

Social Economic Status in Selected Secondary Schools in Ibanda District Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Social Economic Status in Selected Secondary Schools in Ibanda District Uganda was evaluated. The family stress model guided the study. The study population was 10 head teachers, 80 teachers, and 240 students in the selected secondary schools in Ibanda District, computed using the Sloven's formula. Simple random sampling was used to select 80 teachers and 240 students. Ten head teachers were purposively sampled. Self-administered questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson's Linear Correlation Coefficient were utilized to analyze data. The findings indicated that the effects of socio-Economic Status on the quality of education were moderate with an average index mean of 3.09. The findings showed a positive significant relationship between socio-Economic Status and quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District at ($r = 0.132$, $p = 0.016$).

Keywords: Social Economic, Status, Ibanda District and Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

Access to education for all has been a relatively recent development in human history when viewed from a historical perspective. Access to education has over many years of human development been a prerogative of those that could afford it and as a result it was a defining element as to the social class of a person. Wealthier parents could afford to send their children to better schools and generally because they were better educated and they were able to make a more informed decision as to which school their children should attend [1]. All over the world education is regarded as the bedrock to economic, political, and technological advancement of a nation and this is why it is often emphasized that no nation can rise above its educational system. Higher education, particularly, secondary, technical and university education are being demanded all over the world owing to the fact that economic and social factors are increasingly driven by the advancement and application of knowledge being provided by them [2]. Although Canada is a federal state, provincial governments control Education. Canada has neither a historical system of education nor a

central office of education. Each province has its own ministry of education headed by an elected minister. Promotion through the elementary grades is more or less automatic. At the secondary level, variation exists among provinces but most use the credit system with children taking varying levels of courses to accumulate credits for graduation. Students must pass a graduation diploma examination [1]. The Canadian education system like many others in modern economic states, face challenges of the information and an increasingly competitive global economy. Consequently, many Canadian educators recognize the need to improve and create a kind of relevant quality education young people receive [3]. Mexican schools contain a large percentage of average students in each grade because of students repeating grades and or dropping out and then re-enrolling in school. Since 1993, the state governments have controlled the running of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and teacher training institutes. Many Mexican students do not advance to the upper secondary school level [4]. Woolfolk [5] has argued that far the most

serious problem at basic level of education is the high and persistent dropout rate- a consequence of family poverty. The rapid increase in number of school-age children has placed a heavy burden on the education system nationwide. Over all, the emphasis of national basic education programs has been access rather than on relevance or quality. The modern education system in Japan began to form with the introduction of the fundamental law of education 1947. The Japanese demand educational excellence and they get it. At the same time, others contend that Japan's schools foster conformity and reward obedience. While Japanese citizens struggle with realities of increasing unemployment and social problems accompanying it, they continued to place a high priority on the development of a well-educated and skilled populace [6]. The Indian constitution set forth in 1950 directs the government to provide free and compulsory education for all children to age 14. In 1986, the federal parliament adopted its National policy for Education which has served as the Bases for the development of the National curriculum for elementary and secondary education. The intent of the common core is to cut a cross subject areas and to promote cultural heritage, egatarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers and the encouragement of scientific outlook [7]. Until recently, the British educational system had a long tradition of non-interference by the central Government. In 1988, however the education reform act emphasized two themes in the education of all students in the British system, back to the basics and the link between education and the economy. The act was followed by pressure for a national curriculum and teachers' accountability which aligned teaching performance with the curriculum. Schools in Denmark have an exceptionally high degree of local control similar to schools in the United States. The ministry of education sets schools objectives but local schools decide how to meet them.

Individual schools determine their own curricula and teachers teach however they please [7]. South Africa is one of the most multicultural societies in the world. From 1941 to 1991, the structure of society was shaped by an official policy of apartheid. The apartheid legislation was repealed in 1991, initiating what promises to be a dramatic restructuring of society including a restructuring of the segregated education system that had supported it. The government in the process of re-conceptualizing the school system from top to bottom in an effort to clarify the legal status of different categories of schools to establish national norms and standards for governance, finance and the effectiveness of schooling (Committee to review the organization, Governance and funding of schools, 1995). Although inter-racial gaps in the attainment of education (measured by years of schooling) have been narrowing over the past several decades, there remain stark inequalities in the educational performance of those attending the historically different parts of the school system. Despite high levels of government spending on education, poor children in South Africa are performing at lower levels of literacy and numeracy than equally poor children elsewhere in Southern and East Africa. Data on the performance of South African children in grades 3, 4 and 5 show that those attending historically disadvantaged schools are lagging by at least 2 years' worth of learning behind their peers in the historically advantaged schools. Despite the strong impact of poverty on educational outcomes in South Africa, there are certain features which distinguish better-performing schools from those functioning poorly [2]. Education is one of Government's key sectors and has continued to receive priority in resource allocation in Uganda. Over the last five years the budget allocation to the education sector has been increasing steadily from Six hundred thirty three billions in the year 2005/2006 to one trillion. Part of this money is meant for construction of class rooms because other schools do not have

