

Impact of Parental Involvement on Academic Performance of Pupils among Primary Schools in Kabiira Subcounty, Mitooma District, Uganda

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Abstract

This study assessed the effect of parents' involvement on the academic performance of pupils among primary schools in the Kabiira sub-county of Mitooma district - Uganda. Remarkably, the study examined factors such as parents' academic level, occupation, and socio-economic level. The sample size was 60 pupils selected based on simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. The findings revealed that educated parents give more support to pupils' academic achievement. Some occupations do not allow parents time to interact with their children. Parents with good incomes do not only support their children but also support school development programs. The study concluded that parental involvement was vital for pupils' academic success. It is recommended that guidance sessions be organized for parents on the importance of their involvement in their children's education.

Keywords: academic performance, family, influence, socio-economic status, primary schools

Introduction

It is a vital role of parents to have good relationships with their children and also to get involved in their education actively. This involvement has been found to impact their academic performance positively. There are various ways in which parents can be part of the education process of their children: providing a healthy and secure home environment, helping them to do their school work, visiting them at school, attending school events, having parent-to-child talks, and being role models (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Family harmony can easily be affected due to parental conflicts. Parental conflicts vary from mild to severe (Harold et al., 2007). In accounting for the relationship between marital relations and children's adjustment, researchers suggest that a relationship between spouses affects their children's adjustment directly through emotional stress levels, role modeling, and academic performance (Nicholas-Omoregbe, 2010).

Fan and Williams (2009) worked on the effects of parental involvement on pupils' academic self-efficacy, engagement, and

intrinsic motivation, which was done in America. They analyzed the various dimensions of parental participation and their outcomes. They reported that both parents' educational aspirations for their youngsters and school-initiated contact with parents on school issues strongly affected motivational outcomes and functioning. This research aimed to demonstrate the importance of parent involvement to the pupils' academic performance/skills. When the parents put more effort into their child's academics, the result is expected to be better.

Parenting, and by implication, lack of it, is the single most significant variable implicated in truancy, school disruption, and under-achievement. Both mothers and fathers make a vital contribution to the cognitive and emotional well-being of their children. However, studies suggest that the most critical family trend in the United States is the growing absence of fathers from children and this leads to truancy. Healy et al. (1993), in a study of primary school children six months after parental separation, found that one-third reported some feelings of self-blame, which in turn was related to a variety of child problems and lowered feelings of self-competence.

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Various studies have highlighted different factors that influence parental involvement in the academic well-being of their child. Corwyn and Bradley (2016) found substantial support for the positive relationship between mothers' and fathers' supportive behavior, educational level, language is spoken in the home and adolescent's aspirations. In support of this claim, Rodgers and Rose (2001) examined the relationship between family factors and academic performance among a sample with a mean age of 15 from intact, divorced, and blended families. The study revealed that adolescents from divorced families reported less parental support and monitoring, which strongly predicted their academic achievement. Support from family is critical because poor support contributes to lower academic achievement among adolescents, even in intact families (Siti *et al.*, 2005).

In addition, Sun and Li (2002) found that high parental conflict is associated with lower scores on mathematics and reading exams among adolescents from divorced families compared to adolescents in intact families. This indicates that divorce among couples generally leads to a severe decline in the standard of living of single-parent families, and this decline may increase children's development risk in various aspects, including academic achievement. According to Sun and Li (2002), the economic hardship associated with divorced families was found to mediate the educational defects of children in such families.

In a study by Rana (2015), it was reported that the level of education attained by parents significantly affects their involvement in their children's academic endeavors. In this regard, parents who had attained higher levels of education were found to be more involved in the academic process of their children than those who reported having lower levels of education. Parents who have higher levels of education tend to have more love for education and, more substantial confidence in their children's learning abilities, and greater expectations of their children. Parents expect their children to attend school, behave well, and get good grades. With such expectations, parents themselves also end up building their own confidence in supporting their children in all possible ways to enable them to achieve academically (Jantullu *et al.*, 2024). In a study by Eccles (2005), it was pointed out that children can learn by example through observation and imitation. For example, if a parent tends to engage him/herself in reading books, participating in educational programs, and taking children along when visiting a museum or library, in this way, their children learn from such experiences and this can positively contribute to their education achievement.

