**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY BACKGROUND AND ACADEMIC**

**PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE OF BUSHENYI DISTRICT.**

**BY**

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# DECLARATION

I, **Namakobe Haliima,** declare that the work contained in this research dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university or institution of higher learning for any academic award.

Candidate’s name: **Namakobe Haliima**

Signature……………………………… Date………………………………

# APPROVAL

This research dissertation titled, “Relationship between family background and academic performance of secondary school students. A case study of Bushenyi District”, is being carried out under my supervision as a university lecturer.

Supervisor’s name: Dr Herbert Sekandi

Signature: ………………………… ……… Date: ……………………………………………

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Uncle Yona B Muganzi and my family for the support, love, care among others that they have always and are willing to offer me, may the good Lord bless you abundantly.

# 

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Almighty God for accepting that I come into this life.

To my parents who brought me into this life and supported me until I grew up to take on responsibility on my own and also look after them in their old age. I appreciate you so much because without your physical and parental endeavors, I would not be into this life and grow up to this stage. I owe you a lot in recognition and appreciation. Thank you so much.

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# ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

DEO District Education Officer

MMR Mixed Methods Research

PLE Primary leaving examinations

UACE Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education

UCE Uganda Certificate of Education

UN United Nations

UNEB Uganda National Examinations Board

USA United States of America

USE Universal Secondary Education.

# OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Academic-** The process of teaching and learning in school. It involves reading, studying and examinations.

**Educational level-** The rank of a person’s formal education attainment.

**Family-** A group consisting of blood related people including those adopted to the group.

**Family background-** refers to circumstances and past events that help to explain how a child develops.

**Family background relationship**- refers to any positive or negative impression or effect that families exercise on their children while studying in the schools.

**Family financial Status –** This is the money that a person earns at a given time and place. It can be in form of monthly salary or wages as well as returns got from a business.

**Performance -** Refers to degree of attainment of the required grades in school situation.

**Marital Status-** The condition of being married or unmarried

# ABSTRACT

Family backgrounds have been high lightened as of great importance in molding the performance of students in schools worldwide. This study therefore investigated the relationship between family backgrounds on the academic performance of students in Bushenyi District. This study focused on the influences of; parental marital status, family financial status, and parents’ education level on the academic performance of students in Bushenyi District. The study employed a descriptive research design. The target population under study was 500 people. The study used a sample population of 222 people; 130 students, 50 parents, 30 teachers, 10 school administrators, 1 inspector of schools and 1 DEO who were selected by use of a proportionate stratified random sampling method. Data was collected by use of questionnaire and interview schedules. The data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and presented using tables. The findings of the study showed that parental marital status, parents’ education level and family financial status had a positive relationship with academic performance of students. The study recommended that the families should be structured on a functionality level to avoid single parenthood if academic performance has to be achieved, the family should have stable income if the children have to achieve academically.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Over view of the chapter

This chapter introduces the background, statement of the problem, the general and specific objectives, the research questions, the scope and significance of the study.

## 1.1 Background of the study

The background of the study consisted of the following perspectives: Historical perspective, Theoretical perspective, Conceptual perspective and contextual perspective.

## 1.1.1 Historical perspective

Education is very vital in human existence because the society and education are interrelated and inter-dependent. This can also be seen in the nature and development of a child in a given society. The school is an umbrella governing children from different parental background and social background and as such the children learning and rate of academic development is closely related to experience. The child’s performance in school is determined by environment in which the child finds himself or herself. In the child’s environment different factors can be found, which include social economic, psychological, cultural genetic environmental and emotional. Education is a basic tool used by society for transmission of its societal values. It has become an area of prime importance not only for government or voluntary agencies but also for individuals, families, and communities.

The United Nations Report (2010) highlighted education as a basic right and need which is significant in the accomplishment of the second goal of the Millennium Development Goals. This is because good education academic performance guarantees skilled and dynamic citizens. In addition, one of the aspects of the social pillar of Uganda Vision 2040 is education. Uganda Vision 2040 points out education and training as the media that will take Uganda to be a middle-income economy.

Voluntary agencies and individuals are committing a lot of resources in order to achieve success in the educational enterprise (Orhungur, 1990). The issue of students’ performance at schools has been of concern ever since modern education was introduced. Many countries have come to realize that pupils are at the heart of educational process and that without good performance; all innovations in education are doomed to failure. There is a wide dissatisfaction with the current situation of schooling in many countries and parents come in for the blame. This is because majority of the 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.

Decades of research on the effects of student, family, household, and school characteristics on student academic achievement have attempted to find a global explanation for school success or failure. Worldwide studies conclude that student characteristics (e.g. gender, social background, and future outlook) play varying roles in achievement gaps and enrollment disparities ( Filmer, 2005; Lee, Zuze, and Ross, 2005). Family responsibilities, parental involvement, and available resources are some household factors that influence student achievement and aspirations (Jeynes, 2003; Sackey, 2007). However, conclusions are inconsistent across countries (Bowers & Urick, 2011; Wobmann & West, 2006), and there is a long-standing debate of whether student and family or school characteristics have larger effects on academic performance. Researchers have investigated whether academic achievement is more strongly predicted by student or school factors (Baker, Goesling & LeTendre, 2002; Nonoyama-Tarumi & Willms, 2010).

Further McIntosh (2008) in his study concluded that in Canada, children who came from low income households, having divorced or separated parents, would actually perform better than average scores if they came from homes that had positive attitudes and that strongly supported their children. This was supported by another study on Children and Youth in Canada that was carried out by Ryan (2000) who reported that there was a significant effect of family background variables, parental support, and teacher support on a child’s educational achievement.

## 1.1.2 Theoretical perspective.

Three theoretical perspectives guided the work for conceptualizing optimal relations between family background and students’ performance. These include; Charles Cooley’s socialization theory, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory and Vygotsky’s cultural theory.

### 1.1.2.1 Socialization theory.

Socialization is the process by which human infants begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functioning member of their society, and is the most influential learning process one can experience. Although cultural variability manifests in the actions, customs, and behaviors of whole social groups the most fundamental expression of culture is found at the individual level. This expression can only occur after an individual has been socialized by his or her parents, family, extended family, and extended social networks. This reflexive process of both learning and teaching is how cultural and social characteristics attain continuity (Chao, 2000).

This study therefore adapted the socialization theory. Socialization theory was developed by Charles Cooley in 1929 and it refers to the parenting practices that influence children’s development. Socialization is a lifelong process that involves inheriting and disseminating norms, customs and ideologies hence providing an individual with the skills and habits that are necessary for participating within one’s own society.

Socialization therefore is the means through which individuals acquire skills that are necessary to perform as functional members of their societies and is the most influential learning process. Although cultural variability manifests in the actions, customs and behaviors of the whole social groups, the most fundamental expression of culture is usually found at the individual levels, and this expression is usually socialized by one’s parents, extended family and extended social networks (Harkness, 1996).

Chao (2000) highlighted that usually it is assumed that cultural models define desirable endpoints for development that inform socialization goals which define the ideas about parenting in terms of parenting ethno theories.

He however added that the cultural model is represented mainly by families which encompass loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity with the members of the family and therefore the family is an extension of self.

### 1.1.2.2 Ecological systems theory

Bronfenbrenner suggests that development occurs in an ecological context consisting of several layers of embedded systems or settings. He theorized that development is facilitated when there are linkages between the settings, such as the home and the school, that “encourage the development of mutual trust, a positive orientation, good consensus between settings and an evolving balance of power responsive to action on behalf of the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner,1979:216). Further, (Bronfenbrenner, 1972:217) states that development is facilitated when there is a two-way communication between the settings and when “valid information, advice and experience relevant to one setting are made available, on a continuing basis, to the other.”

### 1.1.2.3 Cultural theory.

The third perspective is that of Vygotsky (1978) who states that knowledge and understanding are socially constructed, influenced by the social, historical and cultural contexts of the participants as they interact. Vygotsky (1978) assumes that social interaction and children’s direct participation in authentic cultural activities that is necessary for their optimum development. Learning in social settings is responsible for many of the abilities we have. According to Vygotsky (1978) the way children think about the world around them and the issue of causation can be influenced by the religious and scientific beliefs of a culture.

Vygotsky’s (1978) social cultural theory asserts that culture is a prime determinant of individual development and human develops in the context of a culture including the culture of the home environment in which he/she is enmeshed. He also states that since much of what a child learns comes from the culture around him or her and much of the child’s problem solving is mediated through adult’s help, it is thus wrong to focus on a child in isolation. Interactions with surrounding culture and social agents such as parents (school teachers) and more competent peers contribute significantly to a child’s intellectual development.

