

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN KOLE NORTH COUNTY, KOLE DISTRICT, UGANDA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between parent involvement and academic achievements of primary pupils in Kole North County, Kole District by examining the relationship between parents' discussions with pupils and the academic performance of primary school pupils, examining the relationship between parents attendance of school programs and completion of primary education and assessing the relationship between provision of school requirements by parents and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kole North County, Kole District.

Methodology

The study was a descriptive, correlational, and cross-sectional survey research design. Further, it was both quantitative and qualitative. The study used 32 head teachers of primary schools in Kole North County, Kole District as the respondents of this study.

Results

The findings revealed that 87% of the respondents were males and 13% of the respondents were females. Also, 59.4% of the respondents were aged 41-50 years, 28.1% of the respondents were aged 51-60 years and 12.5% of the respondents were aged 31- 40 years. The correlation between parents' discussions with pupils and their academic performance in a secondary school within Kole North County was 0.843 with a sig value of 0.001. The correlation between parents' attendance of school programs and completion of primary education by primary pupils was 0.411 with a sig. value of 0.018. This indicates a positive significant relationship between parents' attendance of school programs and completion of primary education by primary pupils in North Kole County.

Conclusions

Generally, the education level of parents and parents' involvement in providing scholastic materials and attending school programs contributes to the academic achievements of their children in Kole North County.

Recommendations

Parents should strive hard to provide school requirements in time to avoid sending students home as well as lack of scholastic materials. Parents should also do extra coaching of the children using a private tutor to help their children excel with better grades. Parents should also create time for revision and interaction with their children to know the challenges that their children face in school that might be hindering their academic performance.

Keywords. Academic Achievements, School Children, Kole District, Primary Schools

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academic performance due to parents' fewer efforts towards the education system.

Background of the study

Historical Background

There are various theories of the origin of education across the globe. According to Weintraub, Yinon, Hirsch, and Parush (2009), education was traced to Confucius (561 B.C.), who was the first famous private teacher. According to the bible, education can be seen in Proverbs 22:6 which notes "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" and Ephesians 6:4 which notes "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Bob Burrige, 2023). Therefore, parents have a role in re-educating their children to be successful in life. Also, the development of education can be traced way back to before AD 43 when the Romans occupied Britain (AD 43-410) where education was concentrated on the elites and a religious basis (McCulloch, 2011). In 574 AD many schools were established on church and chapel foundation with missionaries as teachers. There were Grammar schools for boys and men and song schools for vocational education (Gillard, 2011). Further information shows that "the earliest formal school was developed in Egypt's Middle Kingdom under the direction of Kheti, treasurer to Mentuhotep II (2061-2010 BC). In ancient Egypt, literacy was concentrated among the educated elite of scribes. Only people from certain backgrounds were allowed to train to become scribes, in the service of temple, pharaonic, and military authorities (Heyworth-Dunne, 2019). In Uganda, education started in 1877 when Kabaka Muteesa invited missionaries. Eighteen months later, on February 17, 1879, a group of French Catholic White Fathers arrived, also by the East Coast route. They spread their missionary work in the regions of Toro in Western Uganda and Bukedi, Busoga, Bugisu, and Teso, in Eastern Uganda (Ward, 1991).

UIA (2018) notes that Uganda's primary education system has been in place since the early 1960s and consists of seven years of primary education. Additionally, by 1996. Under the UPE program, the Government of Uganda abolished all tuition fees and Parents and Teachers Association charges for primary education. Following its introduction, gross enrolment in primary schools increased from 3.1 million in 1996 to 7.6 million in 2003 (Babiry, 2011). However, this made rural-based parents relaxed as their significant burden had been taken over. This significantly reduced the interaction between parents, teachers, and their children up to date. Studies have shown that school enrolment rates increased in Uganda as a result from 1999 to 2009 leading to an increase of students in school by 20% (Kawachi, 2010). However, issues continue to remain that result in children dropping out of school, absenteeism, and poor

Education is a fundamental human right, the key to sustainable development in line with the Millennium Development Goals. Education does not only provide knowledge and skills, but also inculcates values, and training instincts, fostering the right attitude and habits (Tan, Lyu, & Peng, 2020). Therefore, primary education lays a foundation for pupils' right attitudes, habits, and behaviors in society and therefore parents must support their children's education by supporting their learning process (Boonk, Gijsselaers, Ritzen, & Brand-Gruwel, 2018).

