

Moral decadence as a potential predictor of students' academic performance in some selected senior high schools

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to examine moral decadence as a potential predictor of students' academic performance in some selected senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedures, namely purposive sampling, proportional sampling and simple random sampling, were used in the selection of the sample. A total of 338 respondents were drawn from 3 senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis. Exploratory factor analysis was carried out to validate the instrument and simple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis. Through principal component analysis, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test yielded a value of .636, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance [$\chi^2(78) = 360.171, p = 0.000$], supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The pattern structure and the commonalities results were both inspected. Items that had loadings below 0.30 on the pattern matrix as well as the unrotated loadings of the items were deleted. The outcome of the analysis showed that two items had factor loadings below 0.30. Therefore, those items were discarded. The remaining 11 items were retained because they were all above 0.30. The results again revealed that moral decadence was not a potential predictor of student academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis [$B = -0.395, SE = 0.299, t = -1.322, BootCI (-0.984, 0.193)$]. This outcome suggests that students who do not exhibit moral decadence in their schools would have higher chances of experiencing the higher academic performance. The study recommends that educational directorates and head teachers need to strengthen counselling services for students in senior high schools. This may go a long way to prevent a situation whereby the country could lose most of its manpower shortly, as moral decadence could compel some of the students to become dropouts and drug addicts.

Keywords: Moral decadence and academic performance;

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1. Introduction

Many psychologists have conducted moral development studies based on the premise that morality evolves (Feldman, 2012). When people are morally wrong, the superego, according to Freud (1960), causes negative sensations like anxiety, remorse and humiliation, and people can learn morality by avoiding these negative experiences. Theorists of social learning focus on moral behaviours such as hostility, cheating and sharing (Bandura, 1973; Hoffman, 1970; Sieber, 1980) and they assumed that all these behaviours are learned through stimulus–response and imitation. Albert Bandura's social learning theory mentions this concept.

Shorter (1975) believes that the term moral is derived from the Latin word 'mores', which means 'customs'. Customs refers to practices and standards of rules and norms that are shared by particular groups of people that govern their religious and social obligations. There are two broad moral orientations, according to Schopowal (2001). They are morality that is prescriptive or normative. Prescriptive morality creates rules for ethical behaviour, whereas descriptive morality examines the concepts, language and situations that are employed in moral behaviour. Morality, according to Adewole (1989), is concerned with a man's relationship in terms of what is right or bad, and hence acts as a guide for developing civic cohesion. Morality is a set of ethical principles that guide people's behaviour (Beauchamp, 2001). Moral norms enable communities of people living together to regulate social interactions by reducing selfish or violent behaviour (De Waal, 1996; Rai & Fiske, 2011). What people deem ethically 'good' may, however, vary by group and culture (Sachdeva, Singh, & Medin, 2011). The moral standards of the group can be used to determine if an individual is fit to be part of the group or does not conduct himself or herself in accordance with the group's morals (Gert, 1988; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tooby & Cosmides, 2010).

Moral decadence, according to Odeh (2013), is the failure of our culture to sustain healthy morality. Moral decadence, according to Muraino and Ugwumba (2014), is the process of acting in a way that demonstrates lack of moral norms. It denotes a significant decline in a society's moral ideals. As a result, moral decadence appears to be a lowering of society's moral standard. It appears that our cultural values, beliefs, conventions and ethical standards are deteriorating or collapsing. In light of this, it is reasonable to assume that it comes in a variety of forms. Cultism, examination malpractice, adolescent pregnancy, student prostitution, sexual harassment, selling of 'grade', students' demonstrations, drug misuse, obscene dressing and other examples of moral decay are listed by Afuye (2015). It is projected that students who achieve well academically are less likely to participate in moral decadence than those who perform poorly (Elliott & Voss, 1974; Henggeler, 1989). Students who have had negative school experiences are more likely to engage in moral decadence such as dropping out (Voelkl, Quaife, Leinwand, & Barst, 1999).

As a result of the foregoing, it appears that including moral education in the school curriculum is necessary and should be a part of people's daily life. Haydon (1999) concurred that moral education is a component of citizenship education. He went on to say that society's moral development is inextricably linked to the moral development and education of its individual. Moral education is intended to improve people's social attitudes and empathy for others. The goal is to assist people in making morally sound decisions based on what they believe is the right thing to do, rather than what they are expected to do (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). As a result, moral education is required to become a valuable and decent citizen.