On the other hand, although the involvement of parents in the education of their children impacts positively on their academic performance, this involvement was found to be greatly influenced by the socio-economic status of the parents. A low socio-economic status was discovered to hinder the participation of parents in the education of their children (Gratz *et al.*, 2006). Parents with a low income reported that they work for a long time to sustain their families, which limits their duties as far as their education is concerned (Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009). Despite this limitation, it did not imply that parents with a low socio-economic status are not concerned with their children's education. These parents also believe that their children get all the support they need to excel in their education just like their friends from high socio-economic backgrounds, only that they are hindered by low financial status and ignorance due to their low education level.

Problem Statement

Mitooma district is one of the rural districts in western Uganda, with most of the primary schools located in hard-to-reach areas. Despite the various government programs like 'rising the village' and 'wealth creation for all,' most of the locals are poor peasants with a deficient socio-economic status. Among primary schools in the district and specifically in the Kabiira sub-county, where the first author happens to be one of the teachers, pupils are often seen without school uniforms, others in ragged clothes, no shoes and even some come to school without basic scholastic materials like books and pens/pencils. Additionally, when the pupils are given homework, most return the next day when it is not done, while others come with incomplete one. This situation may be one

of the reasons why grades usually obtained by pupils at the National Primary Leaving Examination (NPLE) in the district, particularly in the Kabiira sub-county, are always poor compared to other areas.

It has been realized that despite the vast research on parental involvement, most of it has been done in urban areas and among secondary schools. Little is known about the effects of parental involvement on pupils in rural primary schools, specifically in the Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma district. These studies have also not explored how this involvement is affected by factors such as parents' education level, occupation and socio-economic status and how these factors interrelate with each other. It is in this context that this research was designed to establish whether parental involvement affects the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Kabiira Sub County, Mitooma District. The study explored the impact of parents' academic level on academic performance, the effect of parents' occupation on academic performance, and the relationship between parents' income level and academic performance, specifically of pupils in Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma District, Uganda. The study went ahead to establish how these three factors interrelate with each other.

It was believed that the findings in this study may help the parents to be aware of the effect the family has on children and how such affects the child positively or negatively about their academic performance. From the available recommendations, they will be able to adopt measures of bringing up their children so that they will perform well academically. Similarly, it is likely to encourage parents to make their children relatively comfortable in school. This study also could aid Pupils of various families to be aware and bear in mind with their parents in their ability to provide them with all the requirements in schools and sympathize with them in family problems and situations.

More so, educational and curriculum planners will be guided in curriculum planning without rigidity to suit diverse cultural and geographical environments. In addition, the teachers would be aware that a cordial teacher-parent relationship may, in a way, improve the influence of socio-economic status on the academic performance of a child in school. Finally, the research, when completed, may add to the available literature and may encourage further research on the topic.

Objective

The study shall try to establish the effect of parental involvement on pupils' academic performance in the primary schools in Kabiira Sub-county, Mitooma District, Uganda. More precisely, it will try to identify how variables like parents' level of education, occupation, and socio-economic status impinge on their pupils' academic performances. All these factors were analyzed in order to observe in what ways parental involvement acts as or hampers the academic success of children, bringing observations that might help improve educational outcomes in children in rural settings.

Methodology

This study was non-experimental and quantitative, adopting a descriptive research design with cross-sectional survey methods. It targeted the primary seven pupils in the Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma district. It was done among 60 pupils randomly selected from four (4) government-aided primary schools in the Kabiira sub-county. The random selection gives an equal chance to the entire population without any bias. Data was collected using a researcher's self-designed questionnaire. The completed questionnaire was presented to three research experts within the university to ascertain the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of each item using the Prion *et al.* (2017) formula:

$$CVR = \frac{n - \frac{N}{2}}{\frac{N}{2}} = .851$$

Where n is the number of experts indicating an item as valid, and N is the total number of experts (3). This value, compared

with the minimum acceptable value of 0.7, according to Prion *et al.* (2017), renders the instrument valid.

A pilot study after that was conducted among 15 pupils. Their responses were entered into a computer using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), and Cronback Alpha Coefficient was computed and obtained as .895. After that, data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Valley University of Science and Technology research committee (Ref. 24/VUST/137D). Before data collection, written consent was obtained from the participants' parents since they are below the adult age of 18 years (according to the Government of Uganda). The respondents, through their parents, were assured of anonymity of their identities and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time they

wished to. However, they were informed that the obtained information would be shared with the university and could be published in journals for the benefit of many.

