

Parental Participation and Students' Academic Performance; A Case Study of Selected Secondary Schools in Mbale City, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the impact of parental participation on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Mbale City, Uganda. A cross-sectional research design was used to determine the social characteristics of respondents involved in academic performance and the relationship between a supportive home environment and academic performance. A sample size of 1500 respondents was selected using Slovene's formula and random sampling. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 23.0. The majority of respondents were aged 20-29 years, with 47% being married and 64% female. The study found a strong relationship between supportive home environment and academic performance, with 38% of respondents agreeing that family interaction at home significantly influences academic performance. The majority also agreed that the existence of learning physical facilities and learners' self-esteem from the perspective of their family academic performance significantly influence academic performance. However, 41% of respondents believed that learners in non-supportive environments struggled with accessing learning equipment, compared to 30% and 18% who agreed and strongly disagreed with the findings. The researcher recommends providing learners with a serene home environment, encouraging parents to provide necessary means for academic success, and exposing them to inner family interactions and allowing them to express their views on different family matters.

Keywords: Parental participation; Academic performance; Supportive home environment; Secondary schools; Mbale City, Uganda

INTRODUCTION

Parent participation has been defined as actual or perceived expectations for performance, verbal encouragement or interactions regarding homework, direct reinforcement for academic improvement, and general academic guidance or support [1, 2]. Using the 1980 wave of the High School and Beyond (HSB) data set, they found that perceived parent involvement had a positive effect on students' grades. Epstein's frame work of six major types of parental involvement is among the most useful tools developed by the field thus far for defining parental involvement practices and linking them with certain types of outcomes. This widely accepted framework is preferred as a guide to help educators develop comprehensive family-school partnerships. Parent participation has been defined and measured in multiple ways, including activities that parents engage in at home and at school and positive attitudes

parents have towards their child's education, school and teacher. To the researchers, Parents' involvement refers to the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling and her child's life. For the purpose of this study, the researchers measured parent involvement using three variables, including; Parenting and which others [3, 4].

Academic performance really means three things; the ability to study and remember facts, being able to study effectively and see how facts fit together and form larger patterns of knowledge and being able to think for yourself in relation to facts and being able to communicate your knowledge verbally or down on paper [5, 6]. To the researchers, academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers or any assessing and evaluating body (Uganda National

Examination Board, UNEB in this case), and being able to communicate their knowledge verbally or down on paper. For this study, the researcher therefore, used UNEB results for the last four years as a measure of academic performance. Participation of parents in their children's education has long been advocated as integral to positive childhood development and school success [7]. . The beneficial effect of parent participation on children's academic learning, especially during elementary school years, has accumulated over the last decade. Mounting evidence has caused educational researchers and practitioners alike to seek ways to bolster the parent participation. In particular, among parents whose children traditionally have low academic achievement, namely, socio-economically-disadvantaged and non-English speaking students [8]. Parents' participation has always been critical to the performance of students in any given institution of learning [9, 10]. In Mbale city, many parents seem not to care about their children's performance. They have put in negligible efforts to create a good home learning environment. Some are not forthcoming when it comes to discussing school issues and never attend Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. Further, most parents do not read or even inquire to know the information on their children's reports and in the letter to parents that is sent to them at the end of every term. They seem to have neglected their role as parents [11, 12].

But the Government has provided text books and chemicals and posted qualified staff, school's management endeavored to motivate staff and teachers organized remedial classes. Further, external donors have supplemented government's funding by building laboratories, class rooms and dormitories. However, academic performance has remained low (Uganda National Examination Board, UNEB, 2020-2023). Summary of results of the last four years show that only 2.5% got distinctions at Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE). At A-level, 0.25% was able to get principal A (only one in four years) and just 37% were able to get two principal passes that can allow them join higher institutions of learning.

Since the year 2006, the year when science subjects in secondary schools were made compulsory in Uganda, academic performance for students in Mbale city has been too. It has been noted that academic achievement of students may not only depend on the quality of schools and the teachers, rather the extent of parental involvement has vital role to play in academic achievement of their kids. It is upon this background study that intends to examine how the extent of parental involvement in academic activities of their children affects their performance [13-16]. It is feared that if this trend does not improve, parents might take away their children. This study therefore tried to find out the relationship between parents' participation and academic performance of selected secondary schools of students in Mbale city, Uganda.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design. The design was used because it was convenient during the process of data collection and analysis. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were both applied in the study. A qualitative research design was used to gain understanding of underlying

reasons and opinions of the respondents because it was convenient and reliable. Quantitative research on the other hand helped in analyzing, coding and interpreting large amount of data by computer for simple descriptive statistical analysis which was good for quantifying the figures.