Therefore, this study added to the knowledge of socialization, ecological systems and cultural theories by relating the influence that family background has on the aspect of a child’s life, which is academic achievement. Further, it detected whether these models are applicable in a developing country scenario which is Uganda and specifically Bushenyi district.

## 1.1.3 Conceptual perspective

Family background refers to circumstances and past events that help to explain how a child develops. It also includes any positive and negative impression or effect that families exercise on their children while studying in schools.

Academic performance is the extent to which a student has attained their short or long term educational goals. Academic performance is commonly measured through examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best evaluated or which aspects are most important between procedural knowledge (skills) and declarative knowledge (facts)

Family backgrounds have been of great important in shaping the performance of children in schools worldwide. This is because; academic performance is usually as a result of motivation that children get from the people they interact with in their initial stages of life. A study conducted in the U.S.A by Rouse and Barrow (2006) revealed that years of schooling completed and educational achievement of students, varied widely by family backgrounds. Rouse and Barrow (2006) found out that students who came from less disadvantaged families had higher average test scores and were more likely to have never been held back a grade as compared to students from the more disadvantaged families. However they highlighted that it was not clear to reflect the causal effect of family backgrounds on the child’s educational achievement which creates a gap that this study sought to fill by finding out the relationship between family backgrounds and the students’ academic performance.

Research conducted by scholars on academic performance has consistently shown that family background is important in predicting children’s educational achievement (Gumn and klebanov, 2007). However, the mechanism for understanding this relationship has not been well studied. This is because in general, family process models such as those developed by Linver and Brooks (2002) have examined how parenting behaviors such as harsh parenting, nurturing, and warmth. Hence, there has been less work on how factors like parental beliefs, educational level and marital status influence students’ motivation and achievement outcomes

Further, Rouse and Barroe (2006) in their study revealed that parental socio-economic status had a causal effect on children’s educational outcomes, but however, they stated that the current studies could not identify precisely how parents’ education and income changes affected education achievement of the students. This therefore creates a gap to find out how parents’ education and income changes have a relationship with on educational achievement of the students, as well as provide empirical evidence of the same. It is therefore basing on this background that this study seeks to investigate the relationship between family background and academic performance of secondary school students (Bushenyi district)

## 1.1.4 Contextual perspective

The relationship between parental resources on the academic performance of children has received a great deal of attention in the economic literature in African Countries. For instance, Goo and Harris (2000) observed that in Ghana and South Africa states, students' performance in school was strongly associated with their parents' educational attainments. The strong correlation between parental income and student's scholarly achievements is one of the major findings in the literature on the determinants of children's attainments. However, the fact that children of parents with high levels of schooling or income perform better than those from less advantageous family backgrounds does not necessarily imply that the former exert relatively more effort. Consequently, the significance of education attainments and academic performance are related in most African countries. This is because, how well an individual performs in primary and secondary school largely determines the individual’s final post-secondary educational destination (Charles, 2003).

In East Africa for instance, parents try to influence the activities that relate to their children’s schooling performance, make investments of time and money in their children, and serve as their role models and set objectives and priorities for them to follow (Venkatesh, 1999).

In Ugandan situation, financial constraints, education level of the parent and the marital status of the parents are the key determinant of student motivation to study. For instance, a study by Pamela and Kean (2010) stated that those students whose parents had a tertiary level of education performed, significantly better in tests of science, reading and mathematical ability than do those whose parents had only basic schooling. Thus, across these three disciplines, the average grades achieved by students with well-educated parents ranged from 7% higher than those achieved by students with poorly educated parents in developing countries to 45% higher in most developed countries. This therefore, shows that parents’ education has some influences on the students’ beliefs and behaviors, leading to positive outcomes for children and youth.

A study conducted by Kamar (2008) revealed that parents of moderate to high income and educational background held beliefs and expectations that were closer than those of low-income families to the actual performance of their children, Low-income families instead had high expectations and performance beliefs that did not correlate well with their children’s actual school performance.

Recent studies of Uganda populations indicated that children from two-parent homes performed better than children from single- parent homes on a variety of social indicators. For instance, Mungyereza (2011) found that in most regions within Uganda children living with one parent were less likely to be in school at age 17 than their two-parent counterparts. In another study by Kamar (2008) showed that a significant Positive relationship was found between father presence and self- esteem. In addition, father- present youths also exhibited stronger scholastic achievement and more stable peer relations. Another recent study (Otieno, 2010) found that living in a single-parent home was a significant risk factor for violent behavior in Uganda. For given levels of ability, student effort as determined by family background is one of the most important input factors for the production of education, and different from other inputs like teacher quality, school autonomy, or class size (Otieno, 2010).

There was also need for empirical study from a Ugandan situation, to assess whether the findings in Canada and U.S.A can be generalized in Uganda hence creating the gap that this study sought to fill.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Poor academic performance of students has been of great concern to educationists, guidance and counselors in particular (McCelland, 2000). Despite all guidance programs and counseling strategies mounted in schools to improve the students’ academic performances, poor performances are still recorded yearly in Uganda and it was necessary to find out the cause of such poor performance. Further, Rouse and Barroe (2006) in their study revealed that parental socio-economic status had a causal effect on children’s educational outcomes, but however, they stated that the current studies could not identify precisely how parents’ education and income changes affected educational achievement of the students. This therefore created a gap to find out how parents’ education and income changes had a relationship on educational achievement of the students, as well as provide empirical evidence of the same In bushenyi district there was evident increase in the mean score of UCE from 10% division one to 12% in the year 2012. This means the score is still low as compared to other topping districts in the country. It is therefore based on this background that this study investigated the relationship between family background and academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi District.

## 1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between family background and academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi District. The study examined the relationship between; parental marital status, family financial status, parent education level, and the academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district.

## 1.4 Specific objectives.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To establish the relationship between parental marital status and academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district
2. To assess the relationship between family financial situation and academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district.
3. To investigate the relationship between parents’ education level and academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district.

## 1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions

1. Is there any relationship between parental marital status and academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district?
2. What is the relationship between family financial situation and academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district?
3. What is the relationship between parents’ education level and academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district?

## 1.6 Scope of the study

This contains the content scope, geographical scope and time scope of the study.

### 1.6.1 Content scope

This study was restricted to assessing the relationship between family background and academic performance of students in Bushenyi District with particular emphasis on parental marital status, family financial situation and parents’ education level.

### 1.6.2 Geographical scope

The study was conducted from Bushenyi district in Western Uganda. Like many other districts in Uganda, Bushenyi district is named after its chief town, [Bushenyi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bushenyi), where the district headquarters are located. Bushenyi District is bordered by [Rubirizi District](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubirizi_District) to the northwest, [Buhweju District](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buhweju_District) to the northeast, [Sheema District](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheema_District) to the east, [Mitooma District](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitooma_District) to the south and [Rukungiri District](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rukungiri_District) to the west. The largest town in the district, [Ishaka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishaka), is located 75 kilometers (47 ml), by road, northwest of [Mbarara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mbarara), the largest city in the [sub-region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ankole_sub-region). The coordinates of the district are:00 32S, 30 11E.The population of the district is approximately 251,400.

### 1.6.3 Time scope

The study was limited to the period 2015 to 2018, as delimitation to the scope of study for better management. This period is optimal to have a clear picture of the academic performance in Bushenyi district.

## 1.7 Delimitation of the Study

This study was limited to students’ academic performance in Bushenyi district western Uganda. Bushenyi district has the highest number of both private and public secondary schools in the western region of Uganda.

The study was conducted in some 10 selected schools in Bushenyi district (Ruyonza School, Valley collage school, Bweranyangi Girls’ SS, Plus Two High School, St Agnes SS, St Kagwa Bushenyi High School, Pioneer High School, Kyeizooba Girls’ SS, Rwakatende SS, and Kitabi Seminary SS).

The study was limited to the period between 2013 - 2018. This period is optimal to have a clear picture of the academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district.

## 1.8 Significance of the Study

This study will be of importance to different individuals who include:

* To parents; in order to make them aware of the importance of family background in shaping the academic performance of their children’s.
* To the school management in order to enlighten them on the important factors in the children’s family background so as to be able to deal with or pay more attention to those factors which may affect adversely the students’ academic performance.
* The study will also benefit other future researchers in the same field with the literature to support their arguments and hence improved knowledge.