The researcher adopted the humanism theory of learning which believes that a learner is free-willed, fundamentally good, and capable of achieving their best when the ideal learning environment is produced (Veugelers, 2011). The ideal learning environment should cater to the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of the learner (Johnson, 2014). Therefore, the parents' involvement in the education of their children should create a good environment for children to stay in school and thrive in academic performance. This study used parent involvement as the independent variable and the academic achievements of the children as the dependent variable.

Primary Education is the most basic formal education and is valued highly for preparing learners for secondary education, the world of work, scientific and technical application of knowledge, and life skills (Kapur, 2018). However, getting primary education is not automatic; it is influenced by many factors including parents' social and economic experiences and disparities in education standards throughout Uganda (Akellot & Bangirana, 2019). The economic status of parents is usually linked to the family's income, parental educational level, parent's occupations, and social status in their communities. Parents' level of income is largely partitioned into three categories: high, middle, and low (Sekiwu, Ssempala, & Frances, 2020). It is believed that children from high and middle economic backgrounds are better exposed to a learning environment at home than their counterparts in low status because of the provision and availability of extra learning facilities (Sabrina, 2018). Wealthy for instance, ensure their children's future by providing them a favorable learning environment, meeting their children's basic needs for education while scarcity of funds from parents for their children's success (Okite, 2021). Academic performance has been defined as the quality and quantity of knowledge, skills, techniques, attitudes, behaviors, and philosophy that students achieve (Talsma, Schüz, Schwarzer, & Norris, 2018). This achievement is evaluated by the mark or grade the students attain in tests or examinations done at the end of the topic, term, academic year, or education cycle. The issue of pupils' academic performance at schools has been of interest since formal education was introduced (Okello,

Angol, & Mwesigwa, 2020). As such, many countries have come to realize that pupils are the heart of the educational process and that without good performance; all innovations in education are doomed to failure. There is wide dissatisfaction with the current situation of schooling in many countries and this has been blamed on many stakeholders (Ngobi, 2019). EEA (2022) noted that education is the world's equalizer but noted that over 800 billion children across the globe will have no education by 2030 which threatens the future of mankind. Further, their report showed that 750 million people in the world are unable to read and write with 75% of them being girls. This has been accounted to limited parental motivation and encouragement to their children to study at a young age (Dembélé & Lefoka, 2007). Africa has the highest rates of educational exclusion around the world with over 20% of children between the ages of 6 and 11 and 25% between the ages of 12 and 14 being out of school (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007). This has partly been attributed to government policy of providing free education to both primary and secondary pupils saving parents the burden of contributing a significant part in their children's education. A UNESCO study in 2012 showed that the number of primary-aged children not attending school in East Africa accounted for more than half of the global total. Also, the rate of gross enrolment in secondary education from primary education was the lowest in Uganda with male parents having a lesser input in their children's academic progress (Suzuki, 2002). According to Earnest (2022), 68.9% of primary school-aged children, 32.1% of the children drop out of school before completing primary seven. Also, 10% of the students are likely to repeat the class in Uganda. According to Tamusuza (2011) the Kole North County, Kole District inspector of schools, the absenteeism rate in primary schools was 24%. This was attributed to a lack of communication between parents and the school to ascertain the causes of absenteeism in government primary schools in Kole North County, Kole District. Out of 109th positions for Kole North County, Kole District out of 169 districts in Uganda. Further, the District Education officer and Chairperson of LCV promised to reward all pupils of the district who would pass with first grades in Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). Abilonino Demonstration Primary School, one of the best-performing schools had 86 pupils in primary seven, and only 10 came in grade one (Vison, 2022). (LGP, 2018) also indicated 64% as the performance of the education sector in Kole North County, Kole District with a major challenge being school dropouts before primary seven. Could this be due to the seriousness and lack of commitment by parents toward their children's education? Therefore, the researcher intended to examine the relationship between parent's involvement and the education achievements of primary school children in Kole North County, Kole District.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was a descriptive, correlational, and cross-sectional survey research design. Further, it was both quantitative and qualitative. This was because the researcher qualitatively used words, texts, and graphs to describe the study the findings. The study was quantitative because the researcher used figures to examine some of the study variables that were numerical such as age hence a mixed research design. Further, the study was cross-sectional since the researcher intends to collect data at a point in time and the study has no follow-up. The study was also correlational in determining the relationship between the study variables. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Graduate Studies on 12th May 2022 and was authorized to collect data by the District Commercial Officer on 15th May 2022.

