

Quality Education in Selected Secondary Schools in Ibanda District Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Correlated in this study were socio-Economic Status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District, Uganda. Its objectives were (i) to examine the socio-Economic Status on the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District, (ii), to assess the level of quality education in secondary schools in Ibanda District and (iii) to establish the relationship between socio-Economic Status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District. 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 further indicated that the level of quality education in secondary was moderate with an average index mean of 1.004. 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: quality education, socio-Economic Status

INTRODUCTION

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 [1]. 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 [2]. 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 [3]. 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

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cross subject areas and to promote cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers and the encouragement of scientific outlook [4]. 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 [4]. 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

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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 [1]. 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 [5].

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to establish *Quality Education in Selected Secondary Schools in Ibanda District Uganda*

Objectives of the Study

To assess the level of quality education in secondary schools in Ibanda District.

Research Questions

What is the level of quality education in secondary schools?

Scope of the Study

Content scope

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.

The Level of Quality Education in Secondary Schools

Educational services are often not tangible and are difficult to measure because they result in the form of transformation of knowledge, life skills and behaviour modifications of learners [6]. Therefore the definition of quality of education varies from culture to culture. The environment and the personal characteristics of learners play an important role in their academic success. The school personnel, members of the

families and communities provide help and support to students for the quality of their academic performance. This social assistance has a crucial role for the accomplishment of performance goals of students at school [7]. Besides the social structure, parents' involvement in their child's education increases the rate of academic success of their child [8]. The quality of instruction can also be low because of low capability, weak motivation and a lack of complementary inputs in very low - income settings learning outcomes can be dismal. Evidence on learning outcome is disappointing even in middle - income countries. When communities are not involved in establishing, supporting, or over seeing a school, the school is often seen as something alien. Villagers refer to the governments school "not our" school. People complain of absent or abusive teachers and demands for illegal fees to get their children into school or influence examination results [9]. Creating and maintaining an institutional environment that promotes higher productivity and more learning is not easy thus in recent set of study documented, spending per students in real terms has increased by 50 percent or more. Work demands for single parents and parents who work outside their home result in less time being spent with their children in general as well as time spent helping and supervising home work. Even when they have time parents are uncertain about how to help their children with school work [10]. According to Children's Defence Fund (1999) adolescence is a time when most teenager are focusing on their own development, has become a time when many become pregnant a lid are forced to turn their attention to the welfare of their babies. Greater societal acceptance of teenage sexuality, earlier and more frequent sexual activity among teenagers, and decrease in early marriages are likely reasons for this increase. Teenage pregnancies force students to mature too quickly diverting energy from their own development to caring for another person. Many dropout of school, jungle

with children with work, develop poor work skills and have limited employment opportunities. Many sexually active teenagers fail to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases, such as herpes, genital warts, Syphilis, and Gonorrhea. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which can be transmitted through sexual activity, has made the problem more urgent and deadly among students (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996). Experts estimate that between 5 and 10 percent of our students are homosexual, gay and lesbian students commonly face rejection, which leads to feelings of alienation and depression, as a result drug abuse among home sexual in youth, is much higher than in hetero sexual population. While the problem has no easy solution, teachers can do much to shape attitude towards home sexual students. They can define appropriate behaviour and maintain zero tolerance for harassment. Schools and classrooms must be emotionally safe places for all students. Alcohol and drug abuse are often are associated with risk factors such as poverty, family instability, and academic problems at school despite the belief that drug use is primarily an inner - city problem, research reveals that drug use problems are actually most acute in rural areas. Rural teens are more likely to use a variety of drugs, ranging from cocaine to amphetamines to alcohol [11]. Critic's content that a major reason for teenage use of alcohol and other drugs is the mixed messages socially sends about them. the media, and particularly teenage pop culture, often glorify alcohol and other drugs, implying that they are not acceptable but preferred way of dealing with problems like stress, loneliness, or depression. Dependence on drugs can reinforce alienation, encouraging students to drop out of school.

