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# School Environment and Pupils' Academic Performance in Selected Primary Schools in Ibaare Sub County of Bushenyi District, Uganda

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines school environment and pupils' academic performance in selected primary schools in Ibaare sub-county of Bushenyi district, Uganda. The study adopted descriptive research design with a sample of 60 participants. Findings show that the study found that instructional materials are crucial for teaching and learning school subjects to improve teacher efficiency and student performance. They also enable active and successful lesson participation by teachers and students. Based on the findings, the study calls for adequate instructional aid to be provided in order to increase students' performance in their academics. Second, teachers are advised to always attend workshops, seminars, vocational courses to make them be abreast of the current development in their teaching subjects. There is also the need for teachers to be creative and resourceful. Learning resources that are very costly to purchase can be improvised. Provision should be made to establish and equip library in every school. There should also be provision for the training of the students in the use of library. Finally, parents should be encouraged to buy recommended textbooks for their wards to supplement teachers' notes.

**Keywords:** Academic performance, Educational facilities, Human capital buildup, Pupils, School environment

## INTRODUCTION

Since the population and economy are growing, the educational setting is under strain, posing dangers to stakeholders who want social and economic growth that fits the country. Though the invention or industry and its results have benefited civilization, they have hurt future citizens[1]. It is agreed that student accomplishment is linked to individual characteristics, socioeconomic factors, and school resources. Recent national and international studies have examined the relationship between socioeconomic factors and academic achievement[2]. However, few research has examined the relationship between school environment and academic attainment. Educational resources are crucial to achieving educational goals. Educational resources help students have equitable chances by reducing the impact of socioeconomic circumstances on academic performance. Achievement of educational goals is directly tied to resource use. In developed and developing nations like Cameroon, education is a crucial process that determines an individual's life chances beyond economics. Lower-level education is considered a basic human right[3]. After independence in 1980, Zimbabwe launched an ambitious campaign to expand student enrollment, particularly in black areas, which was successful. This approach relies on the "education for all" campaign, which abolished elementary school fees to boost enrollment and provide funds for more schools. Zimbabwe had 5560 primary schools in 2007 versus 3116 in 1980[4]. Despite this growth in net and gross enrollment, student achievement has fallen. This is concerning since human capital buildup is crucial to economic progress. A well-educated workforce is more productive[5, 6], hence human capital development resources must be effective. Due to the fact that well-educated people are more likely to improve their standard of living, such investments are crucial to poverty reduction. This type of investment is crucial in rural Zimbabwe, where 60% of the population lives and 70% lives below the poverty line[7]. Teacher qualification is essential to instill ideals in Ugandan children. Research shows that well-planned schools with clean and safe learning environments improve academic performance. Physical facilities help schools meet attendance goals and perform well in national exams. Despite

the government of Uganda's support for education as an EFA (Education for all) aim, Bushenyi schools are threatened with producing half-baked children. The government recognizes education as a basis for a bright Uganda, but the Ministry of Education spends less on it. Student demand for resources to urge them to return to school exceeds the allotted resources. Due to insufficient teaching and learning resources, many schools have low student performance. Classrooms, latrines, and labs are typically lacking in public schools. Based on this background, the researcher examines the school environment and pupils' academic performance in selected primary schools in Ibaare sub-county of Bushenyi District, Uganda.

