

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPEN ENROLMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN GOVERNMENT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MAKINDYE SSABAGABO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL. A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

Lwanga Robert*, Edmand Bakashaba, Muhammad Sendagi
School of Graduate studies and research, Team University.

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ABSTRACT.

Background:

The study aimed to examine the relationship between open enrolment and the academic performance of pupils in Government-aided primary schools in Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council.

Methodology:

A cross-sectional survey design was employed among 16 UPE Schools of Ndejje, Masajja, and Bunamwaya Division, Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council, Wakiso district. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select primary seven pupils to participate in the study. The method was used to give every primary seven pupils a chance to participate in the study and eliminate bias. The total sample size of 142 comprised of primary seven pupils, teachers, and head teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select teachers and head teachers as respondents to provide in-depth information on enrollment criteria in the 5 selected primary schools and the academic performance of pupils in these government-aided schools in Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council

Results

The findings showed that schools have a relatively open enrollment policy, with a lack of strict criteria and a tendency to enroll pupils without emphasizing their previous academic performance. The class sizes are large due to open enrollment. The findings also indicate that the schools don't have stringent measures such as interviews or probation for pupils with low academic performance.

Conclusion:

School enrollment has a significant relationship with the academic performance of pupils in government-aided primary schools in Makindye Municipality, Wakiso District.

Recommendation:

Schools should develop targeted interventions or support programs to improve academic performance in specific exams.

Keywords: Open enrolment, Academic performance, Government-aided primary schools, Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council

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Corresponding author: Lwanga Robert*

Email: robertlwanga9@gmail.com

School of Graduate studies and research, Team University.

BACKGROUND.

The issue of pupils' academic performance in schools has been of concern ever since modern education was introduced. 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 (Martha, 2009). According to Skinner (1945), "Learning Theory" enrollment varies among institutions due to several reasons. Level of performance and aspirations of pupils linked to school environment, availability of resources, presence of instructor. The theory further emphasizes the importance of accessibility of learning aids, involvement in learning

by learners, and involvement of Schools supporting their children's education.

Open enrollment refers to a policy allowing students to enroll in schools outside their residential boundaries or attend schools that might have specific academic programs or features of interest to them, irrespective of their location (Bauman & Cranney, 2020). The effectiveness of any school must be measured by what contributions it has made to improve the learning of the school children. A pupil's performance is defined as, the ability of pupils to do something (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 1994). Barrow (1976) states that the success or failure of a pupil depends on many factors, among the most important being the kind and availability of resources offered by the leader. Like any other

organization, the school needs dynamic and effective resources to achieve the set goals (Kochhar, 1978).

The relationship between school enrollment and the academic performance of pupils is complex and influenced by various factors. Generally, school enrollment is a prerequisite for academic achievement, as it provides students with access to educational resources, teachers, and a structured learning environment (Brown, 1999). While school enrollment is a fundamental step toward academic achievement, the quality of education, socioeconomic factors, teacher quality, parental involvement, and the overall learning environment also play crucial roles. The interplay of these factors makes the relationship between school enrollment and academic performance complex and multifaceted. Efforts to improve education outcomes should address these various elements to create an environment that fosters optimal learning and student success. Hence the researcher sought to investigate the relationship between open enrolment and the academic performance of pupils in Government primary schools in Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council.

METHODOLOGY.

Research Design.

The researcher used a cross-sectional survey design because the study intended to pick only some representative sample elements of the cross-section of the population. The study is cross-sectional because it was conducted across participants over a short period and it did not necessitate the researcher to make follow-ups of the participants. The survey was also preferred because it allowed the researcher to get a detailed inspection of the effects of increased enrolment on the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council.

Table 1 shows the target population.

Participants	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Headteachers	5	5	Purposive sampling
Teachers	40	35	Purposive sampling
P7 Pupils	190	102	Simple random sampling
Total	235	142	

Source: Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council Education Department (2022)

Sample and sample size.

The researcher adopted Kreijcie & Morgan's (1970) table of determining sample size and 142 respondents were selected. These included 5 head teachers, 35 teachers, and 102 students.

Sampling techniques.

It is a process of selecting several individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of characteristics found in the

The study also used interviews and questionnaires to get descriptions from the respondents. Quantitative research was used in data presentation like the use of tables.

Study setting.

The study was carried out in Makindye Ssabagabo Municipality. It is the only Municipality in Uganda that was elevated from a sub-county status to Municipal status without becoming a Town board or Town council first. This Municipality is one of the four (4) municipalities in Wakiso District. It is the highest densely populated urban center in Uganda. Makindye Ssabagabo Municipality is made up of 3 Divisions i.e. Masajja, Bunamwaya, and Ndejje, with 8 Wards and 55 cells.

The Municipality shares borders with Kampala City Council, Kyengera Town Council, Kajjansi Town Council, and Lake Victoria. The Municipality occupies about 82sq kilometers with 392 kilometers of road network and 14sq kilometers are covered by Lake Victoria part of which Busabala and Nakabugo landing sites are situated.

Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council headquarters are 6 kilometers from Kampala-Entebbe Road off Namasuba to Ndejje –Zanta.

Target Population.

The target population comprised of primary seven pupils, teachers, and head teachers of the 5 selected primary schools that are government-aided in Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council. According to the Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council Education Department, the selected schools had 235 target respondents hence the study population. The study was conducted in only the five primary schools namely: Namasuba UMEA, St. Dominic p/s, Kigo p/s, Sseguku Primary School, and Bunamwaya C/U Primary School.

entire group. The study used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques.