enough class rooms and pupils are taught under trees. There has been a general poor performance in education system especially in secondary education and this has caused provoked reactions from the education Ministry and District education officers in Uganda, who don't agree on reasons for poor performance in the leaving examinations (U.C.E and

U.A.C.E respectively) results released yearly. The Ministry officials argue that the poor performance is mostly due to absenteeism and lack of teachers in some districts. The district education officers, however, believe that under funding and socio-Economic Status all cause the poor performance [8].

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to establish the Social Economic Status in Selected Secondary Schools in Ibanda District Uganda

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of socio-economic status affecting the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District.

Research Questions

1. What are the socio-Economic Status affecting the quality of education in secondary schools?

Scope of the Study

Content scope

The study focused on socio-Economic Status and quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District Uganda. Socio-Economic Status' being the independent variable was measured by examining its effects whereas quality of education which is the dependent variable was measured by establishing the level of quality education in secondary schools.

Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Ibanda district which is located in Western Uganda, about 60km North of Mbarara Municipality. Ibanda District borders with Mbarara District in the South, Kamwenge District in the North, Buhweju District in the South Western and Kiruhura District in the East. The study was carried out in selected secondary schools in Ibanda District.

Time scope

The study covered a period of 5 years from 2009 to 2014; the period when a number of secondary schools both public and private, have been mushrooming to embrace government programme of providing education to both boys and girls who have completed primary level in different parts of Uganda.

