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INFLUENCE OF FAMILY LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND FAMILY SIZE ON STUDENTS' DROPOUT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, IN KITAGWENDA DISTRICT. A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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Abstract

Background

Education is important to any country's social, economic, and political development. Globally education is recognized as a basic human right. The study aims to assess the Influence of family level of education and family size on students' dropout in secondary schools, in Kitagwenda district.

Methodology

A cross-sectional descriptive survey design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study population consisted of teachers, head teachers, officials in the education department of Kitagwenda District, and parents who are members of the committee of PTA students s.3 and s.4. After data collection, the responses to the questionnaire were coded, and then data entered into the computer for analysis.

Results

Most of the respondents (90.4%) were unmarried and only (9.2%) were married. Most (200) were students from s3 and s4 classes. The majority of the respondents (82.8%) had a PLE level of education (2.8 %) had a diploma level and (5.02%) had degrees. Most (94.4%) agreed that uneducated parents encourage their sons to go to school as a way of compensation for their parents' education in the area (Mean= 4.48; Standard deviation= 0.666). (89.6%) agreed that parents with low levels of schooling involve their children with home activities that are not academically focused, thus frustrating students who end up dropping out (Mean= 4.34; Standard deviation= 0.694). Most (90.6%) agreed that parents with bigger families have higher chances of dropping out of school (Mean= 4.45; Standard deviation= 0.646).

Conclusion

Children from uneducated parents are more likely to drop out of school than children from educated parents.

Recommendations

There is a need to revive community sensitization on the impact of education among rural people who have been noticed to be reluctant to educate their children.

***Keywords**: Family level of education, Family size, Students' dropout in secondary schools, Kitagwenda district.*
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Background

Education is important to any country's social, economic, and political development. Globally it is recognized as a basic human right, thus a form of investment that contributes to the development of both an individual and society. Basic education strengthens individuals' capacity, families, and communities to access health, higher education, economic and cultural opportunities, and services. The Education for All (EFA) movement 12 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have resulted in more attention being paid to issues of both participation in and completion of education. Universal primary education is goal number two of both EFA (Jomtien, 1990; re-affirmed in Dakar, 2000) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and was adopted by UN Member States in 2000. Many governments might fail to meet Education for All (EFA) Goal 3 which aims at promoting learning and life skills for young people and adults if the dropout rate among learners is still rampant. If learners are dropping out of school, there is no way their learning needs can be catered for.

In 1987, the NRM government instituted the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) under the Chairpersonship of Professor Senteza Kajubi to look at the state of education in Uganda with terms of reference to recommend policies at all educational levels. After consulting with stakeholders, it recommended primary education to be universalized. In defense of its recommendations, the commission emphasized that unless every child is enrolled at the right age and does not drop out before completion, it will be impossible to ensure that all

citizens have the necessary basic education for living a full life (Kakuru, 2003)

Parental education is the most consistent determinant of learners' education(Ersado, 2005). Analysis of American parents' time use suggests that time spent with children is valued more by better-educated parents (Guryan et al., 2008). The coefficients associated with the parents' earnings endowments also reflect income, time allocation, and bargaining effects, but in addition, they reflect the association between parents' and their children's endowments. A parent's level of education influences parents' knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals about childrearing so that a variety of parental behaviors are indirectly related to children's school performance. A father's education has a much larger effect than that of the mother, and the father's education has a larger effect on sons than on daughters. With a sample of brother fathers, the effect of the mother's education is larger than that of the father's education, and the mother's effect is even larger if the offspring is a daughter. It appears then that the differential effect of a mother's education always favors daughters, while the gender interaction with a father's education is less clear in direction and it is often statistically insignificant, even with our large samples (Cantu, 2013). The study aims to assess the Influence of family level of education and family size on students' dropout in secondary schools, in Kitagwenda district.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional descriptive survey design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches to overcome the limitations of using a single design. The reason behind the use of those approaches is the nature of the study which involved data that was described and quantified.