Results and Discussion

This study was conducted among 60 primary pupils in the Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma district. The gender of the respondents is presented in Figure 1. From Figure 1, it was found that 55 % of the pupils were boys while 45 % were girls. The study implies that more boys pupils are in upper primary classes than girls. Among the parents, 76% were females and only 24 % were males. The study indicated that primarily mothers give more time to their children than fathers.

Figure 1
Respondents of Pupils and Parents (by gender)

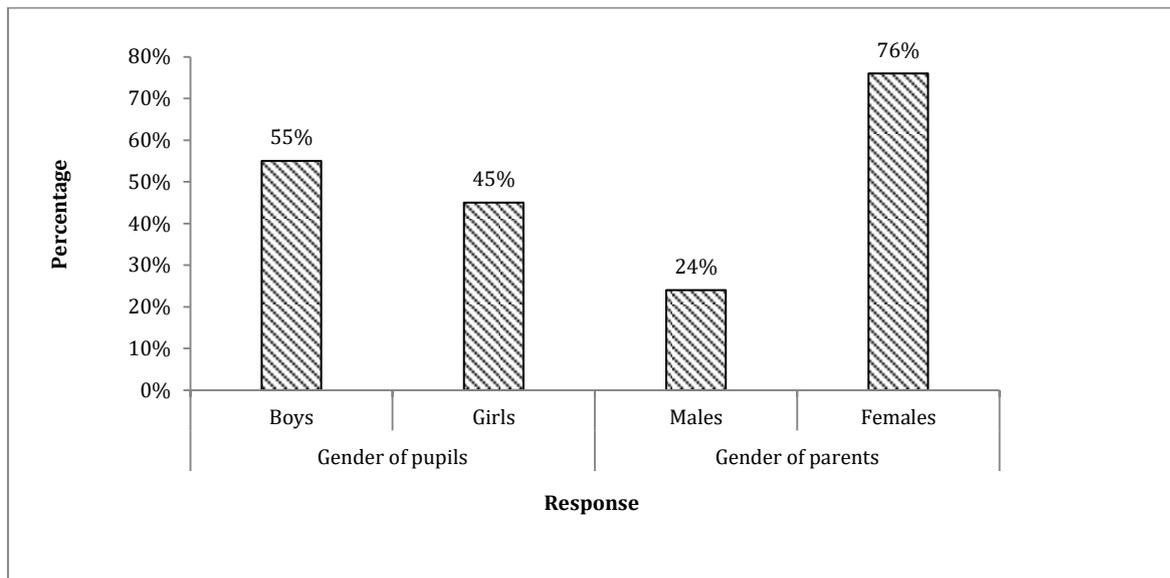


Figure 2
Age of Pupils

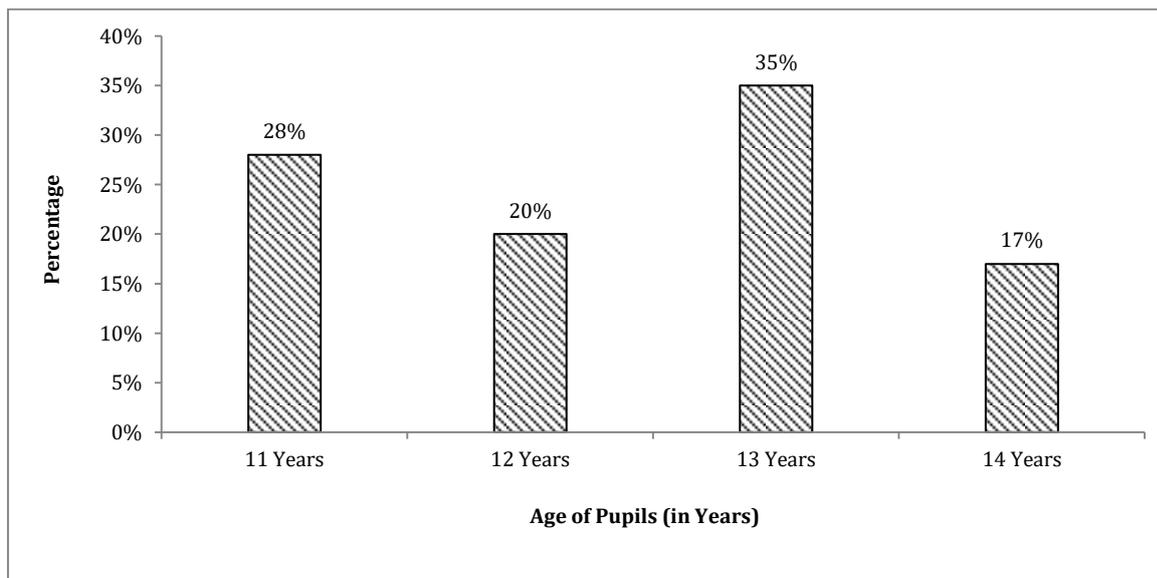


Figure 2, 28 % were 11 years, 20% were 12 years, 35% were 13 years and 17 % were 14 years and above. Thus, it is observed that the majority were 13 years old, which is the expected average age of pupils as they complement the primary level of education.

In assessing the impact of parents' involvement on pupils' academic performance, a questionnaire weighed on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The findings are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1*Responses on Parents' Level of Education and Academic Performance of Pupils in Primary Schools in Kabiira Sub-County, Mitooma District*

Particulars	AS	A	NS	D	SD
All educated parents provide most of the recommended textbooks and other learning aids for their children	52(86.7%)	8(13.3%)	0	0	0
Parents who are educated encourage their children to study subjects which are pivotal for their career	60(100%)	0	0	0	0
In homes of educated parents, there is a conducive environment for studies	49(81.7)	11(18.3)	0	0	0
Educated parents arrange for supportive teachers for the subject/subjects which their words/children find difficult in the school	52(86.7)	8(13.3)	0	0	0
Average percentage	88.8	11.2	0	0	0

Note. SA = strong agree; A = agree; NS = Not Sure; DA = Disagree; SD = strongly disagree.

Table 1 indicates that 86.7 % of the respondents felt that parents who are educated provide most of the recommended textbooks and other learning aids for their children, 100 % pointed out that parents who are educated encourage their children to study subjects which are pivotal for their career, 81.7 % showed that in homes of educated parents, there is a conducive environment for studies, and according to 86.7 % of

respondents, educated parents arrange for supportive teachers for the subject/subjects which their words/children find difficult in the school. Generally, on average, the majority (88.8 %) of the respondents feel that educated parents are more involved in the education process of their children and this positively influences their academic performance.

