s misbehaviour.

4.2.4.2: Student Exploitation

Mukibi as a school manager is depicted as exploitative towards the students. As I already mentioned, Mukibi takes advantage of the students’ mistake to make them offer free labour to him, thereby saving the money he would have paid the cooks for a month.

There is still a lesson to draw from Mukibi’s exploitative tendencies that constitute an irony. For instance, Mukibi initially refuses to offer a pay rise to the cooks, but after they have gone on strike and things have gone from bad to worse, he calls them back and pays them. Similarly, he gives the students little food to save on the food costs, but when the malnourished children prompt the police doctor and inspector to come and monitor the feeding program at the school, Mukibi spends a week serving special meals to the students to impress the inspectors. What I interpret here is that there is no point in trying to save on basic costs meant for students’ welfare, since what is saved in one way will ultimately be spent in another way.

4.2.4.3: Effective Leadership and Crisis Management

In schools, there might often arise unpredicted occurrences that might escalate into crises if not well handled. A case in point is the one narrated in *Moses in Trouble*, following the strike by the cooks. We note that the cooks' strike would have been prevented if Mukibi had listened to their complaints. Similarly, what the students went through and the expenses incurred in medication and police would have been avoided if Mukibi had opted to replace the striking cooks with new ones willing to work for the salary he was offering instead of using students as cooks. In a way, Kimenye emphasises the fact that prevention is always better than cure. The message conveyed by the texts to schools remains as relevant to Ugandan school managers in contemporary schools as it was to the school managers of the 1960's and 1970's. School managers still do much to impress school inspectors and monitors just like it was done at Mukibi's.

4.2.4.4: School Inspection

In *Moses in Trouble* Kimenye uses satire to comment on the faults in the school inspection systems. Note that Mukibi's has been operating under pathetic conditions for a period that the text does not specify but the inspectors in authority are not aware until fate brings malnourished children to the police station. When they question the school proprietor, he resorts to deception, marred with glaring inconsistencies which they somehow ignore. Secondly even when the inspectors go to school to verify the claims, they fall for the practical show and impression of good services without paying attention to the structures and facilities. To make it worse, the police doctor who is on mission to find out the health care given to students in the school sanatorium ends up being diverted by the female teacher in charge. The protagonist cannot hide his disappointment:

I spent nine days in the San, and the only person who profited by my stay was Miss Nagendo. She was looking after me, and when she realised that the police doctor was treating me as his patient, she bought herself a professional-looking apron for the job. The doctor was not as clever as I had thought at first. After attending to me he spent hours laughing and joking with that silly woman, and on the day I left the San, they announced their engagement to be married.

From the above excerpt, we note the lack of seriousness of both the inspection and the nature of the school health management systems. Note that Miss Nagendo buys herself a professional-looking apron "for the job" to look after the patient in the Sanatorium. One wonders what the relationship is, between an apron and the job of taking care of sick students. Indicator 9 of the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (MoES, 2009: 28) provides for what is required of each school as evidence of effective health

care management systems. Interestingly, the facility of a sanatorium is not mandatory for every school, since teachers are not trained to manage sicknesses. Here we have a situation where a school has a room that serves as a kind of isolation centre for sick students, where students are even compelled to go against their will.

The lessons drawn from this narrated experience are significant to the school inspectors and top policy designers. To the inspectors, it suggests that school inspection visits should not always be announced in advance, since school managers tend to put on a temporary show to impress the inspectors and influence them to report things contrary to the actual situation and practice. To the top policy designers, monitors and implementers, implication of the message is that school visits should not only be regular but also frequent by inspectors of different categories. This is because after inspection, things often go “back to normal”.

4.2.5.0: Comparison of Relationship Between Students and School Administration in *Moses and Mildred* and *Moses in Trouble*.

In this section I present a comparison of the relationship between students and the school administration in the two novellas, *Moses and Mildred* and *Moses in Trouble*. My comparison and contrast is based on four factors or elements of school administration: the top administrators, the teachers; the non-teaching staff and the prefects. In the next paragraphs, I compare and contrast the relationship between students and the school administration as depicted from the two novellas.