Sources of data

Primary data was obtained using self-administered questionnaires which were issued to Headteachers of the selected primary schools. The researcher dropped the questionnaires at the District Inspector of Schools office and requested to distribute the questionnaires from the selected schools as they bring weekly reports to his office. The head teachers were requested to fill in the questionnaires and return them in two weeks. Secondary data was obtained directly from magazines, journals, newspapers, academic reports, and the website of the school and the District Education office.

Target population and sample size

The study used all the Head teachers of primary schools in Kole North County, Kole District as the respondents of this study hence the study population. According to KAWA (2022), there were 34 Universal Primary Schools in Kole North counties. The study therefore used the 34 head teachers of UPE schools as the respondents of the study. Further, the study used the District Inspector of Schools (DIS) as a key informant. Thus, the study had 35 respondents as the sample size of the study.

The researcher adopted the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sampling table in determining the sample size. 32 primary school head teachers from all three sub-counties and the District Inspector of Schools were selected as the respondents of the study.

Sampling method

The study used a simple random sampling method to select primary schools to participate in the study. The head teachers were selected using simple random sampling. The method was used to eliminate any bias. The District Inspector of schools was selected using purposive sampling

since he was knowledgeable about education issues in the district.

Validity of instruments

The validity of an instrument refers to the appropriateness of the instrument to measure what it intends to measure. Validity refers to the truthfulness of findings or the extent to which the instrument is relevant in measuring what it is supposed to measure. To ensure greater chances of data validity, the questionnaires will be reviewed with the research supervisor for expert input. A content validity index (CVI) will be determined by dividing the relevant questions by the total questions ($CVI = n/N$). The researcher will continue with the questionnaire if the CVI is greater than 0.7. This is because it is considered a good measure of validity.

Reliability

A test-retest method will be used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The researcher will pre-test the questionnaires on a few respondents before administering them to the entire sample size. The obtained answers will be compared to the responses of the second test (retest) to ensure accuracy and ensure reliability.

Ethical Consideration

- The researcher will be able to seek permission from the school of research and graduate studies and obtain an introductory letter to go within the field.
- The researcher will seek the consent of the respondents to participate in the study and feel free to provide relevant information for the study. Further, the researcher will inform the respondents about the purpose of the research project and the expected outcome of the study.
- The researcher will also assure the respondents that the information provided will be treated with maximum confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.
- Further, the researcher will credit and extend his gratitude to all previous researchers whose literature has contributed to this study and will not take their work as his.

- The researcher will also ensure validity by ensuring that the answers provided answer the questions at hand.
- The researcher will use a simple random sampling technique to avoid bias in the research findings.

Data Analysis

Before data was analysed, it was carefully classified, edited, and coded based on clarity, completeness, accuracy, and consistency to ensure reliability. This will be done with SPSS version 23 for analysis.