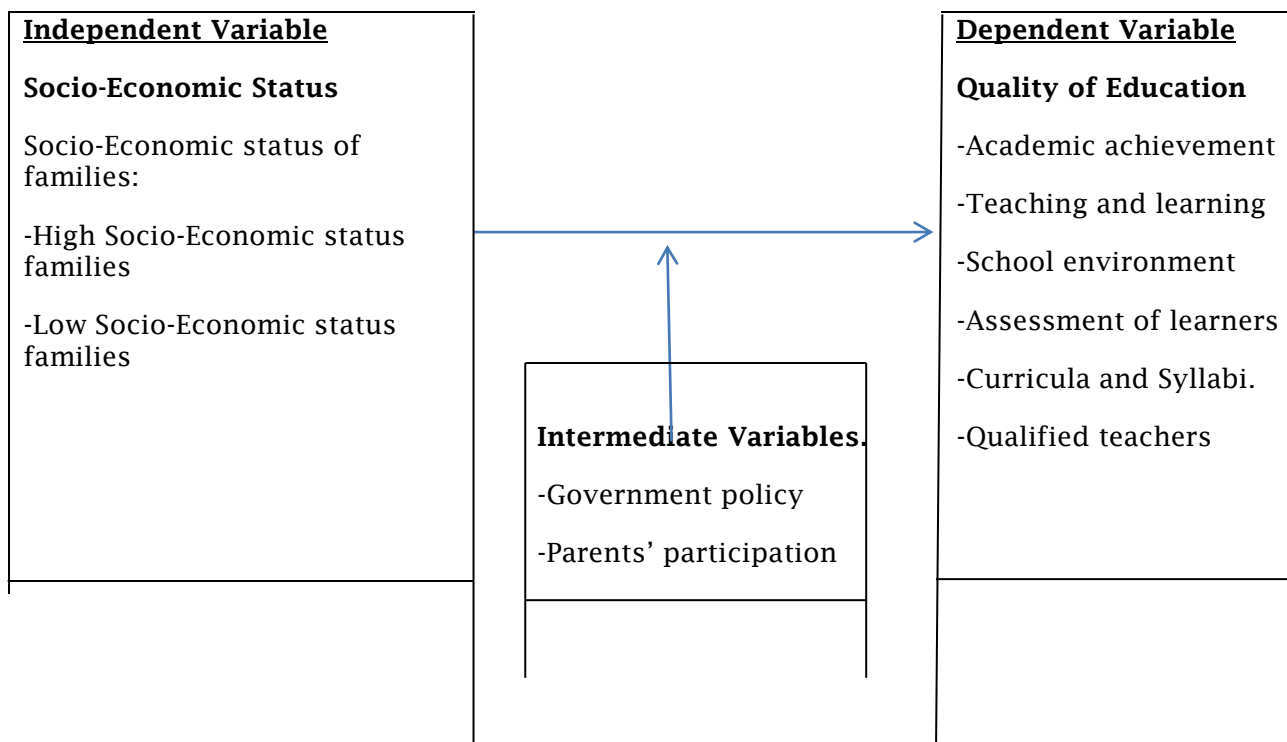
Significance of the Study

This study will make a number of contributions to the policy makers, stakeholders, head teachers, teachers, parents and other managers. The study will help policy makers especially in the ministry of education and sports to understand factors that affect the quality of education and hence respond accordingly so as to improve on the quality of living. The findings will be of help to head teachers and teachers to appreciate the need to improve on the quality of education in secondary schools in order to provide balanced education to students. This research is likely to help parents and community to appreciate the need to address the socio-Economic Status that would enable their children to attain quality education in secondary schools. The study may help the civil society on the need to support the education sector in order to improve on the infrastructure, resources, facilities and human resources that enhance the quality of education secondary schools. It is also expected that the findings will generate information (knowledge) that could form the basis for policy formulation in the quality of education in Ibanda district. By understanding the core factors underlying the quality of education in secondary schools and may develop relevant policies that will enhance its compliance with quality assurance requirements. The findings may produce facts that will be instrumental in shaping the academic future of the education system in Uganda. The study will also contribute to the stock of available theoretical knowledge in the subject area of its effectiveness. To future researchers, literature and methodology of the study will make useful

contributions to the conceptual and theoretical studies for other researchers who will conduct studies that are related to this. The researcher stands to benefit by enriching his knowledge in research

and contribute to the development of his career in attaining a master's degree in education management and administration.

Conceptual Frame Work



Source: Adopted from (9).

Figure 1: **Conceptual Frame Work on Socio-Economic Status and Quality of Education in Secondary School**

The conceptual framework elaborates the relationship between socio-economic status and quality of education in selected secondary schools in Ibanda District Uganda. In this conceptual frame work, socio-Economic Status are conceived as the independent variable while quality of education is the dependent variable. Socio-economic status include income of parents, occupation, property owned by parents, availability of resources, and learners' motivation. Socio-economic status is considered to be high or low. A family with high socio-economic status is likely to take their children to schools that provide good quality education and vice versa. More so, high income earning parents are able provide learning

resources to their children and motivate them as role models, this improves quality of education. Families with low socio-economic status and low income demoralize their children as role models. On the other hand, quality of education has indicators as academic achievement, teaching and learning, material resources, conducive environment, parents' participation as well as curricula and Syllabi. Coles [9] elaborated on the socio-economic status as well as different benefits which guided formulating predefined independent variables. At the same time the authors elaborate and substantiate on the quality of education which guided in formulating and ear marking the indicators of provision of quality secondary education in selected

secondary schools. The conceptual framework illustrates how socio-economic status leads to improved quality education in secondary schools. However, intermediate variables like government policy, provision of materials, and availability of infrastructure, improved curriculum, parents' participation and financial support also lead to quality education. The research emphasized on how independent variable contributes to the effect of dependent variable by linking up with the intermediate variable.

Social-Economic Status on Quality of Education in Secondary Schools

Santrock [6] mentioned that usually in establishing socio-economic status, the factors considered include; income, occupation, education, neighbourhood, and political power. For each of these five factors, the consideration of how fixed each one is also contributes to another. For example, if a family is considered low income because one of the parents is in school to eventually get a better job, then the family is not really in the same socio economic status as their neighbours who have little hope of a better job. According to Wool folk, [5], each year students attend schools that represent a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Socio economic status refers to the level of education, income, and professionalism of an individual or group. Although students of higher and lower social economic statuses both attend school, the effect of lower socioeconomic status on student achievement is difficult to ignore. Students of a lower socioeconomic status often face additional challenges including a dearth of learning resources, difficult learning conditions and poor motivation that negatively affect their academic performance. The quality of a nation's education is a key factor in the economic growth of nations in the labour market performance of individuals and in providing a pathway out of poverty. Over and above performance in the labour market, being literate and numerate empowers people to meaningfully participate in society [10]. In all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, the rights of the

whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation are at the centre. This means that the focus is on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes; and which creates for children, and helps them create for themselves and others, places of safety, security and healthy interaction [11].

