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Parental Involvement in Academic Performance of Girl Child in Primary Schools in Buseta Sub-County of Kibuku District, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

The study examined parental participation and girl-child academic achievement in elementary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District. Cross-sectional survey research design was used for the study and data were collected via questionnaires. The findings showed that numerous socio-economic factors affected parental involvement in girl-child education in Buseta Sub County elementary schools including social class, income, parents' attitudes towards girl-child education, cultural norms, parental education, inadequate government policy, and school distance were among these factors. Based on the findings, the study calls for parents and guardians should be educated on the benefits of lowering girls' workload at home. Furthermore, private primary schools should offer scholarships to underprivileged girls. Since parents are stakeholders in the girl child's education, School Management Committees should educate them on their roles. Parents and guardians should schedule time to help their children, especially girls, access school resources. Finally, the government should provide energy and subsidise solar power projects in rural areas to assist children in finishing their homework with parents/guardians. **Keywords:** Academic performance, Education subsidy, Girl child, Parental involvement, School management committee.

INTRODUCTION

Alfred, Kigundu, Muwaga and Wamaungo [1] state that parents' engagement has always been vital to students' success in any educational institution. Parental participation has been shown to improve children's intellectual development, particularly in elementary school, in the past decade. Parents are vital to their children's educational goals. They help with attendance, finances, and achievement. Parents can help teachers maximise students' academic potential and monitor teaching quality and tactics [2]. According to Wilder [3], everyone comes from a family, hence parental engagement in any stage of development is essential. Parental engagement in development varies by culture and society. According to Ogunsola, Osulale and Ojo [4], numerous factors affect student performance. More often than not, parents and family are the primary platform on which learning begins, is nurtured, encouraged, and developed, which affects student performance. Lau, Li & Rao [5] found that parental involvement varied by marital status and employment status in Hong Kong and Shenzhen (China). Kim [6] found that Korean-American families had extremely high home-based parental involvement and very low school-based parental involvement. Antony-Newman [7] found that Eastern European immigrant parents of elementary school students in Canada supported their children at home by emphasising academic achievement and extracurricular activities. Despite high cultural capital, immigrant parents had different social capital. Those with substantial social networks in the new nation communicated better with teachers and were happier at school. Ogunsola, Osulale & Ojo [4] found that parents' attitudes towards their children's education affected students' self-reporting of academic achievement in senior secondary school in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Ndwandwe [8] found that parental involvement in secondary school students' education in Namibia's Erongo region was low due to many factors, including parents' low educational backgrounds. Additional obstacles were inadequate parent capacity building, language barriers, and parents' lack of educational knowledge. Ngussa and Ngowa [9] used survey data and standardised tests in 126 primary schools in Kwanza-Sul, Angola, to examine conditional correlations between parental involvement, including homeschooling and formal school

participation, and children's test performance. Negative correlations in benchmark specifications are unique to lower-performing schools, indicating that school quality shapes the link between formal participation and test achievement. Chemaget[10] found that parents' activism in school management improved students' national exam performance in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County (Kenya). Echaune, Ndiku & Sang [11] examined the relationship between parental involvement in homework and school academic performance in Teso North Sub County, Busia, Kenya and found that parents provided limited help with reading, writing, and maths. In his study "Parents' involvement and academic performance of universal primary education schools in Buhaguzi County, Hoima District" (Uganda), Bulowa, Maiyo and Likoko [12] found that parents were less involved in providing scholastic requirements to students, especially feeding them.[13]. Mugumya, Mwesigye and Ahimbisibwe[13] evaluated parents' engagement and students' academic achievement at Ryakasinga Centre for Higher Education in Sheema, Uganda. A considerable favourable correlation was found between parenting and academic performance. Parental involvement in school is linked to academic success and social skills. Parental involvement in girls' academic success can be studied in many ways[14]. Schools provide a suitable learning environment for children, but parents and community are also important. Parents, adult family members, and siblings shape a child's personality and academic performance[15]. Many Ugandas' parents are not involved in their children's education. Disengaged parents who are not interested in their children's academic lives often promote school failures or a generation of learners who are not interested in studying or learning. Children who receive parental support develop an appropriate mindset, motivation, and self-discipline at school. Higher scores suggest more parental involvement in their children's online learning, whereas lower scores indicate less[16]. Serugo[17] found that boys outperformed girls in Primary Leaving Examinations, and girls in primary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District are no exception. However, no study has examined the relationship between parental involvement and girl-child academic performance in primary schools. This gap is what necessitated the present study.