While high impact teachers create caring, personal learning environments and assure responsibility for their students' progress, low-impact teachers, in contrast, are more authoritarian, distancing themselves from students and placing primary responsibility for

learning on them. They view instructional help as babying the students "or holding the student's hand". Instruction is teacher directed and lecture oriented and primary responsibility for motivation is the students. Students placed at - risk think of low impact teachers as adversaries who are to be avoided if possible and tolerated if not. Marginal students reported losing interest in learning when teachers distanced themselves [12].As schools become lager, it becomes more difficult to create learning communities in which students fell safer to learn and develop. Huge schools tend to depersonalize education to know each other and work together. Some analysts clam that the reason our schools do not teach very well is that they have no competition. Thus, giving parents options for schooling their children might force all schools to do a better job. Research confirms that many public school systems suffer from bureaucratic bloat, spending too much and teaching too littless and our society has long looked to competition and prize initiative to improved quality and cut costs. Evidence suggests that for protect schools have reduced administrative costs [13]. The school system pushes students from grade to grade whether they have learned anything or not. No school employee comes to know and appreciate the complete students. Students experience this decision of labour as continual shuffling from one fifty - minute period to another throughout the school day. Highly bureaucratic schools do not empower students to learn on their own. Similarly, teachers have little latitude in what and how they teach their classes. If many students are passive in class, others are not there at all. The problem of dropping out - quitting school before earning a high school diploma - leaves young people many of whom disadvantaged to begin with or ill - equipped for the world of work and high risk for poverty. The fact that males and females are different is so obvious that we usually don't think about it. However some important but often unnoticed differences exist between the sexes [14]. Females generally are more

extroverted, anxious, and trusting, they are less assertive and have slightly lower self-esteem than their male counterparts; and their verbal and motor skills tend to develop faster than boys. The play habits of boys and girls are different. The American Association of University Women (1992) argue that different treatment of boys and girls by both teachers and society seriously hampers educational progress, self-esteemed and career choices of girls and women. In spite of a strong and systematic effort to address the needs of both boys and girls in today's schools, when asked about future potential career options, boys continue to be more likely to choose doctor and engineer and girls are more likely to mention nurse or secretary [15]. Research has found that girls are more likely to ask and answer questions in girl's only middle school math classes than in other coeducational classes. Girls also preferred this type of learning environment saying that it enhanced their ability to learn math along with their view of themselves as mathematicians. Girls who attend single - gender schools are more opt to assume leadership roles take more math and science courses, have higher self - esteem, and hold firm beliefs that they are in control of their destinies [16]. Although research shows positive effects of single sex schooling for both boys and girls achievement in stereo typed fields like math and science, the research also raise other issues [17]. Single gender schools can increase stereo typed fields like math and science by the opposite sex [16]. And fail to prepare students for the "real world" in which females and males must work together. Sexual harassment is a problem that affects both male and females and makes classrooms and hall ways less conducive to students' learning and development. Sexual harassment is the unwanted and unwelcome sexual behaviour that interferes with your life [17]. Lack of access and accessibility are two ways services fail. In low and middle income countries alike, if services are available at all they are often of low quality. So many poor people by pass the closest public

facility to go more costly private facility or choose better quality at more distant public facility [18]. Ensuring that positions are filled, that staff report for work, and that they are responsible to all their clients is major challenge. The more skilled the worker the less likely they are to accept a job as a teacher or health worker in a remote area. Even when positions are filled, staff absence rates can be high. Recent random samples of schools and health clinics in several developing countries found absence rates over 40 percent with higher rates in remote areas and for some kinds of staff - although there is wide variation with countries [19]. Staff alone cannot ensure high quality services. They also need the right materials - books in schools, drugs in clinics. By the availability of drugs in a health facility is an ambiguous measure of quality; slacks could be caused by high demand. But when medicines are lacking in clinics and a variable on the black market, as is often the case, and then something is amiss. Education materials are similarly lacking in schooling [19]. When staff report to work-as many do conscientiously and when complementary inputs are available, service quality will suffer if facilities are inadequate or in disrepair, in account of a school in India found classrooms close to disintegration. The some study found that half the schools visited have no drinking water available. In rural areas of Bangladesh and Nepal the study found average of one toilet for 90 students, half of them not usable. In Pakistan they were no separate toilets facilities for girls in 16 percent of schools visited [16].

