

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL COLLABORATIONS AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS IN U.P.E SCHOOLS IN MITYANA MUNICIPALITY USING A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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ABSTRACT.

Background:

Learners' achievements in UPE schools refer to the academic achievement and progress of students enrolled in Uganda Primary Education (UPE) schools. UPE schools are government-supported public primary schools in Uganda that aim to provide free education to all children. The performance of learners in UPE schools is usually measured through assessments, examinations, and other evaluation methods. Learners' achievements in UPE schools have been deteriorating in Mitayana District from 58% in 2018 to 45% in 2022. Most pupils in the selected primary schools fail to complete assignments on time. Therefore, the researcher was prompted to investigate the relationship between social collaborations and learners' academic performance in selected U.P.E schools in Mityana Municipality.

Methodology:

A descriptive correlational and cross-sectional survey design was used. The study was both qualitative and quantitative hence a mixed research design. The study was conducted in four Universal Primary Education schools. The respondents were parents, teachers, head teachers, and pupils of the selected primary school in the study. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire and interview method. Regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between social networking and learners' achievements in Mityana District.

Results:

The findings of the descriptive analysis suggest that there is a strong disagreement among the respondents that social collaborations among pupils have a positive impact on their academic achievements.

Conclusion:

The findings of the descriptive analysis suggest that there is a strong disagreement among the respondents that social collaborations among pupils have a positive impact on their academic achievements. This suggests that as social collaborations increase, there is also an increase in Academic achievements.

Recommendation:

Based on the above findings in the Mityana district, it can be recommended that efforts should be made to increase social collaboration among students.

Keywords: Social Collaborations, Learners, Achievements, U.P.E Schools
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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

Learners' achievements in UPE schools refer to the academic achievement and progress of students enrolled in Uganda Primary Education (UPE) schools. UPE schools are government-supported public primary schools in Uganda that aim to provide free education to all children (Sekiwu, Ssempala, & Naluwemba, 2020). The performance of learners in UPE schools is usually measured through assessments, examinations, and other evaluation methods. This data helps gauge the quality of education being provided in these schools and allows for

monitoring and improvement (Okia, Naluwemba, & Kasule, 2021). Networking in learning has been adopted by many educational institutions because of its advantages (Blazer, 2012). It has brought many stakeholders on board such as parents, school administrators, and teachers (Curry & Holter, 2019). Even though networking is a very useful tool for learning more so when it comes to unity of teacher's expertise, wide explosive, access to homework, evaluations; getting relevant materials for instructions, and so on (Kovacs et al., 2021). Learners' achievements in UPE schools have been deteriorating in Mitayana District from 58% in 2018 to 45% in 2022 (Mityana

District Education Department, 2022). Most pupils in the selected primary schools fail to complete assignments on time (Mityana District Inspector of Primary Schools, 2022). At Kiyinda Primary School, the class teacher for primary seven described pupils' engagement in class discussions as subpar (Kiyinda primary school pupil's academic performance, 2022). A Status Report of Katakala Primary School (2021) describes the completion of classrooms by pupils as slow. This may result in low graduation rates of pupils at the end of the academic year as well as failure to complete the course (Hassan et al., 2020). Therefore, the researcher was prompted to investigate the relationship between social collaborations and learners' academic performance in selected U.P.E schools in Mityana Municipality.

METHODOLOGY.

Research design.

In the study, a descriptive correlational and cross-sectional survey design was used. Further, the study was quantitative hence a mixed research design.

The study was descriptive because the researcher intended to use descriptive statistics as a means to explain the study findings.

The research design was also correlational because the researcher intended to find out the relationship between study variables in line with the study objectives.

The study was also cross-sectional because it took a short period. After all, the researcher was a student with limited resources to make a follow-up on the study findings and recommendations. Lastly, the study was both qualitative and quantitative because the researcher used both numerical and non-numeral data.

Study setting

The study was carried out in selected primary schools in Mityana Municipality. Mityana is approximately 70 kilometers (43 mi), by road, west of Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city. This is approximately 80.5 kilometers (50 mi), by road, east of Mubende, along the Kampala–Fort Portal Road. Mityana is about halfway between Kampala and Mubende, along an all-weather tarmac highway that links Uganda's capital with the city of Fort Portal in the Western Region. The geographical coordinates of Mityana are 0°23'58.0"N, 32°02'36.0"E (Latitude:0.399444, Longitude:32.043333). The average elevation of the town is 1,209 meters (3,967 ft) above mean sea level. The study selected primary schools for the study are; Mutyana Public School, Kiyinda Primary School, Katakala c/u primary school, and St Mary primary school.

Time scope.

The study was limited to the period 2020 – 2022. This period was selected because it's when social networking was used to teach pupils. This period provides sufficient data to support study findings.

Population of the study.

The study was conducted in four Universal Primary Education schools. The respondents were parents, teachers, head teachers, and pupils of the selected primary school in the study. A target population of 154 respondents was used.

Sample size.

The researcher adopted the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table of determining sample size. The sample size of the study was 110 respondents.

Table 1: Sample size determination.