The researcher used Pearson's coefficient to examine the relationship between the study variables. Multiple regression models were used for the analysis of the relationship between Parents' involvement and the education of the children.

Results

Response rate

Of the 33 head teachers selected to participate in the study. One head teacher did not return the questionnaire hence reducing the sample size by 3%. The response rate of the study was 97%.

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

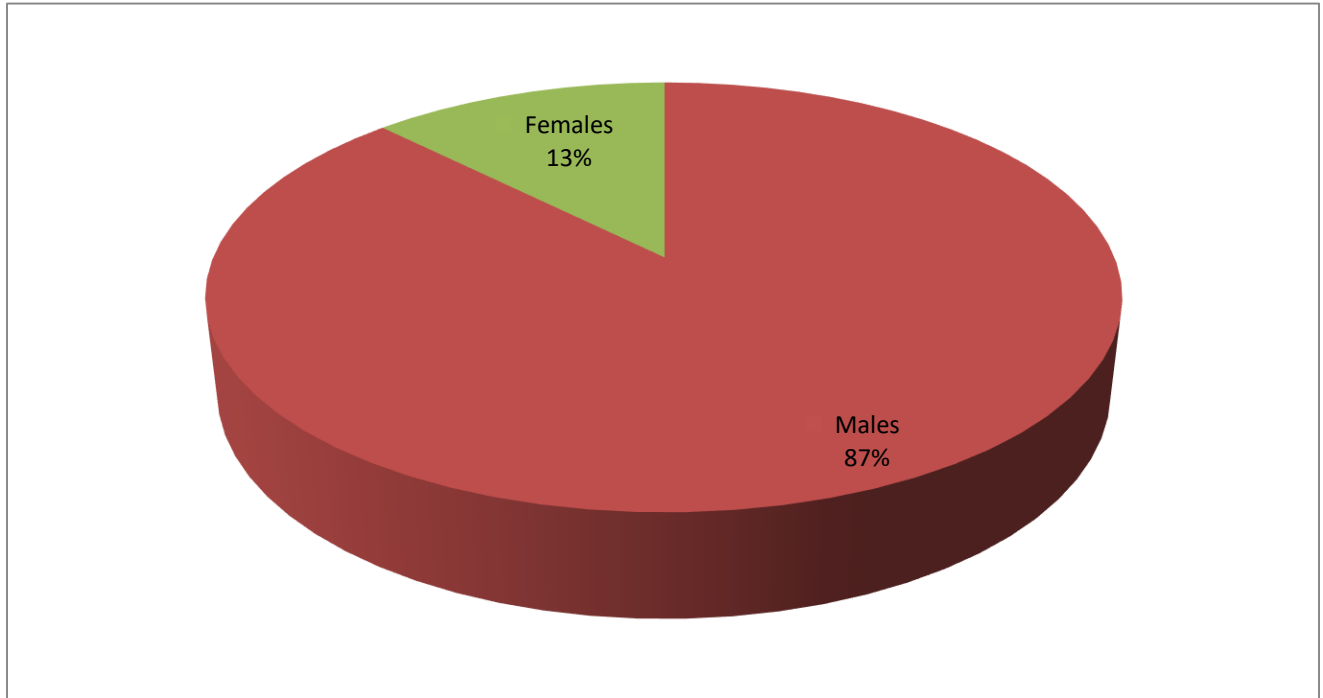
Gender of the respondents

According to figure 1, 87% of the respondents were males and 13% of the respondents were females. This shows that majority of the head teachers of the Universal Primary Schools in Kole district were males.

Age of the respondents

According to the table 2, 59.4% of the respondents were aged 41-50 years, 28.1% of the respondents were aged 51-60 years and 12.5% of the respondents were aged 31-40 years. The head teachers were old people that have experience in management of primary education.

Figure 1: showing gender of the respondents



Source: Primary (2022).