Study Population

The target population of this study consisted of head teachers, teachers and students. The population of the study was 1500 respondents of city and the sample size was derived from the population of the study. These categories of the population have been chosen for the reason that they are directly involved in the operations of the school and are deemed to have the

required knowledge on the variables under investigation. A population is a group of individual persons, objects, or items from which samples are taken for measurement for example a population of presidents or professors, books or students who possess at least one common characteristic [17].

Sample Size of the Study

The sample size of the study was 316 respondents within the study area comprising of men, and women. These included the following categories plus with their numbers, that's four (4) Head teachers, 80 Teachers and 232 Students. The sample size was comprised of these categories of respondents because

they are resourceful people and expected to have information regarding the school performance, parental participation on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Mbale City the table below:

The sample size determined using Solven's formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where n = sample size, N = population size, e = sample probability

$$n = \frac{1500}{1 + 1500 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{1500}{15.25}$$

$$n = 316 \text{ respondents}$$

Table 1 Sample Size of the Study and its respondent's categories

Category of Respondents	Estimated population	Sample Size	Method of sampling
Headteachers	5	4	Purposive
Teachers	100	80	Simple random
Students	1395	232	Simple random
Total	1500	316	

Source: Primary Data 2024

Sampling Techniques

The head teachers were sampled purposively for the reason being that they could be more knowledgeable on school management affairs of the school. The researcher used simple random sampling technique to

draw a sample of teachers and students. This technique has been chosen because it gives each member an equal chance of being selected to be part of the sample without bias [18].

Research Tools

The study used a variety of data collection tools as indicated below;

Questionnaire

Questionnaires were distributed to teachers and students as they possess information to answer the questions or items and was willing to answer the

questions honestly and it is thought to be less expensive for data collection [19]. Both open and closed questionnaires were drafted and used to collect from teachers and students respectively.

Interviews

The interview guide was structured to comprise a set of issues on which the researcher wishes to draw data. In this method the researcher interviewed

respondents face to face to obtain in depth information on the study. This instrument was used to collect data from the head teachers.

Reliability and Validity of Research instruments

Reliability of instruments

This is a test or measure of the extent to which a research instrument yielded the same result under the same conditions that is the consistency of the work.

For reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot survey was carried out on some other respondents.

Validity of instruments

According to Allen et al [20], validity refers to the degree to which a measuring instrument measures what is designed to measure. The face validity was carried out by giving questionnaires to supervisor

who went through the questions drafted and make appropriate suggestions and corrections that helped meet the validity.

Data Analysis

Data was coded and analyzed quantitatively as per the specific objectives after collection. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 computer program. The collected data was also

double checked and edited manually to correct writing errors and then coded before entering into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive analysis involved the use of frequencies and percentages. Quantitative data was

presented using, tables, and percentage. Respondents were guaranteed of complete anonymity of all

information provided, and respondents' names will be replaced by numbers.

Data presentation

Frequency tables and percentage tables aided in presenting the collected data so as to make it summarized and more understandable using statistical packages like SPSS. Frequencies and

percentages were also used in tabulation to portray statistics used to analyze and interpret the findings of the study.

Ethical Consideration

After approval of the proposal by the supervisor, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction and an ethical approval letter from Kampala International University to ensure confidentiality the researcher interviewed respondents one by one not as group. The respondents were assured that all their responses were not revealed to anyone else. In order to obtain reliable and valid information from respondent, the researcher explained to each of them the importance

of their responses. (KIU) and copies were given to the schools of Mbale city to grant permission prior to data collection. To ensure confidentiality the researcher was interviewing respondents one by one not as group. The respondents were assured that all their responses were not be revealed to anyone else. In order to obtain reliable and valid information from respondent, the researcher explained to each of them the importance of their responses.

RESULTS

Social characteristics of respondents

Respondents gender

This study involved both male and female participants. It is because the involvement of both genders enables to derive the result and the study behavioral patterns according to gender and make

wise decisions for the purpose of the study on parental participation and students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Mbale city, Uganda.

Table 2: Showing the gender of the respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	116	38
Female	200	62
Total	316	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Results in table 2 indicates that of 316 respondents, majority 200(62%) were female while the remaining 116(38%) were males. The observation here is that a larger proportion of the respondents were female and

the least were males. This means that many respondents were female dominated so they had the right information that suits the study.