#### **Instructional Materials and Academic Performance**

Access to secondary learning materials affects student enrollment. Alam et al.[8] states that educational materials help children comprehend and enjoy school, which increases retention and enrollment. Secondary school facilities and instructional materials are often substandard and inappropriate. In underdeveloped nations with insufficient educational infrastructure, school, and teacher characteristics affect student performance and resource distribution inequities. Poor households have limited access to excellent education, perpetuating the poverty and exclusion cycle[9]. Previous studies have shown that students from more educated or wealthier households, whose parents care more about education, attend higher-quality schools, while those with less material and human resources attend lower-quality schools[10]. According to Kakuba and Pilon[11], many households live in locations without high-quality schools, therefore they cannot select where to send their children. Audio and visual resources are used in instruction. Thus, television, projectors, and other devices assist learning. Many educationists think that instructional materials increase teaching/learning and allow teachers and students to interact as humans in a climate where people control their environment for their benefit. Most educators think that creative use of instructional materials will help students learn more, retain more, and accomplish the tasks expected of them[12]. Instructional materials help teachers expand their knowledge and find rich sources of communicative materials that they can create with students. Several studies have also examined instructional materials and sensory gadgets. These studies demonstrate that instructional resources may do many complicated tasks when used effectively in teaching and learning. The educational tools provide real-world experiences to help teachers think and understand. They help students think conceptually and avoid nonsensical responses[13]. Instructional materials can give a group a shared experience. They overcome linguistic barriers, ease problems, and make lessons more relevant. They save time and help pupils internalize values faster. They simplify and highlight facts and clarify issues[14]. Igbo and Omeje [15] found that instructional materials support other teaching strategies. They boost other methods and teaching efficacy. Learning and teaching require instructional resources to boost instructor efficiency and student achievement. Learning becomes more engaging, practical, realistic, and enticing. They also enable active and successful lesson participation by teachers and students. They foster skill development, self-confidence, and self-actualization. Students and teachers use instructional aids for practical and demonstration in class. Sirajo and Abdullahi stated that effective teaching and learning require instructional materials and practical activities to make learning vivid, rational, realistic, and pragmatic. Abudl-Raheem[16] agreed that teaching and learning require instructional materials. Olugbenga[17] added that teaching aids always benefit the senses. Instructional materials, which make learning practical and information simpler, are scarce in Nigerian secondary schools, resulting in low government exam performance. According to Abdu-Raheem[16] instructional materials assist, enable, influence, or encourage knowledge, competency, and abilities. She advised teachers to invent teaching aids since they increase student participation and allow for inquiry, problem-solving, discussion, and explanation of issues and concepts. Teaching via improvisation is effective. Students, instructors, parents, Parents/Teacher Associations, government, and benefactors should create school educational materials.

#### **The Effect of Infrastructure Development on Pupils' Academic Performance**

Access to secondary learning materials affects student enrollment. Sao[18] states that educational materials help children comprehend and enjoy school, which increases retention and enrollment. Secondary school facilities and instructional materials are often substandard and inappropriate in underdeveloped nations, with insufficient educational infrastructure, school and teacher characteristics that affect student performance, and resource distribution inequities. Poor households have limited access to excellent education, perpetuating the poverty and exclusion cycle. Previous studies have shown that students from more educated or wealthier households, whose parents care more about education, attend higher-quality schools, while those with less material and human resources attend lower-quality schools. According to Kakuba and Pilon[11], many households live in locations without high-quality schools, therefore they cannot select where to send their children. Many educationists think that instructional materials increase teaching/learning and allow teachers and students to interact as humans in a climate where people control their environment for their benefit. Most educators think that creative use of instructional materials will help students learn more, retain more, and accomplish the tasks expected of them. Instructional materials help teachers expand their knowledge and find rich sources of communicative materials that they can create with students. Several studies have also examined instructional materials and sensory gadgets. These studies demonstrate that instructional resources may do many complicated tasks when used effectively in

teaching and learning. The educational tools provide real-world experiences to help teachers think and understand. They help students think conceptually and avoid nonsensical responses[13]. Igbo and Omeje [15] stated that effective teaching and learning requires instructional materials and practical activities to make learning vivid, rational, realistic, and pragmatic. Teaching and learning require instructional materials. Abdu-Raheem[16] added that teaching aids always benefit the senses. Instructional materials, which make learning practical and information simpler, are scarce in Nigerian secondary schools, resulting in low government exam performance. According to Charles and Nwinle [19], instructional materials assist, enable, influence, or encourage knowledge, competency, and abilities. Abdu-Raheem[16] advised teachers to invent teaching aids since they increase student participation, and allow for inquiry, problem-solving, discussion, and explanation of issues and concepts. Teaching via improvisation is effective. Students, instructors, parents, Parents/Teacher Associations, government, and benefactors should create school educational materials.