Table 2: Age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
31-40 years	4	12.5
41-50 years	19	59.4
51-60 years	9	28.1
Total	32	100

Source: Primary data

Figure 2 showing level of education

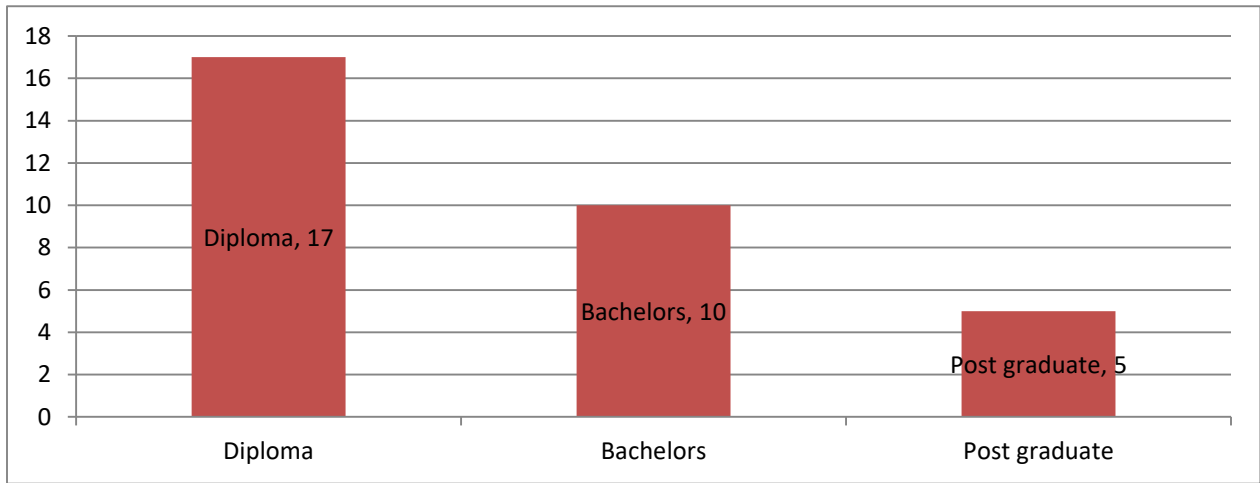
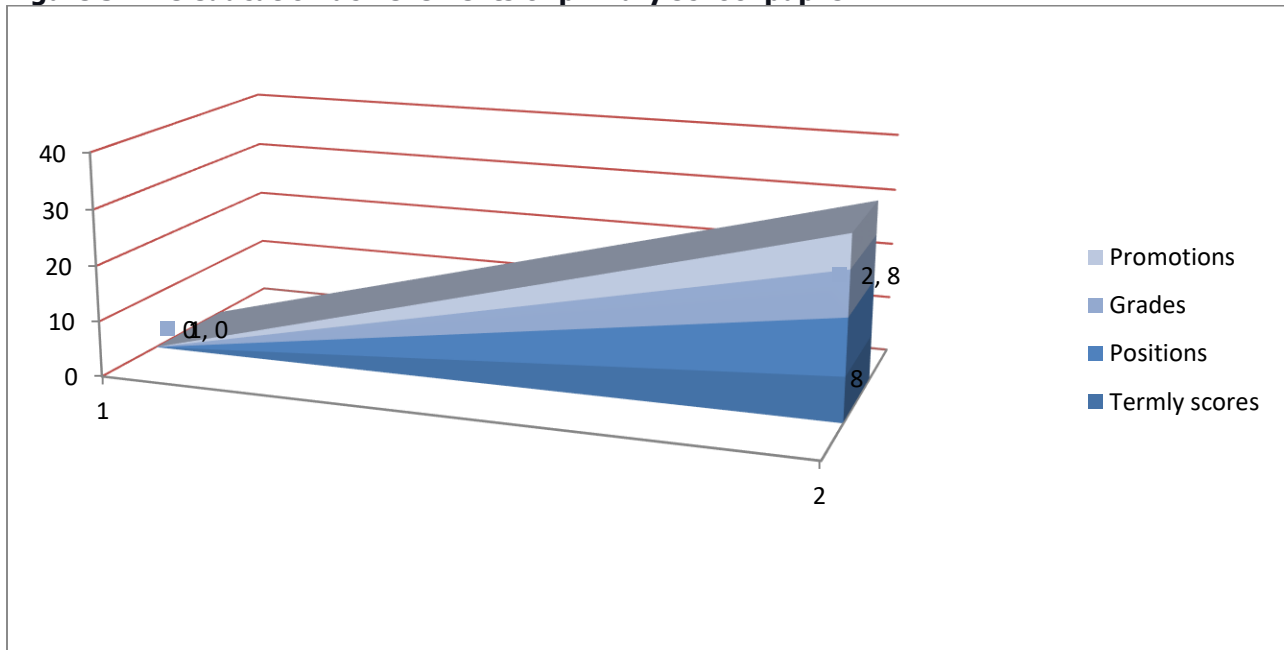