4.2.5.1: Students and Top School Administrators

The two top administrators are perceived differently by the students. When the headmaster is upset by something, he is seen as losing temper. When the deputy headmaster, Mr. Karanja gets upset, the students perceive it as being strict with discipline. Both leaders are actually strict as far as discipline is concerned but the deputy headmaster is calm and tactful unlike the headmaster who has professional and temper issues. Mr. Karanja is presented with attributes of a professional and morally upright person in sharp contrast with his boss, the headmaster, who is presented with attributes of a selfish manipulative school owner.

In the attitude of the students toward the two top school administration, the difference between respect and fear are demonstrated: Mr. Mukibi, the headmaster, is feared by the students while Mr. Karanja, the deputy head, is respected by the students. Even when Mr. Karanja extensively and passionately uses the

cane on the students, there is no bad talk to or about him by the students, whether he is present or absent in school.

In *Moses and Mildred*, the plot presents the headmaster as out of school for the most part, which allows the deputy headmaster to take full charge of the school and show his competence in running the school. As such, the deputy headmaster is presented as the epitome of professional and moral conduct. The headmaster, on the other hand is presented briefly in *Moses and Mildred* in a humorous way of insinuating that the school can ably be run by the deputy and that the students are actually happier in Mr. Mukibi's absence than they are when he is present at school.

In *Moses in Trouble*, Mr. Karanja stays in the background. All the initiatives are taken by the headmaster himself, and Mr. Karanja only comes in to intervene in a crisis or to show that there is an administrative dilemma. Mr. Mukibi, on the other hand, assumes full control in his capacity as the headmaster and he is presented as more of a problem than a solution on every occasion. Where he is presented as nice, there is a quickly exposure of his motives for the temporary pseudo-goodness.

On the whole, the relationship between the students and top school administration is characterised by mixed attitude. The students generally exhibit a positive attitude towards the deputy headmaster in *Moses and Mildred*; and then show the full extent of their negative attitude and resentment towards the headmaster, Mr Mukibi due to his administrative faults in *Moses in Trouble*.

4.2.5.2: Students and the Teachers

The relationship between the students and teachers in both novellas focuses on a few individuals and this has the effect of infusing humour in the text or providing suspense to the story. In *Moses and Mildred*, the relationship, as represented by Mr. Lutu focuses more on the informal interaction than on the formal one. This relationship is so collegial and informal that a teachers and the students can buy one another drinks at the village bar without feeling uncomfortable.

In *Moses in Trouble*, the focus is on Miss Nagendo, whose role in the plot is to show Mr. Mukibi's dictatorial tendencies. Miss Nagendo also provides the reader a window into the social needs and dilemma of an only female teacher in a school for boys.

In both novellas the students are depicted as cooperative to the teaching staff, in and outside class. As such, the plot in each novella views the relationship of the teachers and students within the broader perspective of the community in terms of attitude and impression. For instance, in *Moses and Mildred*,

the wide community comprises the different towns and villages where students had gone for holiday and from which they return with different items from their homes. The teachers expect the students to volunteer to keep the food items away from the dormitories to discourage rats from invading the dormitory. In *Moses in Trouble*, the wider community includes the neighbouring dairy farmer from whom the boys attempt to steal milk at night and the nearby town including the police station where the students are taken for picking materials that have been dropped by a speeding vehicle.

On the whole, students are depicted as obedient to teachers; and teachers are depicted as supportive to students in both novellas. Only on rare occasion are teachers reported as not attending to the learners' needs. The school routine, guided by the bell, is followed as an indicator of seriousness in the school.

It is worthy to note that the teachers play an informant's role when it comes to students' discipline. The texts do not give sufficient information why the discipline of learners at Mukibi's is handled this way. I conclude that it is intended to minimize wastage of time by the teachers. Still, I wish to point out that the management of discipline is concentrated both at the top, and at the bottom. The top administrators play a key role in discipline of learners at class and school level just like dorm prefects play a vital role in managing discipline at dormitory level. I wish to argue at this point that the overall leadership of students, say the head prefect is considered vital in the hierarchy of leadership at Mukibi's Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen.

4.2.5.3: Students and the Non-teaching staff

The relationship between the students and the non-teaching staff is depicted as more of informal and personal than official. The only member of the non-teaching staff that features extensively in the novellas is Kigali, the gatekeeper. There are also the cooks that are mentioned generally, and there is a mention of a cleaner in *Moses in Trouble*.