Most moral education specialists, according to Moller and Reich (1999), believe that empathy is innate. However, for people to develop important moral characteristics, such as honesty, care for others and a sense of fairness, this potential must be allowed to bloom. Educational institutions, and the peer interactions that result, according to Keup and Mulote (2014), are some of the most essential environments in nurturing moral characteristics and moral development in people. Students can interact

with people in educational institutions, such as their peers and teachers, and share their experiences and values (Moller & Reich, 1999). Students develop a better understanding of moral thinking and the ability to look at things or topics from multiple perspectives, as a result of this interaction and sharing of ideas. Moral education must take place both within and outside of family groupings, according to Moller and Reich (1999). Educational institutions, on the other hand, should not only follow the moral rules of parents but should also integrate moral issues into schools to aid in the instillation of values in students.

It is consequently critical for a stable society to have morally mature people who are capable of distinguishing good from wrong in terms of a society's commonly accepted norms. However, the amount of influence we have on our people is limited. All types of descent living have been swept away by the quick entry of foreign culture and values, cultural diffusion and enculturation (Ekpunobi & Ezeaku, 1990). Negative values, such as profane song lyrics, indecent dressing, disrespect for authority and other influences, have substituted our much-loved culture, resulting in the upward rise of social vices and moral degradation (Ekpunobi & Ezeaku, 1990). As a result, a study was needed to determine whether moral decadence is a potential predictor of students' academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Education is meant to prepare people for a thriving economy by training and developing them (Agyekum & Gambrah, 2011). According to Kyungu (2003), immoral behaviour patterns among students have become a critical concern in many second-cycle institutions across the globe, especially in the Kumasi Metropolis, that must be addressed.

The number of students engaging in examination misconduct is the most concerning. Examination malpractice, according to Anzene (2014), has progressed from a simple giraffe where students periodically strain their necks to catch a peek at what they want to steal from other students' scripts to a variety of complex ways. Some include writing very tiny summaries on pieces of paper, parts of the body or materials found within the venue (Anzene, 2014). The West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) documented 2,293 malpractice cases, according to the Chief Examiner's Report (2016). As a result, 1,277 applicants had their subject results cancelled, while 647 had their whole results cancelled (WASSCE, 2016).

Other studies have found that sexual relationships between students are on the rise and are widespread among students in most second-cycle colleges (Jones & Espey, 2008). The tendency is slowly shifting, and the number of student-adolescents participating in sexual relationships is on the rise, which could lead to social, health and academic issues (Ngalinda, 1998). Increased incidences of unexpected pregnancies and, subsequently, school dropouts have resulted from students' sexual engagement (Mlyakado, 2013). According to statistics, 10.1% of adolescent pregnancies in Ghana's Western region occurred between the ages of 15 and 19, and 12.7% of that age group had begun childbearing (Ghana Demographic and Health Survey, 2008).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the World Health Organisation undertook the most comprehensive research on substance use among senior high school students in Ghana, finding that the average age for the first use of substances was between 14 and 19 years (MOH, 2003). According to the findings, the most widely used substances by students were alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis, cocaine, tranquilisers and heroine, implying that these drugs were commonly used at school or home. The problem of moral decadence among the youth, according to Noraini and Suryani (2006), is primarily caused by a lack of true religious understanding and practices, parental attitudes towards their roles, the breakdown of the marriage institution, rapid economic growth, the educational system and teenagers' attitudes.

Studies on the prevalence of moral decadence have primarily focused on aspects of the idea of moral decadence in isolation. For example, Nkyi (2014) and Enose, Omondi, Atieno, and Gaudencia (2014)

focused on drug addiction in isolation, whereas Mlyakado and Neema (2014) focused on sexual immorality as a component of moral decadence to the exclusion of other important aspects of moral decadence. Again, it is very essential to note that the majority of studies conducted on the concept of moral decadence have been conducted in the Western world and very few studies have been conducted in Ghana, particularly in the Kumasi Metropolis in the Ashanti Region.

Looking at the prevalence of moral decadence, and addressing the gap created in the literature as indicated, a study of this form has become necessary as it primarily considers multiple elements of moral decadence such as examination malpractices, illicit sexual activities, bullying, sexual harassment, drug abuse, truancy and how these elements affect the performance of the students. It is in this light that this study sought to examine moral decadence as a potential predictor of students' academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana.

1.2. Hypothesis

H0: Moral decadence will not predict students' academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis.