Figure 3: The education achievements of primary school pupils



Level of education

According to findings in figure 2, 17 respondents have diploma (grade 5) level of education, 10 respondents have bachelors' level of education and 5 respondents have postgraduate level of education. Therefore, the head teachers of Universal primary schools in Kole district have at least a diploma with education.

Education achievements of Universal primary school Pupils in Kole North County.

According to figure 3, the academic achievements of primary pupils are promotion to the next class or completion of primary seven, attaining good grades especially first grade, getting a good class position, obtaining good termly scores especially in the various subjects. Further, majority of the respondents believe that the best achievements are

obtaining a good grade or termly score as it contributes to promotion and completion of primary level of education.

Table 3: Ways through which parents get involved in the life of their children

Parental involvement	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Revision for exams, tests and take homes	Academically	4	12.5
Discussions of issues at school	Socially	12	37.5
Attending school activities such as speech day, PTA meetings and sports day	Responsibly	6	18.75
Provision of school requirements such as school fees, lunch, uniform and scholastic materials.	Financially	10	31.25
Total		32	100

Ways of how parents get involved in the life of their children

According to findings in table 3, parents get involved in the life of their children through helping their children revise for exams, tests and take homes, Provision of school requirements such as school fees, lunch, uniform and scholastic materials, Attending school activities such as speech day, PTA meetings and sports day and general discussions of issues at school. Further, the findings revealed that 37.5% of the parents are involved socially in the life of their children, 31.2% of the parents are financially involved in the life of their children, 18.75% involved in the life of their children and 12.5% of the parents are

academically involved in the life of their children. This shows that a small number of the parents are concerned about the academic performance of their children.

Relationship between parents' discussions with pupils and academic performance of primary pupils in Kole North County

The researcher used Likert scale where the answers were on a scale of 1 to 5 and 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The table also includes the summary of the participant's responses basing on percentages (P), frequency (F), standard deviation (Std) and mean of detailed understanding of the responses.

Table 4: showing parents' discussions with pupils and their academic performance in Kole North County

Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	std
Discussing with pupils is of great help to the pupils and reduces the school drop out rate.	F	9	15	4	4		4.0	0.18
	P	28.1	46.9	12.5	12.5			
Parents help pupils to do homework. This contributes to understanding of concepts and passing of exams.	F	0	6	16	8	2	2.8	0.03
	P		18.75	50	25	6.25		

Parents that help their children to revise for exams enable the pupils to obtain better grades.	P	8	16	6	2		4	1.4
	F	26	50	18.75	6.25			
Parents' discussions with pupils contribute to their excellence in academic performance.	P	9	17	6			4.09	0.43
	F	28.125	53.125	18.5				

Source: Primary

According to findings in Table 4, on the statement "Discussing with pupils is of great help to the pupils and reduces the school dropout rate", the average response was 4.00 with a standard deviation of 0.18. Further, the findings showed that 75% of the respondents agree that discussing with pupils is of great help to the pupils and reduces the school dropout rate. On the statement "Parents help pupils to do homework. This contributes to understanding of concepts and passing of exams", the average response was 2.8 with a standard deviation of 0.03. Further, the findings revealed that parents who help pupils to do homework understand the concepts better and pass their exams.