Learning Resources

Families with a lower social economic status often struggle with providing academic support for their children. Limited time and financial resources make it difficult for parents to create a home-based learning environment. Parents in a low socioeconomic household cannot afford reading materials, technology and tutors for their children. When children do not have a positive learning environment at home, it negatively affects their academic achievement level in school [12]. Learning involves interaction of students with the learning resources. Teaching and learning resources include classrooms, libraries, playing fields, textbooks among others. Indeed learning resources go a long way in creating an effective teaching and learning.

School Environment

School environment plays a profound role in academic achievement for low socioeconomic status children. Teacher turnover, limited resources and low academic performance are all characteristics of schools in lower socioeconomic communities. Consequently, highly-qualified teachers often avoid such schools by committing themselves to more affluent school communities, leaving low socioeconomic status children with teachers who often lack expertise in their subjects [13; 14; 12]. Student's achievement is largely determined by the school quality, which in turn is determined by the performance of the teachers whose effectiveness in working partly depends on the school environment. According to Rumberger [15], school administrators could devise

strategies to assist the students on good performance. He advises that school administration could develop programmes that are in course with the students' interest, needs and understanding. If educational programmes were made interesting to the teachers and students, teaching and learning would become enjoyable.

Academic Achievement

Lower socioeconomic status students often display difficulty with language skills and struggle with reading. In comparison to higher socioeconomic status children, they are not as accurate when completing mathematical tasks such as word problems or addition and subtraction. As schools become aware of low student performance, students are often assigned to lower school tracks. Consequently, students on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum are forced to take lower level courses or vocational courses that do not necessarily prepare them for higher education. Lower socioeconomic status ultimately contributes to lower academic performance and slower rates of academic progress [13; 12]. Students' academic attainment is determined by the family's socio-economic characteristics and social environmental factors that are outside the school. Ichado [16] indicates that the environment that students come from largely influences their school performance. Rothman [17] suggests that children from low socio-economic conditioned families do not have a study environment in their homes to have a positive influence on their academic achievement at school. Eweniyi [18] explains that students' low academic achievement has personal and

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was both quantitative and qualitative in dimension. The quantitative paradigm was used to study generalizable information measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures [21] about socioeconomic status and the quality of education among the students. While the qualitative domain sought in-depth responses about critical issues

institutional reasons. Personal reasons are related to an individual's intelligence, knowledge and talents while institutional reasons are associated with familial and parental influences, social reasons, school-related reasons, relationships between the student and the instructor, home and living conditions.

Motivation

Students in lower socio-economic communities are more likely to exhibit behaviour-related learning problems because they feel as if they do not belong in school due to their working class background. These feelings of loneliness and inadequacy often influence the decision to drop out for many students. Additionally, as low socioeconomic status students become aware of high college tuition fees, they often lose the motivation to perform well due to their inability to pay for higher education, ultimately affecting the influence of socioeconomic status on student achievement [14; 12]. The student's role in education is crucial and should go beyond the traditional view of student as customer or recipient of knowledge. In addition to the roles of buyer and recipient, "students are the raw materials for education and the primary products of educational transformations; and most important...students are key members of the labor force involved in creating education" [19]. Also, the increasing diversity of individual differences among students can be seen in time management, learning styles, maturity, demographics, experiential background, cultural orientation, and interests. As such, [20] suggest that teachers should be "producers of environments that allow students to learn as much as possible".

relating to the study variables from head teachers as key informants. The study employed cross-sectional survey research design, incorporating descriptive and correlational techniques for data interpretation. The cross-sectional aspect enabled representativeness in sampling from all categories of schools and students in Ibanda District. The correlational technique was used to study

the relationship between the socio-economic status and the quality of education.

Study Population

The target population of the study was estimated at 3430 potential participants. This was composed of 10 Head teachers and 3420 students from a random sample of 10 selected schools. For purposes of confidentiality, the 10 schools were coded with letters A- J.

Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive and random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique were used in obtaining key informants - the head teachers of the selected schools because they were considered to be having specific information that enabled the researcher to respond properly to the objectives of the study. Students were subjected to random sampling from the

Table 1a: Showing the expected respondents.

Respondents	Target Population	Population Sample
Head teachers	10	10
Students	3420	352
Total	3430	362

Source: Primary data

Research Instruments

The researcher used a closed ended questionnaire to collect data from the student respondents. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. Section A had 13 items that sought demographic data and students’ academic achievement scores. Section B was the 15-item questionnaire containing Likert type items for measuring family socio economic status adapted from [22].The scale was scored on different Likert points ranging from zero to 10. Sections C and D were modified from [23] scales in *Measuring the Quality of Education by Means of Indicators*. Section C contained 18 items for measuring the quality of school learning environment on a 4-point Likert scale, 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Section D was the scale for measuring the quality of learning attained by the students. It contained 33 items scored on a 4-point Likert scale, 1 (*very*

bigger population in the selected schools because they were considered to be having specific information that enabled the researcher to respond properly to the study objectives.