Factors That Influence Parental Involvement in Primary Schools

Ndiku [18] examined parental involvement in homework and school academic performance in Teso North Sub County, Busia, Kenya, and found that female parents were more willing to help children with homework. Curry and Adams[19] noted that school and community social networks might limit or stimulate parental participation. Social network size and community leader support determine parents' home and school involvement. Chohan and Khan[15] state that parental support relies on ethnicity, family income, home environment, and education awareness. The historic Universal Primary Education (UPE) legislation in Uganda removed school and PTA fees, giving parents more avenues to participate in education. Parental involvement is limited to providing school materials and food. Parents still argue about these inputs. Concerns exist that some parents may not feel deeply connected to schools, where their children spend most of their days and growing years[20]. Anderson & Minke[21] found that good teacher encouragement and head teachers' desire to create close ties with parents increase parent involvement. Teachers influence parental involvement most at home, school, and in parent-teacher associations. Social class substantially influences parents' educational goals for their children. Education and income affect parents' involvement in their children's activities [22]. Teachers' views on their duties affect how much they encourage parental participation. Teachers and parents have different expectations of each other. Teachers don't always encourage parental involvement in learning[23]. According to Smith[24], some parents still believe that no one, including head teachers, can charge them for elementary education because the government pays for it. Thus, many parents wonder what role they may play without contributing monetarily. Raising awareness of parental roles and education support is necessary. Parents' self-perceptions of their capacity to support their children or participate in school affect their involvement at home and in school[25]. Homby and Lafaele[26] also noted that weak legislative frameworks and poor communication of expectations contribute to parental ignorance of their education responsibilities. In both circumstances, these issues might hinder positive and satisfying engagement. Few parents go to school; therefore, they lack the confidence and knowledge to help their kids learn. Their income also affects how often they can fund their kids' education. One reason parents pull children out of school is poverty and the necessity for them to work on farms and in small businesses[27]. Parents will act if they believe in their abilities and believe they can help their children learn. Parental self-perception and engagement influence their activities[28].

Level of Academic Performance of Girl Child in Primary Schools

Academic performance is the amount to which a student, instructor, or institution has met their education goals. Learning quality and quantity includes knowledge, skills, techniques, positive attitude, behaviour, and philosophy [26]. Only 36,987 girls completed division one on the 2020 PLE, while 44,877 boys did. English subject-wise, girls outperformed boys [17]. Under 50% of Ugandan students passed the PLE. In Uganda, 10.6% of girls and 9.5% of boys meet the standards [29]. Nyoni [30] reports that parents of underachieving children lose interest in their schooling. Malawi's 2002–2006 pass rates were 69% for girls and 79% for boys. Only 36,987 girls completed Division One in 2020, while 44,877 boys did. Despite 41,911 more female candidates than men in 2020, boys outperformed girls [31]. Scholars have worried about children's academic achievement for decades. Students fail school due to low socioeconomic background, cognitive aptitude, school-related problems, home environment, or parental and family support [32]. International examinations also show low elementary school achievement. The 2002 Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) found that 0.1% of girls and 0.5% of boys in Malawi met attainment standards [33].

