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Influence of Parental Educational Background on Student Academic Performance in Selected Schools in Makindye Division, Kampala Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of parental educational background on student academic performance in Makindye Division, Kampala District. The research aims to elucidate the relationship between parents' educational levels and their children's academic success, focusing on both public and private primary and secondary schools. The study employed a case study research design, selecting a sample of 240 students and their parents from five schools in Makindye Division. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews, complemented by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to gather comprehensive insights. The sample was chosen using stratified random sampling, and data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel to present findings in tables, graphs, and charts.The study revealed a strong correlation between parental education and students' academic performance. A significant majority of students (66.7%) perceived that their parents' educational background significantly influences their academic performance. The data indicated that higher parental education levels often result in better academic outcomes for students. Conversely, students whose parents had lower education levels were more likely to experience academic challenges, partly due to limited parental support with homework and academic activities. Parental involvement emerged as a critical factor in academic success, with only 33.3% of students receiving regular homework assistance from their parents. The study also highlighted that a substantial proportion of parents (58.3%) were not actively involved in their children's education, including a low attendance rate at parent-teacher conferences. Financial constraints were identified as a significant barrier to academic success, with 54.2% of parents reporting difficulties in paying school fees, leading to frequent student absenteeism. The research concludes that parental educational background is a key determinant of students' academic performance. Educated parents tend to provide better academic support and instill the value of education, leading to improved student outcomes. Inadequate parental involvement, negative attitudes towards education, and financial constraints are significant challenges affecting academic success. The study recommends implementing parental education programs to equip parents with the skills to support their children's education. Schools should enhance parental involvement through flexible meeting schedules and regular performance updates. Financial assistance and scholarships should be provided to alleviate the burden of school fees. Additionally, community engagement efforts should focus on raising awareness about the importance of education and changing attitudes toward academic success. Further studies should explore additional factors influencing academic performance, such as household income, school infrastructure, teacher quality, and peer influence. Expanding research to other regions could provide a broader understanding of how parental education and socioeconomic factors impact student performance across different contexts.

Keywords: Parental educational background; Student academic performance; Parental involvement; Financial constraints; Education programs

INTRODUCTION

The influence of parental educational background on student performance in Uganda can be traced back to the country's colonial and post-colonial periods. During the colonial era, education was largely reserved for the elite, and access was limited[1, 2]. Parents with higher educational backgrounds were more likely to value education and

provide better learning opportunities for their children. Post-colonial, after independence, the government expanded education, increasing access but still affecting student performance. Economic crisis and structural adjustment (1986-2000) led to a decline in education quality, making parental educational background even more crucial[3]. Theoretical frameworks such as Social Capital Theory, Cultural Capital Theory, Human Capital Theory, Parental Involvement Theory, Socio-Economic Status (SES) Theory, and Attachment theory provide a foundation for understanding the complex relationship between parental educational background and student performance in Uganda[4, 5]. Parental Educational Background (PEP) refers to the highest level of education completed by parents, which is a significant factor in shaping a child's educational outcomes, opportunities, and future success[6]. Student Academic Performance (SAP) measures the factors influencing this, such as parental educational background, socio-economic status, access to resources and opportunities, teacher quality, student motivation, engagement, learning style, abilities, attendance and participation, extracurricular activities, and distractions[7]. By understanding these factors, educators and policymakers can develop strategies to support students' success and address achievement gaps.

Parent Involvement (PI) refers to the extent to which parents participate in their children's education, such as attending school events, volunteering, and supporting with homework. Student Self-Efficacy (SSE) is a student's belief in their ability to succeed academically, which helps improve academic performance, increase motivation, and enhances resilience. Access to resources (AR) includes educational materials, technology, and support services. Socio-economic status (SSE) is a family's economic and social position in society, including income, occupation, and wealth[8–10]. School type (ST) refers to the classification of schools based on their characteristics, focus, and governance. Despite efforts to improve education in Uganda, significant disparities in student academic performance persist, with students from families with higher parental educational backgrounds consistently outperforming their peers[11]. The influence of parental educational background on student academic performance in Uganda remains poorly understood, particularly in the context of socio-economic status, school type, and location. This knowledge gap hinders the development of effective interventions to address educational inequalities and promote inclusive learning environments[11].