Sample Size

Using the Survey Monkey Sample Size Calculator accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/>, a sample of 346 students were to be drawn for the quantitative study at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. However, questionnaires were distributed to 400 students to cater for attrition. A total of 352 student respondents provided fully completed questions, thus rendering more than 100% response rate. The qualitative information provided by the 10 head teachers was considered for the study.

low) to 4 (*very high*). The data gathered via the questionnaires were easy to be analysed, compared, described, and quantified in order to determine the level and the degree of association between the variables in the study context. The questionnaire consisted of general background information about respondents’ profile, the effects of socio-Economic Status on the quality of education, the level of quality education and the relationship between socio-Economic Status and the quality of education.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument the researcher used expert judgment method in which the researcher made use of the university supervisor and other senior /experienced lecturers in the faculty of education and Directorate of Postgraduate Studies and Research

(DPGSR) to evaluate the relevance, wording and clarity of questions or items in the instrument. These individuals were asked to give their judgment on whether or not the items in the instrument were valid for evaluation of socio-Economic Status and quality of education in secondary schools of Ibanda District or not. Their ideas were taken into consideration and highlighted mistakes were corrected accordingly to make the instrument accurate and worth to be used for data collection. Out of the eight experts who reviewed the instrument seven validated the instrument and these gave a content validity index co-efficient of 0.96. The coefficient of 0.96 made the instrument to be accepted as valid. This indicates the instruments were valid. The reliabilities of the instruments were tested using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient which is provided in SPSS. The reliability results indicate that Section B had $\alpha = 0.77$, Section C had $\alpha = 0.79$, and Section D had $\alpha = 0.84$, which means that the instruments were reliable and hence internally consistent [24] and therefore acceptable for use in the study.

Data Gathering Procedures

The procedures consisted of; Collection of transmittal letter: A transmittal letter was obtained from the Directorate of Post Graduate Studies and Research for the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from respective head teachers and learners in the selected secondary schools. Delivering the questionnaires; the researcher prepared the questionnaires for distribution purposes. The research assistants were selected and oriented with reference to the sampling and data collection procedures in order to be consistent in administering the questionnaires. The researcher and his research assistants requested the respondents to answer as objectively as possible and not to leave any option not answered. Collecting the answered questionnaires; the researcher and research assistants held a brief discussion with the respondents and explained to them the purpose of the study. On retrieval, all returned questionnaires were checked to see if they were all answered.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data processing and analysis. The total score range on the family socio-economic status scale was 4-69. Scores in the range of 4-36.5 were interpreted as low socio-economic status while scores in the range 36.6-69 were interpreted as high social economic status.

Ethical considerations

To ensure confidentiality of information provided by the respondents and to ascertain the practice of ethics in this study, the following activities were implemented by the researcher: A letter from the DPGSR was presented to the School authorities and permission sought from the concerned officials of the secondary schools involved in the study. The participation in this study was voluntary. In addition, a copy of the consent form document is attached to the appendices section. Respondents' names were not reflected in this study, to further ensure confidentiality. The schools where the respondents came from were not mentioned. In addition to the above, the protection of rights and integrity of human participants was granted. The researcher acknowledged the authors quoted in this study through citations and referencing. The researcher worked under the accepted norms of research. Given the nature of this study, it may not necessarily require formation of Community Advisory Boards (CABs), but nevertheless, the researcher worked closely with the community in order to attain the highest possible standards. The researcher assured the respondents that this study was not to expose respondents to any major risks, but rather, it was of great benefit to them and other stake holders if the necessary information was provided. The study followed all the sequential steps involved in research, to ensure scientific validity. Justice was ensured while selecting the respondents. This was done through use of proper sampling methods and procedures. The findings of this study were presented in a generalized manner.

Limitations of the Study

There was a problem in accessing information from respondents who were not in their offices especially administrative staffs at the time of carrying out the study. This was overcome by constant visiting and reminding them of the objectives of this study. There was also a challenge of bench marking data regarding socio-Economic Status and quality education as majority of the respondents never wished

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Background Information of the Primary Respondents

The demographic information of the student participants was summarised

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to disclose their status. This was solved by consulting libraries and use of internet searches for the available information on socio Economic Status and quality education. The response rate was low given that the respondents were busy with their class activities and others not willing to open up. This caused delays in data collection exercise but it was later resolved by constantly reminding them to fill the questionnaire.

using the number of students in each category of the demographic and the percentage this number represents. The results are indicated in Table 1b.