Study population

The study population will contain teachers, head teachers, officials in the education department of Kitagwenda District, and parents who are members of the committee of PTA students s.3 and s.4. The respondents are chosen because they have so much to tell the researcher as per the study objectives. The study was conducted among selected schools in, Kitagwenda District. For purposes of this study, a total of 6 USE schools will be used. This population is chosen because of having adequate data concerning the family socioeconomic factors explaining school dropout in the study area.

Sample size and sampling procedure

In this study, five groups of respondents namely; students, class teachers of S4 and S3, head teachers, PTA committee members, and district education department officials were involved. The sample frame was 6 public secondary schools within the Kitagwenda District. The selection of head teachers, class teachers, and district education department officials was purposive because they are already known and are few. For the selection of students and PTA executive members, random sampling will be used.

The researcher used Yemane's (1967) scientific formula, as cited by Taye (2014), by considering a 5% level of error and will determine the sample size of students and PTA members for this study.

The formula is: n =

Where; n = Sample Size

N = Total number of targeted populations

α = level of precision (sampling error).

The sample size is summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Sample space.

Category	Target population	Sample size	Sampling Method
Headteachers	6	6	purposive
Class teachers	12	12	purposive
District education officials (DIS&DEO)	02	02	Purposive
PTA executive members	60	30	Random
Class 2 and 3 students.	600	200	Radom
Total	**680**	**250**	

Data Collection Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data for this study, these include questionnaires and interview guides. Questionnaires were designed for teachers and students to form a major data collection tool as it allowed the study to include large samples for representativeness to inform the study on practices, opinions, and attitudes of respondents. The questionnaires were divided into sections A and B section A of each questionnaire which was to collect data on the background information of the respondents and section B which targeted school strategies and student consideration on dropout with items of attitude scale positively worded statement for students with scores in Likert scale. An interview guide for the head teachers was designed to collect data. This was preferred because head teachers do not have enough time to fill out the questionnaire.

Research procedure

After the approval of the proposal, the researcher sought an introductory letter from the School of Postgraduate Studies, Team University. This letter introduced the researcher to the participants in this study in their respective places in Kitagwenda District. A visit to the projects was done to explain to the respondents the nature of the study. This created rapport before collecting data. The selected schools were visited and the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. The filled questionnaires were collected on the same day. The questionnaires were conveyed to the respondents by use of the drop–fill and collect method. The researcher assisted some respondents who were not literate enough on the questionnaire items while collecting primary data. The empirical data collected were edited, coded, analyzed, interpreted, and presented using frequency tables, means, and standard deviations. After that, conclusions and recommendations were made and the report was written.

Data analysis techniques

After data collection, the responses to the questionnaire were coded, and then data entered into the computer for analysis. Data was summarized, organized according to research questions, arranged into themes, and resented narrative form. Tabular forms indicating percentages and frequencies were used. Editing to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information contained in the transcripts will be done to raise the accuracy of the information and ensure that all desired information is conceptualized, coded, connected, and verified to ascertain accuracy and reliability, reducing the possibility of mismatch between available information and what is intended to be tested as per research questions.

Instrument validity

A pilot study test was carried out on 10% of cases drawn from the target population outside the study. This proceeded with questionnaire administration which was meant to create a good rapport with respondents and to reveal ambiguities, and inconsistencies, bringing into light any weakness of questions.

Instrument reliability

The same questions were administered to the same group within a time interval of two weeks. A reliability coefficient was then calculated to indicate the relationship between two sets of scores obtained. Pearson product-moment formula was used to calculate the correlation.

Ethical Issues Consideration

Permission was first sought from relevant authorities and a letter was granted to allow the researcher to carry out the research. Furthermore, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and assured them of the confidentiality of their responses and identities. To safeguard the respondents in this research, the researcher followed four ethical doctrines. The first one was deliberate consent which necessitated that the respondents not be forced to participate in the research. Respondents were educated about the nature of the research before they participated. The respondents also were informed that participation is voluntary and the respondents have the right to pull out of the study if they are not contented. The researcher thus allowed the participants to freely agree to participate in the study.