Another problem is corruption in various forms. Teachers and principals might solicit bribes to admit students or increase the demand for private tuition after hours. Services can also fail poor people when technical quality is low that is when inputs are combined in warp that produce outcomes in ineffective or harmful warp. Some schools use ineffective teaching methods even though technical quality is more necessary [20]. An institutional arrangement for basic education should be juggled by its

production of high - quality learning, equitably distributed. This requires that children be in school and learn. This in turn rests on educational systems that create relationships of accountability between citizens, politicians, policy makers and providers, with clear objectives, adequate resources capable and motivated providers, progress assessments and performance oriented managements. In many of the poorest countries there are enormous deficits in affordable access. Poor people have less access, lower attainment, and lower quality than those better off. The technical quality of instruction and learning outcomes are shockingly low, especially among the poor people and even the most advanced economies struggle to make education systems more productive. Most classrooms focus on the linguistic and logical - mathematical dimensions and virtually ignore others. If these other dimensions are to develop students need experiences with them. Cooperative learning activities can help students to develop interpersonal intelligence; participation in sports or dance can improve bodily kinesthetic abilities; and playing in the band or singing in choral groups can improve musical intelligence [21]. In middle, junior high, and high schools, ability grouping goes further, with high - ability - students studying advanced and college preparatory courses and their low ability counterparts receiving vocational or work related instruction. The most common way schools respond to differences in learner ability is by ability grouping which places students of similar aptitude and achievement histories together and attempts to march instruction to the needs of different groups. Grouping also affects the students themselves. In addition to lowered self - esteem and motivation to learn, absentee rates do increase. One study found that absenteeism increases from 8 percent to 26 percent after student's transition to attracted junior high, with most of the truants being students in low level classes. Tracking can also result in racial or cultural segregation of students,

impeding and across cultural groups. Negative effects of grouping are related, in parts to the quality of instruction. Presentations to low groups are more fragmented and vague than those to high groups. They focus more on memorization than understanding. Problem solving and active learning. Students in low ability classes are often taught by teachers who lack enthusiasm and who stress conformity versus autonomy and the development of self-regulation. Students with behaviour disorders display serious and persistent age-inappropriate behaviours that result in social conflict, personal unhappiness and school failure. Many children occasionally fight with their peers and all children go through periods when they want to be alone. When these patterns are chronic and interfere with normal development and school performance, however, a behaviour disorder may exist [22].

In recent years, violence has claimed the lives of students and teachers in high schools across the United States. Moreover, in national surveys about one - fourth of students and 11 percent of teachers report being victims of violence in and around schools [23]. As most people see it, school themselves do not create the violence; rather, disorder spills into schools from the surrounding society. But in recent decades, teachers have lost much of their authority in dealing with troublemakers, especially young people who have little interest in school in the first place. If some schools are plagued by violence, many more are afflicted with passive, bore students. Some of the blame for passivity can be placed on television which now consumes more of young people's time than school on parents and on students themselves. Our educational system itself generates student passivity [24]. Schools must be large enough to provide varied curricular offerings needed to help students learn as much as possible, but not so large that students get lost. Research suggest that the ideal size for a high school between 600 and 900 students. The only schools not fitting this pattern are elite private that

enrol students with similar backgrounds and have the money to provide extensive resources, such as well-equipped science and computer labs [25]. One of the most important teacher attitudes is a concept called personal teaching efficacy, which is teachers' beliefs that they can promote learning in all students regardless of their background [26]. Expert teachers understand different way of involving students in learning activities, techniques for checking their understanding and strategies for keeping lessons running smoothly [27]. Regardless of the content or topic, expert teachers ask questions that get students to think, engage all students as equally as possible, give them time to think about their responses and provide prompts and cues when they are unable to answer. Whatever decisions one made about who controls education one factor that will continue to reshape schools is new information technology. Today 97 percent of conventional primary and secondary schools have instructional computers. The promises of this new technology agree beyond helping students learn basic skills; computers can improve the overall quality of learning. Computers help students be more active learners and allow them to progress at their own pace. According to [28] teachers need to be a community of learners supporting and sustaining each other's growth. Teachers study groups are a great place to meet with other teachers with the sole purpose of sharing and learning new ideas. Conventional teaching is defined as teaching procedures generally acceptable and in common use that are teacher centered, that is the teacher or tutor is almost entirely responsible for how the teaching is done and to a lesser extent is responsible for choosing the curricular methods, materials or deciding what will be taught.