Table 1b: Showing demographics of the student participants

		<i>F</i>	%
Sex	Male	250	71.0
	Female	102	29.0
Community	Village	264	75.0
	Town	88	25.0
Class	S2	26	7.4
	S3	56	13.1
	S4	62	17.6
	S5	82	23.9
	S6	126	35.8
Combination	Arts	116	33.0
	Sciences	100	28.4
School type	Government	152	43.2
	Private	200	56.8
USE or Non-USE	USE	112	31.8
	Non-USE	228	64.7
Nature of school	Boarding school	82	23.3
	Boarding and day school	270	76.7
Attendance schedule	day scholar	32	9.1
	Boarder	320	90.9
Religious affiliation	Muslim	22	6.3
	Pentecostal	28	8.0
	Protestant	102	29.0
	Catholic	152	43.2
	Other	48	13.6
School change	No change	230	65.3
	Yes, changed	122	34.7

The background information of the respondents considered were sex, class,

community, school type, nature of school, attendance schedules, religious

affiliations and school change on socio-economic Status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District as shown above. The findings from Table 4.1 above showed that of the respondents 250 (71%) were males whereas females were 102 (29%). This shows clearly that the majority of the respondents were males. This was as a result of given socio-cultural issues where boys are favoured in schooling while girls are meant for house chores and later married off. Majority of the students, 264 (75.0%), came from village communities while the minority 88 (25.0%), came from towns. This implies that many communities in Ibanda District are still remote and likely to have low socio-economic statuses. There were more respondents in private schools, 200 (56.8%), than in government schools, 152 (43.2%). This is in support of the fact that about eighty percent of secondary schools in Uganda are private schools and so most students study in private schools. Despite the public-private partnership in some secondary schools, still majority of the students, 228(64.7%), were in non-USE schools while the minority, 112 (31.8%), were in USE schools. This could be indicative of popular belief that the

quality of education provided in USE schools is low such that most parents prefer to shoulder the burden of 'quality' education in private schools.

Level of Family Socio-Economic Status among Students in Secondary Schools in Ibanda District

The first objective of this study was to examine the level of socio-economic status of the families of the students in secondary schools in Ibanda District. The results are constituted of both quantitative findings from the students and qualitative findings from the head teachers. The quantitative findings are followed by qualitative data obtained from the head teachers.

Family socio-economic status levels according to students in secondary schools in Ibanda District

The results indicate that generally the socio-economic status of the families was low ($M = 34.92$, $SD = 10.20$). There were 204 (58.0%) students from low socio-economic families compared to 148 (42.0%) students from high socio-economic status families. The distribution of the students by family socio-economic status and demographics is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Showing distribution of students by family socio-economic status and student demographics

		level of socioeconomic status		Total
		Low n(%)	High n(%)	
Sex	Male	144(57.6)	106(42.4)	250
	Female	60(58.8)	42(41.2)	102
Community	Village	166(62.9)	98(37.1)	264
	Town	38(43.2)	50(56.8)	88
Class	S2	14(53.8)	12(46.2)	26
	S3	22(47.8)	24(52.2)	46
	S4	38(61.3)	24(38.7)	62
	S5	42(51.2)	42(48.8)	82
	S6	82(65.1)	44(34.9)	126
	Combination	Arts	64(55.2)	52(44.8)
Sciences		62(62.0)	38(38.0)	100
School type	Government	100(65.8)	50(34.2)	152
	Private	104(52.0)	96(48.0)	200
USE or Non-USE	USE	66(58.9)	46(41.1)	112
	Non-USE	132(57.9)	96(42.1)	228
Nature of school	Boarding school	34(41.5)	48(58.5)	82
	Boarding and day school	174(64.4)	96(35.6)	270
School attendance schedule	Day scholar	24(75.0)	8(25.0)	32
	Boarder	182(56.9)	138(43.1)	320
Religious affiliation	Muslim	14(63.6)	8(36.4)	22
	Pentecostal	16(57.1)	12(42.9)	28
	Protestant	60(58.8)	42(41.2)	102
	Catholic	80(52.6)	72(47.4)	152
	Other	34(70.8)	14(29.2)	48
School change	No change	138(60.0)	92(40.0)	230
	Yes, changed	66(54.1)	56(45.9)	122

