

Academic Performance of Learners by Occupation of Parents In Primary Schools In Ibanda Municipality

Peter Nsiimire Mwesigye, Patrick Mbyemeire and Raphael Kombi

Department of Educational Management of Kampala International University

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the difference in academic performance of learners in primary schools across socio-economic status (SES) of parents in Ibanda Municipality. Data were collected from pupils in Primary Six and Primary Seven using questionnaires while data from teachers, head teachers and parents were obtained using interview guides. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts and percentages were used to indicate the characteristics of students and SES of their parents. One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether SES of parents led differences in academic performance of learners. The findings showed that there was statistically significant difference in academic performance among primary school pupils of parents whose parents but not occupation of parents ($p = 0.881$) and income of parents ($p = 0.744$). **Keywords:** Academic performance, learners, occupation, parents, Primary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, academic performance of learners in the education sector has remained a vehicle that springs up social-economic development over the world [1, 2, 3, 4]. The measure of academic performance as a symbol of school success can be traced way back from the Victorian period [2, 5, 6, 7]. Since then, academic performance has been used to grade schools and most importantly to determine ones career paths [8, 9, 10, 11, 12]. The 'good schools' are acclaimed to be those that are able groom the students well enough to achieve the set standards [13, 14, 15]. This is measured by use of students' academic performance both at school level and nationally [16, 17, 18].

Poor academic performance has a long history in education and many researchers have delved into the various aspects that contribute to the situation. During the last twenty years much of the research has been aimed at lowering the dropout rate and closing the achievement gap, especially with the No Child Left Behind [3] mandate. Taking the importance of good academic performance of national examinations globally, many governments in developing countries have been allocating much of their resources to education since independence [4, 19, 20].

This has resulted to a considerable growth of educational activities world over that has led education sector to be one of the largest in most countries [4, 21, 22, 23].

Many countries in Africa have come to realize that pupils are the heart of educational process and that without good performance, all innovations in education are doomed to failure [24, 25]. There is a wide dissatisfaction with the current situation of schooling in many countries and parents come in for the share of the blame [26]. This is because majority of parents involve their children in garden and other domestic work. This makes pupils have limited time with their teachers and no time for revision, therefore, affecting their performance [5].

Performance in primary school leaving education in East Africa Countries has been a problem for a long time [6, 27, 28]. Underperforming in primary school leaving examination in Tanzania has persisted for years [7, 29, 30]. The study by [8] stressed that poor performance may lead learners leaving school with bad habits. Poor relationships between teachers and community has been contributed by poor results of pupils in primary school leaving examinations [9, 31, 32]. Tanzania like other African

countries has persistently been underperforming in primary school leaving examination [7, 33, 34, 35]. Pupils leave primary education with poor knowledge and skills.

With the introduction of school education in Uganda by missionaries in 1877, modeled along by the British system of education under the British protectorate from 1894 until 1962 when Uganda attained her independence [10], there has always been a tendency in making a direct correlation between academic performance of learners and SES of parents [11]. There has been a belief that parents better SES will always facilitate better education for their

children by sending them to better schools and availing with them adequate learning resources all of which will improve academic performance. While this may be true, such an assumption could be too simplistic as there are other contributing factors which could significantly influence a student's academic performance. One such factor is the SES of the learner [12].

Purpose of the Study

To establish whether there are differences in academic performance in primary schools of learners across occupation level of parents in Ibanda Municipality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design.

The study Area

The study was conducted among primary schools in Ibanda Municipality, Ibanda District in Western Uganda.

Study Population

The study population for this research was made up of 1501 in P.6 and 500 in P.7 making a total of 2001 learners in the 62 primary schools in Ibanda Municipality. This study population was preferred because of their clear understanding of the informed by the research problem that aims at exploring the influence of SES on academic achievement of male and female primary school learners in Ibanda Municipality.

To supplement information generated from the main target population, head teachers in all the primary schools in Ibanda Municipality were also targeted because, as administrators and managers of their respective schools, they are in a position to provide data on the academic performance in their schools. In addition, 454 teachers in the 62 primary schools were targeted because they interact with learners on a daily basis and are thus best placed to provide perspectives on learners' performance.