In *Moses and Mildred*, Kigali plays a key role in the plot by keeping the pet snake, while in *Moses in Trouble* the role played by Kigali is to gossip to the students and provide a window through which we get to know the views of the school community about the school and the way it is managed.

The strike of the cooks in *Moses in Trouble* is significant as it introduces the possibility of solving problem through striking when demands are not met. In this we appreciate the fact that the students never think of striking against the school administration, even when it is clear that they have become innocent victims of the situation. Although one might argue that the act of sending dead insects to the

ministry of Education itself constituted a strike, I wish to argue that this is mere whistle blowing demonstration that someone needs to come to their rescue regarding their feeding. Otherwise, a violent strike by students in a situation where they are subjected to kitchen duty would have been possible, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Therefore, the relationship between the students and cooks is so shallow that the students don't even know about the strike until it has happened. Similarly, the cooks have so little influence on the students that the latter do not emulate the former's idea of seeking solutions in strikes.

4.2.5.4: Students and Prefects

In *Moses in Trouble*, the relationship between students and student leaders as represented by Rukia of Dorm 3 is solid and impactful on the students' well being. In *Moses and Mildred*, the relationship is toxic, characterised by malice, intrigue and double standards. This is probably due to the fact that the narrator's friend, Mulu (King Kong) has been an interim dorm prefect of dorm 3 and he loses the position to Rukia, the original bearer in what Mulu regards a planned strategy of character assassination.

In *Moses in Trouble*, the relationship between the students and their leaders is so solid that they speak the same voice and are guided by competence and merit when assigning tasks. Looking at the Rukia of *Moses in Trouble* in comparison with the Rukia of *Moses and Mildred* would give an impression that they are different individuals, yet it is one and the same person. This resonates with the common saying that in politics, there is no permanent friend, and neither is there a permanent enemy. Rukia and Mulu, regarded rivals in *Moses* and *Moses and Mildred* exhibit inseparable friendship in *Moses in Trouble* probably due to the fact that they have a common problem to solve as a group, which is the task of planning and preparing meals for the rest of the boys in other dormitories.

4.2.6: Conclusion

In line with the second objective of the study which was set to establish the relationship between the students and the school administration, I hereby conclude that the relationship varies with the situation. Four elements of school administration are considered: top administrators; teachers; non-teaching staff and Student Leaders. It was generally established that the relationship based more on the person than the office or title. While the headmaster is feared, the deputy headmaster is respected. The deputy headmaster makes extensive use of the cane but one may not be quick to conclude that it is this use of corporal punishment that earns him respect. The headmaster uses the cane as well, but the students do

not respect him. They instead fear him, and their resentment of him is unmistakable. There are lessons to learn from the administrative and social interactions at Mukibi's and their implications on contemporary schools have already been discussed in this and the previous chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0: Introduction

In this section I draw attention to the major findings in line with the problem statement, specific objectives of this study and research questions. The discussion is still guided by the reader response theory with particular focus on the role of the reader in reconstructing meaning as well as the possible meaning the reader can generate from the text based on personal experiences drawn from culture and history. In the pages that follow I share the findings, insights, observations and intriguing questions that arose as I interacted with the primary and secondary texts during this study.

5.1: Summary of Findings

The general findings of this study are presented in terms of the problem statement, the general objective and the two specific objectives. School life is depicted as stressful on the part of not only the students but also the teachers. Kimenye's narrative tends to focus more on the physical and human environment than the learning environment.

The behaviour of students, individual and collective, is depicted as bad characterised by stealing, bullying, lies, escaping from school, alcoholism, smoking and violence. Interestingly, despite their bad behaviour, the students are depicted as being obedient to authorities, considering that they never disobey any order but are always compliant, no matter how unfair it seems to them.

The relationship between the students and school administration is in such a way that it is driven by attitude and interest. The students address teachers by title and surname, which signifies respect. Some teachers are depicted as unprofessional and not able to follow the example set by Mr. Karanja who is the only qualified member of staff and a role model of good practice in school management. Mr. Mukibi, the headmaster is known as selfish and exploitative. The students fear him more than they respect him.

