# EFFECT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SCHOOL CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF PUPILS OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN DIVISION, JINJA CITY.  A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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## Abstract
### Background
The forces of the environment begin to influence the growth and development of the individual right from the womb of the mother. The study aims to assess the Effect of psychological and school cultural environment on the academic achievement of pupils of public primary schools in Northern Division, Jinja City.
### Methodology
A cross-sectional study applied correlational research design to determine whether and to what degree relationships existed among the variables. The data was coded, awarded numerical scores, and entered into the computer for statistical analysis using version 24 Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).
### Results
(89%) were of primary level, 4 % were certificate holders, and (2%) were diploma holders while 5% were graduates.128(64.7%) agreed that pupils in their schools have enough time to do their homework while 45(22.7%). 190(96%) respondents disagreed with the statement "teachers embarrass each other in front of pupils". 140 (70.7%) agreed that their schools assign manageable and realistic tasks to teachers. 115 (58%) agreed that their school is open to new ideas, 183 (92.4%) agreed that teachers in their school always utilize lesson plans and schemes of work during lesson delivery, 137 (69.2%) agreed that there is sharing of work and responsibilities among teachers in their school
### Conclusions
Learners' achievement was higher among pupils with a favorable psychological and school-cultural environment since such pupils had enough time for their homework, teachers' respect, routine utilization of lesson plans and schemes of work, openness to new ideas, and sharing responsibilities.
### Recommendations
School management should adopt new ideas from other best-performing schools to boost the teaching/learning in their schools to enhance the academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools.

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## Background to the study

The forces of the environment begin to influence the growth and development of the individual right from the womb of the mother. The educational process of development occurs in the physical, social, cultural, and psychological environment. School culture is a communicatively, constructed, historically based system of assumptions, values, and interpretive frameworks that guide and constrain organizational members as they perform their organizational roles and confront the challenges of their environment (Schein, 2010). Culture is about what people value, either individually or collectively, whether in a school or as a community. It consists of the deep patterns of values, beliefs, rituals, symbols, and traditions that have formed over time in the course of the school's history. School culture contributes a lot to the morale of the place (Peterson and Deal, 2002).

There are two dimensions of the school psychological environment namely, the goal and the relationship dimension (Roeser et al, 1996). The goal dimension emphasizes aspects of the learning environment that are related to the achievement goals that learners pursue in school as they strive to achieve competency. Other studies have reported that the school environment (goal structures) can be perceived at a school level, conveyed through school policies and practices that pupils experience regularly. Practices such as ability groupings, and holding special assemblies to award pupils who are rated the best in their class may convey to them messages about what represents success in a school (Maehr & Midgley, 1991). Value aspects of organizational culture comprise commitment to the school, commitment to teaching, cooperation, and teamwork, trust and group loyalty, egalitarianism, service to pupils, and High academic achievement. The study aims to assess the Effect of psychological and school cultural environment

on the academic achievement of pupils of public primary schools in Northern Division, Jinja City.

## Methodology

A cross-sectional study applied correlational research design to determine whether and to what degree relationships existed among the variables. In correlational research, although, the statistical relationship of variables of interest is thought to be causal, the researcher does not have direct control over independent variables either because they already occurred, or are impracticable to manipulate (Creswell, 2018). Although it is not possible to test causality, the correlational design allows the researcher to make a preliminary identification of possible causes and effects. It allows the researcher to make predictions based on the relationships (Creswell, 2018). The research design was found suitable for this study whose main aim was to measure the degree to which relationships existed between psychological environment, achievement goals, and academic achievement. It was also appropriate for this study which also explored the mediating role of learning strategies in the relationships among psychological environment, achievement goals, and academic performance. The design was suitable for quantitative data collection and analysis in this study.

## Population for the study

The study targeted seven selected public primary schools in Northern Division, Jinja City. These included Mafubira Primary School, Kimasa Primary School, Mpumudde Methodist Primary School, Mpumudde Estate Primary School, Butiki C/U Primary School, Wakitaka Primary School, and Namulesa Muslim Primary School. These schools will be chosen because they have been presenting candidates for PLE up to 2020, the 7 head teachers will be chosen because they are responsible for the implementation of education curriculum policy at the school level, 14 primary seven teachers, two from each sampled school, and 181 pupils within the target schools. The study will target the primary seven pupils because they have been in the school system long enough to understand the school-based factors affecting their academic achievement and understand sources of school funding better than the lower classes.