Parental Involvement and Academic Performance of Girl Child

Parental involvement in their children's education has long been recommended for positive childhood development and school success, according to Mugumya et al. [13]. Parent participation has improved children's academic development, notably in primary school, over the last decade. Mahuro and Hungi [34] noted that parents must be involved in school administration, governance, and decision-making for effective operations. Parents should be involved in school decisions through parent-teacher groups, management committees, and patrons or chairpersons. The types of parental participation studied have yielded diverse results. Some research shows no correlation between parental participation and student accomplishment. This uncertainty necessitates more research on parental engagement characteristics to determine the most effective activities [35]. Mahuro and Hungi [34] found that parental involvement in teaching and learning resources improved students' academic performance in national exams in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County (Kenya). There is a strong and positive relationship between providing scholastic requirements to pupils and the academic performance of UPE schools [36]. Echaune, Ndiku & Sang [37] believe that parental participation remains a major issue despite efforts to address academic success issues. Poor outcomes in Kenyan schools are attributed to unsupportive parents. Educational research has linked parental involvement in children's schooling to many academic results, according to Mahuro & Hungi [34]. Children's academic performance requires parental time and resources. Chohan & Khan observed in their 2010 study "Impact of parental support on the academic performance and self-concept of the student" that parents' involvement in their children's education consistently improves academic performance and self-concept. Jeynes [38] found that parental participation and support for children's academic success at home and school are positively correlated. Echaune, Ndiku, and Sang [37] examined parental involvement in homework and its relationship to school academic performance in Teso North Sub County, Busia, Kenya. They found a positive correlation. The study found educational benefits from parental participation and validated their importance in schooling. Students' academic growth is significantly correlated with parents' educational goals. Parental education affects child learning [39]. Schneider & Lee [40] related East Asian students' academic success to their parents' attitudes and goals and their home learning activities. Parental support is essential for students to succeed in school. In all areas of learning, research shows that parental involvement improves student performance [28]. Mahuro and Hungi [34] found in Iganga and Mayuge districts, Uganda, that parental involvement through parenting and communication enhanced pupils' numeracy results by 6 and 15 percentage points, respectively. Parental involvement through parenting and communication enhanced students' reading scores by 6 and 12 percentage points, respectively. The implied message was that parental involvement motivates children to improve academically.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Target Population

The study used a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population of this study was 100 respondents who comprised head teachers, teachers, and pupils. The study aimed at collecting information from a representative sample of the study population.

Sample Size

A sample size of 80 respondents was used to provide information for the study. The sample size was determined using the Morgan table.

Table 1: Target population and sample size

Category of respondents	Target population	Sample size
Headteachers	02	02
Teachers	20	16
Pupils	78	62
Total	100	80

Field survey, 2023

Data Sources

The study used both secondary and primary data. Primary data was collected from participants with the help of semi-structured questionnaires. On the other hand, secondary data was collected from journals, magazines, textbooks, and internet websites which were directly or indirectly related to the variables under study.

RESULTS

Table 2: Respondents responses on the factors that influence parental involvement in primary schools

Responses	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage (%)
Socio-economic status	16	20
Parents' attitude towards girl-child education	20	25
Cultural norms	12	15
Education of parents/guardians	10	12
Poor government policy	8	10
Distance from school	14	7
Total	80	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

In Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District, 16 (20%) of respondents indicated socio-economic status/income as socio-economic or geographical factors influenced parental involvement in elementary schools, 20 (25%) indicated parents' attitude towards girl-child education in the family, 12 (15%) indicated cultural norms, 10 (12%) indicated education of parents/guardians, 8 (10%) indicated poor government policy, and 14 (7%) indicated distance from school.

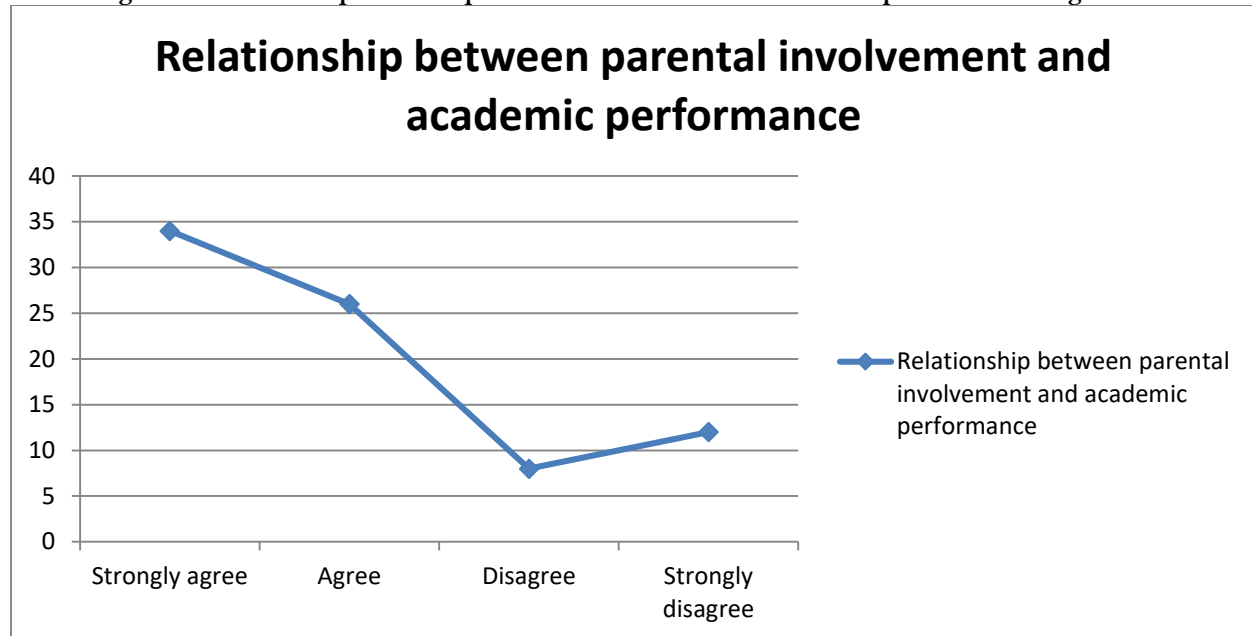
Table 2: Respondents' responses on the level of academic performance of girl child in primary schools