These will have enriched available information on family background specific factors and how they affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the themes that were used to conduct the study. The themes include academic performance, family background, parental education level, parent marital status, and family financial status.

## 2.2 Academic Performance

**Academic** is process of teaching and learning in school. It involves reading, studying and examinations.

**Performance** Refers to degree of attainment of the required grades in school situation.

Education is an essential need in the society today, and therefore academic performance is positioned quite high on the national agenda, with educators and policy makers putting effort in testing, accountability and other related concerns (Mark 2003). In Uganda, education is examination oriented and hence the only evaluation for performance is through examinations.

## 2.3 Family Background and Students’ academic performance

**Family** is a group consisting of blood related people including those adapted to the group.

**Family background** refers to circumstances and past events that help to explain how a child develops.

No doubt, that it is important to investigate the different aspects of academic achievement within a specific family situation. However, the family situations cannot be detached from the general culture (example, societal values, traditions, attitudes and home environment). Accordingly, one applied aspects of this study is secondary school students’ performance as influenced by family structure, functions, values and other psychological dimensions such as parent beliefs. Lumsden (2004), for example, stated the role of the significant others (parents and home environment) in students’ academic performance as a main factor which shapes the initial constellation of students’ attitudes they develop towards learning. He stressed that “When children are raised in a home that nurtures a sense of self-worth, competence, autonomy, and self-efficiency, they will be more apt to accept the risks inherent in learning.” (P.2). Fleming and Gottfried (2004) supported this trend and emphasized that their study “strongly suggest that parental motivational practices are causal influences on children’s academic intrinsic motivation and school achievement” (P.110).

Accordingly, there was a need to instruct parents on motivational practices such as encouragement of persistence, effort, mastery of subject area, curiosity and exploration that are likely to impact on the academic performance of the student (Gottfried et al., 2004). In fact, the impact of family on students’ motivation and school achievement is an old issue that was stresses by since 1953. Recent studies in Australia, for example, had pinpointed the role of social integration in academic integration (McInnwas, Hartley, Polesel & Teese, 2000). Some of these studies showed that experiences with peers and family members do influence social and academic integration in complex ways.

The demands, for example, of family and friends outside the academic institution can limit opportunities for social integration (Chrwastie and Dinham, 2001). Ryan etal (2000) stressed that despite the fact that humans are liberally endowed with intrinsic motivational tendencies, the evidence was now clear that the maintenance and enhancement of this inherent propensity requires supportive conditions, as it can be fairly disrupted by various unsupportive conditions.

Research has revealed that external negative impacts such as threats, deadlines, directives, pressured evaluations, and imposed goals diminish intrinsic motivation. Consequently the same reported that studies showed that autonomy-supportive parents, relative to controlling parents, have children who are more intrinsically motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

## 2.4 Family Financial Situation

**Family financial Status** is the money that a person earns at a given time and place. It can be in form of monthly salary or wages as well as returns got from a business.

Family background can be analytically separated into at least three distinct components as raised by Coleman (2008). These are: financial (physical) capital (family income or wealth), human capital (parent education), and social capital (relationship among actors). With respect to children's educational achievement, Kim (2002) maintained that, there is a direct relationship between parental financial and human capital and the successful learning experience of their children.

However, he stressed that while both of these factors are important determinants of children educational success, there remains a substantial proportion of variation in educational success, which was unaccounted for by these variables alone.

Kim (2002) explained that this variance by what he called the “social capital” which mediates the relationship between parents' financial and human capital, on the one hand, and the development of the human capital of their children on the other. A research conducted using a sample of low-income minority families, found that mothers with higher education had higher expectations for their children’s academic achievement and that these expectations were related to their children’s subsequent achievement in math and reading (Kim, 2002).

The economic deprivation perspective has been given enormous attention by researchers of African family processes, specifically with regard to single-mother homes (McLanahan, and Wilson, 2009). Fifty percent of African female-headed families live below the poverty line, which makes them the most impoverished group in Africa (Taylor et al., 2000). The proponents of the economic deprivation perspective argued that the potential effects of single parents is not due to the physical absence of one parent but to the absence of the economic resources generated by the absent parent. Therefore, the effects of marital status on child well- being will be reduced when income is statistically controlled or when families are matched on income level. For instance, McLeod et al. (2004) argued that parents who experienced income loss became more rejecting of their children and that their children were at risk for developing feelings of inadequacy associated with parental rejection.

However, the empirical research on the effects of income has not been adequately tested (Amato & Keith, 2001) nor has it consistently supported these assumptions for African children.

The limitations and small effect sizes found by family structure studies, as well as the income perspectives, led many researchers to criticize both approaches for several reasons (Murray etal 2009). For instance, Ng’ang’a (2008) argued that the major problem with pathological-based studies was not the harsh facts that described an important number of African families but the failure to study how these families survived in extremely adverse conditions.

A study revealed that single motherhood generally reduces the economic resources available to families because non-custodial fathers contribute far less to their children’s household than they otherwise would. In fact, only a minority of children with non-custodial fathers receive any child support payments, and the amount is typically very small.

This means that by reducing income and necessitating greater paid work by mothers, single motherhood increases the time children must spend doing housework and working for pay, which might negatively affect educational achievement and progress (Zulauf and Gortner,1999).

Another study conducted by Becker (2001) revealed that family income also affected children's educational aspirations, their status among their peers, their neighborhood quality, the stability of their lives, and insecurity within their family, any or all of which may influence child outcomes. Furthermore, the inability to exploit the work/home specialization afforded by two-parent families’ means that child care expenses are often greater for single mothers than they would be with a husband. Another benefit of specialization is that married parents may self-invest strategically in forms of human capital that, over time, magnify the gains from a work/home division of labor (Becker, 2001).

Husbands and wives can exploit the comparative advantage each has in household and market production so that investment in children is greater than it would otherwise be in the absence of specialization.

## 2.5 Parental Marital Status

**Marital Status-** The condition of being married or unmarried

A number of significant changes have occurred in African families over the past 50 years (Tucker and MitcheU-Kernan, 2005). In 1950, married couples headed 78% of African families. By 1996, this number dropped to only 34% (Amato and Keith, 2001). The divorce rate has also increased dramatically for African. In 1960, only 78 per 1,000 African women's marriages ended in divorce. In 1990, this number jumped to 358 per 1,000 (Tucker and Mitchell Kernan, 2005), It is expected that 75% of African children born to married parents will experience their parents' divorce before the age of sixteen (Amato and Keith, 2001).

Studies conducted on African populations indicated that children from two-parent homes do better than children from single- parent homes on a variety of social indicators (McLeod, etal, 2008). Coley (2008) found that African children living with one parent were less likely to be in school at age 17 than their two-parent counterparts. In another study, a significant positive relationship was found between father presence and self- esteem (Alston and Williams, 2002).

Father- present youths also exhibited stronger scholastic achievement and more stable peer relations and that the father-son relationship facilitated the adoption of an adequate self-concept because boys were able to model their fathers. The study further found that living in a single parent home was a significant risk factor for violent behavior in African children.

A recent longitudinal study found that African children in two-parent homes had significantly higher math and reading scores and lower behavioral problems than did children in single-parent homes. The results held up over a 4-year period for both older and younger siblings in the sample (Paschall etal 2006). However, some researchers highlighted the fact that not all studies show advantages for two-parent homes as evident by the study carried out by Vollmer (2006) ,and even for the studies that do, the effect sizes may not be large enough to be socially relevant. Many researchers also argued that the consequences of single- parent homes were mainly related to the economic deprivation of the single-parent home and others argued that the studies did not account for important aspects of family functioning or extended kin (Scott and Black, 2009). For instance, Wilson (2009) argued that the strength of flexible family roles in African families has not been taken into consideration.

The family structure model fails to consider aspects of parent-child relationships (Partridge and Kotler, 2007) and socialization processes within African families (Wilson, 2002). The family functioning model suggests that children may be better off in a cohesive single-parent home than in a conflictive two-parent home (Vollmar, 2006). Research on the effects of family functioning quality on African children has generally been very supportive of the family functioning theory (Heiss, 2006). Dancy and Handal (2004) found that family-environment quality significantly predicted African adolescents' perceptions of family climate, psychological adjustment, and grade point average. Heiss (2006) also found that family structure had weak effects on academic variables for African adolescents, but parental involvement had a very strong effect on the same variables.