On the statement "Parents that help their children to revise for exams enable the pupils to obtain better grades", the average response was 4 with a standard deviation of 1.4. Further, the findings revealed that 76% of the respondents agree that Parents who help their children to revise for exams enable the pupils to obtain better grades. On the

statement "Parents' discussions with pupils contribute to their excellence in academic performance", the average response was 4.09 with a standard deviation of 0.43. Further, the findings revealed that 81.25% of the respondents agree that parents' discussions with pupils contribute to their excellence in academic performance. Therefore, there is a relationship between parents' discussions with pupils and their academic performance in Kole North County.

Pearson correlation findings on the relationship between parents' discussions with pupils and their academic performance in Kole North County

In order to clearly bring out this relationship, the researcher used the number of times parents discuss for their children in a term and their scores in various subjects discussed. The findings are summarized in table 6 below.

Table 5: showing the correlation between parents' discussions with pupils and their academic performance in Kole North County.

		Parents' discussions	Academic performance
Parents' discussions	Pearson Correlation	1	.843**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	32	32
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.843**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	32	32

**). Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary (2022)

According to the findings in table 5, the correlation between parents' discussions with pupils and their academic performance in Kole North County was 0.843 with a sig

value of 0.001. This indicated a significant positive strong relationship between parents' discussions with pupils and their academic performance in Kole North County. Therefore, parents' discussions with pupils influence the

academic performance of primary pupils in Kole North County.

The relationship between parent's attendance of school programs and completion of primary education by primary school pupils in Kole North County.

The researcher used Likert scale for this particular section of the study where the responses were on a scale of 1-5. Where 1 = Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The table below shows a summary of the participant's responses basing on percentages (P), frequency (F), standard deviation (Std) and mean.

Table 6: showing the descriptive findings of the relationship between parent's attendance of school programs and completion of primary education by primary school pupils in Kole North County

Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	std
Most parents attend school annual general meeting.	F		6	10	14	2	2.6	0.12
	P		18.7	31.3	43.7	6.3		
Parents at this school also attend sports day for their children	F		2	13	10	7	2.3	0.08
	P		6.3	40.6	31.3	21.8		
Parents also come to school for graduation (Speech day) and this motivates students to complete school	F			10	20	2	2.3	0.25
	P			31.3	62.5	6.2		
Attendance of school programs by parents contributes to the academic achievements of primary pupils in Kole north county.	F	6	19	7			4.0	0.62
	P	18.7	59.4	21.9				

According to findings in table 6, on the statement "Most parents attend school annual general meeting", the average response was 2.6 with standard deviation of 0.12. Further, the findings revealed that 50% of the respondents disagree with the statement that most parents attend school annual general meeting. On the statement "Parents at this school also attend sports day for their children", the mean response was 2.3 with standard deviation of 0.08. Further, the findings revealed 53.1% of the respondents disagree with the

statement. On the statement "Parents also come to school for graduation (Speech day) and this motivates students to complete school", the mean response was 2.3 with standard deviation of 0.25. Further, the 68.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. On the statement "Attendance of school programs by parents contributes to the academic achievements of primary pupils in Kole North County", the mean response was 4.0 with standard deviation of 0.62. Further, the findings revealed 78.1% of the respondents agree with the statement.