H1: Moral decadence will predict students' academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis.

1.3. Psychoanalytic theory

One of the fundamental principles in Freud's (1939) psychoanalysis theory is the ID drive. The ID, according to Freud (1939), is a cauldron of seething excitation that behaves irrationally to find solely the pleasure that comes from releasing its pent-up energies. The drive to satisfy one's immediate demands, according to Freud, is one of the ID's main features. The ID is only interested in having fun and is unconcerned about the consequences of their actions. The ID's primary interest is maximum instinct fulfilment, and once that is achieved, the ID is content.

As a result, it can be assumed that students who engage in unethical behaviours, such as cheating in exams, consuming drugs, bullying other students, and stealing, do so as a result of their ID, which expects immediate pleasure. The ID's work could be described as the wrong gratification of desires or immoral behaviour among senior high school students without regard for the consequences of such actions, and despite their awareness that the school authority or society at large frowns on such behaviour, they continue to perpetuate it (Ali, Dada, Isiaka, & Salmon, 2014). The EGO works on the reality principle, which means it holds off on satisfying the ID drive until the proper object is found, then obtains the objects and satisfies the drive. The EGO teaches the individual to distinguish between fantasy and reality, to plan and to exert some influence over their surroundings (Ali et al., 2014).

1.4. Operant conditioning

This theory/s basic premise is that rewards and punishment cause people to act in certain ways. This means that reinforced behaviour is more likely to be repeated (strengthened), while non-reinforced behaviour is more likely to die out or be extinguished (weakened) (Oliver, 2011). That is, modifying behaviour by using reward after a desired response and punishment after an unpleasant or undesired reaction.

This idea implies that if a student engages in unethical behaviour, the teacher should not reinforce it; instead, he or she should use negative reinforcement or try to inform the student about the implications of their actions. For example, if a student tries to smoke at school and the main result is that he gets to hang out with the crowd, he is likely to do so again. However, if such a student is caught or suspended from school, he is most likely never to smoke in school again. To summarise, instructors and school administrators must be aware of students' backgrounds to favourably or adversely reinforce student behaviour to achieve desired outcomes.

1.5. Related studies

At this point, one might bring up some of the various types of moral decadence that can be found in the lives of today's senior high school students. These morally reprehensible actions jeopardise the country's peace, progress and development in educational institutions (Chinwe, 2010). Moral decadence manifests in several ways, such as examination malpractice, substance abuse, bullying, truancy, sexual harassment and sexual intercourse. In related studies, Anih (2014) investigated the impact of moral decadence on students' academic progress. A total of 48 teachers and 300 pupils were chosen for the study. The study's main findings revealed that moral degradation has a favourable impact on student achievement.

Onyema (2011) investigates the socio-political, economic and theological factors that contribute to moral decadence in Igboland. The investigation was qualitative, with a descriptive and analytical research approach. Primary and secondary data were employed in this study. The research revealed that bad leadership, corruption, human trafficking, indecent fashion, prostitution, a high rate of materialism, insecurity, cultism, kidnapping, drug misuse and injustice in the judicial system are the elements confronting the Igbo society. The findings imply that the socio-political, moral, economic and religious outlook of the entire Igbo world indicates that the Igbo are rapidly undergoing serious moral degeneration.

Hagan (2010) investigated the kinds, causes and impacts of immorality among students in second-cycle colleges, as well as remedies to immorality issues. The study's research design is a descriptive survey. The study discovered that both inherited and environmental factors contribute to student immorality. Peer pressure, the media and the Internet, and the country's economic status are among the environmental factors. The research also demonstrated the consequences of immorality, which include physical, social and health consequences.

Britwum, Adjei, Nyamekye, and Britwum (2020) looked into the alleged causes and effects of moral decay in several Kumasi Metropolis senior high schools. A total of 321 people took part in the study. The study's findings were analysed using means and standard deviations. Exam malpractice, drug misuse, bullying, truancy and unlawful sexual activity were among the main issues encountered in the study area, according to the findings. The study also found that parental negligence, peer pressure, seeing immoral films, unregulated media environment with uncensored media content and poverty all contribute to moral decadence. The research also showed the negative impact of moral decadence on senior high school students. The outcome also revealed that the steps to combat moral decadence were the establishment of rules and regulations, parental supervision and school counselling, and school authorities to be of good moral, moral leadership and education.