Numerous studies showed that fathers and mothers treated their girls and boys differently. For instance, Wilson (2009) found differences in children's and mothers' perceptions regarding the African fathers' socializing strategies of their girls and boys. Specifically, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, and sons perceived the fathers of sons as using more controlling, demanding, and supporting parental behaviors than was perceived for fathers of daughters.

Fathers of sons were also perceived as more involved with their children than were fathers of daughters. Other studies showed that fathers hold more masculine gender role attitudes toward their sons and more feminine attitudes toward their daughters (Hokoda and Fincham, 2005). In general, fathers appeared to be more strict with their boys than were mothers and more strict with boys than they were with girls. Therefore, the effects of parental marital status may be more apparent for boys than for girls.

Further as study conducted by Turker (2003) reported that those who grow up in fatherless families do worse on measures of scholastic achievement, educational attainment, psychological health, behavioral problems, delinquency, stable family formation, early sexual debut, partner satisfaction, economic success, and even physical health. The bottom line is that single motherhood may reduce the quantity of parental time with children, both for mothers and fathers. This may translate into less socialization, less supervision and monitoring, and less involvement and emotional support.

Household composition is less stable among single-mother families, with extended family, boyfriends, and stepfathers entering and exiting the picture over the course of childhood. Such instability may be psychologically disruptive to children. To the extent that it reduces income, growing up with a single mother may shape educational aspirations by making college seem more or less plausible an option. Furthermore, single mothers may be unable to afford luxuries such as stylish clothes, sports equipment and fees, and orthodontics for their children. Their children's status among their peers may suffer as a result (Harris, 1999). Finally, having a single mother itself may be stigmatizing to children.

Furthermore, single parenting can rob children of gender-specific role-modeling (Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan, 2012). Father absence – resulting either from divorce or non-marital pregnancy – might harm the ability of children to form healthy relationships (Fleming and Gottfried, 2004). Coley (2008) has argued that single mother families feature less hierarchical and more peer-like relations between parent and child than two-parent families do. Single mothers are more reliant on their children for support and assistance than married mothers are. As a result, their children are under-exposed to authority relations typical of hierarchical institutions related to education and employment. Fathers may also have cultural capital that mothers lack, such as knowledge about professions and industries dominated by men (Scott and Black, 2009).

## 2.6 Parental Education Level

**Educational level** is the rank of a person’s formal education attainment. The influence of the level of education of parents on the academic performance of their children is evident in all countries. Pamela and Kean (2010) states those that students whose parents have a tertiary level of education perform, on average, significantly better in tests of science, reading and mathematical ability than do those whose parents have only basic schooling. Thus, across these three disciplines, the average grades achieved by students with well-educated parents ranged from 7% higher than those achieved by students with poorly educated parents in developing countries to 45% higher in most developed countries.

Even though the majority of the literature on parents’ education pertains to the direct, positive influence on achievement (Ryan and Deci, 2000), the literature also suggests that it influences the beliefs and behaviors of the parent, leading to positive outcomes for children and youth (Heiss, 2006). For example, Alston and Williams (2002) found that parents of moderate to high income and educational background held beliefs and expectations that were closer than those of low-income families to the actual performance of their children, Low-income families instead had high expectations and performance beliefs that did not correlate well with their children’s actual school performance.

Research on parenting also has shown that parent education is related to a warm, social climate in the home. Gottfried et al. (2004) found that both mothers’ education and family income were important predictors of the physical environment and learning experiences in the home but that mothers’ education alone was predictive of parental warmth. Likewise, Smith et al. (2007) found that the association of family income and parents’ education with children’s academic achievement was mediated by the home environment. The mediation effect was stronger for maternal education than for family income. Thus, these authors posited that education might be linked to specific achievement behaviors in the home. Murray and Fairchild (2009) also found that maternal education had the most consistent direct influence on children’s cognitive and behavioral outcomes with some indirect influence through a cognitively stimulating home environment. However, they examined only two, quite broad aspects of family mediators: learning stimulation and parental responsively.

Mediation might have emerged if other parent behaviors and attitudes were examined.

On the same line, Iverson & Walberg (2002) had revised 18 studies of 5,831 school aged students on a systematic research of educational, psychological, and sociological literature. Accordingly, they had concluded that students’ ability and achievement are more closely linked to the socio-psychological environment and intellectual stimulation in the home than they are to parental socio-economic status indicators such as occupation and amount of education.

## 2.7 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework explains the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. It briefly explains the relationship between family financial status, parental marital status, parental education level and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Bushenyi district.

**Fig.1.Conceptual framework.**

**Dependent variable**

**Moderating variable**

**Independent Variable**

**Family background**

* Marital status of parents
* Family financial status
* Parents’ education level

**Academic performance of students in secondary school**

* Improved attendance of class and students sitting for examinations
* Better performance of students in assignments
* Improved grades in internal and external exams by students from stable families and vice versa
* National education policy
* USE Policy
* Teacher-pupil-parent relationship

**Source: Developed as a model by the researcher, 2017.**

### 2.7.1 Explanation of the conceptual framework

The independent variable of this study is family background, which is divided into the following components; marital status of parents (number of parents in the family), Family financial status (employment status of parents, purchase of luxurious items by parents) and parents’ education level (highest education achievement of father, highest education achievement of mother) while the dependent variable is secondary school students’ academic performance. The moderating variables are the National education policy, USE policy and Teacher-pupil-parent relationship. The school setting is made up of the characteristics of individual school such as the type of school, the administration, decision making process in the school, degree of student’s participation in decision making among others.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods that were employed in conducting the study. It covers the research design, area of study, study population, sample and sampling techniques, sample size, data collection methods, instruments, and procedures, quality control measures, validity and reliability of research instruments, data analysis, limitations of the study and ethical considerations

## 3.2 Research Design.

According to Owen (1996) a research design is an outline of how an investigation is carried out and indicates how data is to be collected, what instruments to be used and how the data collected is analyzed. Under this section the following are identified and explained; research approach, research strategy and research classification.

### 3.2.1 Research approach

According to Rist (2004) a research approach means the development of a theory or look for a pattern of meaning on the basis of the data that they have collected. The research approach is important because it can be used to test the validity of the research hypothesis. This research approach allowed the researcher to probe the richness of emotions and motivations related to the topic. The approach also enabled the researcher to use qualitative data to help clarify hypotheses, beliefs, and attitudes about academic performance of students.

### 3.2.2 Research strategy

A research strategy is a [methodology](http://www.dissertationhelpservice.com/Research-Methodology-Help-Service.html) that helps the researcher to investigate the research issue. According to Saunders (2003), research strategy is a general plan that helps the researcher in answering the research questions in a systematic way. As such, in this study, a case study was used as the research strategy, and thus Bushenyi district was under focus. This strategy enabled the researcher to undertake the appropriate in-depth and detailed examination of family background and academic performance of students.

### 3.2.3 Research classification

According to Gossa (2016) this means understanding the specific type of research to be used. This is important because it explains the purpose of carrying out the research.

Traditionally, research is divided into two broad categories: deductive and inductive. In general, qualitative research utilizes an inductive approach, while quantitative research uses a deductive approach (Bryman& Bell, 2011; Castellan, 2010; Teddlie&Tashakkori, 2010).

According to Teddlie&Tashakkori (2010), mixed methods research (MMR) includes both deductive and inductive approaches in the same study. Neuman (2014) asserts that the inductive approach begins with detailed observations and ends with generalizations. This means that a researcher begins with some specific details and based on the research observations, arrives at a general conclusion from the observations. Similarly, Castellan (2010), explains that in the inductive process, a researcher uses observations to develop theory.

This study used both quantitative and qualitative techniques. It involved collecting and converting data into numerical form, hence use of statistical calculations where conclusions be drawn. In order to predict possible relationship between the variables, the study used various instruments such as self-administered questionnaire and materials such as observation check lists. This also facilitated the researcher to describe, explain, discuss and interpret the data collected.

## 3.3 Area of study.

The study was conducted in Bushenyi district. Bushenyi district has a total area of 924.3km2 and it is located in western Uganda, Ankole sub region. It is bordered by Rubirizi district to the northwest, Buhweju district the northeast, Sheema district to the east, Mitooma district to the south and Rukungiri district to the west.

Some schools were selected for the study which acted as a purposive sample. These schools include; Bweranyangi Girls’ S.S, St Kagwa Bushenyi high school, Ruyonza School, Kyeizooba Girls’ S.S, Plus Two High School, Valley High school, Kitabi Seminary S.S, Bassajjabalaba S.S, St Agnes S.S, and Bumbaire S.S. These schools are both private and government aided and are accessible and represented a cross section of the whole district.