### **Quality of Teachers and Academic Performance**

Apiah et al.[20] believe strong teacher performance influences student success. Teacher performance is determined by factors such as year of training, verbal fluency, subject matter knowledge, having books and materials, knowing how to use them, teacher expectation of student performance, classroom preparation time, and frequent student progress monitoring. A teacher should be motivated to teach regardless of training, experience, or preparation. Lack of incentives in schools and low pay force teachers to take multiple jobs to make ends meet. This makes many teachers ineffective. UNESCO [21] defines teacher competence as knowing student development of the content appropriately. The teacher must be able to teach, advise, and guide his students, community, and culture. He should be positive and non-aggressive so his examples are followed and he can communicate national goals, morals, and social values. Hotaman [22] believes "Teaching is multifaceted and requires many skills. Two categories can be made: mental abilities and skills, understanding of psychological and educational principles, knowledge of the general and specific subject matter to be taught, and personality, interest, attitude, belief, and behavior in working relationships with students and other individuals. According to Irfan[23], teachers can influence their classes. Teachers are crucial to improving schools, qualifications, and curricula. Teachers raise youth who shape a nation. Therefore, teachers who shape children's character and education need certain traits. Every country has teacher standards and trains certified teachers to meet them. Qualifications and attitudes should be linked because those with knowledge, expertise, and abilities in teaching should have positive attitudes about the profession. To improve teaching, general qualifications, and attitudes are needed. This is only achievable if pre- and in-service teachers can learn the competencies through education and training programs. Feedback from studies is needed to determine pre-service teachers' graduation competency. Thus, additional research is needed on the requirement, execution, and improvement of the Ministry's general teaching competencies. Professional and personal skills are demanded of teachers. Academic and pedagogical skills are professional. Academic competence is teachers' topic expertise. Pedagogical competency involves teaching from known to unknown, tangible to abstract, and simple to complex. A teacher's classroom success depends on his preparation for teaching. Few secondary school instructors are professional chemistry teachers or have completed teacher training[24]. Delandshere and Arens[25] claim that professional standards are beliefs about what students should know and be able to perform. Teacher qualifications, the "general knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to effectively and efficiently fulfill the requirements of the teaching profession", were first introduced in the 1890s but gained importance and publication in the 1960s and 1970s. Many teacher standards were created in the 1990s. Teaching requires time, effort, and dedication. Teachers prepare students for the labour market and worldwide socioeconomic development. They must be decent people and meet students' academic, social, and emotional requirements[26]. Their effectiveness shows their devotion. They adapt to different learning styles and classroom dynamics by using effective classroom management to produce a safe, resourceful, and productive classroom. Student involvement metrics are significantly related to student perceptions of teaching quality[27]. Kukundakwe and Devis[28] believe that teachers' experiences and qualifications affect students' academic achievement. Teacher-provided feedback helps students close the gap between their achievements and their goals. Students require evaluation feedback to claim quality education. As stated, instructor input helps students succeed or fail. Teachers are more effective at identifying student weaknesses during teaching and learning. Communication, teamwork, and feedback are crucial teacher traits. Arsenijevic [29] found that teachers need good communication, classroom management, updated knowledge, and personality. Any instructor with good communication skills simplifies things. Effective communication skills are crucial for teachers to teach, manage the classroom, and engage with students. To teach according to students' abilities, a teacher must use communication skills that drive pupils to study. Thus, effective teacher communication skills are essential for student academic and professional success.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design. The design enabled the researcher to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. The descriptive method tells us about what exists by determining the nature and degree of existing conditions. Descriptive methods are undoubtedly the most popular method. Descriptive methods are meant to obtain information concerning current events (phenomena) and draw valid and general conclusions from the facts discovered. They are restricted to fact-finding, formulation of principles of knowledge, and solutions to significant problems.

### Study Population and Sample Size

The study was carried out in 3 Government Primary Schools Bwoma Primary School, Kitabi Primary School, and Kainamo Primary School. A total of 113 respondents were selected. The sample size consisted of 60 respondents selected from four categories, 10 teachers, 3 head teachers, 15 local leaders, and 47 students. This sample was enough to enable the researcher to gather all the necessary information.