For educators, knowledge on research on effective educational practices is essential in their preparation of teachers. The teacher preparation curriculum must acknowledge and espouse the best practices. General methods course should focus on research best practice. These include reinforcement acceleration, cues

and feedback and feedback, cooperative learning, personalized instructional adaptive instruction and performance based instruction. Attempts to reform education and improve student's achievement are dependent on our ability to move teacher through developmental stages. Although earlier studies by James Coleman and others seem to call into question the educational impact of teacher, comprehensive studies in 1990s found that teacher's performance is critical. Every dollar spent to increase lectures qualifications and skills are among the most important factors in improving student's performance [29]. A study of the California formative assessment and support system for teachers determined that the best way to ensure improved student achievement was put knowledgeable high quality qualified teachers in the classroom, investing in teacher professional development and providing for sustained examination and evaluation of teaching overtime is the path to increased success for students [30]. Public production is almost always the dominant, if not exclusive - means of government support of education. Public systems display age - grade organization of classrooms. Replication of social structures and inequalities, and similar ways of training, hiring compensation and promoting teachers [14]. Universal and quality education can come from very centralize systems or from decentralized with considerable accountability and flexibility, many countries have little private schooling and some a great deal. Classrooms practice is what matters. If the under lying causes of failure are not addressed, all these approaches can fail. Schools and teachers cannot be made more accountable for results without also receiving sufficient autonomy and resources and the opportunities to build capability conversely, schools cannot be given autonomy unless they are given clear objectives and regular assessments of progress [29]. To achieve educational goals, politicians and policy makes either autonomously or through the pressure of citizens must provide adequate resources.

To learn effectively, children need affordable access to infrastructure, inputs and instruction - far from the case in many countries. The compact between policy makers and organizational providers should create an environment in which all schools have the means and motivation to provide high-quality learning. Whether there is public production or government funding of range of providers, the compact should focus on outputs and outcomes. This requires a means of assessing a schools contribution to the collective objectives of education and creating an environment for organization to innovate and bring those innovations to scale- schools autonomy with accountability [30]. National assessment systems are essential for monitoring educational achievement. It is important to distinguish among the

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 [31] about socioeconomic status and the quality of education among the students. While the qualitative domain sought in-depth responses about critical issues 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.

three types of assessment; sample based assessment to track performance overtime, examinations that are high stakes for students, and assessment performance. Special and regular education teachers would plan with the teacher and collaborate closely to ensure that learning experience are integrated into regular classroom curriculum. Rather than pulling students with special needs out of the classroom for supplementary instructions in math, in inclusion the special education teachers would offer supplementary help liked to the regular math curriculum right in the classroom. Effective inclusion makes all educators responsible for creating supportive learning leaning environments by attempting to place students with exceptionalities in regular classrooms and providing support for teachers.

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 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.

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 (Appendix B) 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 Aggarwal et al. [32]. The scale was scored on different Likert points ranging from zero to 10. Sections C and D were modified from Screerens [33] 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 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 (Amin, 2005) 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

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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. Low quality learning environment scores ranged from 18 to 45 while high quality learning environment scores ranged from 46 to 72. The quality of learning which was measured as the level of performance of the learners in different aspects ranged in score from 33 to 132. A score in the range 33-82.5 was interpreted as low performance hence indicating low quality learning, while a score in the range 82.6-132 was interpreted as high performance and hence high quality learning.

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.

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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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.

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
School change	Other	48	13.6
	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 1b 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.

The Level of Quality of Education in Secondary Schools in Ibanda District

The second objective of this study was to establish the level of quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District. This was achieved by examining the quality of the school learning environment (see Section C of Appendix B) and the quality of the students' performance in exhibiting different

attitudes, skills, and values (see Section D of Appendix B). Again both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from students and head teachers respectively as presented below.

The level of quality education in secondary schools in Ibanda District according to the students

It is noted from Table 3 that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two facets of quality of education ($r = .411, p < .01$), that is, the higher the quality of school learning environment, the higher the overall learner achievement in academic, athletic,

social, and moral skills, attitudes, and values.