The influence of moral deterioration on student performance was investigated by Oghuvbu and Okpilike (2012). The research used a survey design. Three thousand people were given a 20-item questionnaire. Two research topics and two hypotheses led the investigation. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. School strike action, examination malpractice, substance misuse, absenteeism and damaging school property were all determined to be unethical in the schools, according to the report. The study found that these vices had a positive impact on pupils' performance. The study recommended that the establishment of rules and regulations and the provision of ethics training lessons were possible ways to reduce unethical conduct in schools. This study is closely related to the present study in the sense that moral decadence can affect students' performance.

Tonbra (2013) researched the counselling implications of moral education for secondary school students' academic performance. The study's goal was to see if there was a link between moral instruction and secondary school students' academic performance, as well as to determine the counselling implications of moral education for secondary school students' academic achievement. The research was

descriptive in nature. A total of 800 people were chosen in a systematic random sample, with 500 (male and female) students and 300 teachers, guidance counsellors (male and female) and other staff (male and female). The scores of the two sets of responses were computed using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Moral instruction and counselling had a beneficial impact on students' academic performance ($p > 0.5$), whereas immorality had a significant detrimental impact on students' academic performance ($p = 0.5$).

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

The descriptive survey was used to conduct this research. According to Gay (2004, p. 187), 'the descriptive survey entails gathering data to test hypotheses or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of study'. It also describes and forecasts occurrences without affecting the variables that determine the phenomenon (Amedahe, 2002). According to Polit and Hunger (1995), the primary goal of a descriptive survey is to describe, observe and document the characteristics of a situation as it occurs in the natural world. According to Leedy and Ormond (2005), the descriptive survey design includes gathering information about one or more cohorts or groups of people, most likely based on their distinctiveness, views, character or prior occurrence or understanding, by conducting inquiries and graphically displaying their responses.

A descriptive survey, according to Kothari (2004), is concerned with describing, recording, assessing and reporting situations that exist or existed. According to Kerlinger (1973), descriptive surveys are commonly used to acquire data useful in evaluating current practices and forming the foundation for choices. The descriptive survey was chosen as the best method for conducting this study since it provides the researcher with a lot of data from a large sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Descriptive survey design aids in the identification of trends in attitudes and behaviours, as well as the generalisation of research findings (Neuman, 2000). The descriptive survey is also suited for performing this study since descriptive research involves describing, recording, evaluating and interpreting existing conditions, and the information gained from a descriptive research can be valuable or useful in diagnosing a situation.

Despite the benefits of descriptive designs, ensuring that the questions to be answered or assertions to be responded to are clear and not misleading is tough. This is because the specific wording of questions or remarks can have substantial impact on survey outcomes. They may also provide unreliable answers since they dig into personal matters about which people may not be completely honest (Antiri, 2015). The researcher constructed the items in the questionnaire in such a way that they are clear and intelligible to minimise the effects of the design flaw. The participants were also informed of the confidentiality and anonymity of whatever information they provided, so they were encouraged to be as truthful as possible when answering the questions.

2.2. Study population

The study's target demographic was all Kumasi Metropolis senior high school 2 students. In the city, there are currently 19 certified public senior high schools, 5 of which are single-sex girls' senior high schools, 4 single-sex boys' senior high schools and 10 mixed senior high schools (Regional Education Office, 2017).

Senior high school 2 students from Asanteman Senior High School, Adventist Senior High School and KNUST Senior High School made up the study's accessible population. Because of the geographical and economic nature of the Kumasi Metropolis, human and vehicular traffic is a major concern, the sample for the study was chosen as conveniently as possible, as suggested by Frankel and Wallen (2002), who believe that time and energy should be taken into account when selecting a study sample. At the time of

this study, there were 2,800 senior high school 2 students at the three selected schools in the Kumasi Metropolis. This number was calculated using data from the Regional Education Office (2017). The total population of senior high school 2 students at the three selected schools is shown in Table 1.

2.3. Sample and sampling procedure

The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formula was used to pick the sample from the population of senior high school students in the three selected schools in the Kumasi Metropolis. From the 3 schools chosen for the study, a total of 338 students were gathered: Asanteman SHS = 127, Adventist SHS = 120 and KNUST SHS = 91 made up this group. A total of 204 men and 134 women were chosen for the study (Table 1).