Sampling Primary schools

Out of the 42 UPE schools and 20 private schools in Ibanda Municipality, 9 (21.4%) and 4 (20.0%) schools were selected by stratified sampling technique. Simple random sampling was then applied to select the 9 UPE schools and 4 private schools.

Sampling of Head Teachers

The head teachers of the selected schools were purposively selected and interviewed since they were the first contacts in the given school. A total of 13 head teachers, including 9 (21.4%) and 4 (20.0%) from UPE and private schools respectively were recruited into the study.

Sampling of Teachers

Simple random sampling technique was used to select teachers in the selected primary schools. A total of 61(20.3%) and 31(20.3%) teachers were selected from UPE and private schools respectively.

Sampling of Learners

The researcher used simple random sampling technique to select learners in the selected primary schools. A total of 271(20.0%) and 129(20.0%) learners in primary six and seven were selected from UPE and private schools respectively.

Sampling of Parents

Parents were selected to participate in the study using purposive sampling with the help of head teachers. A total of 400 parents, including 271(67.8%) and 129(32.2%) from UPE and private schools respectively were recruited into the study.

Research Instruments

The researcher used two types of instruments. These included questionnaires and interview guides.

Self-administered Questionnaires

The researcher used structured and self-administered questionnaires to get data from the learners (Primary Six and Seven). Self-administered questionnaires were preferred because they encouraged

respondents to answer sensitive questions and allowed them to consult other relevant documents [13]. The questionnaires were adopted from a previous study in Kenya and were then modified to the context of Uganda. Questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A consisted of the bio-data of the pupils. This included gender, class of study, age in years, number of siblings, nature of schooling and the type of school. Section B was comprised of the SES characteristics of parents. It included the type of occupation, level of education and income levels of household head. The academic performance of learners was obtained from the school records.

Interview Guide

The interview guide helped the researcher while interviewing the head teacher, parents and class teachers. Only 13 head teachers were randomly selected among the many because this number was assumed to represent the views of the majority parents whose pupils had academic performance assessed. This instrument was used because it creates an open atmosphere for respondents and allows the researcher to probe in order to get hidden data. Interviews were preferred because they generate in-depth information around the topic, ensure higher response rate and one would be sure that the selected respondent is the one that actually answered the questions [14].

Data Collection Procedure

After the research proposal was accepted, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Dean, Post Graduate Studies and Research Directorate, Kampala International University introducing the researcher to the respondents and relevant authorities. At the school, the questionnaires were administered to the learners and then their parents were contacted using phone contacts at school in order to ascertain the parental socio-economic status. The researcher personally interviewed the head teachers, teachers and the parents. Data regarding the marks obtained by learners in the beginning of term as measure of academic performance of learners were obtained from class teachers' records. Also, data on bio-data and SES of parents were obtained from

parents in collaboration with household head and records at school.

Data Management

Data from questionnaires was entered into Microsoft Excel 10.0 and exported into Statistical package for Social scientists (SPSS) version 23.0 for analysis. Data was checked for missing values. Missing values were reviewed by re-visiting the questionnaires. The discovered missing values were treated by filling in the missing information while in the field such that respondents were consulted where necessary before collecting the filled questionnaires. During analysis, occupation was categorized as Government employed, Self-employed and unemployed. Parents' income was categorized as less than 130,000 shillings, between 130,000 and 260,000 shillings and more than 260,000 shillings per month. Parents' education on the other hand was categorized as Never in school, Primary and Secondary and above.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics comprising frequencies and percentages were reported for categorical demographic characteristics.

To assess whether there was a significant relationship between education, occupation income of parents and academic performance of learners, one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed. Means and corresponding standard deviations for each of the socio-economic status variables were determined. The level of significance denoted by P was to ascertain the statistical significance of the relationship.

Qualitative data analysis was also applied. This was done with aid of thematic approach. Based on the questions of the study, quotes related to the themes were identified through handwriting and presented in order to triangulate the quantitative information.