Table 2*Responses on Parents' Occupation and Academic Performance of Pupils in Primary Schools in Kabiira Sub-County, Mitooma District*

Particulars	AS	A	NS	D	SD
Some occupations do not give parents time to attend to their children's academic needs	50(83.3%)	8(13.3%)	0	0	2(3.3%)
Parents with low-paying occupations find it difficult to provide learning aids for their children	60(100%)	0	0	0	0
Parents who are poor farmers can only enroll their children into the minor apprenticeship program	60(100%)	0	0	0	0
Average percentage	94.4	4.4	0	0	1.1

Note. SA = strong agree; A = agree; NS = Not Sure; DA = Disagree; SD = strongly disagree.

From Table 2, 83.3 % of the respondents strongly agreed that as educated parents seem to be more supportive of their children's education, some occupations do not give them time to attend to their children's academic needs. Additionally, all respondents strongly agreed that parents in poor-paying occupations find it difficult to provide learning aids for their children. Additionally, 100

% strongly agreed that parents who are poor farmers can only enroll their children into minor apprenticeship programs. Thus, 94.4 % of the respondents pointed out that some occupations of parents deny them the right to optimally be involved in the education of their children.

Table 3*Responses on Socio-Economic Status and Academic Performance of Pupils in Primary Schools in Kabiira Sub-County, Mitooma District*

Particulars	AS	A	NS	D	SD
Children from high-income status parents achieve better academically than those from low-income status parents	22(36.7%)	23(38.3%)	0	12(20%)	3(5%)
Children whose parents are of high-income status have higher career aspirations than children whose parents are of low-income status	44(73.3%)	12(20%)	0	0	4(6.7%)
Average percentage	55	29.2	0	10	5.9

Note. SA = strong agree; A = agree; NS = Not Sure; DA = Disagree; SD = strongly disagree.

From Table 3, 36.7 % of the respondents strongly agreed and 38.3 % agreed that children from high-income status parents achieve better academically than those from low-income status parents, while 6.7 % strongly disagreed. More so, 73.3 strongly agreed and 20.0 % agreed that children whose parents are of high-income status have higher career aspirations than children whose parents are of low-income status. The responses of each participant for the three factors that influence parent involvement in the education of their children were averaged and then correlated to assess how they are dependent on one another (Table 4).