## 3.4 Study population

According to Koffi (2002), this is the total number of respondents from which the sample size is derived. Bushenyi district has a total population of 251400 people with a population density of 266.8/km2 of which this study targeted a population of 500 people. These include among others the students, teachers, administrators and parents/guardians. These were chosen because they are expected to have enough knowledge required in understanding the relationship between family background and academic performance of students in Bushenyi district.

## 3.5 Sample and sampling techniques.

Sampling is the process of selecting the units from the population of interest; therefore, the sample population was selected to represent the entire population. The target population of this study was 500 people.

The total number of secondary schools in Bushenyi is 720 both government aided and privately owned. Out of them only 10 schools will be selected for this study (Bweranyangi Girls’ S.S, St Kagwa Bushenyi High school, Ruyonza School, Kyeizooba Girls’ S.S, Plus Two High School, Valley High School, Kitabi Seminary S.S, Bassajjabalaba S.S, St Agnes S.S, and Bumbaire S.S).

The sample parents were selected by use of convenience sampling while teachers and students were proportionately selected from the 10 schools in Bushenyi district.

## 3.6 Sample size determination.

The population in the sample is the representative of the entire population. Out of 720 secondary schools in Bushenyi district, the researcher selected only 10 schools to be to represent the whole district.

The sample size was determined using the formula by Yamane (1967:886) as shown below.

Where

n = sample size

N = Study population

e = the level of significant co-efficient.

Therefore, n= 222, the sample size will be 222 respondents.

The researcher used **purposive method of sampling**. This was dictated by the nature of the study which aimed at getting information from specific respondents. In this study, this method used to select respondents from the district education officer (DEO), school administrators, and inspector of schools because their duties and responsibilities are directly related with students’ academic performance.

**Convenience sampling** was used by the researcher for convenience purposes in case the selected respondents are not available at the time of the interview. In this study, this method was used to select respondents from the school administrators, DEO, and inspector of schools because they are most of the time busy and play a big role in determining students’ performance.

**Simple random sampling** was used to select respondents from the parents, students, and teachers. The respondents were randomly selected to eliminate elements of bias in the research process by giving almost all respondents an equal chance to participate in the study.

Table 3.1: Distribution of the study population and sample size as well as sampling methods used.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Respondents** | **Population** | **Sample size** | **Sampling method** |
| DEO | 1 | 1 | Purposive sampling |
| Inspector of schools | 1 | 1 | Convenience sampling |
| School administrators | 20 | 10 | Purposive sampling |
| Teachers | 50 | 30 | simple random sampling |
| Students | 368 | 130 | simple random sampling |
| Parents | 100 | 50 | simple random sampling |
| **Total** | **500** | **222** |  |

## 3.7 source of data

The research study used both primary and secondary data.

### 3.7.1 Primary data

This consists of a collection of the original primary data; it was undertaken after the researcher had gained some insight into the issue by reviewing secondary research or analyzing previously collected data. It was accomplished through various methods, including questionnaires and interviews and direct observations in the schools, amongst others.

### 3.7.2 Secondary data

This involves the summary of the existing research rather than primary research, where data was collected from already available literature. Relevant documents and records were used like journals, government publications and other internal records. Secondary data was used to supplement primary data in an attempt to answer the research questions raised

## 3.8 Data collection methods

Primary data was collected using interviewing, questionnaires and focus group discussion method. Secondary data was collected through document reviews.

### 3.8.1 Interviewing

In this study, the researcher conducted face to face interviews with the DEO, Inspector of schools and school administrators with the help of the interview guide. The interviews were held on appointment. The unstructured interviews contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions that were asked in any order because this interview method was more flexible as questions were adapted and changed depending on the respondent’s answer. The study also used group interviews with the teachers and students’ respondents of the study. This method of interviewing was used to make sure the group interact with each other and not drift off topic.

### 3.8.2 Self-administered questionnaire

This research instrument was used to gather primary data from the individual respondents. The questionnaire contained both closed and open ended questions that sought information from the respondents on the relationship between family background and academic performance of students in secondary schools. Questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to the selected respondents. A questionnaire requiring respondents not to disclose their identity was used to collect data. The researcher also used questionnaires in order to uphold the confidentiality of the respondents and also in order to save time. The questionnaire had clear instructions on how to be filled and respondents filled these appropriately to the best of their knowledge. The questionnaires were self-administered by respondents by ticking the best answer in a Likert scale. Questionnaires were used because they helped the researcher save time during data collection.

### 3.8.3 Focus group discussion

The study used focus group discussion with the distribution of the sample size. The group discussion involved respondents from the entire sample size distribution and the exercise was guided by a moderator (or group facilitator) who introduced topics for discussion and helped the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves. This method was used because it is a good way to gather together respondents from similar backgrounds or experiences.

### 3.8.4 Document review

This method was used to gather secondary data about the study variables that is family background and academic performance of students in secondary schools. This involved reviewing articles, text books, journals and finance magazines to collect relevant data. The study also used document checklist as part of document review. This method was used because a lot of secondary information helped the researcher to obtain the most reliable and relevant information.

## 3.9 Data collection procedures

The procedure for data collection was as follows: the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Dean School of Education Nkumba University.

Permission was requested from the respective schools showing that the study was for academic purposes. Written questionnaires were hand delivered to the respondents. The respondents were instructed not to reveal their identity and assured that the information given was purely for research purpose and would not affect them individually.

## 3.10 Quality control measures

This refers to methods and procedures implemented to ensure that data is collected, managed, and utilized with accuracy and precision. When collecting data, it is important that the data collected are of high quality so that they can be reliably used as the basis to make sound decisions. Rigorous data collection methods using appropriate instruments were adopted, accompanied by well-defined procedures and strict application of data quality norms and control practices. The researcher did the following to ensure quality of data collected

1. Carefully checked and rechecked the designed questionnaire to identify any remaining data errors and omissions before issuing it to the respondents. Checked that any symbols used in the questionnaire are consistent.
2. Briefed and guided the respondents on how to fill the questionnaire
3. Translated the questionnaire language for those respondents who did not understand English.
4. Ensured all pages and questions have been properly completed.

## 3.11 Validity of Instruments

Validity is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure according to the researcher’s subjective assessment (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2007). Validity deals with the adequacy of the instrument for example, the researcher needs to have adequate questions in the written task in order to collect the required data for analysis that can be used to draw conclusions. To ensure validity of the instrument used, the designed questionnaire for this study was given to the two academic advisors to determine their suitability. Frenekel (1993) suggested that the individual who is supposed to render an intelligent judgment about the adequacy of the instruments should be given the instruments before the actual research is carried out.

A pre-test of the research instruments to establish their validity was done. The instruments were given to two experts who gave their opinions on the relevance of the questions. Items that were found not to be valid were then eliminated and those found not to be understood were adjusted for understandability for the final research instrument that was used.

## 3.12 Reliability of Instruments

Reliability of the instruments was carried out in order to find out whether the measures of the research instrument yielded the same results on other occasions (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2008) Therefore, to ensure reliability, this study used triangulation. Orodho (2003) argued that the idea behind triangulation is that the more agreement of different data sources on a particular issue, the more reliable the interpretation of the data.

## 3.13 Data Analysis Techniques

Upon collecting data, several methods were used to process and analyze data. All data collected was checked on completion of the procedure, the questionnaires were handed over to the researcher. The data collected was compiled, sorted, edited, classified, and coded to improve on its accuracy and relevancy. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the data and the findings. The findings were presented in Tables and figures.

### 3.13.1 Qualitative data analysis

This is a research based on the meanings expressed through words. Qualitative data was analyzed using the explanatory/ descriptive method. The data collected using this approach was classified into categories and analysis was conducted through conceptualization.

### 3.13.2 Quantitative data analysis

This is a research based on meanings derived from numbers. The researcher analyzed the data in numerical standardized form. Analysis was conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics.

## 3.14 Limitations of the study

The researcher faced a number of problems while carrying out the study. They include;

**Time constraint**: The researcher faced a problem of inadequate time required for the conduct of the study. Comprehensive research study involves a great deal of collecting, analyzing and processing, hence requiring a lot of time which tends to be hard for the researcher. However, the researcher overcame this problem by designing a work plan or timeframe which served as a guide in time management.

**Non response**: The researcher also faced a problem of non-response from some of the respondents probably because they are too busy or not willing to participate in the study.