The schools for the study were chosen via purposeful sampling. In the Kumasi Metropolis, the researchers focused on the 10 mixed schools. The researcher purposefully chose schools located in the heart of the metropolis. As a result, three schools were chosen in the process. However, a proportional sampling procedure was used to obtain the sample size for each school. The total population of each school was divided by the total population of the 3 sampled schools which were multiplied by the sample size of 338. Therefore, 127 out of 1053 students comprising 77 males and 50 females, 120 out of 992 students comprising 72 males and 48 females and 91 out of 755 students comprising 55 males and 36 females were sampled to represent each of the 3 schools (Table 1).

Simple random sampling was used to select the students in the various schools for the study. In simple random sampling, the lottery technique was used in selecting the students. The names of all the students in the various schools were coded on pieces of paper. The coded pieces of paper for each student were folded and placed in a bowl. The researcher shook the bowl and picked the folded paper one after the other until the number needed was arrived at.

Table 1. Population and sample of SHS students in the selected schools

Schools	Students	Male	Female	Sample size	Male	Female
Asanteman SHS	1,053	636	417	127	77	50
Adventist SHS	992	599	393	120	72	48
KNUST SHS	755	456	299	91	55	36
Total	2,800	1,691	1,109	338	204	134

Source: Regional Education Office (2017).

2.4. Data collection instrument

The questionnaire was the primary tool for data gathering. The moral decadence questionnaire, which was constructed and structured based on the literature review, was created. The Likert scale format was used to structure the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to answer each question on a Likert-type scale with four degrees of agreement or disagreement: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3 and Strongly Agree = 4. Concerning students' academic performance, written text was given to the students to answer. The score on the text was used to measure students' academic performance.

2.5. Pre-testing

Pre-testing was carried out to validate the instrument, i.e., to determine how valid and trustworthy it was for the main data collection. For pre-testing the tool, the researcher used 10% of the students from Nsutaman Catholic Senior High School. According to Cohen, Manion and Morisson (2007) using 10% of the sample size for pre-testing an instrument is laudable. The instrument was administered

to 150 senior high school students at the Nsutaman Catholic Senior High School in Ashanti Mampong. Cronbach's alpha method of determining the reliability coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient was .80.

2.6. Exploratory factor analysis

PCA was used to examine the data. To determine whether the data fit the criteria for the analysis, an appropriateness evaluation was performed. The primary component extraction approach was used with the FACTOR software to determine the number of components to use for the scale based on the correlation matrix. Because of the high level of interconnectedness among the items, PCA was chosen (Baglin, 2014). The rotation was carried out using the Promin method, which is an oblique rotation process. Based on simulation tests, this rotation approach has been recommended in the literature as being superior to other methods (Baglin, 2014; Timmerman & Lorenzo-Seva, 2011). The FACTOR software was created specifically for PCA with ordinal data.

The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin provided a value of .636, exceeding the suggested value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974), and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett 1954) obtained statistical significance [$\chi^2(78) = 360.171, p = 0.000$], supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Kaiser's criteria, a scree plot test and parallel analysis were all used to determine the number of components to keep. Components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, according to Kaiser (1960), should be kept as a rule of thumb. The scree plot should keep the evolution of components before the point where information drops down quickly, with a sharp 'elbow' and a sudden shift from vertical to horizontal (Cattell, 1966). Table 2 and Figure 1 show the results of the analysis in detail.

Table 2. Eigenvalues

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.598	19.987	19.987	2.598	19.987	19.987
2	2.226	17.119	37.106	2.226	17.119	37.106
3	1.332	10.246	47.352	1.332	10.246	47.352
4	1.123	8.638	55.990	1.123	8.638	55.990
5	1.028	7.909	63.899	1.028	7.909	63.899
6	0.850	6.541	70.440			
7	0.800	6.153	76.593			
8	0.659	5.072	81.665			
9	0.623	4.789	86.454			
10	0.559	4.299	90.753			
11	0.510	3.920	94.674			
12	0.412	3.166	97.839			
13	0.281	2.161	100.000			

Extraction Method: PCA.