## Sampling Procedure

In this study, 7 primary schools were selected for the study due to their small number and they are included in the government school funding program. These schools are also information rich with respect to the purpose of the study because they have been presenting UPE candidates for a number of years.

## Sample Size

The desired sample size was established using the formula recommended in Mugenda and Mugenda, (1999) and revisited by Kothari, (2009):

Using this formula, the pupils sample size was = 181

## Methods of Data Collection

This involved self-administered questionnaires, interviews, and observation schedules. At first, the researcher requested an introductory letter from Team University. This was presented to the heads of the selected primary schools in the northern division and request for appointment from the head teachers about the nature of the study. On the appointment date, the researcher visited the sampled schools for responses from the pupils and then explained to them the purpose of the study and what was required of them. The researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality before distributing the questionnaires to them and asked them not to indicate their names. The researcher then collected the completed questionnaires to avoid distortion of the respondents' answers by other pupils. The sampled class teachers were given the questionnaires and assured them of their confidentiality. When they completed filling them, the researcher collected the questionnaires. The head teachers in each school were interviewed in their respective offices. The observation schedules were then completed by the researcher in the sampled schools during the study. All completed instruments were bound separately depending on their category and sample school for analysis.

## Validity of Research Instruments

In this study, the validity was taken to mean the extent to which the instruments cover the objectives. To ascertain the content validity of this research instrument, the researcher consulted expert literature in research methodology in the Department of Education, Administration of Jinja city, and head teachers of the selected schools.

This enabled the researcher to develop instruments that yield content-valid information.

## Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability was enhanced through the use of the instrument triangulation technique which is an acceptable technique in survey research that is qualitative since it leads to credibility to the findings of the study Kothari, (2008); Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003).

A pilot study was conducted by administering the questionnaires to a few head teachers, class teachers, and

pupils from neighboring schools in the northern division to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Kothari (2004) argued that reliability is the consistency of measurement and is frequently assessed using the test-retest reliability method. Reliability is increased by including many similar items on a measure, by testing a diverse sample of individuals, and by using uniform testing procedures.

Cronbach's Alpha was applied to measure the co-efficient of internal consistency and therefore reliability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.71 was obtained and considered high enough for the instruments to be used for the study Jwan (2010).

## Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaires was grouped according to specific objectives and research questions. Data was obtained from the research instruments. The data was coded, awarded numerical scores, and entered into the computer for statistical analysis using version 24 Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data entry in the computer was followed by data cleaning to deal with improper entries that could taint the results. The researcher computed summary scores for each sub-section of the questionnaire as per the research objectives. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to present the findings. The Descriptive statistical procedures were used to describe the characteristics of the participants and summarize the data collected.

They included frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, scenes, and kurtosis. The results were reported using tables and figures. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis was applied to measure the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables. To test mean differences between two independent groups (males and females), t-tests for independent samples were used. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was done to determine the significant predictors of academic achievement. The level of significance in this study was set at $p = .05$, which is the level deemed acceptable for social science research (McMillan, 2012).

## Ethical Consideration

Written permission was sought from the university. The research protocol and consent were sought and approved by the University. The aim of the study was explained to all potential participants. Permission to include them in the study was sought and where necessary written consents were obtained. The participants were informed of their freedom to withdraw at any time without giving reasons. A reason not to participate was highly respected; also, confidentiality and privacy were ensured and maintained throughout the study.

## Results

Table 2, Most of questionnaires that were distributed were filled and returned, thereby giving a response rate of 98%.

## The Description of the Respondent's Background

The description of the respondent's background is given in terms of the following variables: Age, gender and level of education. Table 3 shows that 89.3% of the respondents were 20 years and below, 6% were between 21 and 50 years, while those above 51 years of age were only 4.5%. This implies that all the respondents had enough ability to answer the questionnaires, and that means the data collected was reliable.

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents were female with (56%) and male were (44%). Thus indicating that on ground there are more female teachers and pupils than males.

Table 5 indicates that majority of the respondents (89%) were of primary level, 4 % of the respondents were certificate holders, and least of the respondents (2%) were diploma holders while 5% were graduates. This implied that the respondents were educated which is an added advantage, hoping that the quality of data collected was well reflected upon.