Quality of School Learning Environment

The mean score of school learning environment was 53.73 ($SD = 6.87$), in the score range of 46-72 for high quality school learning environment. Most of the students, 330(88.1%), rated their school learning environments as high quality compared to only 42(11.9%) who rated their school learning environments as low quality. The student distribution by demographics in response to school learning environment quality is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Student distribution by quality of school learning environment quality and demographics

		Quality of School Environment		Total
		Low n(%)	High n(%)	
Sex	Male	30(12.0)	220(88.0)	250
	Female	12(11.8)	90(88.2)	102
Community	Village	28(10.6)	236(89.4)	264
	Town	14(15.9)	74(84.1)	88
Class	S2	0(0.0)	26(100.0)	26
	S3	4(8.7)	42(91.3)	46
	S4	2(3.2)	60(96.8)	62
	S5	12(14.3)	72(85.7)	84
	S6	24(19.0)	102(81.0)	126
Combination	Arts	24(20.7)	92(79.3)	116
	Sciences	12(12.0)	88(88.0)	100
School type	Government	24(16.0)	126(84.0)	150
	Private	16(8.0)	184(92.0)	200
USE or Non-USE	USE	26(23.2)	86(76.8)	112
	Non-USE	12(5.3)	216(94.7)	228
Nature of school	Boarding school	8(9.8)	74(90.2)	82
	Boarding and day school	32(12.0)	234(88.0)	266
School attendance schedule	Day scholar	2(7.1)	26(92.9)	28
Religious affiliation	Boarder	38(11.9)	282(88.1)	320
	Muslim	2(9.1)	20(90.9)	22
	Pentecostal	4(14.3)	24(85.7)	28
	Protestant	10(9.8)	92(90.2)	102
	Catholic	14(9.2)	138(90.8)	152
Whether promoted or not	Other	12(25.0)	36(75.0)	48
	Not promoted	6(33.3)	8(66.7)	14
Did you change school?	Promoted	36(10.7)	302(89.3)	338
	No change	21(8.7)	111(91.3)	232
	Yes, changed	22(18.3)	96(81.7)	120

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Results in Table 2 indicate that majority of students in all categories of the demographic characteristics generally appraised their school learning environments as high quality. However, within each demographic variable some subtle trends in proportions of respondents were noted. For instance, nearly equal proportions of males and females indicated that their school learning environments were of high quality. Similarly, nearly the same proportions of students in the different religious affiliations rated their school environments as high quality. Peculiar differences in proportions of ratings of school learning environment quality existed within location of the home, combination of the student, type of the school, USE status of the school, whether the student was promoted or not, and whether the student had changed school or not. A greater proportion of students from villages (89.4%) rated their school environments as high quality than those from towns (84.1%). The percentage of science students who rated their school environments as high quality (88.0%) outweighed that of students offering art combinations (79.3%). More students in

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private schools (92.0%) rated their school environments as high quality compared to students in government schools (84.0%). Similarly, more non-USE students (94.7%) than USE students (76.8%) rated their school environments as high quality. In addition, a greater proportion of students who had been promoted from one class to another (89.3) rated their school environments as high quality compared to students who were not promoted (66.7%). On a similar note, a higher percentage of students who had not changed school (91.3%) rated their school environments as high quality compared to students who had changed school (81.7%).

Quality of learner performance

The learners rated the quality of the educational achievement in their schools in academic, social, and moral proficiencies in terms of critical skills, attitudes, and values as generally high ($M = 106.13$, $SD = 9.6$). Only two students (0.6%) rated the overall quality of education in their schools as low. The distribution of the students by levels of quality of learner performance in the various categories of the demographics is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Student distribution by levels of quality of learner performance and demographics