- a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

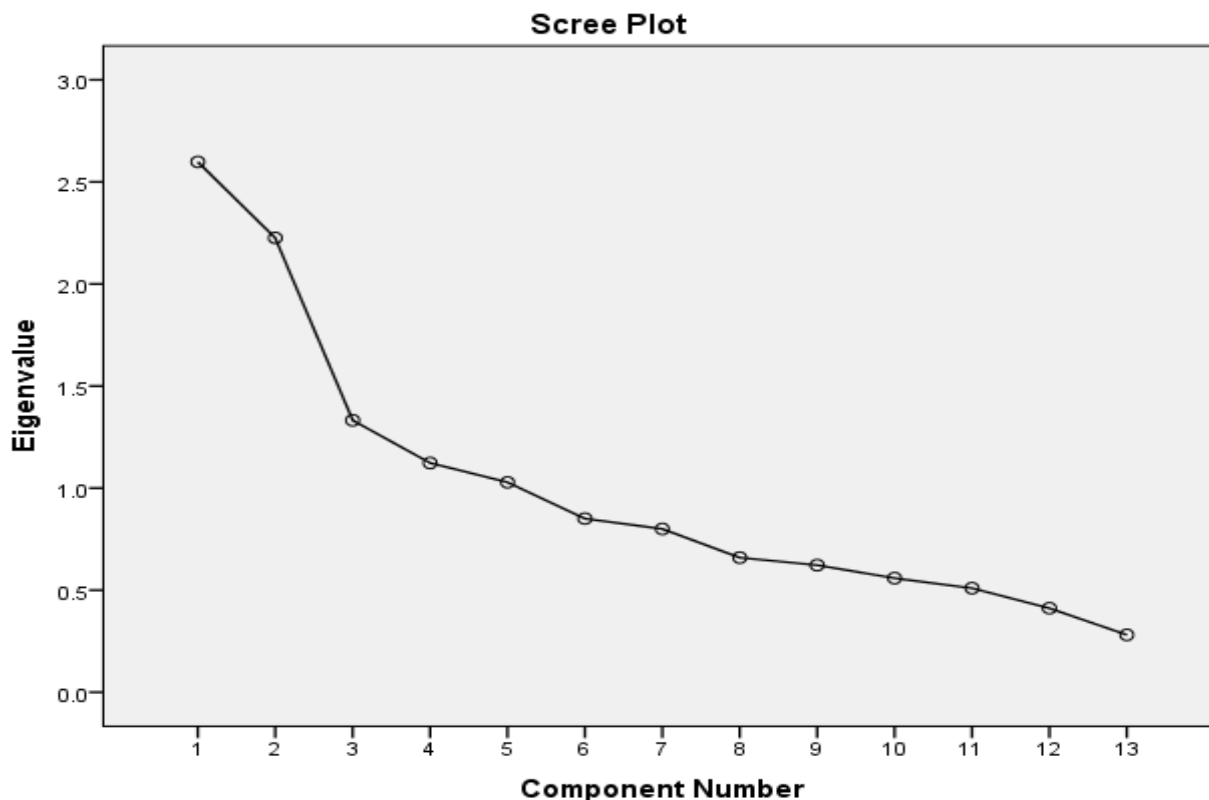


Figure 1. Scree plot

The five-component structure was found to be suitable for the scale by Kaiser's eigenvalue test, with five components accounting for 63.89% of the variance in the notion of moral decay (Table 2). The scree plot, however, revealed two components in the second test. Two of the components emerged before the curve's elbow, where the simulated data point meets the actual data, as shown in Figure 1. Only two components from this plot should be retained (extracted).

Two separate structures were discovered based on the two tests: the five-component structure from the eigenvalue criterion and the two-component structure from the scree plot. Based on the literature recommendations, the two-component structure was kept. Factor analysis is a data exploration technique, according to Pallant (2016), therefore, the interpretation and application one makes of it are up to them, rather than any hard and fast statistical laws.

After confirming the two-component structure, more results were examined to see whether any of the items needed to be removed. The commonality results and the pattern structure were both examined. Items with loadings of less than 0.30 on the pattern matrix, as well as unrotated loadings, were removed (Pallant, 2016). The results of the research revealed that two of the items had factor loadings of less than 0.30. As a result, the items were thrown away. Because all of the remaining 11 items were above 0.30, they were kept.

2.7. Hypothesis testing

One hypothesis was tested in this study. The normalcy assumption, which is the foundation of all parametric assumptions, was tested before hypothesis testing. Mean, median, 5% trimmed mean, skewness and the normal Q-Q plot were used to test this. Table 3 shows the results in greater detail.