In the same regard, the respondents must remain unidentified during the study as a condition to ensure their privacy. The researcher will protect the identity of the respondents by substituting their names with pseudonyms. Lastly, the researcher reminded each respondent that the information obtained from them was completely intended to support the study. This implies that all the information that was collected was used for research and persons' names and official titles were omitted in the report.

Results

Table 2: Response rate

Respondents category	Sample size	Response rate
Headteachers	6	6
Class teachers	12	12
District Education department	02	02
PTA executives members	30	30
Students	200	200
Total	**250**	**250**

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 2 indicates that the targeted sample size of 250 responded as planned. This confirms that the participation of the target respondents in this study was perfect.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics of respondents considered in this study include sex, age, marital status, and education level as presented in table 3.

Table 3. Sex of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Female	134	53.6	53.6
Male	115	46.4	100
Total	**250**	**100**	

Source: Primary data

Table 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents (53.6%) were males while females were 46.4%. This implies that there are more male students than female students in secondary schools in Kitagwenda District. This shows that either gender was fairly represented in the learners who form the majority sample and therefore was thought to give balanced views for the study. The high number of male respondents showed that more male learners have led to a higher retaining rate of boys in schools compared to girls.

Table 4 Age of respondents

Age groups	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
15-30	235	94.0	94.0
31-45	13	5.2	99.2
46-60	2	8	100
61 and above	00	00	100
Total	**250**	**100**	

Source: primary data

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents (94.0%) belonged to the age bracket 15-30 years. This is because class 3 and 4 learners fall in this bracket and form the majority of the respondents. A small minority (8%) belonged to the age bracket 46-60 years no respondents were in bracket 61 years and above. This implies that USE schools in Kitagwenda District have young and energetic staff and management who are capable of performing their duties effectively.

Table 5. Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Single	226	90.4	90.4
Married	23	9.2	99.6
Others	1	0.4	100
Total	**250**	**100**	

Source: Primary data

Table 5 indicates that the majority of the participants (90.4%) were unmarried and only (9.2%) were married whereas a minority (0.4%) were in others. This shows that most of the respondents were single. This is because the majority of respondents (200) were students from s3 and s4 classes. Other than students majority (23 respondents) were married indicating that they were responsible workers.

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Table 6. The education level of respondents

Education level	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
PLE	207	82.8	82.8
USE	07	2.8	85.6
UACE	00	00	85.6
CERTIFICATE	02	0.8	86.4
DIPLOMA	21	8.4	94.8
DEGREE and above	13	5.2	100
Total	**250**	**100**	

Source: Primary data

Table 6 indicates that the majority of the respondents (82.8%) had a PLE level of education (2.8 %) had diploma level and (5.02%) had degrees. The majority of the respondents sampled had PLE because they were students of S3 and S4. The respondents with diplomas (8.4%) and those that had attained the degree level (5.32%) were head teachers and teachers. This indicated that there was a good number of Teachers with professional qualifications which matters a lot (Mulusa, 2010).

The effects of parents' education levels on students' dropout in USE schools in Kitagwenda District

Findings under this theme were sought by research objective two which sought to establish the effect of parents' literacy levels on pupil dropout in USE schools in Kitagwenda District. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they strongly agree (SA), agree (A), Not Sure (NS), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) using a five-point Likert scale. The analysis was done using percentages, mean, and standard deviation. A mean above 3 indicates an agreement of respondents, a mean of 3 shows undecided, and a mean of below 3 shows disagreement by respondents. The standard deviation (Std) of close to 1 shows agreement, while the standard deviation of close to zero shows disagreement among the respondents. The analysis further grouped strongly agree and agree to mean agree; and strongly disagree and disagree to mean disagree.