		Quality of Students' Performance		Total
		Low n(%)	High n(%)	
School Attendance Schedule	Day Scholar	0(0.0)	28(100.0)	28
Class	Boarder	2(0.1)	318(99.9)	320
	S2	0(0.0)	26(100.0)	26
	S3	0(0.0)	46(100.0)	46
	S4	0(0.0)	62(100.0)	62
	S5	0(0.0)	84(100.0)	84
	S6	2(1.6)	124(98.4)	126
Community	Village	0(0.0)	264(100.0)	264
	Town	2(2.3)	86(97.7)	88
Combination	Arts	2(1.7)	114(98.3)	116
	Sciences	0(0.0)	100(100.0)	100
School Type	Government	0(0.0)	150(100.0)	150
	Private	2(1.0)	198(99.0)	200
USE or Non-USE	USE	2(1.8)	110(98.2)	112
	Non-USE	0(0.0)	228(100.0)	228
Nature of School	Boarding school	2(2.4)	80(97.6)	82
	Boarding and day school	0(0.0)	266(100.0)	226
School Attendance Schedule	Day scholar	0(0.0)	30(100.0)	30
Religious Affiliation	Boarder	2(0.6)	316(99.4)	318
	Muslim	0(0.0)	22(100.0)	22
	Pentecostal	2(7.1)	26(92.9)	28
	Protestant	0(0.0)	102(100.0)	102
	Catholic	0(0.0)	152(100.0)	152
	Other	0(0.0)	48(100.0)	48
Whether promoted or not	Not promoted	0(0.0)	6(100.0)	6
	Promoted	2(0.6)	340(99.4)	342
Did you change school?	No change	0(0.0)	230(100.0)	230
	Yes, changed	2(1.7)	118(98.3)	120

The results in Table 3 stamp the students' rating of the quality of educational achievement in their schools as high. The two students who disagreed with the status quo were new comers in a certain USE school, which leaves room for speculation and suggestions of disgruntlement.

The level of quality education in secondary schools in Ibanda District according to the head teachers

The head teachers analysed the level of quality of education in Ibanda District in

different ways. For instance, Respondents 1 and 3 regarded the level as low. Respondent 1 indicated the following:

The quality of education in Ibanda District is also low in respect to learners' performance. Most of the schools in Ibanda do not attain first grades with exception of a few private and traditional schools. Quality teaching is low because most of the schools lack committed staff, lack of learning materials and laboratories.

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Community involvement is low because most community members do not visit schools and their contribution to support schools is minimal.

In respect to school/work readiness of the learners, the response was low. Most of the learners need to be forced to be in school because of some issues like early pregnancies, betting clubs, and actually most of them lack the vision to study. The level of the quality of education is low because most of the families and learners lack sensitisation and also the low socio-economic status of the parents is responsible for this trend.

Respondent 3 stated that: Learners' performance is still low. Most schools are in rural set up save for the few in Ibanda Town Council. Students in rural schools do not value education so much, the same with their parents. Community/parental involvement is also low. In the olden days a child belonged to the community and the discipline of the child was the concern of all the people but today it is not the case. Therefore, discipline as one of the determinants of good performance has deteriorated.

Some learners are not ready for school most especially day scholars. They set off from home for school but never reach there. This has been brought about by many pool game places and betting kiosks where they spend most of their time instead of going to school.

Whereas quality of teaching may affect the level of education, this is minimal. The quality of education has been affected mainly by the above factors.

Respondent 4 on the other hand posited the level of quality of education in Ibanda District secondary schools as fair, with reasons to justify this stand as follows:

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Learners' performance is fair because primary school background affects the performance as some students come from poor schools. Environment of the school also affects performance. Instructional materials also inhibit performance e.g. lack of science equipment etc. Parents' failure to provide necessities to students such as scholastic materials, lunch etc. Attitude of learners e.g. towards sciences.

Quality of teaching is fair. It is affected by the following: lack of instructional materials, low morale among teachers especially those not catered for by government, lack of accommodation in schools for teachers leading to no time to concentrate on learners.

Parents'/community involvement is fair due to the following: Some parents do not make a follow up of the children while in school, e.g., do not attend meetings, fail to show up to discipline their children, etc. Unreadiness of some parents to pay school dues in time despite having the means to pay.

To the contrary, Respondent 2 believed that:

Learners' performance is moderately high due to more private schools that supervise teachers' and learners' work. Quality of teaching is low due to the fact that government schools are not supervised and majority of students join government schools because of USE, so teachers tend to relax in teaching children.