**Financial constraint**: The researcher also faced a problem of inadequate funds to cater for the research process because the researcher is a student and does not have enough finance to effectively carry out the study.

## 3.15 Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the university, introducing her as an academic researcher to relevant people and offices in the field.

The researcher sought for the consent of the participants to participate in the study. These was informed about the purpose and procedures of the study.

Respondents were briefed to be free to omit any information they did not want to divulge for purposes of ensuring privacy.

Respondents were promised anonymity as their names would not be published anywhere in the report and they were promised that the information they give would be treated with confidentiality as it would only be used for academic purposes.

## 3.16 Summary.

This chapter provided the methods that were employed in conducting the study, research design, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods and techniques, validity and reliability of the instruments and data analysis techniques. The next chapter focused on data presentation analysis and interpretation.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

# DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

# 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides summary of the data collected. Data was collected by use of questionnaires for both parents and students and structured interview schedules for teachers, school administrators, inspector of schools and the DEO. The chapter contains two sections; the response returns rate and findings of the objectives of the study which are explained in tabular form by use of descriptive and inferential statistics.

**4.2 Respondents return rate**

Table 4.1 Respondents return rate

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Instruments**  **distributed** | **Percentage%** | **Instruments**  **collected** | **Percentage %** |
| **DEO** | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 0.5 |
| **Inspector of schools** | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 |
| **School administrators** | 10 | 4.5 | 10 | 4.5 |
| **Students** | 130 | 58.6 | 128 | 57.7 |
| **Parents** | 50 | 22.5 | 47 | 21.2 |
| **Teachers** | 30 | 13.4 | 29 | 13.1 |
| **Total** | **222** | **100** | **215** | **97** |

**Source: Field findings, 2020**

The total number of questionnaires distributed to parents were 50 and 47 were returned, 130 to students and 128 were returned. Further 10 interviews were carried out among school administrators and the study managed to carry out interviews among 29 teachers. Also the researcher managed to interview the DEO. The inspector of schools was not interviewed because she was on maternity leave.

This rate of return was considered adequate according to (Dilliman 2000).

**4.3.1 Demographic information**

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The characteristics discussed in this section are; gender and the category of school attended by the students.

**4.3.2 Gender**

The study sought to find out the gender distribution of the respondents as showed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Gender distribution of parents and students

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Frequency** | **Percentage %** |
| Male | 98 | 45.8 |
| Female | 117 | 54.2 |
| **Total** | 215 | 100 |

**Source: Field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that (45.8%) were male while (54.2%) were female. From the table above, majority of the respondents were females.

# 4.3.3 Category of school attended

The study asked the respondents to identify the type of school that the students attended. As for the interview by students, they were identifying the type of school that they go to while the parents were identifying the type of school that their children school in. the findings are indicated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Category of school

The category of the schools was analyzed and cross tabulated as shown below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| School | Frequency | Percentage% |
| Boys’ boarding | 37 | 21.1 |
| Girls’ boarding | 43 | 24.6 |
| Mixed boarding | 80 | 45.7 |
| Day school | 15 | 8.6 |
| **Total** | **175** | **100** |

**Source: Field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that majority of the respondents 45.7% were in mixed’ boarding schools, 21.1% were in boys’ boarding schools 24.6% were in girl’s boarding schools and 8.6 were in day schools.

# 4.4. Academic performance

The dependent variable of this study was academic performance of secondary school students in Bushenyi district. This section presents the finding of improvement of school in UNEB (UCE and UACE) and the trend of performance of their schools.

# 4.4.1 Improvement of school in UNEB

The researcher asked the respondents to state whether the school they attended and the schools where their children studied had improved in performance in the past 3 years

Table 4.4 Improvement of school in the past 3 years

The improvement of schools in the last three years were analyzed and cross tabulated as shown below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Improved** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 180 | 83.7 |
| No | 35 | 16.3 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

The findings showed that (83.7%) said that the performance had improved in the last 3 years, while only (16.3%) felt that the school had not improved in the past 2 years.

# 4.4.2 Academic performance of students in the past term

The study wanted to investigate the academic performance of students subject to this study in the past term in school. The findings are shown by the Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Academic performance of students in the past term

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Min** | **Max** | **Mean** |
| 215 | **27** | 61 | 48.2 |

**Source: Field findings, 2020**

The findings in Table 4.5 shows the minimum average marks is 27% and the maximum average marks is 61%. This translates to a range of 61% which reflects a high disparity of academic performance.

# 4.4.3 Cross-tabulation of improvement of school and category of respondents

The study wanted to find out the frequency of responses on improvement of school and the category of the respondents. The main aim was to find out whether there was a relationship between the responses and the type of respondent. This is to identify whether there was a bias of response due to the type of respondent.

Table 4.6 Cross tabulation of school improvement and category of respondents

The school improvement and category of respondents were analyzed and cross tabulated as shown below

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No | Total |
| DEO | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| School administrators | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Teachers | 29 | 0 | 29 |
| Students | 108 | 20 | 128 |
| Parents | 40 | 7 | 47 |
| Total | 188 | 27 | 215 |

**Source: Field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that the DEO, School administrators and teachers said there was improvement while 20 students and 7 parents felt that there was no improvement. This shows that the DEO, school administrators and teachers had a more positive outlook as compared to the students and parents.

4.4.4. Trend of performance of children in the past 3 years

The study sought to investigate the trend of performance of the students in the past 3 years. The findings are shown in Table 4.7rwe

# Table 4.7 Trend of student performance in the past 3 years

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Trend** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Increasing | 150 | 69.8 |
| Constant | 10 | 4.7 |
| Decreasing | 18 | 8.3 |
| Irregular | 37 | 17.2 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that 69.8% of the respondents felt that the performance was increasing while only 4.7% felt that the performance was constant. 8.3% felt that the students’ performance was decreasing while 17.2% felt that the performance was irregular.

# 4.4.5 Cross tabulation of trend of student’s performance and category of respondents

The study examined the opinions on the trend of student performance and the type of respondents, as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Cross tabulation of trend of student performance in the last 3 years and category of respondents

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Increasing | Constant | Decreasing | Irregular |
| DEO | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| School administrators | 7 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Teachers | 21 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Students | 91 | 5 | 12 | 21 |
| Parents | 30 | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| Total | 150 | 10 | 18 | 37 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that no School administrator (0) felt that the trend was constant. Also the DEO was of the view that the trend was increasing.

# 4.5.1 Parents marital status and academic performance

The study focused on parents’ marital status as one of the independent variables of the study. This section investigated the marital status of parents, the type of family and the opinion of the respondents on the effect of parents’ marital status on students’ academic performance.

**4.5.2 Parents marital status**

The study investigated the marital status of the parents of the respondents. When probed further, the respondents who said that they were from divorced families, said that when the parents divorced, the children were between 6 years and 12 years.

Table 4.9 Parents marital status

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Status** | **Frequency** | **Percentage %** |
| Single | 27 | 12.6 |
| Married | 119 | 55.3 |
| Divorced | 51 | 23.7 |
| Widowed | 18 | 8.4 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that 55.3% of the respondents were from married parents’ families while 12.6% were from single parent families.

**4.5.3 Type of family**

The study wanted to find out how the respondents rated their families. The findings were presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Type of family

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Types of family** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Cohesive | 160 | 74.4 |
| Conflictive | 55 | 25.6 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The finding showed that (74.4%) of the respondents said that they came from cohesive families while (25.6%) of them said that they came from conflictive families.

# 4.5.4 Effect of family structure on academic performance

The study asked the respondents to indicate whether they felt that their family structure had an effect on the students’ academic performance as shown in Table 4.11

Table 4.11 Family structure affects family performance

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **Percentage %** |
| Yes | 177 | 82.3 |
| No | 38 | 17.7 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that (82.3%) felt that there was an effect while (17.7%) felt that it did not affect the academic performance at all.

# 4.5.5 Relationship between marital status and academic performance of students

The study wanted to find out the relationship between marital status of parents and academic performance of students. The study conducted a cross tabulation of marital status and academic performance of students.

Table 4.12 Cross tabulation of academic performance and parental marital status

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance** | **Single** | **Married** | **Divorced** | **Widowed** | **Total** |
| 45% and less | 10 | 23 | 18 | 6 | 57 (26.5%) |
| 46%-65% | 12 | 72 | 24 | 9 | 117 (54.4%) |
| 66% and above | 5 | 24 | 9 | 3 | 41 (19.1%) |
| Total | 27 | 119 | 51 | 1 | 215(100%) |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that 59.6% of students who performed 45% and less were from single parent families while only 41% of the students from single parent families scored 65% and above in the past term exam.