Ethical considerations

Permission was first granted by the University through a letter of introduction. This helped introduce the researcher to relevant authorities in selected primary schools and the respondents. Efforts were also made to mobilise pupils to participate in the study by liaising with some class

teachers especially given that most of them were minors. After mobilization, a

briefing was organized prior to selection of pupils to participate in the study.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of Learners (N=400)

Item	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender of the respondents	Male	187	46.8
	Female	213	53.2
	Total	400	100.0
Class of the respondents	P.6	190	40.2
	P.7	210	59.8
	Total	400	100.0
Age group of the respondents in years	10 - 13 years	332	83.0
	14 and above years	68	17
	Total	400	100.0
Nature of schooling of the respondents	Day scholars	211	52.2
	Boarders	189	47.8
	Total	400	100.0
Type of school attended by the respondents	UPE	271	67.1
	Private	129	32.9
	Total	400	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2018

The results on gender category showed that the larger percentage (53.2%) was of females with males being 46.8%. This suggested that the larger percentage of the respondents were females. With regard to the class, majority of the respondents were from primary seven (59.8%) while the rest 40.2% were from primary six. In terms of age, majority

(83%) were aged between 10-13 years while the remaining 17% were aged 14 years and above. Also, in regard to nature of schooling, majority were day scholars (52.2%) while 47.8% were boarders. Over half were in UPE schools (67.1%) while the least (32.9%) were from private schools

Table 2: ANOVA Results on academic performance of learners by occupation of parents

Occupation of parents	Sample Size	Sample Mean	Sample Dev	Std F	p
Government employed	26	3.10	0.85	0.133	0.876
Non - government sector employment	195	3.05	0.70		
Peasant farmers	179	3.03	0.80		

Source: Primary data, 2018

The findings in Table 2 indicate the mean scores of occupation of parents in relation to the academic performance of learners in the primary schools in Ibanda Municipality. One way ANOVA was tested to find out the significant difference in academic performance by occupation. The results indicated that, learners whose parents were government employed (mean = 3.10) scored higher on academic performance, followed by

those whose parents were employed in non-governmental sector (mean = 3.05) and those whose parents were peasant farmers (mean = 3.03). The computed or observed (F = 0.133) was low and the level of significance (p = 0.876) was larger than $\alpha = 0.05$ (p > 0.05). There was no statistically significant difference in academic performance among primary school pupils of parents who were employed in government, non-

government sector employment and peasant farmers ($F=0.133$, $p=0.876$). Thus, parents' occupation level in the selected primary schools was not the determinant for learners' academic performance.

From the interview findings, it is showed that government employees as compared to peasant farmers and non-government sector employed parents show more concern for their children's education. Similarly, parent "5" answered:

"Unemployed parents or those in private business tend to have negative attitudes towards education [academic performance of learners]. Usually unemployed people do not see a lot of value in educating their children and hence do not follow up the performance of their learners. This is because they have failed to land on a job despite their education attainment. This hopelessness in education affects the children directly

DISCUSSION

This study examined whether there were differences in academic performance in primary schools of learners across occupation of parents in Ibanda Municipality. The finding showed no statistically significant difference in academic performance among primary school pupils of parents who were employed in government, self employed and unemployed. This finding disagrees with [15] who showed that there was a strong significant association between occupation of parents and the academic performance of students. Students from educated and better off families have scored higher result in their regional examination than their counterparts.

CONCLUSION

The occupation level of parents is not very essential for the academic performance of learners in both UPE and private primary schools in Ibanda Municipality. Once conditions at school are conducive for learning, pupils

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or indirectly hence hindering their academic performance" (Interview with parent "6" conducted on 25th June 2018) Also, one head teacher 3 went on to confirm, he said: *"The government workers have money from their salaries and have enough vehicles from government to visit their children. Besides, they attach a lot more value to education of their children [learners]. That is why parents in government offices look so much at their children's education. Sometimes when both parents have jobs, they provide their children with scholastic materials that are left in their offices. This increases the learning capability of learners from working parents by facilitating their academic needs which improves on their academic performance"* (Interview with head teacher "3" conducted on 25th June 2018).

Earlier on the findings by [16] agree with those of [15] but disagrees with those reported in this particular study. A study that was conducted by [17] in Kitui County found out parents who had high educational expectations for their children were stricter on their children doing homework and attending school. These parents, if they were educated helped their children with homework and this led to their children performing better at school than those of parents with negative attitudes towards education who were more permissive in their parenting. The researcher however disagrees with findings earlier reported.

irrespective of their parents' occupation can be able to perform better academically. The nature of job for the parents rarely influences how well the learners perform at school.

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