Theoretical frameworks include social cognitive theory, cultural capital theory, and parental involvement theory. Empirical studies have found a positive correlation between parents' educational background and students' academic achievement, with student motivation being a significant predictor of academic achievement. However, the relationship between social economic status and academic achievement is not fully mediated. Contextual factors such as cultural context and socio-economic context can also affect the relationship between parental educational background and student academic performance. Mixed-methods studies, such as quantitative and qualitative approaches, can provide a more comprehensive understanding.

The study aims to investigate the influence of parental educational background on students' academic performance in Uganda, specifically in Makindye division. The research will inform educational policy and interventions aimed at improving student outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged groups. It will empower parents and communities by understanding the relationship between these parties, aiming to enhance student learning and overall educational outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Area of study

The survey was conducted in selected primary and secondary schools within Makindye division in Kampala district, public and private. The area was considered appropriate because it has both public and private schools and this was needed to see the comparison

A map showing the location of schools in Makindye division

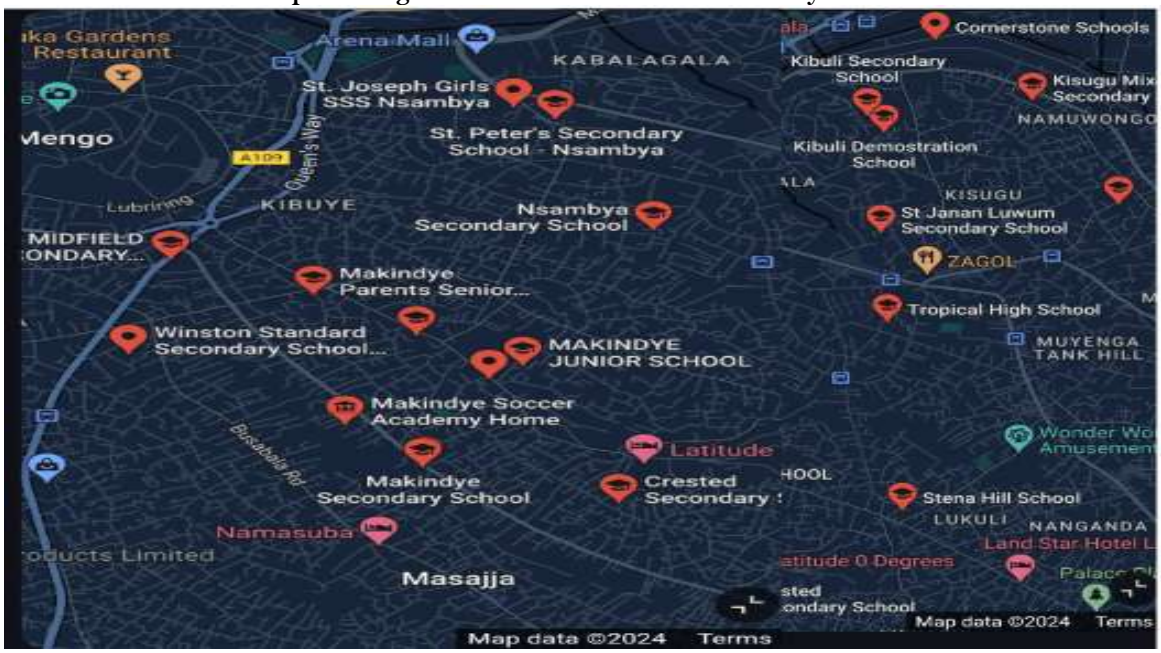

Figure 1: A map **showing the location of schools in Makindye division**

Research design

The study will be conducted through Case Study in attempt to analyze data: Research design is intensive, descriptive, and holistic analysis of a single activity. It will be used by selecting a specific place in Makindye division and a sample of 5 schools in Makindye with a sample population of 240 obtained from 300 students and 300 parents, making a total population of 600 people. It was basically this design chosen as it will provide with deep information to our study. Questionnaires and interview guides will be used to obtain information from the targeted respondents, Focus Group Discussions will be also used to get opinion from the local community. The sampling methods to be used will be; purposive, simple random, systematic and stratified sampling.