Table 7: The effects of parents' education levels on students' dropout rate in USE schools in Kitagwenda District

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std.
Uneducated parents encourage their sons to go to school as a way of compensation for their parent's education in the area	0 (0.0%)	5 (2.0%)	9 (3.6%)	98 (39.2)	138 (55.2%)	4.48	0.666
Parents with low levels of education do not understand how to motivate children in school to enhance their completion thus leading to some dropping out	0 (0.0%)	73 (29.2%)	25 (10%)	76 (30.4)	76 (30.4)	3.62	0.705
Parents with low levels of education involve their children in home activities that are not academically focused, thus frustrating students who end up dropping out	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.2%)	23 (9.2%)	110 (44.0%)	114 (45.6%)	4.34	0.694
Educated parents motivate, inspire, and are good role models to their children which makes them stay in school	0 (0.0%)	12 (4.8%)	24 (9.8%)	98 (39.2%)	116 (46.4%)	4.27	0.825
Parents with higher education levels have stronger confidence in their children's academic abilities and they also have higher expectations of their children which make them stay in school	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.6%)	33 (13.2%)	73 (29.2%)	140 (56.0%)	4.40	0.776.

Source: Primary data

Table 7 shows that the majority of respondents agreed with the statements put to them. This is explained by their mean which is above 3, and their standard deviation which is close to 1. The respondents' responses were as follows:

Table 7 indicates that the majority of respondents (94.4%) agreed that uneducated parents encourage their sons to go to school by way of compensation for their parents' education in the area (Mean= 4.48; Standard deviation= 0.666). This implies that there are higher chances that children of less educated parents will drop out of school among USE schools as compared to their counterparts of educated parents. These findings are supplemented by results from interviews in which the participants were quoted saying:

"……..parents who are less educated take it for granted to educate their children. For instance, when a student turns up without a uniform or lunch at school and you send them back, parents feel unbothered and advise their children to remain home until they can be able to find a solution. This discourages students and eventually, they drop out of school…"

Also, findings show that the majority of the respondents (60.8%) agreed that parents with low levels of education do not understand how to motivate children in school to enhance their completion, thus leading to some dropping out (Mean= 3.62; Standard deviation= 0.705). This implies that parents with low levels of education are not supportive of the education of their children, which makes it impossible for these children to remain in school. This is supplemented by views from the interviews in which one of the participants was quoted saying:

".....when parents are not educated, they do not serve well as good examples and role models for their children's education. Their stories are far from education making it impossible for their children to use them as inspiration towards achieving in education…"

Another group of respondents (89.6%) agreed that parents with low levels of education involve their children with home activities that are not academically focused, thus frustrating students who end up dropping out (Mean= 4.34; Standard deviation= 0.694). This is an indication that parents with low education can compromise their children's education with home activities. This finding concurs with interview findings where the participant had this to say:

"…….you see when the parent is illiterate, he/she finds it very easy to tell her child to remain home and do other activities. In extreme cases, we have seen parents telling their children to remain home for the whole term or year. At worst such children drop out completely…"

Findings further show that 85.6% of the participants agreed that educated parents motivate, inspire, and are good role models to their children which makes them stay in school (Mean= 4.27; Standard deviation= 0.825). This shows that when parents are educated, chances are high that they will motivate their children to excel in education.

The effects of family size on students' dropout in USE schools in Kitagwenda District.

Regarding research objective three which sought to establish the effects of family size on student dropout in USE schools in Kitagwenda District, respondents were asked to indicate whether their position was based on a five-point Likert scale. The analysis was done using the percentages, mean, and standard deviation. A mean above 3 indicates agreement by respondents, a mean of 3 shows undecided, and a mean of below 3 shows disagreement by respondents. The standard deviation (Std) of close to 1 shows agreement, while the standard deviation of close to zero shows the disagreement of the respondents. The analysis further grouped 'strongly agree' and 'agree' to mean 'agree'; and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' to mean 'disagree'.

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Table 8 Effects of family size on students' dropout in USE schools in Kitagwenda District.

	Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std
	Children from polygamous families have a high risk of dropping out of school.	0 (00%)	5 (2.0%)	6 (2.4)	111 (44.4%)	128 (51.2%)	4.45	0.646
	Parents with bigger families do not understand how to motivate children in school to enhance their completion thus leading to some dropping out	0 (00%)	9 (3.6%)	14 (5.6%)	100 (40%)	127 (50.8%)	4.38	0.752
	Parents with big-sized families always engage children in home activities that are not academically focused, thus frustrating pupils who end up dropping out	0 (00%)	3 (1.2%)	23 (9.2)	110 (44.0%)	114 (45.6%)	4.34	0.649
	Parents with small and medium-sized families motivate, inspire, and are good role models to their children which makes them stay in school	0 (00%)	3 (1.2%)	4 (1.6%)	104 (41.6%)	139 (55.6%)	4.52	0.596
	parents with small families have confidence in their children's academic abilities and they also have higher expectations of their children stay in school	0 (00%)	2 (0.8)	11 (4.4%)	77 (30.8%)	160 (64.0%)	4,58	0.617

Table 8 indicates that the majority of respondents (90.6%) agreed that parents with bigger families have higher chances of dropping out of school (Mean= 4.45; Standard deviation= 0.646). This implies that there are higher chances that children from polygamous families will drop out of school among USE schools as compared to their counterparts of non-polygamous families. These findings are supplemented by results from interviews in which the participants were quoted saying.

.....learners from families have many wives have problems they depend on their mothers for school requirements and have too many excuses and end up dropping out of school.

Also, findings show that the majority of the respondents (96.6%) agreed that parents with bigger families do not understand how to motivate children in school to enhance their completion, thus leading to some dropping out (Mean= 4.; Standard deviation= 0.752). This implies that parents with bigger families are not supportive of the education of their children, which makes it impossible for these children to remain in school. This is supplemented by views from the interviews in which one of the participants was quoted saying.

...in this area, parents with bigger families are seen as not supportive of their families. Instead tell them to work hard in other areas they discourage them from continuing with education because of having not enough resources to facilitate.

Also, findings show that the majority of the respondents (97.7%) parents with small and medium families motivate and inspire and are good role models to their children(Mean= 4.52; Standard deviation= 0.596). This implies that parents with small and medium families are supportive and act as role models for their children, which makes it possible for these children to remain in school.

Discussion

The effects of parents' education level on student dropout in USE schools in Kitagwenda District

Findings on the effect of parents' literacy level on student dropout in USE schools in Kitagwenda District, found that parents with low levels of education do not understand how to motivate children in school to enhance their completion, thus leading to some dropping out. It was revealed that instead of motivating their children to attain higher education, such parents keep on making discouraging statements by citing some of the successful individuals who never went higher in education in their villages. This has motivated most students to drop out of school at an early age. This practice is mainly in uneducated families as opposed to their educated counterparts.

The effects of family size on student dropout in USE schools in Kitagwenda District

Also, findings show that the majority of the respondents (97.7%) parents with small and medium families motivate and inspire and are good role models to their children(Mean= 4.52; Standard deviation= 0.596). This implies that parents with small and medium families are supportive and act as role models for their children, which makes it possible for these children to remain in school.

Conclusions

The academic attainment of parents is a key factor that influences the chances of a child dropping out of school. The study indicated that the majority of dropouts were coming from parents who had never attended school, followed by

the students who were coming from parents who had primary education levels. There was only one dropout student who was coming from a parent with a post-primary education level. Therefore the study concluded that children from uneducated parents are more likely to drop out of school than children from educated parents.

Recommendations

There is a need to revive community sensitization on the impact of education among rural people who have been noticed to be reluctant to educate their children. This can help in instilling a new spirit of educating children and cut the ever-increasing rate of school dropout in USE schools, particularly in rural communities of Uganda.

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Mission accomplished.

List of Abbreviations

PTA: Parents and Teachers Association
PLE: Primary leaving Examination.

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There was no source of funding.

Conflict of Interest

The author did not declare any conflict of interest.

Author Biography

Twikirize Medard is a student with a master's degree in public administration at Team University.
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