Respondents	Population size	Sample size	Sampling techniques
Teachers	43	34	Simple random sampling
Head teachers	4	4	Purposive sampling
Parents (SCM)	32	20	Purposive sampling
Pupils (P7)	75	52	Simple random sampling
Total	154	110	

Therefore, 34 teachers, 4 head teachers, 20 parents, and 52 pupils were selected as respondents to the study.

Sampling techniques.

The researcher employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques to select a sample size for the study. Simple random sampling was used to select

teachers and primary seven pupils as respondents of the study. The methods provided an opportunity for everyone to participate in the study hence bias was eliminated.

Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers and parents (SMC members) to participate in the study. The technique helped the researcher to obtain more detailed information from the key respondents.

Data Collection methods.

Primary data was collected using a questionnaire and interview method. The questionnaire method was used to correct data from teachers and pupils of the selected primary schools within Mityana Municipality. The interview method was used to collect more detailed information from the head teacher and parents.

The documentary review method was used to collect secondary data from journals, magazines, Academic performance reports, and the Internet.

Research instrument.

Self-administered Questionnaires.

The researcher used self-ad – Administered questions for collecting data from teachers and pupils who were selected to participate in the study. The instrument was used to capture a lot of information in a short period.

Interview guide.

An interview guide was used to collect data from head teachers and selected parents. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and discussions were held with key informants.

Validity of instruments.

The validity of the instrument was measured using the content validity of the instrument; this was determined by logical judgment and relevancy of items regarding the content valid instrument of formula which indicated the content validity of 0.9 and compared with 0.75 as suggested by Amin (2009) hence valid for the study.

Reliability of instruments.

The reliability of instruments was determined by pre-testing mode. The researcher formulated the instruments

and tested them with a neutral group outside a research area. The consistency of the instrument in delivering the needed information of data was considered in case of ambiguity some amendment was made to ensure reliability.

Data Analysis.

The data collected from the field was organized and analyzed according to the variables and objectives of the study. Data from questionnaires was coded and entered into the computer.

The data was analyzed using SPSS and was presented as descriptive statistics, frequency tables, and graphs.

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the characteristics of individual variables. Correlational analysis was used to analyze two variables, especially in line with the study objectives.

Regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between social networking and learners' achievements in Mityana District.

Ethical Consideration.

The researcher collected an introduction letter from the University.

This letter was presented to the administration of selected primary schools for the study. The purpose of the letter was to introduce the researcher officially and ease a research exercise. The researcher sought permission from the people who participated in the research for their consent. The research also sought approval from the University ethics committee to make sure the research did not violate any of the ethical considerations through the supervisor.

RESULTS.

The researcher used gender, age, marital status, and level of education as demographic characteristics of the respondents and the findings are as follows.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	53	53%
Female	47	47%
Total	100	100%
Age (years)		
5-15	51	51%
16-45	37	37%
46+	12	12%
Total	100	100%

Table 2 (Continuation) : Demographic characteristics of the respondents		
Marital status		
Single	62	62%
Married	33	33%
Separated	3	3%
Widowed	2	2%
Total	100	100%
Level of education		
Primary	58	58%
Secondary	8	8%
University	34	34%
Total	100	100%
Occupation		
Teaching	34	34%
Student	51	51%
Peasants	15	15%
Total	100	100%

According to findings on Gender, 53% of the respondents are male, while 47% are female. This indicates a relatively balanced representation of both genders in the study.

Also, findings on age showed that 51% of the respondents were in the age group of 5-15 years, 15% of the respondents were in the age group of 16-45 years, and 12% of the respondents were above 46 years. This indicates that the majority of the respondents for this study are primary pupils hence this suggests a diverse age distribution among the participants.

Findings on marital Status indicated that 62% of the respondents were single, 33% of the respondents were married, 3% of the respondents were separated and 2% of the respondents were widowed. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were single pupils. However, the majority of the parents and teachers were married.

Findings on the level of education showed 58% of the respondents had primary education, 8% of the respondents had secondary education and 34% of the respondents had University education. This indicates a relatively significant proportion of participants with higher education qualifications.

Findings on occupation showed that 34% of the respondents were in the teaching profession, 51% of the

respondents were students and 15% of the respondents were peasants. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were teachers and pupils hence education-based research. In summary, the study sample consists of a relatively balanced representation of both genders, with a diverse age distribution. The majority of participants are single and have completed primary education, while a significant proportion have also achieved university education. The occupation is primarily split between teaching and student roles, with a smaller percentage involved in peasant work.

Social Collaborations and learners' Achievements in U.P.E schools in Mityana Municipality.

To explore the relationship between Social collaborations and learners' achievements in U.P.E schools in Mityana Municipality, the researcher used a descriptive analysis of responses that were captured using a Likert 5 point scale where 1- Strongly Agree (SA), 2- Agree (A), 3-Not sure (NS), 4-Disagree (D), 5-Strongly Disagree (SD), Mn-Mean, Std-standard deviation

Table 3: Social collaborations and learners' achievements in U.P.E schools in Mityana Municipality.