**Table 1: A tabular presentation of the study population and sample size**

population	Target population	Sample size	Sampling Technique
<b>Teachers</b>	10	10	Simple random technique.
<b>Headteachers</b>	3	3	Purposive sampling technique
<b>Students</b>	100	47	Simple random technique.
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>60</b>	

Source: Field survey, 2023

### RESULTS

**Table 2: Respondents' responses on Some of the instructional materials used by teachers in the participated schools n=5**

Instructional materials	Frequency	Percentage
Chalkboard	5	100
Textbooks	5	100
Charts	5	100
Environment	3	60
Visits to different places	2	33
Resource persons	3	60
Real specimens	3	60
Abacus	5	100
Cards	3	60
Counters	3	60
Sticks	2	33

Source: Field survey, 2023

One hundred percent of head teachers provided educational tools such as chalkboards, textbooks, charts, and abacuses (see table above). 60% of head teachers provide maps, environment, resource people, specimens, cards, and counters. 40% of head teachers used sticks and visited different sites.

**Table 3: Respondents' responses on the effect of the instructional materials as given by local leaders**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
It saves time and energy for the teacher	10	66.7
It simplifies the work of the teacher	12	80
It makes the lesson interesting	11	73.3
It arouses the learner's memory	12	80
It prevents learners from cramming	10	66.7
It's possible for learners to use all their senses in learning	12	80
Learners learn by doing	11	73.3
Broadens learners' creativity	9	60
Good learners – teacher relationship	9	60

Source: Field survey, 2023

According to the table above, instructional materials are important to learning because they simplify the teacher's job, make the lesson interesting (66.7%), arouse the learners' memory (80%), allow them to use all their senses in learning, and foster a good student-teacher relationship (80%).

**Table 4: Head teachers' responses on whether their school has enough infrastructure**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Yes</b>	1	<b>20</b>
<b>No</b>	4	<b>80</b>
Total	5	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

According to the table above, head teachers reported that their schools lack infrastructure for students. 20% answered they did, compared to 80% who did not.

**Table 5: Respondents' responses on the role of infrastructure development on pupils' academic performance in Ibaare sub county Bushenyi District**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
The presence of unsafe infrastructure at schools is a violation of the rights of learners to life	40	67
When temperatures are extremely high, poor insulation and ventilation in classrooms make studying impossible	35	58
Good infrastructure provides a safe school environment that will ensure effective teaching and learning process	42	70
School infrastructure makes it possible for learners to study comfortably and improve academic performance	44	73
Helps improve environmental conditions	35	58
Lack of facilities limits the ability of a student to achieve various learning and extra curricula activities	39	65
The location and availability of adequate playing fields and necessary equipment are necessary for talent development	31	52
Materials used in the construction of school buildings and type of buildings determine the levels of cleanliness	28	47
Schools that are properly build and attractive to look at motivated the children to stay in school	35	58
Good facilities appear to be an important precondition for student learning, provided that other conditions that support a strong academic programme in the school are present	28	47
Laboratories and technical workshops are essential in the teaching and learning process.	18	30
School facilities enable the learner to develop problem-solving skills and scientific attitudes	25	42
Technology and adaptabilities of physical infrastructure equip students better for success	41	68
Schools with well-equipped libraries normally maintain high academic performance.	36	60
A safe school must have sanitation facilities built up to the required standards and kept clean with high standards of hygiene.	37	62
Poor hygiene is dangerous to the psychological upbringing and to the learning process of children	29	48
A clean environment allows students time to concentrate on reading books usually in a silent environment	31	52

Source: Field survey, 2023

According to the table above, the role of infrastructure development on pupils' academic performance in Ibaare sub county Bushenyi District as given by all the respondents include; the presence of unsafe infrastructure at schools is a violation of the rights of learners to life given by 67%, when temperatures are extremely high, poor insulation and ventilation in classrooms make studying impossible given by 58%, good infrastructure provide a safe school environment that will ensure effective teaching and learning process given by 70%, school infrastructure makes it possible for learners to study comfortably and improve academic performance given by 73%, helps improve environmental conditions given by 58%, lack of facilities limits the ability of a student to achieve various learning and extra curricula activities given by 65%, the location and availability of adequate playing fields and necessary equipment are necessary for talent development given by 52%, materials used in construction of school buildings and type of buildings determine the levels of cleanliness given by 47%, schools that are properly build and