Target population of the Study

This study will be conducted in a targeted population of 300 students and 300 parents, this makes a total population of 600 people. This has been chosen because this population will enable reasonable number of students from these schools to be examined from with the influence of their parental educational background on their performance as learners. The population consists students from any class chosen at random specifically S.3 and S.5 and this will be done by asking questions on how they feel like it has affected their performance as students. The parents will also be examined by various questions to know the relationship between their educational background and their child's academic performance.

Sample size

A stratified random sample of 240 students and their parents was selected from 5 schools in Makindye division. The sample consisted of secondary level students specifically S.3 and S.5 students with ages between 12-25 capturing both genders, and parental educational background (none, primary, secondary, post-secondary) to ensure representation of diverse groups. The sample size was determined using Slovene's formular as shown in Equation (1)[12–14].

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where n = sample size
N= population of the study
1= constant
e = level of significance
e = 0.05
Making substitution in equation

$$n = \frac{600}{1 + 600(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{600}{1 + 600(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{600}{1+1.5} = \frac{600}{2.5} = 240$$

n= 240 respondents

Sample size =240 Respondents.

Table 1: sample size from the five schools.

SCHOOL NAME	SAMPLE SELECTED
Kibuli Secondary School	80
Makindye Secondary School	40
St Peter's Secondary School	30
Nsambya Secondary School	30
Kansanga Secondary School	60
TOTAL	**240**

Sampling Methods

The researcher will use probability sampling. The key informants are to be reached through purposive sampling, this is because purposive sampling gives the opportunity for the researcher to choose people who have the knowledge about the problem under investigation. The students on the other hand shall be reached in through simple random sampling, this is to be done to avoid bias. The local community and parents are to be reached through simple random sampling. Stratified sampling will be employed whereby the population will be divided into sub groups called strata based on parental educational background and participants will be selected from each stratum. Also, purposive sampling whereby participants will be selected based on specific characteristics like students with varying levels of academic performance.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire Method

Questionnaires were used as a primary research tool for the study. Data for this study were gathered via both closed- and open-ended questionnaires. A questionnaire consists of a number of carefully thought-out research questions that are established after a comprehensive assessment [15–17]. The questionnaire attempted to elicit specific responses from study participants in order to help the accomplishment of the research objectives. The surveys had both closed- and open-ended questions to enable respondents to give comprehensive responses for a full analysis. The research objectives, which are described in the first chapter of this study, dictated how these were arranged. questionnaires, primarily for students and parents.

Interview Method

This analysis also included in-person interviews between the study participants and the researcher. Formal interview guides at sensitive and complex themes, [18, 19]. Clarifications were also provided so that the interviewee could voice their thoughts, as indicated by Sutton & Austin [20]. This kind of data collection is intended for managers, and it was helpful in getting direct feedback from those who will be selected for one-on-one interviews in order to provide the required data.

Procedures for data collection

Upon submission of the approved research proposal to the researcher, an introductory letter from Kampala International University was issued and submitted to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Another letter was got from the CAO office which introduced the researcher to the field.

Data Analysis

Data will first be collected and presented by use of tables, graphs, pie chart, and interview report. The data will be expressed as percentages, and this will help to summarize large amount of data and save time. The use of graphs, pie charts, and tables will clearly interpret large data and simplify the findings to the beneficiaries. Data analysis tool will be Microsoft Excel.

Data Reliability and Validity

Data reliability incudes consistency of data collection methods, measures, and ensures data is free from errors and biases. Data validity includes accuracy and truthfulness of data collection methods, and ensures data accurately reflects the phenomenon being studied; and to achieve both, the researcher will use established methods and

instruments, pilot-test methods, train data collectors, use multiple data sources, monitor data quality, document procedures and then analyze data carefully.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher will observe all possible ethical conduct. Respondents will be assured of confidentiality of the information and where demanded-anonymity was observed. The researcher will ensure participants understand the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study, and respect to diverse cultures and backgrounds will be observed. The researcher will ensure transparency about the research process, methods, and findings, and participants will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequences.