Results in Table 2 indicate that a slightly greater proportion of females were from low socio-economic status families than males (58.8% vs. 57.6%). The percentage of students from low socio-economic families (62.9%) in villages was far greater than that of students from towns (43.2%). Conversely a greater percentage of students from towns (56.8%) had high socio-economic status families than students from villages (37.4%). The results further show that a greater percentage of advanced level students offering science combinations (62.0%) had low status families compared with 55.5% of students of low socio-economic families offering arts combinations. Conversely, more arts students than science students were from high socio-economic families. Considering

the government-private divide, more students in government schools than in private schools (65.8% vs. 52.0%) had low socio-economic backgrounds. Similarly, there were far more day scholars (75.0%) than boarding students (56.9%) from families of low socio-economic status. In other words, students in private schools were more likely than those from government schools to belong to families of low socio-economic status. By religious affiliation, the downward trend of distribution of students within the low socio-economic status family category was Muslim (63.6%), Protestant (58.8%), Pentecostal (57.1%), and Catholic (52.6%). Meanwhile by class, the distribution of students in low socio-economic status families was as follows: Senior 6 (65.1%),

Senior 4 (61.3%), Senior 2 (53.8%), Senior 5 (51.2%), and Senior 3 (47.8%). The comparative percentages of students in low and high socio-economic status families by demographics confirm that most of the students in Ibanda District were from low socio-economic families. However, there were also students from families with high socio-economic status, especially families in towns.

Family socio-economic status levels according to head teachers in secondary schools in Ibanda District

A cross-section of the head teachers who participated tended to agree that the general level of socio-economic status among families in Ibanda District was low. The following verbatim responses attest to this: Respondent 1: The socio-economic status of families in Ibanda is low. The SES is low in Ibanda households because of low levels of education of most of the family heads in the district. There are few family heads who are employed in formal or informal (*sic*) sector. The SES is low because of subsistence farming; few people practice intensive farming that would earn income, the rate of alcoholism is high, and idleness of the youth who engage primarily in gambling and betting. Respondent 2: "The socio-economic status of most families of students in Ibanda District is generally low because their parents don't pay school fees in time. The majority are parents whose

income is seasonal. "However, one of the head teachers who participated in the study as Respondent 3 observed that "social economic status is neither high nor low, it is just average." In supporting this ground, the respondent noted that "most people have an average income. Income goes hand in hand with family sociability. "On the other extreme end, one of the head teachers, Respondent 4, noted that; The socio-economic status of the families of students in Ibanda District is generally high due to the following:

Majority of households have steady income from coffee, bananas, animals etc.

Majority of households have safe drinking water provided by the gravity water project. The availability of power: UEDCL and solar system in a number of homes is an indicator of socio-economic progress. The road network is good hence transportation of agricultural produce made possible. The mining sector has also facilitated economic growth in some communities e.g. gold mines in Nyarukiika and other parts of Rukiri S/C; sand mining, etc. Housing/shelter is also high compared to other districts. Semi-permanent, permanent houses have been constructed, latrine coverage is very high. All these are indicators of socio-economic development.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Level of Family Socio-Economic Status among Students in Secondary Schools in Ibanda District

The results indicate that generally the socioeconomic status of the families was low. In this study, family socioeconomic status (SES) was measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. It is conceptualized as the social standing or class of a family. When viewed through a social class lens, privilege, power, and control are emphasized. The generally low socioeconomic status revealed in this study indicates that most of the children in secondary schools in Ibanda District come from families in which access to

and distribution of resources is low. In other words, most members of the families have low education, indulge in small scale seasonal agriculture for income generation, and are generally referred to as the peasant class of citizens. According to the American Psychological Association [25], low SES and its correlates, such as lower education, poverty and poor health, ultimately affect society as a whole. Inequalities in wealth distribution, resource distribution and quality of life are increasing in the United States and globally. Society benefits from an increased focus on the foundations of socioeconomic inequalities and efforts to

reduce the deep gaps in socioeconomic status in the United States and abroad. This implies that low socioeconomic status problem is not a localized Ibanda District problem but rather an international concern. However, government programmes of poverty eradication need to target remote districts such as Ibanda with a focus on education quality improvement in order to pull the population out of poverty.