**Table 1 Target Population**

| Population | Total No. | Sample | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Head teachers | 7 | 7 | 3 |
| Teachers | 56 | 14 | 7 |
| Pupils | 871 | 181 | 90 |
| **TOTALS** | **934** | **202** | **100** |

**Table 2: The Response Rate**

| Questionnaires | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Number of questionnaires returned | 198 | 98% |
| Number of questionnaires not returned | 04 | 2% |
| Total number of questionnaires | 202 | 100% |

*Source: Field Data (2023)*

**Table 3: The distribution of respondents by age**

| Age Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 20 years and below | 177 | 89.3% |
| 21-50 years | 12 | 6% |
| 51 and above years | 09 | 4.5% |
| **Total** | **198** | **100** |

*Source: Field Data (2023)*

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 87 | 44% |
| Female | 111 | 56% |
| **Total** | **198** | **100** |

*Source: Field Data (2023)*

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Level**

| Educational Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Primary | 177 | 89% |
| Certificate | 08 | 4% |
| Diploma | 04 | 2% |
| Degree | 09 | 5% |
| Total | 198 | 100 |

*Source: Field Data (2023)*

**Table 6: The effect of Psychological School Environment on the Academic Achievement of pupils**

| Statement | Scale | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| The level of learners' Achievement is low in my school as compared with private schools in my area. | Strongly Disagree | 20 | 10.1% |
| | Disagree | 28 | 14.1% |
| | Undecided | 25 | 12.6% |
| | Agree | 70 | 35.4% |
| | Strongly Agree | 55 | 27.8% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Most of the pupils in my school come from stable families | Strongly Disagree | 50 | 25.3% |
| | Disagree | 81 | 40.9% |
| | Undecided | 15 | 7.5% |
| | Agree | 32 | 16.2% |
| | Strongly Agree | 20 | 10.1% |
| Pupils in my school have enough time to do their home work | Strongly Disagree | 26 | 13.1% |
| | Disagree | 19 | 9.6% |
| | Undecided | 25 | 12.6% |
| | Agree | 80 | 40.4% |
| | Strongly Agree | 48 | 24.3% |
| Do teachers in this school embarrass each other in front of pupils | Strongly Disagree | 65 | 32.8% |
| | Disagree | 125 | 63.1% |
| | Undecided | 0 | 0% |
| | Agree | 8 | 4% |
| | Strongly Agree | 0 | 0% |

## Psychological School Environment and Academic Achievement of pupils

Table 6, indicates that 125 (63.1%) respondents agreed that the level of learners' achievement in their schools is low as compared with private schools in their area, 48 (24.2%) respondents were in disagreement with the statement while only 25(12.6%) respondents did not decide. This indicates that the level of learners' Achievement is low in public schools as compared with private schools in my area in Northern Division, Jinja City.

Regarding whether most of the pupils come from stable families; respondents had varying responses as the majority of the respondents 131 (66.2%) disagreed with the statement as compared to 52 (26.3%) respondents who agreed that most pupils come from stable families while only 15 (7.5%) respondents did not decide. This indicates that most pupils in public schools come from unstable families.

Respondents were further requested to give their level of agreement or disagreement on whether pupils in their schools have enough time to do their homework. The responses were; 128(64.7%) respondents agreed that pupils in their schools have enough time to do their homework while 45(22.7%) respondents were in disagreement and only 25(12.6%) respondents did not decide. This indicates that pupils in public primary schools have enough time to do their homework.

On the issue of whether teachers embarrass each other in front of pupils, the findings were; those 190 (96%) respondents disagreed with the statement and only 8(4%) respondents agreed with the statement. This implies that teachers do not embarrass each other in front of pupils.