Table 4 shows that there is a positive (.397) and significant (.002) correlation between parents' level of education and their occupation and academic performance, a positive (.149) but non-significant (.257) correlation between parents' level of education and their economic status, and parents' poor occupation was found to have a weak negative and non-significant correlation

with the economic status of parents. These findings show that parents who are highly educated are likely to get good-paying jobs and thus have high economic status. This enables them to provide financially for their children and directly be involved in this education, which enables them to perform well academically. With reference to the study findings, the education achievement of pupils is a function of several aspects of parents' level of involvement, such as the education level of parents, parents' occupation, and family's economic status, as pointed out by Regasa and Taha (2015). According to the findings, it was realized that parents who are educated have a high positive attitude towards the education of their children and have greater confidence that their children will be successful. These results agree with those of Sarkowi *et al.* (2023), who pointed out that parents visiting their children at school and continuously encouraging them boosts the children's confidence in studying, and this makes them perform well.

Table 4

Pearson correlation between Education Level, Occupation, and Economic Status of Parents in Relation to the Academic Performance of Pupils in Primary Schools in Kabiira Sub-County, Mitooma District

	parents' level of education and academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Kabiira sub		Parents' occupation and academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma district		Parents' economic status and academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma district	
	Pearson correlation	<i>p</i>	Pearson correlation	<i>p</i>	Pearson correlation	<i>p</i>
Parents' level of education and academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma district.	1	---	.397**	.002	.149	.257
Parents' poor occupation and academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma district.	.397**	.002	1		-.062	.636
Parents' economic status and academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Kabiira sub-county, Mitooma district.	.149	---	-.062	.636	1	

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
N=60.

Additionally, the economic status of families, especially income and wealth, are key determinants of the education achievement of children. Research by Regasa and Taha (2015). Syndicates that parents who are financially stable have the ability to provide for their children and involve themselves more in the education of their children. In this line, Ada (2019) conducted a study on how parents' self-concept, gender, and socio-economic status impact learners' general academic achievement in Biology, and it was reported that children coming from high social-economic families had an advantage of performing better in school than those from low-income backgrounds. This may be due to the fact that education requires money in the form of fees, scholastic materials, transport and money and other facilitations, otherwise, it becomes challenging.

Agreeing with the study findings and other scholars are Kyao and Onyango (2024), who conducted a study among students in secondary schools on how parents' occupation affects the education achievement of their children. It was pointed out that some occupations do not allow parents to stay with their children, and others are too demanding in that parents leave home very early and return very late and cannot even afford to visit their children at school. This situation creates a big gap between parents and their children's life struggles, which can hinder their academic progress. Similarly, Seeret and Manzoor (2021) reported that the occupation of a parent determines their income and what they can offer to their children. The authors further clarify that parents with low-paying occupations find it difficult to pay school fees, provide scholastic materials, and cannot even afford a home library, all of which can negatively affect the school performance of these children.

Conclusion

Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that parents' involvement greatly affects the academic performance of their children. This involvement was found to be influenced by the parents. Education level, occupation, and social-economic status. The higher the level of education of a parent, the greater the will

to be involved in the education process of their children. Some occupations are so demanding that parents have no time to be physically present for their children's education. Parents of low social-economic status were found to be less involved in the education process of their children.

Recommendations

1. Parental Guidance and Counseling: Seminars should be carried out for parental guidance on the importance of their role in their children's academic lives and how it can exemplarily raise the academic performance of the child. Schools and policymakers should also encourage opportunities where parents can be more involved in their children's educational activities throughout the school year, even those whose schedules are tight or with lower socio-economic status.
2. Assistance to Low-Income Families: Such programs should be developed that could provide resources to low-income families so that they may better support their children's education, like providing essential scholastic materials.
3. Flexibility in Work Policies: Facilities should be given to employers so that they can provide more time to parents from demanding occupations to take part in their children's education.
4. Parenting Education Programs: Government and NGOs should institute such a viewed educational program, which raises the levels of education amongst parents since more educated parents are more likely to be involved in the scholastic lives of their children.
5. Community and School Collaboration: Schools should make attempts at establishing better relations with parents through periodic contacts and meetings so that parents feel at home and well-informed of their children's progress at school.
6. Holistic Child Support: Educators should recognize the supportive home environment and family, including the community, in striving to bring improvement in students' academic affairs.

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