Results in Table 2 indicate that a slightly greater proportion of females were from low socio-economic status families than males. This finding is similar to findings from previous studies. For instance, a study by [25] reveals that socioeconomic status affects overall human functioning, including development across the life span, physical and mental health. Variance in socioeconomic status, including disparities in the distribution of wealth, income and access to resources, affects everyone; however, women are over represented among those living in poverty. Women are more often responsible for raising children and are increasingly likely to raise children alone. This fact is one of the many reasons that the socioeconomic standing of women is of great importance to the well-being of future generations. Everyone benefits from an increased focus on the foundations of socioeconomic inequities and efforts to reduce the deep gaps in socioeconomic status in the United States and abroad. APA further argues that socioeconomic status is a key factor in determining the quality of life of women, with resulting effects on the lives of children and families. Inequalities in wealth and quality of life for women are long standing and exist both locally and globally. Low SES among women and its correlates, such as poverty, lower education and poor health for children and families, ultimately affect our society as a whole. The results further indicate that the percentage of students from low socioeconomic families in villages was greater than that of students from towns. Conversely a greater percentage of students from towns had high socioeconomic status families than students

from villages. This is a commonsensical finding. Villages in Ibanda District are associated with low levels of education, income and occupation compared to the town. Social amenities that indicate high social class are mainly centred in the town and in the trading centres along the highway. Therefore, it is expected that the schools would attract mainly low socioeconomic status students. It has been shown that a greater percentage of advanced level students offering science combinations came from low socioeconomic status families compared with students of low socio-economic status families offering arts combinations (Table 4.2). Conversely, more arts students than science students were from high socio-economic families. This is in sharp contrast to previous studies, especially those set in the west. For instance, a study by Willingham [26] reports that children from low socio-economic families are disadvantaged in so many ways that they may not perform adequately in the sciences. However, the local situation in Ibanda District could be a reaction by children from low socio-economic families to step out of poverty, ignorance and disease. The Government of Uganda pronounced science subjects as compulsory at ordinary level so as to produce scientifically and technologically apt graduates who steer economic transformation at local, national, and international levels. Parents and children from low socioeconomic families probably took up this call seriously, resulting in more of the lowly attending sciences at advanced level. In addition, it is likely that children from low socioeconomic status families face less distraction and hence concentrate more on their studies, thereby resulting in higher chances of choosing sciences, than those from high socio-economic status. This study also unveiled the fact that more students in government schools than in private schools had low socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, there were far more day scholars than boarding students from families of low socioeconomic status. In other words, students in private schools were less likely than

those from government schools to belong to families of low socio-economic status. The prevailing situation of school preference is that parents of a high social class prefer to send their children to first world schools or renowned private schools. The fees structure in these categories of schools is such that parents in low socio-economic status cannot afford to pay their children in them. The proportion of students from low socio-economic status families decreased in the order Muslim, Protestant, Pentecostal, and Catholic. A study by [27] indicates that there exists difference in socioeconomic status by religious affiliation; Protestants and Catholics differ in wealth, but the differences favour Catholics in some countries and Protestants in others. Other

differences are more systematic. For example, Muslim women have less education than other women in a variety of contexts. Those who hold traditional beliefs are also at an educational disadvantage. In this case, the trend discovered in this study tends to rhyme with the extant situation in Ibanda District. In conclusion, it has been proved that students in Ibanda District mainly come from low socio-economic backgrounds. Demographic factors such as location of the family and religious affiliation matter in segregating the students by socioeconomic status. However, investigations into the socioeconomic status of the schools impacting on the choice of the students to study in them needs be done.

CONCLUSION

From the study findings, and in accordance with the study objective, one conclusion was drawn: there was generally a low level of family socioeconomic status among students in

Ibanda District. This varied according to demographics with students from families in towns, those in private and boarding schools reporting higher socioeconomic backgrounds than their counterparts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study findings were used to make a number of recommendations. For instance, it has been realised to be of great importance for policy makers in the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Sports to underscore the socioeconomic Status affecting families before trying out ventures to improve the quality of education. Such factors might call upon the government to organise non-formal educational programmes to uplift the socioeconomic statuses of families before embarking on the formal educational programmes. In addition, the government needs to provide heightened infrastructural development to appreciate the need to improve on the quality of education in secondary schools in order to provide balanced education to students. Head teachers and teachers need to strive to structure the school environment in such a way that both categories of students; from high- as well as from low-socioeconomic status families are catered for in the school.

Further there is need for the school authorities to undertake student screening to understand their socioeconomic backgrounds so as to offer appropriate guidance and counselling in relation to the school environment. This way all students can be made to fit within the existing quality of the school environment. The political leadership of Ibanda District needs to be informed to spearhead sensitisation of households to embrace socio-economic transformation through education and agricultural production. Generally, the parents and community need to be made to appreciate the need to address the socio-Economic Status that would enable their children to attain quality education in secondary schools. The civil society also needs to be reached out to so as to support the education sector in order to improve on the infrastructure, resources, facilities and human resources that enhance the quality of education secondary schools.

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