# 4.6.1 Family financial situation and academic performance

This section presents the findings of the independent variable; family financial status of the family. The section focuses on the source of parents’ income, trend of parents’ income in the last 3 years and the financing of the children’s school fees.

**4.6.2 Family’s main source of income**

The study sought to find out the main source of income for the families that the students came from. The findings are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.13 Main Sources of income

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Source | Frequency | Percentage % |
| Monthly salary | 123 | 57.2 |
| Selling farm outputs | 42 | 19.5 |
| Small businesses | 50 | 23.3 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that (57.2%) of the respondents said that the main source of income was monthly salary while (23.3%) relied more on small businesses. A further probe, showed that majority of the families had an aggregate of between Ugx.200, 000and Ugx.450, 000 per month.

**4.6.3 Trend of monthly income**

The study wanted to find out the income of the families in the past two years. The findings are shown in Table 4.14

**4.6.3 Trend of monthly income**

The study wanted to find out the income of the families in the past two years. The findings are shown in Table 4.14

Table 4.14 Trend of income in the past 3 years

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Trend** | **Frequency** | **Percentage%** |
| Increasing | 117 | 54.4 |
| Reducing | 23 | 10.7 |
| Irregular | 28 | 13 |
| Constant | 47 | 21.9 |
| Total | 215 |  |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The results showed that (54.4%) of the respondents said that the income has been increasing in the last three years, while (13%) of the respondents said that the income has been irregular, 10.7% of the respondent felt that the trend was reducing while 21.9% felt that the trend was constant.

# 4.6.4 Children’s school fees financing

The study investigated how the students’ school fees were financed in the various families as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Financing of student’s school fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Source | Frequency | Percentage% |
| Financed fully by parents | 182 | 84.7 |
| Financed partly by parents and partly by well wishers | 33 | 15.3 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that (84.7%) of the respondents said that the parents financed the fees fully while (15.3%) said that the parents financed partly and sponsors/ well-wishers financed partly.

# 4.7.1 Parents’ education level and academic performance of students.

The study investigated the effect that parents’ education level has on academic performance of students. This section focused on; the level of mother’s education, the level of father’s education and the opinion of the respondent on the effect of parents’ education level on academic performance of students.

**4.7.2 Mother’s level of education**

The study investigated the education level of the mothers among the respondents.

Table 4.16 Mother’s education level

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Education level | Frequency | Percentage% |
| Primary | 54 | 25.1 |
| Secondary | 133 | 61.9 |
| Tertiary | 28 | 13 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that 133 (61.9%) of the respondents said that their mothers had secondary level education while only 14 (13%) had tertiary level education.

**4.7.3 Fathers education level**

The study investigated the education level of the fathers among the respondents.

Table 4.17 Education level of the father

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Education level | Frequency | Percentage% |
| Primary | 26 | 12.1 |
| Secondary | 114 | 53 |
| Tertiary | 75 | 34.9 |
| Total | 215 | 100 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings revealed that 114 (53%) of the respondents said that their fathers had secondary level education while 75 (34.9%) had tertiary level education.

# 4.7.4 Effect of parent’s education level on academic performance

The study sought the opinion of the respondents, as to whether they felt that the education level of parents had an effect on the academic performance of students.

Table 4.18 Parents education level effect on academic performance of students

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No | Total |
| DEO | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| School administrators | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Teachers | 29 | 0 | 29 |
| Students | 80 | 48 | 128 |
| Parents | 47 | 0 | 47 |
| Total | 167 | 48 | 21 |

**Source: field findings, 2020**

The findings showed that 80 students said that education level of their parents did affect theiracademic performance while all the parents, teachers, school administrators and the DEO responding to the study were in agreement as illustrated in Table 4.18 above.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# 5.1 Introduction of the chapter

This chapter outlines the discussions and conclusions of the research findings. The chapter also presents the recommendations of the study based on the discussions and conclusions. The study’s objectives were; to establish relationship between; parental marital status, family financial status, and parents’ education level and academic performance of students.

**5.2 Discussion of findings**

**5.2.1 Parental Marital Status**

It was concluded in table 4.9 pg33 that children living with one parents were less likely to be in school at age 17than their two parents counterpart (Cooley, 2008). According to Amato and Keith (2001) the divorce rate has also increased automatically and hence a creation of single parenthood which impacts negatively on academic performance. These findings are in line with the study findings in table 4.9 pg33

The research on the effect of family functioning quality on African Child has generally been very supportive on family functioning theory (Heiss 2006). A further study conducted Turker (2003) reported that those who grew in fatherless families performed poorly on measures of scholastic achievement, educational attainment and other healthy related issues.

# 5.2.2 Parental Education Level

The relationship between the levels of education of parents had an impact on their children’s academic performance (Pamela and Kean 2010). Further it was found that the lssevel of education of parents had a direct and positive relationship on the academic achievement of their children (Ryan and Deci 2000). The study findings in table 4.18 pg38 also show that the level of education of parents had an impact on the academic achievements of their children

The education level of parents according to Murray and Fairchil (2009) had a consistence direct relationship on the children’s cognitive and behavioral outcomes. On the same line, Iverson and Walberg (2002) concurred that school aged students on a systematic research on educational, psychological and sociological aspects had the ability and achievement more closely linked to the social – psychological environment and intellectual stimulation in the home.

# 5.2.3 Family Financial Status

The research table 4.14 pg36 concluded that with the respect to children’s educational achievement, Kim (2002) maintained that there is direct relationship between parental financial and human capital and the successful learning experience of their children and the academic success. A research conducted using a sample of low income the achievement of their children’s academic performance were lower in terms of their expectations (Wilson 2009).

# 5.2.4 Relationship between Parental marital status and academic performance

The study was investigating the relationship between parental marital status and the academic performance of students. The findings in table 4.9 pg33 showed that majority of students 119(55.5%)came from married parents’ families. These findings therefore support the observation made by Mc Leod, Kruttschnitt and Downfield (2004) that children from two parent homes do better than children from single parent’s homes.

The study findings in table 4.10 pg33 showed that majority of the students 160(74.4%)were from cohesive families, which explains the reason why in table 4.7 pg31 150(69.8%)of the students were pointed out that their performance had been increasing in the past 3 years. The correlation analysis of the study showed that the type of family that students came from had a positive although weak correlation to the academic performance of the students. However, although the correlation of the marital status of the parents was very weak and is not statistically significant in explaining the academic performance of students, the correlation analysis showed that marital status of the parents was significant is estimating the type of family This is in context with the observation made by Vollmar (2006) that children perform better in a cohesive familythan in a conflictive family. Actually he claimed that children were better-off in a single parent cohesive family than a two parent conflictive family. These explain the findings of this study that the type of family has a stronger relationship to academic performance of students than the marital status of the parent.

# 5.2.5 Relationship between family financial status and academic performance of students

The study observed that majority of families from which students come from has a monthly salary as the main source of income with a monthly salary of between Ugshs. 200,000 and Ugshs. 450,000. The study findings in table 4.14 pg36 showed that at least 117(54.4%) of the families have the income level increasing in the past 3 years while a close 24(13%) have had irregular monthly incomes. A further analysis in table 4.15 pg36 showed that 182 (84.7%)of students’ school fees are financed solely by the parents.

An analysis of the relationship revealed that the students’ academic performance could be explained by the family’s financial status. However, while the source of income and the trend of income were found to be significant in explaining the academic performance of students, it was observed how the school fees of the students is financed, is not significant in explaining the academic performance of the students.

These findings support the claim made by Kim (2002) when he pointed out that there was a direct relationship between parents’ financial status and academic performance of the students. He however pointed out that this factor is an important determinant of academic success of the child but there is a substantial proportion of variation which accounted by other factors.

# 5.3 Conclusions

The research study in table 4.9 pg33 found out that a single parenthood had a negative relationship with academic performance and family quality functions had a very supportive achievement on the children’s academic performance both scholastic educational attainment and other healthy related issues.

On the issue of parental educational level in table 4.18 pg38 was concluded that the level of education of parents had an impact on their children’s academic performance. It was also concluded that the educational level of parent had a consistent direct relationship on the children’s cognitive and behavioral outcomes.

On family financial situation (table 4.15 pg36) it was concluded that there is a direct relationship between parental financial and human capital on the successful learning experience of their children and their academic success and equally low income of parents had negative academic performance expectations on their children.