Judged against the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards, the fictitious school and students are depicted as falling short of standards in terms of structures and personnel as well as facilities. The school structures are not fit for occupancy and there is no assurance of proper health and security of the learners. Co-curricular activities are not given due attention and the student leadership falls short of the requirements. Most of the practices depicted in the school are inconsistent with the provisions of the Basic Requirements and minimum standards. The school, in a way, serves as an image of the practices that should be avoided when running a school.

However, in an intriguing way, the school depicted manages to retain the students and minimize expulsion and school dropout. The three cases of school departures that are depicted, two males and one female are special cases in some way and the problems are more of personal than institutional. One male student happens to be married, and is advised to leave school to take care of his family following the complaints of his wife regarding her need for financial support; the other male student is withdrawn from school by his parents who consider him unable to study safely with the students in that school environment; and the female student is also withdrawn by her parents, a decision which the school backs by refunding all the school fees she has already paid.

5.2: Conclusion

My conclusion is premised on the understanding that Kimenye, a female author, narrating experiences of male students using a first person narrative was obviously not communicating personal experiences. Her works in these texts are therefore purely fiction considering that she herself is not a teacher and even never studied from Uganda, which suggests that she has no personal experiences with Ugandan schools. Her works are a result of, and an indicator vivid imagination (Hopkins, 2024). I therefore wish to conclude as follows.

Although the behaviour of student characters in selected texts of the Moses series is depicted as generally bad, there is no student that is too bad to keep in school if they are given the appropriate support in an engaging and accommodative learning environment.

The relationship between the students and school administration is in such a way that the students respect and like the deputy headmaster more than the headmaster because of the way he respects and listens to them. The relationship between the students and student leaders is situational while between the students and the teachers and nonteaching staff, the relationship is personal.

There are a number of lessons to learn from the running of schools as depicted in the Moses Series. While Mukibi's receives students mostly expelled by other schools, there is nothing special that is done to the students to keep them in school apart from engaging them. The negative depictions of the school could only serve as a point of reference to other schools regarding what to avoid in terms of the bad practices in schools.

5.3: Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, I wish to recommend the following actions.

First, Barbara Kimenye's *Moses Series* should be included on the schools Literature set books to encourage as many students as possible to read the books so that they can be able to judge the impact of their own behaviour on their learning as well as appreciate the physical, human and learning environments that their schools are able to provide.

Secondly, the *Moses Series* should be acted out into plays to give them a visual impact and enable students and members of the society who may not have interest in reading to also benefit from Barbara Kimenye's message to students and schools.

Finally, school administrators should be encouraged to read a few texts of the *Moses series* with an aim of gaining insights into the dynamics of students' behaviour and their interaction among themselves and members of staff and the school administration.

A number of issues kept cropping up in my study, yet they were not part of my purpose of this study. I therefore, recommend the following areas for further research.

First, there should be a study on the relevance of school prefects in school administration as represented in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses Series*.

I also recommend a study, specifically on the depiction of leisure management in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses Series*. This study should focus on the impact of leisure activity on learner retention and academic performance in schools.

Another potential area of study I recommend is the use of suffering as a form of humour in Young Adult Literature with close reference to Barbara Kimenye's *Moses series*.

Lastly, there should be a study interrogating the depictions of punishment and discipline in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses Series*.

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APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A: Tool 1: Literature Review Gap Identification Template

Objective	Scholar	Study	Year	Possible gap to fill.

Page.....of.....

Researcher's Signature.....

APPENDIX B: TOOL 2: Character Behavioural Attributes Analytical Tool.

Title	Character	Attribute	Positive/ negative		Support evidence and text page.
			Pos	Neg	

Pageof.....

Researcher's Signature.....

APPENDIX C: TOOL 3: School Inspection Minimum Standard and Basic Requirement Checklist

Aspect/ Indicator	Depicted/Not Depicted	Support Evidence	Text and page

Page.....of.....

Researcher's Signature.....

APPENDIX D: TOOL 4: Intertextual Comparison of Relationships between Students and Administration.

Aspect	Similarity	Difference
Top administrators		
Teachers		
Non-teaching staff		
prefects		

Page.....of.....

Researcher's Signature.....