Age of respondents

The study involved people of different age brackets from 15-19, 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 years above. This age distribution was crucial for understanding the

representation of different age groups in the study and provides insights into potential age-related differences in the findings.

Table 3: Age bracket

Response	Frequency	Percentage
15-19	210	66
20-29	26	8
30-39	40	13
40-49	30	9
50 and above	10	4
Total	316	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Results in table 3 show that 210(66%) of the respondents were in age brackets of 15-19, 26(8%) were in the age bracket of 20-29, 40(13%) were in the age bracket of 30-39, 30(9%) were in the age bracket of 40-49 and 10(4%) were in the age bracket of 50 and

above. This implies that the majority of the respondents with 66% were in the age bracket of 15-19 and the minority with 10(4%) were in the age bracket of 50 and above.

Respondents' marital status

The researcher sought to establish different status of the respondents who participated in the study in terms of married, single, separated and widowed.

This was aimed at understanding marriage trends of respondents whether respondents are married or not or are marrying again. The results.

Table 4: Showing the marital status of the respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Single	246	78
Married	40	13
Separated or divorced	20	6
Widowed	10	3
Total	316	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 4. show different levels of marital status of respondents. 246 (78%) of the respondents were single, 40 (13%) were married, 20 (6%) were separated or divorced and 10(3%) widowed were females. The

observation shows that majority of the respondents were single and the minority were widowed. This means that learners with both parents receive maximum support towards academic performance.

Education level of the respondent

The study aimed at finding out the level of education of the respondents because the higher the level of education of an individual, the higher and more intelligent the person is assumed to be arguing on

different issues. The study focused on different education levels like certificate, diploma, Degree and Masters levels. The results on education level are shown in table 5.

Table 5: Showing the level of education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	200	63
Diploma	40	13
Degree	72	23
Masters	4	1
Total	316	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

The results in table 5 asserts that of 316 respondents involved in study had different levels of education, 40(63%) of the respondents has certificate, 40(13%) of the respondents had diploma, 72(23%)of the respondents had reached degree level and 4(1%)of the

respondents had masters. This observation show that the majority of the respondents were degree holders and the minority were of certificate level. This means that people have wide range of knowledge to support their children academically.

Relationship between supportive home environment and academic performance in Mbale City

Influence of family Interactions at home on academic performance

The study aimed at finding out the influence of family Interactions at home on academic performance of learners because the higher the Educated

environment the more motivated learners are in pursuing academics.

Table 6: Influence of family Interactions at home on academic performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	150	47
Agree	100	32
Disagree	30	10
Strongly Disagree	36	11
Total	316	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

According to table 6, 150(47%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Family Interactions at Home

affect academic performance, 100 (32%) of the respondent agreed, 30(10%) of the respondents

disagreed and 36(11%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The observation show that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that Family Interactions at Home affect academic performance and the minority strongly disagreed that Family

Interactions at Home affect academic performance. This means that learners surrounded with more informed about academics hence good performance compared to their counterparts.

Physical facilities at home on students’ academic performance

The study looked at physical facilities at home on students’ academic performance because the

availability of adequate resources facilities a convenient environment for learning at home.

Table 7: Physical facilities at home on students’ academic performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	150	47
Agree	100	32
Disagree	36	11
Strongly Disagree	30	10
Total	316	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 7 show 150 (47%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Physical Facilities at Home for Students affect academic performance, 100 (32%) of the respondent agreed, 36(11%) of the respondents disagreed and 30(10%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This implied that the majority of the

respondents strongly agreed that Physical Facilities at Home for Students affect academic performance and the minority strongly disagreed that physical Facilities at Home for Students affect academic performance.

Students’ Self-Esteem from the perspectives of their family academic performance

The study looked at the degree of students’ Self-Esteem from the perspectives of their family academic performance.

Table 8: Students’ Self-Esteem from the perspectives of their family academic performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	120	37
Agree	130	41
Disagree	40	13
Strongly Disagree	26	8
Total	136	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Results in table 8 shows that, 120(37%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Students’ Self-Esteem from the perspectives of their family academic performance, 130 (41%) of the respondent agreed, 40 (13%) of the respondents disagreed and 26(8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This implied that the

majority of the respondents strongly agreed that Students’ Self-Esteem from the perspectives of their family academic performance and the minority strongly disagreed that Students’ Self-Esteem from the perspectives of their family academic performance.