attractive to look at motivated the children to stay in school given by 58%, good facilities appear to be an important precondition for student learning, provided that other conditions that support a strong academic programme in the school are present given by 47%, laboratories and technical workshops are essential in the teaching and learning process given by 30%, school facilities enable the learner to develop problem-solving skills and scientific attitudes given by 42%, technology and adaptabilities of physical infrastructure equip students better for success given by 68%, schools with well-equipped libraries normally maintain high academic performance given by 60%, a safe school must have sanitation facilities built up to the required standards and kept clean with high standards of hygiene given by 62%, poor hygiene are dangerous to the psychological upbringing and to the learning process of children given by 48% and clean environment allows student time to concentrate on reading books usually in silent environment given by 52%.

**Table 6: Local leaders' responses on whether they thought the quality of teachers is related to the academic performance of children in Ibaare sub-county**

Responses	Frequencies	Percentage
Yes	15	100
No		
Total	15	100

**Source: Field survey, 2023**

According to the table, 100% of local leaders' responses on whether they thought the quality of teachers is related to the academic performance of children in Ibaare sub-county Bushenyi district showed that they strongly agreed.

**Table 7: Teachers' responses on how the Quality of teachers is related to the academic performance of children in Ibaare sub-county of the Bushenyi district**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
They make learning meaningful, lively and enjoyable	12	40
They work with parents to help learners understand and appreciate the value of education	17	57
They maintain professional ethics and high standards of teaching.	18	60
They never use punishments which hurt the child's body or mind	15	50
Being gender sensitive to the special learning/needs of boys and girls	15	50
Teaching about risky behaviour and advising learners to stay safe	16	53
Providing guidance and counseling to learners	17	57
They become role models of the learners	16	53
They promote extracurricular programmes at school	14	47
They can help the learners to stay in school and completely finish studies	18	60
Having the knowledge in the subject.	17	57

**Source: field survey, 2023**

According to the table above, teachers' responses on how teacher quality affects pupils' academic performance in Ibaare sub-county Bushenyi district included: 40% make learning meaningful, lively, and enjoyable, 57% work with parents to help pupils understand and appreciate the value of education, 60% maintain professional ethics and high standards of teaching, and 60% never use punishments that harm pupils.

## DISCUSSION

According to the participants, instructional materials simplify the teacher's work, make the lesson interesting (66.7%), arouse the learners' memory (80%), allow them to use all their senses in learning, and foster good student-teacher relationships (80%). These findings are in line with the findings of Lukman[30] who observed that instructional materials are crucial for teaching and studying school subjects to improve teacher efficiency and student success. Learning becomes more engaging, practical, realistic, and enticing. They also enable active and successful lesson participation by teachers and students. They foster skill development, self-confidence, and self-actualization. Students and teachers employ instructional aids for practical and demonstration in class. According to the research findings, the role of infrastructure development on pupils' academic performance in Ibaare sub county Bushenyi District as given by all the respondents include; the presence of unsafe infrastructure at schools is a violation of the rights of learners to life given by 67%, when temperatures are extremely high, poor insulation and ventilation in classrooms make studying impossible given by 58%, good infrastructure provide a safe school environment that will ensure effective teaching and learning process given by 70%, school infrastructure makes it possible for learners to study comfortably and improve academic performance given by 73%, helps improve environmental conditions given by 58%, lack of facilities limits the ability of a student to achieve various learning and extra curricula activities given by 65%, the location and availability of adequate playing fields and necessary equipment are necessary for talent development given by 52%, materials used in construction of school buildings and type of buildings determine the levels of cleanliness given by 47%, schools that are properly build and