RESULTS

Presentation of Results

The table below outlines the frequency and percentage of results of the survey questionnaire. Males and females were generally equally represented in the sample. Father's degree was highest (41.7%) for an associate's, mother's degrees were evenly spread, with an associate's degree slightly higher than high school degree (12.5%) (Table 2) [21].

Table 2 frequency and Percentage results for the questionnaire for students

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	70	58.3%
Female	50	41.7%
	120	**100**
Age		
12-15	24	20%
16-19	75	62.5%
20-25	21	17.5%
	120	**100**
Student's Academic goal		
1 year certificate	25	20.8%
Associate's	20	16.7%
Bachelor's	55	45.8%
Master's	15	12.5%
Doctorate's	5	4.2%
	120	100
Student's Favorite subjects		
Arts	77	64.2%
Sciences	43	35.8%
	120	**100**
Overall students' Academic Performance		
Excellent	40	33.3%
Very Good	50	41.7%
Fair	20	16.7%
Poor	10	8.3%
	120	**100**
Parents helping with homework		
Yes	40	33.3%
No	80	66.7%
	120	**100**
Do you agree that there is an influence on your parental educational background on your performance.		
Strongly agree	80	66.7%
Agree	30	25%
Disagree	10	8.3%
	120	**100**

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage results for parents.

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	75	62.5%
Female	45	37.5%
	120	**100**
Father's highest degree		
Completed some primary grades	30	25%
High school graduate or GED	36	30%
Associate's degree or technical training	19	15.8%
Bachelor's degree	17	14.2%
Master's degree	12	10%
Doctorate degree	6	5%
	120	**100**
Mother's highest degree		
Completed some primary grades	40	33.3%
High school graduate	50	41.7%
Associate's degree or technical training	20	16.7%
Bachelor's degree	10	8.3%
Master's degree	0	0%
Doctorate's degree	0	0%
	120	**100**
How often do you assist your children with home work		
Always	**30**	**25%**
Sometimes	**20**	**16.7%**
Do not help	**70**	**58.3%**
	120	**100**
What makes it difficult for you to assist your students with their home work		
Being busy in different activities	**40**	**33.3%**
Can't manage the students work	**60**	**50%**
Do not bother	**20**	**16.7%**
How do you value your child's education		
Very important	**30**	**25%**
Important	**50**	**41.7%**
Not important	**40**	**33.3%**
	120	**100**
Attendance of parent-teacher conferences		
Very often	30	25%
Often	20	16.7%
Do not attend	70	58.3%
	120	**100**
How often do you monitor your child's academic performance		
Always	**40**	**33.3%**
Sometimes	**30**	**25%**

Not at all	**50**	**41.7%**
	120	**100**
Ease of paying school fees		
Easy	**42**	**35%**
Difficult	**65**	**54.2%**
Very difficult	**13**	**10.8%**
	120	**100**
How often is your child sent for school fees		
Always	**13**	**10.8%**
Sometimes	**65**	**54.2%**
Never	**42**	**35%**
	120	**100**

Interpretation of Data

Gender Distribution

The results from 58.3% of the students are male, and 41.7% are female, indicating a slightly higher representation of male students. This suggests a gender imbalance, which might influence academic engagement or access to education.

Age Distribution

The majority (62.5%) of the students are aged between 16-19, which is typical of secondary school students. A smaller portion (20%) is in the 12-15 age range, and 17.5% are older (20-25), possibly indicating students who are either delayed in their studies or returning to education later.

Academic Goals

Most students (45.8%) aspire to attain a Bachelor's degree, while others aim for certificates (20.8%), Associate's degrees (16.7%), and some even for Master's (12.5%) and Doctorate degrees (4.2%). This shows varied academic ambitions, with the majority aiming for higher education.