Table 3. Test for normality

Parameters	Moral decadence	Academic achievement
Mean	33.38	273.33
Standard deviation	3.80	20.38
5% Trimmed mean	33.50	273.48
Median	33.00	274.00
Skewness	-.487	-.182
Std. error	.212	1.137
Zskewness	-3.58	-1.34

The mean, median and 5% trimmed mean of moral decadence and academic achievement were nearly comparable, as shown in Table 3. This indicates that the scores of the aforementioned factors were distributed regularly. Further investigation of the Zskewness reveals that the academic achievement coefficients (Zskew = -1.34) were within the range of $+3.29$ and -3.29 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), indicating that it is normally distributed. The moral decadence coefficient (Zskew = -3.58), on the other hand, revealed evidence of negative skewness.

In addition, all of the variables' typical Q-Q plots were investigated. The standard Q-Q plots for all the variables in Figures 2 and 3 indicated that the distribution of all the scores was closer to the straight line (Pallant, 2016) (Figures 2 and 3). To further enhance the precision of the tests, bootstrap was performed for all the tests. All the tests were bootstrapped to increase the precision of the results. This approach would correct the paradox in the moral decadence score distribution.

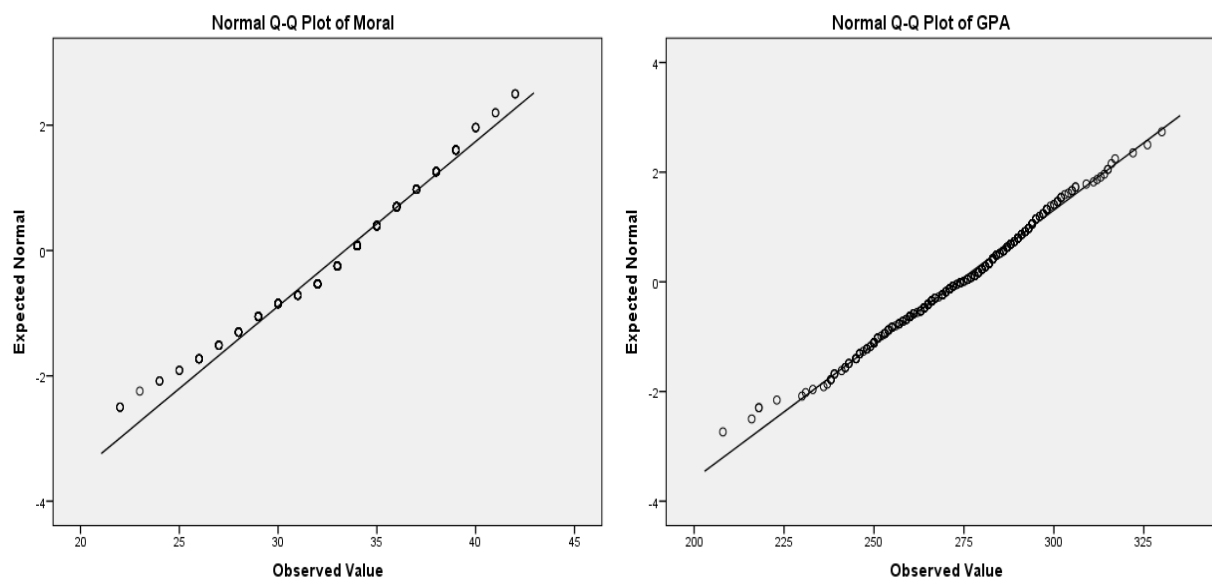


Figure 2. Screw plot of moral decadence

Figure 3. Screw plot of GPA

2.7.1. Hypothesis one

H0: Moral decadence will not predict students' academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis.

H1: Moral decadence will predict students' academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis.

The goal of this study was to see if moral decadence in the Kumasi Metropolis may predict academic success. Tables 4 and 5 show the specifics of the simple linear regression analysis.

Table 4. Model summary and fit statistics of the relationship between moral decadence and students' academic performance

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	R	R ²
1	Regression	723.766	1	723.766	1.747	0.187 ^b	0.074 ^a	0.005
	Residual	132,186.888	319	414.379				
	Total	132,910.654	320					

a. Dependent Variable: Achievement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Decadence

Table 5. Coefficients of the prediction of moral decadence on students' academic performance

Model	B	SE	Beta	t	LLCI	ULCI
1 (Constant)	286.522	10.049		28.513	266.752	306.293
Decadence	-.395	.299	-.074	-1.322	-.984	.193

B—Unstandardised Coefficient; SE—Standard Error; LLCI—Lower Limit Confidence Interval;

ULCI—Upper Limit Confidence Interval.