attractive to look at motivated the children to stay in school given by 58%, good facilities appear to be an important precondition for student learning, provided that other conditions that support a strong academic programme in the school are present given by 47%, laboratories and technical workshops are essential in the teaching and learning process given by 30%, school facilities enable the learner to develop problem-solving skills and scientific attitudes given by 42%, technology and adaptabilities of physical infrastructure equip students better for success given by 68%, schools with well-equipped libraries normally maintain high academic performance given by 60%, a safe school must have sanitation facilities built up to the required standards and kept clean with high standards of hygiene given by 62%, poor hygiene are dangerous to the psychological upbringing and to the learning process of children given by 48% and clean environment allows student time to concentrate on reading books usually in silent environment given by 52%. The above findings are in line with the findings of Amsterdam[31] who found that despite government gains in basic education in South Africa since 1994, the country currently has a school infrastructure crisis. The study found that 69% of public schools in South Africa lack libraries and 80% lack laboratories. Out of 23 276 regular schools, 5 167 have illegal pit toilets, 5 836 lack dependable water, and 3 343 lack reliable power. Schools with poor infrastructure are unevenly distributed throughout provinces. weaker provinces and rural areas have weaker school infrastructure. Teachers' responses on how teacher quality affects children's academic performance in Ibaare sub-county Bushenyi district included: 40% make learning meaningful, lively, and enjoyable, 57% work with parents to help learners understand and appreciate the value of education, 60% maintain professional ethics and high teaching standards, and 60% never use punishments that hurt students. These findings are in line with the findings of Spiel et al.[32] who found that teaching requires time, effort, and commitment. Teachers prepare students for the labour market and worldwide socioeconomic development. They must be decent people and meet students' academic, social, and emotional requirements. Their effectiveness shows their devotion. They adapt to different learning styles and classroom dynamics by using effective classroom management to produce a safe, resourceful, and productive classroom. Student involvement metrics are significantly related to student perceptions of teaching quality[33].

### CONCLUSION

Instructional materials simplify the teacher's job, make the lesson interesting, arouse the learners' memory, allow them to use all their senses, foster good student-teacher relationships, allow them to learn by doing, save time and energy, prevent cramming, and broaden learners' creativity. According to the research findings, the role of infrastructure development on pupils' academic performance in Ibaare sub county Bushenyi District as given by all the respondents include; the presence of unsafe infrastructure at schools is a violation of the rights of learners to life, when temperatures are extremely high, poor insulation and ventilation in classrooms make studying impossible, good infrastructure provide a safe school environment that will ensure effective teaching and learning process, school infrastructure makes it possible for learners to study comfortably and improve academic performance, helps improve environmental conditions, lack of facilities limits the ability of a student to achieve various learning and extra curricula activities, the location and availability of adequate playing fields and necessary equipment are necessary for talent development, materials used in construction of school buildings and type of buildings determine the levels of cleanliness, schools that are properly build and attractive to look at motivated the children to stay in school, good facilities appear to be an important precondition for student learning, provided that other conditions that support a strong academic programme in the school are present, laboratories and technical workshops are essential in the teaching and learning process, school facilities enable the learner to develop problem-solving skills and scientific attitudes, technology and adaptabilities of physical infrastructure equip students better for success, schools with well-equipped libraries normally maintain high academic performance, a safe school must have sanitation facilities built up to the required standards and kept clean with high standards of hygiene, poor hygiene are dangerous to the psychological upbringing and to the learning process of children and clean environment allows student time to concentrate on reading books usually in silent environment. Based on these observations, the study calls for an urgent need to provide more qualified teachers in secondary schools to teach the students. Bearing in mind the importance of learning resources to teaching and learning, adequate instructional aid should be provided for the teaching to increase students' performance in the subject. Both material or learning resources and achievement are intimately related. Second, teachers are advised to always attend workshops, seminars, and vocational courses to keep them be abreast of the current development in their teaching subjects. There is also the need for teachers to be creative and resourceful. Learning resources that are very costly to purchase can be improvised. Provision should be made to establish and equip a library in every school. There should also be provision for the training of the students in the use of the library. Third, parents should be encouraged to buy recommended textbooks for their wards to supplement teachers' notes. The Ministry of Education and NGOs' should establish centres or if it has been established should make functional, centres for the provision of locally developed teaching aids, and their functions should include the evaluation and recommendations on specific and relevant instructional and learning resources. Finally, the students are encouraged to find friends they can study and share ideas. Learning together can be very encouraging. It is

advisable for students to find friends at the same level as them, but have different skills that will aid their further learning.

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