The influence of environment on children’s academic performance

Home Environment on Students’ Academic performance

The study looked at how home Environment contributes to Students’ Academic performance. This

was relevant on understanding how varies environments can impact on learners’ performance

Table 9: Home Environment on Students' Academic performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	100	32
Agree	150	47
Disagree	20	6
Strongly Disagree	46	15
TOTAL	316	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 9 show that, 100 (32%) of the respondents strongly agreed that home Environment Affects Students' Academic performance, 150(47%) of the respondent agreed, 20 (6%) of the respondents disagreed and 46(15%) of the respondents strongly

disagreed. This implied that the majority of the respondents agreed that home environment affects students' academic performance and the minority disagreed that home environment affects students' academic performance.

Academic performance of students living in non-supportive home environment

The study looked at how learners in non-supportive home Environment struggle in their academic performance.

Table 10: Academic performance of students living in non-supportive home environment

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	170	54
Agree	90	28
Disagree	30	9
Strongly Disagree	26	8
Total	316	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 10 show that, 170 (54%) of the respondents strongly agreed that students living in non-supportive home environment struggle in their academic performance, 90 (28%) of the respondent agreed, 30 (9%) of the respondents disagreed and 26 (%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This

implied that the majority of the respondents agreed that students living in non-supportive home environment struggle in their academic performance and the minority disagreed that students living in non-supportive home environment struggle in their academic performance.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents were females and the minority were males. This led to the decision to interview female respondents only as key informants. The majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 20-29 years and the minority were 50 years and above. The majority of the respondents were degree holders and

the minority had reached masters. The study disclosed that the majority of the respondents strongly conceded that the social characteristics of the respondents at home influence academic performance. The social traits/characteristics (behaviors) which are desirable do facilitate better academic performance such characteristics include

greeting, being social and extroverted makes the learners at home to be inquisitive and outgoing which helps them not to fear or shy off unlike aversive social characteristics which seem not be desirable at all cost. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that family interactions at home affect academic performance. Physical Facilities at Home for Students affect academic performance. Students' Self-Esteem from the perspectives of their family academic performance. Home environment affects students' academic performance and the minority disagreed that home environment affects students' academic performance. Students living in non-supportive home environment struggle in their academic performance. The study

conducted revealed that most of the respondents greatly agreed that different reading Environment have huge impact on their children's academic performance. They claim that a conducive environment both at home and school inspires and motivates learning and teaching process within the home surrounding and school set up. They strongly gave empirical evidences to convey their point that is to the reason why parents choose schools with conducive environment is that such Environment aids in good academic performance that's according to the respondents who have liberated themselves from illiteracy. However, some environments with too much background noise, exposed places to the permissive societies negatively affect academic performance in Mbale City.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the relationship between social characteristics, home environment, and academic performance in secondary schools in Mbale city, Uganda. It found that socioeconomic status has a strong positive correlation with academic achievement, suggesting that students from higher-income families perform better. Home environment, including parental involvement, learning environment, family structure, and discipline, also plays a significant role in academic performance.

Students with high parental involvement and access to resources, such as books, internet, and study space, generally perform better. Environmental factors, such as school infrastructure, peer interactions, teacher qualifications, and extracurricular activities, also impact academic performance. Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and supportive home environments tend to perform better, with the quality of the school environment and community resources further amplifying these outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

To effectively improve the level of academic performance in the selected secondary schools in Mbale city Uganda, the following are the recommendations that one should undertake in consideration. For students from challenging social backgrounds, I recommend mentoring programs, tutoring and finance assistance. Family engagement, encourage schools to involve families even in low income areas through workshops on to support learning at home. For schools in low resource areas Community involvement, suggest community initiatives to improve access to educational resources eg establishing local libraries at school programs. Policy recommendations. Advise policy makers to allocate more funding to schools in low income areas to improve facilities and teacher support. For students from different environment. Urban areas, focus on reducing class size and promoting

individualized attention. Rural areas, encourage remote learning programs and the provision of mobile education resources. Purpose targeted policies for improving the educational system such as enhanced teacher training in disadvantaged areas or expanding early childhood education programs. For urban students in low income households. Implement after school tutoring and community based mentorship to help bridge the education gap. For rural students with limited access to technology, provide schools with technology grants and online learning platforms to improve academic performance. For students with low parental engagement, offer parent workshops on how to support learning at home or increase school family communications channels. By doing all the above the children's academic performance will be improved and the students will achieve academically.

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