The researcher employed a simple random sampling technique to select primary seven pupils to participate in the study. The method was used to give every primary seven pupils a chance to participate in the study and eliminate bias.

Purposive sampling was used to select teachers and head teachers as respondents to provide in-depth information on enrolment criteria in the selected schools and the academic performance of pupils in these schools.

Data Collection Instruments.

The data collection instruments were self-administered questionnaires, which comprised; open and close-ended questions that required respondents to answer all the questions to the best of their knowledge and options given to avoid deviating from the Head Teacher's Administrative Tasks and Academic performance t of Government Aided Schools in Uganda: a case study of selected Government Schools in Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal council Wakiso District.

Interviews were conducted during data collection from which the researcher had to ask questions and respondents answered from selected sections. The interview was supplemented with a document Analysis of various sections or departments and assess their control system. A document review checklist was also utilized in collecting secondary data for the study

Validity of Instrument.

The validity of the instrument is established using the Content Validity Index. A first session was conducted in which a critical assessment of each item was rated for relevancy. Adjustments to the questions were made until validity was achieved. Content validity was established through expert judges using the Content validity Index (CVI) given by the formula below (Amin, 005)

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items declared valid}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

A content Validity Index of 0.85 was obtained and compared with 0.7 as suggested by Amin (2005). The

obtained value indicated a good validity hence the researcher continued with the study.

Reliability of instrument.

To achieve consistent results, the study sought to determine the reliability of the instruments.

In this case study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient method of internal consistency was used to calculate the reliability of the coefficient of the questionnaire.

Data analysis.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze data for descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive data was analyzed for percentages and frequencies, while inferential statistics was analyzed for correlations and regressions. Data was presented using tables and figures.

RESULTS.

Open enrolment and academic performance of pupils in UPE schools in Makindye Municipal Council.

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

Table 2: Open enrolment and academic performance of pupils in UPE schools in Makindye Municipal Council.

Statement	Mean	Std
There are no enrollment criteria in this school	4.5	0.2
Pupils are enrolled without questioning of previous academic performance	4.6	0.1
Pupils sit for interviews before being enrolled	2.6	0.2
Pupils with low grades are enrolled on probation at this school	2.3	0.2
Pupils enrolled with poor grades are advised to repeat a class	2.1	0.5
Due to open enrolment, the class size is too big	4.7	0.4
Parents are involved in the enrollment decisions of their children	3.6	0.4

On the statement "There is no enrollment criterion in this school" the mean response was 4.5 with a standard deviation of 0.2. The majority of participants strongly agree that there are no specific enrollment criteria in the school, suggesting a relatively open admission policy.

On the statement "Pupils are enrolled without questioning of previous academic performance" the mean response was 4.6 with an std of 0.1. Participants strongly agree that there is no emphasis on questioning the previous academic performance of pupils during enrollment.

On the statement "Pupils sit for interviews before being enrolled" the mean response was 2.6 with std 0.2. The mean score suggests that participants tend to disagree that pupils go through interviews before enrollment, indicating that interviews are not a common practice in the admission process.

On the statement "Pupils with low grades are enrolled on probation at this school" the mean response was 2.3 with a std of 0.2. The mean score indicates disagreement,

suggesting that pupils with low grades are not typically enrolled on probation.

On the statement "Pupils enrolled with poor grades are advised to repeat a class" the mean response was 2.1 with a std of 0.5. Participants strongly disagree that pupils with poor grades are advised to repeat a class, indicating that the school might have a lenient approach toward academic performance.

On the statement "Due to open enrolment, the class size is too big" the mean response was 4.7 with a std of 0.4. The majority strongly agree that due to open enrollment, the class sizes in the school are perceived to be too large.

On the statement "Parents are involved in enrollment decisions of their children" the mean response was 3.6 with a std of 0.4. Participants tend to agree that parents are involved in the enrollment decisions of their children, but the agreement is not as strong as in some other statements. In summary, the findings suggest that the school has a relatively open enrollment policy, with a lack of strict criteria and a tendency to enroll pupils without emphasizing their previous academic performance. The class sizes are perceived as large due to open enrollment. However, there is some level of parental involvement in enrollment decisions. The findings also indicate that the school may not have stringent measures such as interviews or probation for pupils with low academic performance.

DISCUSSION.

The findings suggest that the school has a relatively open enrollment policy, with a lack of strict criteria and a tendency to enroll pupils without emphasizing their previous academic performance. The class sizes are perceived as large due to open enrollment. However, there is some level of parental involvement in enrollment decisions. The findings also indicate that the school may not have stringent measures such as interviews or probation for pupils with low academic performance.

Several studies have investigated the impact of open enrollment policies on student outcomes and educational systems, shedding light on both the positive and negative aspects of this approach. This study's findings correlate with Bauman and Cranney (2020) about open enrollment and academic performance in correlation to the pupil's location from school.

In conclusion, open enrollment policies offer potential benefits by providing families, especially the poor ones with educational choices and stimulating competition among schools in Uganda. However, according to findings, challenges related to equity, resource allocation, and policy implementation need careful consideration to ensure equitable access and optimal outcomes for all pupils in the country.

CONCLUSION.

School enrollment has a significant relationship with the academic performance of pupils in government-aided primary schools in Makindye Municipality, Wakiso District

RECOMMENDATION.

Schools should develop targeted interventions or support programs to improve academic performance in specific exams.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

UPE: Universal Primary Education

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

The author declares no conflict of interest

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY.

Student of the school of graduate studies at Team University.


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