Responses	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage (%)
Very high	10	12
High	26	32
Low	30	38
Very low	14	18
Total	80	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Teachers, students, and head teachers were asked about the academic achievement of girl children in elementary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District. 10 (12%) ranked it very high, while 26 (32%) rated it high. 30 (38%) said girl children's academic performance in elementary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District was low, while 14 (18%) said it was very bad. The findings indicated that girl students in primary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District had low academic performance and needed to improve.

Figure 1: Relationship between parental involvement and academic performance of girl child



Source: Field survey, 2023

When questioned about the association between parental participation and girl child academic performance in elementary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District, 34 (42%) highly agreed and 26 (33%) agreed. 8 (10%) of respondents disputed that parental participation strongly affected girl child academic achievement in elementary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District, while 12 (15%) strongly disagreed. Even though parental involvement is linked to girl child academic performance in primary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District, the study found that some parents did not have enough time to help their children complete their assignments, some parents feared being embarrassed in front of their children if they did not remember what they asked, and some parents were poor and could not afford paraffin or general. Despite the foregoing data, most respondents agreed that parental participation affected girl child academic performance in primary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District, while a few disagreed.

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The study found that numerous socio-economic factors affected parental involvement in girl child education in Buseta Sub County elementary schools. Parent's socio-economic status/income, attitude towards girl-child education, cultural norms, education, inadequate government policy, distance from school, and others were variables. This study can be compared to Mahuro and Hungi [34], who found that some parents still believe that no one, including head teachers, can charge them for elementary education because the government pays for it. Thus, many parents wonder what role they may play without contributing monetarily. The study findings reflect Chohan and Khan[15], who believed that parental support relied on ethnicity, family income, home environment, and education awareness. The findings showed that girl students in primary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District had low academic performance and needed improvement. Study findings can be compared to Sserugo [17] who found that only 36, 987 girls completed division one on the 2020 PLE, while 44,877 boys did. English subject-wise, girls outperformed boys. Under 50% of Ugandan students passed the PLE. In Uganda, 10.6% of girls and 9.5% of boys meet the standards. Most respondents felt that parental participation was strongly linked to girl child academic success in primary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District. The findings were consistent with Chohan and Khan's[15] 2010 study that found that parents' involvement in their children's education had a consistent and positive effect on academic performance and self-concept. This study can be compared to Jaynes [38] who found that family participation improved student performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined parental participation and girl primary school performance in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District. The study found that socio-economic factors affected parental involvement in girl child education in primary schools. The academic achievement of girl children was often low and needed improvement. Most respondents believed that parental participation affected girl child academic achievement in primary schools in Buseta Sub County, Kibuku District. Based on the findings, the study calls for parents and guardians should be

educated on the benefits of lowering girls' workload at home. Furthermore, private primary schools should offer scholarships to underprivileged girls. Since parents are stakeholders in the girl child's education, School Management Committees should educate them on their roles. Parents and guardians should schedule time to help their children, especially girls, access school resources. Finally, the government should provide energy and subsidise solar power projects in rural areas to assist children in finishing their homework with parents/guardians.

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