**One of the respondents** interviewed noted that; *"Pupils always have enough time to accomplish their homework but most of them fail to do so due to various reasons such as lack of proper lighting, domestic chores, and engaging themselves in economic activities on behalf of their parents which hinders their academic achievement"*

**Another Respondent earmarked that:** *"Most of the pupils in this school come from poor families which can sometimes miss meals and when pupils come to school, they don't give full attention to teachers since they are hungry, this affects their academic achievement".*

**One teacher said:** *"Sometimes when the supervisors get us teaching in dirty classrooms, they stop us from teaching and order the pupils to sweep before we continue with the lessons which disorganize the lesson and learners' attention and develops poor attitude towards the administrators".*

**Another Respondent replied**: *"It is rare for teachers in this school to embarrass each other before the learners and if there is any issue to address, they only meet in the staffroom the resolve the issue."*

**Table 7: The Influence of school cultural Environment on the Academic Achievement of pupils**

| Statement | Scale | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| The school assigns manageable and realistic tasks to teachers. | Strongly Disagree | 10 | 5.1% |
| | Disagree | 18 | 9.1% |
| | Undecided | 30 | 15.1% |
| | Agree | 80 | 40.4% |
| | Strongly Agree | 60 | 30.3% |
| Teachers in this school always utilize lesson plans and schemes of work during lesson delivery | Strongly Disagree | 5 | 2.5% |
| | Disagree | 10 | 5% |
| | Undecided | 0 | 0% |
| | Agree | 135 | 68.2% |
| | Strongly Agree | 48 | 24.3% |
| The school is open to new ideas to enable pupils achievement | Strongly Disagree | 75 | 37.8% |
| | Disagree | 40 | 20.2% |
| | Undecided | 30 | 15.2% |
| | Agree | 45 | 22.7% |
| | Strongly Agree | 8 | 4% |
| Teachers in this school get involved in the supervision of co-curricular activities | Strongly Disagree | 4 | 2% |
| | Disagree | 16 | 8% |
| | Undecided | 0 | 0% |
| | Agree | 38 | 19.2% |
| | Strongly Agree | 140 | 70.7% |

| There is timely assessment of learners in this school | Strongly Disagree | 100 | 50.5% |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Disagree | 30 | 15.2% |
| | Undecided | 2 | 1% |
| | Agree | 46 | 23.2% |
| | Strongly Agree | 20 | 10.1% |
| There is sharing of work and responsibilities among teachers in the school hence academic achievement among pupils in this school | Strongly Disagree | 20 | 10.1% |
| | Disagree | 26 | 13.1% |
| | Undecided | 15 | 7.6% |
| | Agree | 62 | 31.3% |
| | Strongly Agree | 75 | 37.8% |

## School Cultural Environment and Academic Achievement of Pupils

Table 7, Respondents were tasked to give their opinions on whether their schools assign manageable and realistic tasks to teachers however, their responses varied as recorded in the table above and further categorized thus; Majority of the respondents 140 (70.7%) agreed that their schools assign manageable and realistic tasks to the teacher as compared to 28 (14.2%) respondents who disagreed with the stamen while 30 (15.1%) did not decide. This indicated that schools assign manageable and realistic tasks to teachers.

Regarding whether teachers in this school always utilize lesson plans and schemes of work during lesson delivery, most of the respondents 183 (92.4%) agreed with the statement compared to 15(7.5%) respondents who disagreed with the statement. This implies that teachers in schools always utilize lesson plans and schemes of work during lesson delivery.

Respondents were further tasked to give their level of agreement or disagreement on whether their school is open to new ideas to enable pupils' achievement; 115 (58%) respondents disagreed with the statement; 53(26.7%) respondents agreed with the statement while 30(15.2%) did not decide. This indicates that most schools don't welcome new ideas to enable pupils' achievement.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to give their opinions on whether teachers in their schools get involved in the supervision of co-curricular activities and the responses were; 178 (89.9%) respondents agreed with the

statement and only 20 (10.1%) respondents were in disagreement with the statement; an indication that teachers get involved in the supervision of co-curricular activities in schools.

On the issue of whether there is timely assessment of learners in this school, 130 (65.6%) respondents disagreed with the statement, 66 (33.3%) respondents agreed with the statement and only 2 (1%) respondents were undecided. The findings indicate that in most schools there is no timely assessment of learners.

Lastly, respondents were also requested to give their opinions on the issue of whether there is sharing of work and responsibilities among teachers in their school hence academic achievement among pupils in this school; 137 (69.2%) respondents agreed with the statement, 46(23.2%) respondents were in disagreement and only 15(7.6%) respondents did not decide which indicates that there is sharing of work and responsibilities among teachers for academic achievement among pupils in schools.