Favorite Subjects

The results from the table 4.1 also indicate that 64.2% of the students prefer arts subjects, while 35.8% prefer sciences. This might suggest a greater interest in humanities and social sciences in this division, which could influence the types of academic programs chosen.

Overall Academic Performance

The results also show that 41.7% of students are performing "Very Good," while 33.3% are rated as "Excellent." However, 16.7% are performing at a "Fair" level, and 8.3% have "Poor" academic performance. This shows a significant proportion of high achievers, but there is a notable percentage of students struggling academically.

Parental Involvement in Homework

Only 33.3% of students reported that their parents help with homework, while 66.7% do not receive such help. Lack of parental involvement could be a factor affecting academic performance for some students.

Perception of Parental Education's Influence

A significant majority (66.7%) of students "Strongly Agree" that their parents' educational background influences their performance, with 25% agreeing, and only 8.3% disagreeing. This indicates that most students perceive parental education as a key factor in their academic success.

Results for the Questionnaire for Parents

Parental Gender Distribution

The results from the table 4.2 indicate 62.5% of respondents are male, and 37.5% are female, which aligns with the common pattern where fathers may take a more prominent role in responding to such surveys.

Father's Educational Background

The results also show that 30% of fathers have a high school education, and 25% have only completed some primary grades. Fewer have higher education qualifications, with 14.2% holding a Bachelor's degree, 10% a Master's, and only 5% with a Doctorate. This suggests that many fathers have limited formal education, which could impact their ability to assist their children academically.

Mother's Educational Background

A larger percentage of mothers have lower educational qualifications, with 33.3% having completed some primary grades and 41.7% having graduated high school. No mothers hold a Master's or Doctorate degree. This lower educational background among mothers might impact their capacity to support their children academically.

Parental Assistance with Homework

The results in table 4.2 continue to indicate that 58.3% of parents report that they do not help their children with homework, and only 25% always assist. This lack of involvement in homework could contribute to students' academic challenges, particularly for those who need additional support.

Challenges in Assisting with Homework

Majority (50%) of the parents' state that they "Can't manage the students' work," while 33.3% cite being busy with other activities. This reflects barriers in helping children academically, which may be related to their own educational limitations or time constraints.

Value of Child's Education

Most of the parents (41.7%) consider education important, and 25% view it as very important. However, 33.3% do not regard it as important, indicating that some parents may not prioritize education, potentially affecting their children's academic performance.

Attendance at Parent-Teacher Conferences

The results in the table 4.2 indicate that 58.3% of parents do not attend parent-teacher conferences, which could suggest a lack of engagement with their child's academic progress, further contributing to lower performance for some students.

Monitoring Academic Performance

Only 33.3% of parents consistently monitor their child's performance, while 41.7% do not monitor at all. This indicates that a large proportion of parents may not be fully aware of their child's academic standing, which could have a negative effect on performance.

School Fees Payment

A majority of parents (54.2%) report difficulty in paying school fees, with 35% finding it "easy" and 10.8% finding it "very difficult." Financial struggles might impact students' attendance and performance in school.

Frequency of Being Sent Home for School Fees

The results from the table 54.2% of students are sent home "sometimes" for unpaid fees, indicating that financial instability is a significant issue for families, which could disrupt students' academic progress.

DISCUSSION

The research findings show a strong correlation between parental education levels and students' academic performance. From Table 4.1, 66.7% of students "Strongly Agree" that their parents' educational background influences their academic performance, and 25% also "Agree." This supports the hypothesis that students whose parents have higher education tend to perform better.

Parents with higher education levels are more likely to provide academic support and monitor their children's progress. For instance, 33.3% of parents always monitor their child's academic performance (Table 4.2). However, many parents with lower education levels struggle to assist with homework (58.3%), which contributes to poorer performance for some students, as seen in the "Fair" and "Poor" performance categories (25% combined) in Table 1. The lack of higher education qualifications among most parents, especially mothers (no Master's or Doctorate degrees), limits their ability to help their children academically. The majority of mothers have only completed high school (41.7%) or some primary grades (33.3%), further reinforcing the influence of parental education on students' academic performance. The findings highlight that parental involvement in homework is a key determinant of academic success. Only 33.3% of students reported receiving help from their parents with homework, while 66.7% do not receive such support. This lack of engagement can negatively impact students' academic performance, especially in complex subjects where additional guidance may be needed.