The model summary and fit statistics of the regression results are highlighted in Table 4. The data, which included moral decadence and academic performance, did not match the model, $[F(1, 319) = 1.747, p = .187]$, according to the analysis. The findings also revealed that moral decadence accounted for around 0.5% of the variation in academic achievement.

The results revealed that moral decadence was not a potential predictor of student academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis $[B = -.395, SE = .299, t = -1.322, \text{BootCI} (-.984, .193)]$ (see Table 5). This outcome suggests that students who do not exhibit moral decadence in their schools would have higher chances of experiencing the higher academic performance.

Discussion

In this study, the moral decadence inventory was developed and validated using senior high school students in the Kumasi Metropolis. Through PCA, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin yielded a value of .636, exceeding the recommended value of .6, (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett 1954) reached statistical significance $[\chi^2(78) = 360.171, p = .000]$, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The pattern structure and the commonalities results were both inspected. Items that had loadings

below 0.30 on the pattern matrix and the unrotated loadings of the items were deleted (Pallant, 2016). The outcome of the analysis showed that two items had factor loadings below 0.30. Therefore, those items were discarded. The remaining 11 items were retained because they were all above 0.30. Therefore, researchers who want to use the instrument should use the eleven items instead of the 13 items.

The results gain showed that moral decadence was not a potential predictor of student academic performance in the Kumasi Metropolis [$B = -.395$, $SE = .299$, $t = -1.322$, $BootCI (-.984, .193)$] (see Table 4). This finding shows that students who do not engage in moral decadence in their schools have a better probability of excelling academically. The findings contradict those of Oghuvbu and Okpilike (2012), who investigated the impact of moral degradation on student performance. The research used a survey design. Three thousand people were given a 20-item questionnaire. Two research topics and two hypotheses led the investigation. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. School strike action, examination malpractice, substance misuse, absenteeism and damaging school property were all determined to be unethical in the schools, according to the report. The study found that these vices had a positive impact on pupils' performance. The conclusions of Anih (2014), who conducted a study on the impact of moral decadence on students' academic progress, are likewise in conflict with the findings of this study. A total of 48 teachers and 300 pupils were included in the study. The study's main findings revealed that moral degradation had a favourable impact on student achievement. These previous outcomes could be the result of student indiscipline. The researchers argue that rules and regulations in schools should be highly valued. When a student violates the school's rules and regulations, he or she should be punished as deterrence to others. When students are disciplined, they will follow the rules and obey others.

Moral education or moral instruction, according to the researchers, should be included in the school curriculum to teach students what is good and wrong. This conclusion is consistent with Tonbra's (2013) research on the effects of moral education on secondary school students' academic performance. The study's goal was to see if there was a link between moral instruction and secondary school students' academic performance, as well as to determine the counselling implications of moral education for secondary school students' academic achievement. The research was descriptive in nature. A total of 800 people were chosen in a systematic random sample, with 500 (male and female) students and 300 teachers, guidance counsellors (males and females) and other staff (males and females). The scores of the two sets of responses were computed using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Moral instruction and counselling had a beneficial impact on students' academic performance ($p > 0.5$), whereas immorality had a significant detrimental impact on students' academic performance ($p = 0.5$).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This outcome of the study showed that students who do not exhibit moral decadence in their schools would have higher chances of experiencing the higher academic performance. It can be concluded that students in senior high schools are not under the supervision of their parents, hence the possibility of the students engaging in immoral acts becomes high. Therefore, students should always exhibit good behaviours while studying in school. Students should refrain from moral decadence such as abusing drugs, alcoholism, truancy, bullying and destroying school property among others. When students focus on their studies and abstain from moral decadence, their chances of experiencing higher academic performance become high. However, students who exhibit moral decadence, such as abusing drugs and engaging in alcoholism, jeopardise their health and academic performance. The study recommends that school authorities, teachers and students should be sensitised through workshops, seminars, talks and symposia on the adverse effects of moral decadence on students as this could go a long way to reduce the menace. Also, the Ghana Education Service could develop pre-service and in-service staff training programmes that are tailored to the school environment to keep teachers updated with new skills for dealing with student's

moral decadence issues. The study recommends that the educational directorates and head teachers need to strengthen counselling services for students in senior high schools. This may go a long way to prevent a situation, whereby the country could lose most of its manpower soon, as moral decadence could compel some of the students to become dropouts and drug addicts.

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