**One Respondent said;**

**"….***that teachers scheme for the term in time which helps them to know the content to be delivered to learners and coverage of the syllabus which improves on the academic achievement of pupils"…*

**Another Respond noted that;**

*"……teachers always use lesson plans and schemes of work for lesson delivery but they don't assess learners in*

*time due to limited instructional materials which somehow affects learners' academic achievement".*

## Discussion

### Psychological school environment affects the academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools in Northern Division, Jinja City

The study found that; the level of learners' achievement is low in public primary schools as compared with private schools in Northern Division, Jinja City. Similarly, several studies by sociologists, Psychologists, and Educationists showed that the type of school a learner attends has a profound influence on his academic achievement. Overall, findings indicated that the average private school mean score was higher than the average public school mean score and that the difference was statistically significant.

It was also evident from the findings that most of the pupils in public primary schools come from unstable families. Results further showed that the percentage performance trend of public schools was higher than those of the private both; consequent upon the discussion above, more parents and guardians who can afford it are daily withdrawing their children from the public schools to the private fee-paying primary schools despite its expensive nature even in this hard time. Many of the private schools are growing bigger and fatter at the expense of the public ones whose enrolment is daily dwindling.

The study also found out that Pupils in public primary schools have enough time to do their homework. Similarly, coming back to material after a period away from it is a time-tested strategy for retaining information; homework provides exactly that and this enables pupils to move on to new material during class hence improving their academic achievement.

Evidence from the study findings indicated that teachers in public primary schools do not embarrass each other in front of pupils. It is urged that teachers maintain confidentiality unless a scenario warrants involvement from parents, school administration, or law enforcement, and never use relationships with, respect, lawfulness, fairness, patience, and unity. It is urged that teachers must maintain confidentiality unless a scenario warrants involvement from parents, school administration, or law enforcement, and never use relationships with pupils for personal gain.

### School cultural environment influences the academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools in Northern Division, Jinja City

The study found that schools assign manageable and realistic tasks to teachers. It was also revealed that teachers in public primary schools always utilize lesson plans and schemes of work during lesson delivery. Teachers around the world routinely spend as much as half of their working time on non-teaching activities, and lesson planning and scheming of work accounts for much of that time. Lesson plans assist in structuring lesson outcomes and activities associated with those outcomes hence improving the academic achievement of pupils.

Factors that drive change are both external and internal forces that constrain managers. These forces also bring about the need for change. In educational institutions, changes are imposed from outside or motivated by internal pressure. The ultimate goal of change is to make practice better or more effective in the work. It is learning to do and learning to understand something new.

It was also revealed that teachers in public primary schools get involved in the supervision of co-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities have become a fundamental part of school life and aid in improving pupils learning at school. These activities are mandatory & necessary for every pupil to participate. Co-curricular such as athletics, social occasions, Library activities, science lab activities, classroom (study hall) activities, creative arts, meditation, and so on are structured and balanced with the scholastic educational/ academic curriculum so that every pupil gets the opportunity to learn beyond studies. Co-curricular activities are intended to bring social & intellectual skills, moral, cultural & ethical values, personality development, and character advancement and hence academic achievement among pupils.

The findings further indicated that there exists no timely assessment of learners in most schools in Northern Division, Jinja City. For such type of evaluation to realize its maximum benefit, it is suggested that assessment should not be a once-and-done activity. Rather, it must be a continuous act, which guides the teaching-learning process through the provision of timely feedback. It is widely acknowledged that the effect of feedback is enhanced if and only if it is immediate and clearly articulated to guide the learning process and to rectify possible shortcomings.

Teachers working as Teams can improve the achievement of pupils through collaboration. In schools where teachers work as teams become the standard for the school. It is the means of improving manpower utilization and potentially raising the achievement of pupils. With support from upper-level management, teachers work confidently in teams and increase the productivity of the school.

## Conclusions

Learners' achievement was higher among pupils with a favorable psychological and school cultural environment since such pupils had enough time for their homework, teachers respected one another before pupils, teachers routinely utilized lesson plans and schemes of work during lesson delivery, and shared work and responsibilities among themselves.

## Recommendations

School management, administration, parents, and other stakeholders should ensure proper management of teachers and pupils, close supervision of teaching/learning, and timely assessments of pupils.

School management should adopt new ideas from other best-performing schools to boost the teaching/learning in their schools to enhance the academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools.

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## Conflict of interest

The author did not declare any conflict of interest

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Juliet Konso is a student with a degree of masters in educational planning and management at Team University

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