Parents who cited not helping with homework mentioned their inability to manage the work (50%) or being too busy with other activities (33.3%). These challenges, coupled with lower parental educational levels, contribute to the difficulty in providing effective academic support at home. This lack of involvement may explain why a large portion of students falls into the "Fair" and "Poor" performance categories.

Parental attitudes toward the importance of education also impact students' academic outcomes. According to Table 2, while 41.7% of parents view their child's education as important, a concerning 33.3% regard it as not important. This lack of prioritization can negatively influence the child's motivation and overall academic success.

Furthermore, the low attendance rate at parent-teacher conferences (58.3% of parents do not attend) and the lack of consistent monitoring of academic performance (41.7% do not monitor at all) suggest that many parents are disengaged from their child's education. Such attitudes may lead to lower academic performance and hinder students' ability to reach their full potential.

Financial constraints emerged as a significant barrier to students' academic success. The findings show that 54.2% of parents find it difficult to pay school fees, and 10.8% find it very difficult. This financial strain leads to frequent

absenteeism, with 54.2% of students being sent home "sometimes" for unpaid fees, which disrupts their academic progress.

The impact of financial instability on academic performance is notable, as students who are frequently absent from school due to unpaid fees are less likely to perform well academically. This was evident from the student responses, where 16.7% rated their performance as "Fair" and 8.3% as "Poor."

CONCLUSION

Parental Educational Background is a Key Determinant: The research concludes that students whose parents have higher educational backgrounds are more likely to perform better academically. This is due to the ability of educated parents to provide academic support, monitor progress, and instill the value of education in their children. Lack of Parental Involvement Hampers Performance**:** The study concludes that insufficient parental involvement in homework and academic monitoring significantly contributes to lower student performance. Parents with lower education levels face challenges in assisting their children with academic work, which negatively affects student outcomes. Parental Attitudes Impact Academic Success: The attitude of parents toward education is a crucial factor in shaping students' academic performance. Parents who do not prioritize education or attend school-related activities are less likely to motivate and support their children, leading to lower academic achievements.

Financial Constraints Limit Academic Success: The study concludes that financial difficulties faced by parents with low educational levels are a significant barrier to academic success for many students. The inability to pay school fees and frequent absenteeism due to unpaid fees negatively impact students' academic continuity and performance.

Recommendations

There is a need to establish parental education programs that can equip parents, especially those with lower educational backgrounds, with the skills and knowledge needed to support their children's education. Workshops on how to assist with homework, engage in school activities, and monitor academic progress can improve student outcomes.

Schools should implement initiatives to encourage more active parental involvement. This could include flexible parent-teacher conference schedules, regular updates on student performance, and incentives for parents who attend meetings and engage in their child's academic activities.

To alleviate the financial burden on families, local government and schools should consider providing scholarships or financial aid to students from low-income families. This would help reduce absenteeism due to unpaid fees and ensure that students have continuous access to education.

Community leaders and stakeholders should work to raise awareness of the importance of education among parents. Efforts should be made to change the attitudes of parents who view education as unimportant, emphasizing the long-term benefits of academic success for their children's futures.

Future Research

This study was conducted within Makindye Division, focusing primarily on parental education background. Future research could explore other factors influencing academic performance, such as household income, school infrastructure, teacher quality, or peer influence. Additionally, expanding the study to other regions would provide a broader understanding of how parental education and other socioeconomic factors impact student performance across different contexts.

ABBREVIATIONS

PEP	Parental Educational Background
SAP	Student Academic Performance
ST	School Type
PI	Parental Involvement
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
SES	Social Economic Status
SSE	Student Self-Efficacy
AR	Access to Resources
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
DEO	District Education Officer
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer

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