# 5.5 Recommendations

In view of the findings discussed in this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The researcher recommended that the families should be structured on a functionality level to avoid single parenthood if academic performance has to be achieved.
2. The researcher also recommended that for children to attain academic achievement the family should have stable income from whatever source.
3. The researcher recommended that parents should endeavor to be also academically sound if they have to influence their children’s academic performance.

# 5.6 Areas for further research

1. The researcher suggested that a related study on the relationship between the school background and academic performance of the students, in order to complete the circle of academic performance determinants.
2. Further, this study was conducted among secondary school students, therefore the researcher suggests a similar study on primary school pupils, to find out whether the results of this study can be replicated among primary school pupils.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Dear respondent,

I am NAMAKOBE HALIIMA a student of Nkumba University pursuing Masters of Education Management and Planning currently under taking research. I am conducting a study about “Relationship between family background and academic performance of secondary school students, a case study of Bushenyi District”. I am therefore kindly requesting you to fill this questionnaire and the information given will be kept confidentially and strictly used for academic purposes only. *Thank you for your assistance*

***MATTERS TO NOTE;***

i) The Information given on this questionnaire will be held in strict confidence and will be used only for the purpose of the study.

ii) If any of the questions may not be appropriate to your circumstance, you are under no obligation to answer.

iii) The word parent can be substituted with guardian

**SECTION A: PERSONAL PROFILE**

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

1. What is your gender?

Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. What is your age?

Below 30 [ ] 30-40 [ ] 41-50 [ ] 51-60 [ ] Above 60 [ ]

**SECTION B: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

1. What grade did your child school get in PLE and UCE?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Do you think that he/she had improved?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

3. How has your child’s academic performance trended in the last 2 years?

Increasing [ ] Constant [ ] Decreasing [ ] Irregular [ ] No idea [ ]

4. What was the class position of your child in the last end of term examinations? ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Was this an improvement from the previous term?

Yes [ ] No [ ] No idea [ ]

**SECTION C: FAMILY BACKGROUND**

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

***1: PARENT MARITAL STATUS***

1. What is your marital status?

Single [ ]

Married [ ]

Divorced [ ]

Separated [ ]

Widowed [ ]

2. If divorced, separated or widowed, what age group was the child?

Below 5 years [ ] 6-12 [ ] 13-19 [ ] over 20 years [ ] N/A [ ]

3. How would you rate your family?

Cohesive family [ ] Conflictive family [ ]

4. Do you think family structure (whether single parent or two parent family) affects the students’ academic performance?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

5. Give opinion to the following statements in relation to students’ performance at school and the parent marital status. Use a scale of 1 to 5 where (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= undecided, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | 5 |
| High number of school dropout are from single parent home |  |  |  |  |  |
| High number of school dropout are from two parent home |  |  |  |  |  |
| Father present in a family increases son morale to study because they have a role model hence they perform better. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Low income family is as a results of father absence and affect student performance |  |  |  |  |  |
| Low income family is as a result of mother absence and affects student performance. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Boys perform better than girls because fathers are strict to them than girls. |  |  |  |  |  |

6. Give the opinion to the following ways in which parent marital status may affect students’ Performance in school. Use a scale of 1 to 5 where (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= undecided, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Two parenthood increases quantity of parent time with children hence better performance in school |  |  |  |  |  |
| Single parenthood lead to less socialization of the child which leads to better performance in school. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Single parenthood leads to less academic supervision to the child which leads to poor performance in school. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Two parenthood increases parent monitoring of student performance hence leads to better performance in school. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Single parenthood reduces parent support to the student which leads to better performance in school. |  |  |  |  |  |

***2. FAMILY FINANCIAL SITUATIONS***

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

7. What is your main source of income?

Monthly salary [ ] Loan [ ] Selling farm outputs [ ] Small business [ ] other [ ]

8. If other, please specify ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. What is the aggregate monthly income level of both parents?

0 -100,000 [ ] 110,000 -500,000 [ ] 510,000 – 1,000,000 [ ] more than 1,000,000 none [ ]

10. How has the trend of your income been in the last 5 years?

Increasing [ ] Reducing [ ] Irregular [ ] Stagnant [ ]

11. How is your child’s school fees financed?

Parents finance full fee of children [ ]

Some of the fee is financed by sponsors/ well-wishers [ ]

All the fee is financed by well-wishers/ sponsors [ ]

Others (specify) ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..………………………………………………………………………..

12. Do you think your parents’ financial status affected your academic performance?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

13. If yes, please state how?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

1. ***PARENT EDUCATION LEVEL***

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

14. What is the average education level of mother?

Primary level [ ]

Secondary level [ ]

Tertiary level [ ]

None [ ]

15. What is the average education level of father?

Primary level [ ]

Secondary level [ ]

Tertiary level [ ]

None [ ]

16. Do you think that parents’ education level have any influence on performance of children at school?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

17. Give opinion to the following criteria which motivate students’ choice of the subjects. Use a scale of 1 to 5 where (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= undecided,4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Based on parents’ career |  |  |  |  |  |
| Based on their capability |  |  |  |  |  |
| Based on area of their interest |  |  |  |  |  |

***Thank you for your assistance.***

## APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Dear respondent,

I am NAMAKOBE HALIIMA a student of Nkumba University pursuing Masters of Education Management and Planning currently under taking research. I am conducting a study about “Relationship between family background and academic performance of secondary school students, a case study of Bushenyi District”. I am therefore kindly requesting you to fill this questionnaire and the information given will be kept confidentially and strictly used for academic purposes only. ***Thank you for your assistance***

**SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

1. Which is your gender?

Female [ ] Male [ ]

2. Category of your school.

Boys Boarding [ ]

Girls Boarding [ ]

Mixed Boarding [ ]

Day school [ ]

3. In what class are you in?

Form 1 [ ] Form 2 [ ] Form 3 [ ] Form 4 [ ]

**SECTION 2. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

4. How has your school performance trend in UNEB been like in the last 5 years?

Increasing [ ] Constant [ ] Decreasing [ ] Irregular [ ] No idea [ ]

5. What was the position of your school in the district in UNEB last year? ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Was this an improvement from the previous year?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

**SECTION C: INFORMATION ON FAMILY BACKGROUND**

1. **PARENT MARITAL STATUS**

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

7. What is the marital status of your parent (students’ parents)?

Single parent [ ]

Both parents [ ]

Others (specify)

…………………………………………………………………………

8. Do you think family structure (whether single parent or two parent family) affects the students’ motivation to study

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

1. **FAMILY FINANCIAL STATUS**

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

9. What is your parents’ main source of income?

Monthly salary [ ] Loan [ ] Selling farm outputs [ ] Small business [ ] other [ ]

10. If other, please specify ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

11. How is your school fees financed?

Parents finance full fee of children [ ]

Some of the fee is financed by sponsors/ well-wishers [ ]

All the fee is financed by well-wishers/ sponsors [ ]

Others (specify) …………………………………………………………….

12. What mode of learning do you undertake?

Boarders [ ]

Day scholars [ ]

13. If day scholars, what has contributed to the status?

Lack of finances [ ]

My own choice [ ]

Others reasons (specify) …………………………………………………………

14. Do you think your parents’ financial status affect your academic performance?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

15. If yes, please state how?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

1. **PARENT’S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

**(“Please tick where applicable”)**

16. What is the average education level of your mother?

Primary schools [ ]

Secondary schools [ ]

Tertiary level [ ]

None [ ]

17. What is the average education level of your father?

Primary schools [ ]

Secondary schools [ ]

Tertiary level [ ]

None [ ]

18. What kind of inputs does your parent use to motivate you to study?

Money [ ]

Time [ ]

Attention [ ]

Resources [ ]

Others (specify) ………………………………………………………………….

19. Would you say the kind of inputs used in the first borns are the same as those used in other siblings?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

***Thank you for your assistance*.**

## 

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Question:

1. Introduce myself, research topic, purpose of the study, purpose of the visit and request respondents to spare some time for the interviewer
2. What is your designation in the education system and for how long have you been working in this position?
3. When did you start working in Bushenyi district?
4. How has been the students’ performance trend in the last two years?
5. Do you think there has been an improvement?
6. Do you think family structure (whether single parent or two parent family) affects the students’ academic performance?
7. Does the parents’ financial status affect students’ academic performance?
8. Do you think that parents’ education level has any influence on performance of students at school?
9. Does the student’s mode of learning (whether boarding or day scholar) affect their academic performance?
10. What should parents do to motivate their children to study?