	Mean	Standard deviation
Pupils collaborate effectively in doing group assignments which helps them to deeply understand concepts for better grades	4.6	0.4
Pupils collaborate through social networks to present classroom work which helps them attain better results	4.6	0.3
Pupils use social networks to discuss with fellow students hence gain more knowledge and understanding of subject content leading to their academic excellence	4.3	0.2
Social collaborations enable pupils to engage easily during classroom lectures hence improving academic performance of pupils	4.2	0.3
Social collaborations enable pupils to complete class assignment quickly and easily for better grades	4.2	0.2

According to findings on the statement, "Pupils collaborate effectively in doing group assignments which helps them to deeply understand concepts for better grades", the mean response was 4.6 with a standard deviation of 0.4. This statement implies that the majority of the respondents strongly disagree (DA) that pupils do not collaborate effectively in doing group assignments, leading to a shallow understanding of concepts and poor grades. The low standard deviation suggests a high level of agreement among the respondents on the statement.

On the statement "Pupils collaborate through social networks to present classroom work which helps them to attain better results", the mean response was 4.6 with a standard deviation of 0.3. The data indicates a high level of disagreement among the respondents thus pupils do not collaborate through social networks to present their classroom work hence resulting in low academic results. The low standard deviation suggests minimal variation in the responses.

On the statement "Pupils use social networks to discuss with fellow students hence gain more knowledge and understanding of subject content leading to their academic excellence", the average response was 4.3 with a standard deviation of 0.2. The data suggests that while there is disagreement among the respondents (mean of 4.3), it is slightly lower compared to the previous statements. Hence pupils using social networks to discuss with fellow students is not seen as a way to gain more knowledge and understanding of subject content, leading to low academic achievements. The low standard deviation indicates a minimal spread of responses.

On the statement "Social collaborations enable pupils to engage easily during classroom lectures hence improved academic performance of pupils", the mean response was 4.2 with a standard deviation of 0.3. Therefore, respondents disagree (mean of 4.2) that social collaborations do not enable pupils to engage easily during classroom lectures, which, in turn, leads to low academic performance. The low standard deviation suggests consistency in the responses.

On the statement "Social collaborations enable pupils to complete class assignments quickly and easily for better grades", the average response was 4.2 with a standard deviation of 0.2. The data indicates that the majority of the respondents disagree (mean of 4.2) that social collaboration has no contribution in enabling pupils to complete class assignments quickly and easily, thus not contributing to better grades. The low standard deviation suggests minimal variation in the responses.

In summary, the findings of the descriptive analysis suggest that there is a strong disagreement among the respondents that social collaboration among pupils has a positive impact on their academic achievements. Pupils collaborating effectively in group assignments, using social networks to present work, and discussing with fellow students are believed to be not available in most primary schools in Mityana District hence a gap exists in deeper understanding of concepts and academic performance. This can apply to different parts of the world because the aspects of social collaboration exist in all schools much as the findings may vary due to different school settings and education systems.

DISCUSSION.

The findings of the descriptive analysis suggest that there is a strong disagreement among the respondents that social collaboration among pupils has a positive impact on their academic achievements which agrees with the study by Kao et al. (2015) who specifically focuses on elementary students in UPE schools, further supporting the argument that collaborative learning leads to higher academic performance.

The review also acknowledges the challenges faced in implementing effective social collaborations in UPE schools, such as large class sizes, lack of resources, and limited teacher training. By including Mugiraneza's (2021) study, the review provides practical strategies for overcoming these challenges, such as providing teacher training and creating supportive classroom environments. Overall, the literature review provides a solid overview of the existing research on social collaborations and learners' achievements in UPE schools. By adding a more critical analysis of the literature, discussing the specific context of UPE schools in Uganda, and exploring the mechanisms through which social collaborations impact academic performance, the review further enhanced its analysis and contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the descriptive analysis suggest that there is a strong disagreement among the respondents that social collaborations among pupils have a positive impact on their academic achievements. Pupils collaborating effectively in group assignments, using social networks to present work, and discussing with fellow students are believed to be not available in most primary schools in Mityana District hence a gap exists in deeper understanding of concepts and academic performance. The findings indicate that there is a positive and moderately strong relationship between social collaborations and Academic achievements ($r = 0.719$). This suggests that as social collaborations increase, there is also an increase in Academic achievements. This relationship implies that the municipality is using its collected revenue to fund its expenditures for Academic achievements.

LIMITATION.

The author did not provide any limitations in this study.

RECOMMENDATION.

Based on the above findings in the Mityana district, it can be recommended that efforts should be made to increase social collaboration among students. The strong positive relationship between social collaborations and academic achievements suggests that as social collaborations increase, academic achievements also improve. Therefore, to improve academic achievements in the

Mityana district, it is recommended to focus on promoting and facilitating social collaborations among students. This can be done through various means such as group projects, collaborative learning activities, and extracurricular programs that encourage teamwork and cooperation. It is important to consider that other factors may also influence academic achievements, so a comprehensive approach that considers various aspects of student development should be adopted. This can include providing quality education, supportive learning environments, and addressing individual needs and challenges.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

U.P.E: Universal Primary Education
NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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