Table 7: Correlation between parent’s attendances of school programs and completion of primary education in Kole North County

Correlations

	Parents’ attendance	Completion of primary education
Parents’ attendance of school programs	1.000	.411*
of Pearson Correlation Coefficient		.018
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	32	32
Completion of primary education	.411*	1.000
Correlation Coefficient		.018
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	32	32

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary (2022)

Correlation between parent’s attendance of school activities / programs and completion of primary education in Kole North County

According to findings in table 7, the correlation between parents’ attendance of school programs and completion of primary education by primary pupils was 0.411 with a sig. value of 0.018. This indicates a positive significant relationship between parents’ attendance of school programs and completion of primary education by primary pupils in North Kole County.

The relationship between provision of school requirements by parents and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kole North County

The researcher used Likert scale for this particular section of the study where the responses were on a scale of 1-5. Where 1 = Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The table below shows a summary of the participant’s responses basing on percentages (%), frequency (F), standard deviation (Std) and mean;

Table 8: showing descriptive analysis provision of school requirements by parents and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kole North County

Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std
Parents provide uniform, books and pens to students in this school	F	5	23	4			4.03	0.002
	P	15.6	71.9	12.5				
Parents also pay for their childrens school trip which gives them exposure on what is taught in class.	F		8	14	8	2	2.8	0.00
	P		25	43.8	25	6.2		

Parents provide lunch for their children to help them avoid late coming and absenteeism	F	10	16	6			4.13	0.00
	P	31.2	50	18.8				
There is a relationship between provision of school requirement and academic performance of students in of students	F	12	16	4			4.25	0.11
	P	37.5	50	12.5				

According to findings in Table 8 on the statement “Parents provide uniforms, books, and pens to students in this school”, the average response was 4.03 with a standard deviation of 0.002. Further, the findings revealed that 87.5% of the respondents agree with the statement and thus Parents provide uniforms, books, and pens to students in this school. On the statement “Parents also pay for their children's school trip which gives them more exposure to what is taught in class”, the mean response was 2.8 with a standard deviation of 0.00. Further, the findings showed that 43.8% of the respondents were not sure whether parents buy scholastic material for their children to excel academically. On the statement “Parents provide lunch for their children to help them avoid late coming and absenteeism”, the mean response was 4.13 with a standard deviation of 0.00. Further, the findings revealed that 81.2 % of the respondents agree that Parents provide lunch for their children to help them avoid late coming and absenteeism. On the statement “There is a relationship between the provision of school requirement and academic performance of students in of students”, the mean response was 4.25 with a standard deviation of 0.11. Further, the findings revealed that 87.5% of the respondents agree that there is a relationship between the provision of school requirements and the academic performance of students.

Conclusions

Findings indicated that parents fail to pay school fees in time hence their children are sent home interrupting their school program leading to poor grades. Also, parents fail to provide scholastic materials hence limiting learning of some subjects' poor performance. For example, failure to have a mathematical set significantly affects the performance of students in mathematics. Also, parents with low levels of income go to work with parents on several occasions to help them raise school requirements, by the time such students come back, they have significantly lost hence affecting their grades. Since the majority of the parents have a primary or secondary level of education, it discourages pupils from studying as they see no reason to study. Also, several parents are less educated and hence cannot do much to help their children revise or do homework. Generally, the education level of parents and parents' involvement in providing

scholastic materials and attending school programs contributes to the academic achievements of their children in Kole North County.

Recommendations

Parents should strive hard to provide school requirements in time to avoid sending students home as well as lack of scholastic materials.

Parents should also do extra coaching of the children using a private tutor to help their children excel with better grades. Parents should also create time for revision and interaction with their children to know the challenges that their children face in school that might be hindering their academic performance.

Areas for further research

Research should be carried out on early closure of schools and syllabus coverage by schools in Uganda. Also, research is needed on the use of electronic learning by primary pupils in rural schools.

Source of funds

The researchers used own funds to carry out this study.

Conflict of Interest

The researchers have no any conflict of interest in carrying out this research.

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