Community/parental involvement which would help in running the school is low because schools' budgets allocation to the same vote is very minimum and it can't allow several functions to involve parents or community. This is so because fees charged on parents/students is very minimum

to the extent of not allowing such functions to happen. The students are not self-motivated to work but

can only work under the supervision of teachers.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The level of quality education in secondary schools in Ibanda District

Results in Table 3 indicate that the higher the quality of school learning environment, the higher the overall learner achievement in academic, athletic, social, and moral skills, attitudes, and values. Generally, past studies prove that a rich learning environment is the precursor of good learner performance.

Quality of School Learning Environment

Generally the school learning environments of secondary schools in Ibanda District were rated as high quality. This result does not surprise one so much given the fact that most schools in the district now have constant hydroelectric power and gravity water in addition to well stocked libraries, functional laboratories, furnished classrooms, and other teaching/learning resources provided by the government. Private schools also equally compete to furnish and stock their learning environments with facilities in order to attract clientele. The disparity in ratings of school learning environment quality by village/town divide of the families of the students implies a couple of issues. First, students from town might already have had experience of better quality facilities at their homes and in their neighbourhoods in town. This means that the quality of such facilities they meet in the schools might fall below their expectation. Second, students from villages are likely having a first time experience of high quality facilities such that being majority in this study, are likely to appraise their school environments as high quality. Third, USE schools in villages are relatively better facilitated by government through African Development Bank and World Bank loan projects than non-USE schools, even the towns. The divide between science students and arts students tends to agree with the policy in place that of compulsory science at lower secondary school. To this effect, more

resources and effort have been dedicated both at school level and national level. At school, teachers dedicate more time to teaching sciences, moreover hands-on and minds-on unlike in the arts. At national level, the government has made enormous input into the teaching of sciences and training of science teachers; laboratories are well stocked, teachers are regularly retooled, students are provided with science trips, seminars, workshops, and science fairs among others, all aimed at bettering the science learning environment. This unfortunately occurs at the expense of the arts. The results point to the fact that private schools were rated as being of higher quality than government schools. The fact is that almost all the concentration of private schools is on learner performance to attract more learners. High performing private schools attract learners from high socioeconomic status schools who are able to pay high fees. With a better fee collection, such schools are better able to afford structural development and hence a high quality learning environment for teaching and learning. Repeaters rated their school environments as low quality compared to students who were promoted. In the same vein, students who changed school were more likely than those who did not change to rate their school environments as low quality. In these two cases, poor performance among the students was likely being attributed to the school environment; hence a defence mechanism. Repeaters are a disgruntled batch of learners who will use self-serving bias to maintain their outlook. Meanwhile, most students change school due to being made to repeat classes or due to other cases of indiscipline, in which case they will use self-serving bias or sour-grape rationalisation to attribute their low performance to the schools they come from.

Quality of Learner Performance

Most of the learners rated the quality of their educational achievement in their

schools in academic, social, and moral proficiencies in terms of critical skills, attitudes, and values as generally high. Assuming that there was no social desirability at play, it means that most of the students being from low socioeconomic status families saw themselves as highly improved in the educational aspects measured in the study. In comparison to their peers in the villages, they might have felt better improved in academic attainment, work readiness, social responsibility, and moral aptitude. In addition, the existence of infrastructure, social amenities, good teaching and learning environment, and competition among schools and students could enhance good performance among the students. However, this finding disagrees with most popular findings on the subject. For instance, research indicates that children from low-SES households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from higher SES groups [34]. Initial academic skills are correlated with the home environment, where low literacy environments and chronic stress negatively affect a child's pre-academic skills. The school systems in low-SES communities are often under resourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress [35]. Inadequate education and increased dropout rates affect children's academic achievement, perpetuating the low-SES status of the community. Improving school systems and early intervention programs may help to reduce

these risk factors, and thus increased research on the correlation between SES and education is essential. Research continues to link lower SES to lower academic achievement and slower rates of academic progress as compared with higher SES communities. Children from low-SES environments acquire language skills more slowly, exhibit delayed letter recognition and phonological awareness, and are at risk for reading difficulties (35). Children with higher SES backgrounds were more likely to be proficient on tasks of addition, subtraction, ordinal sequencing, and math word problems than children with lower SES backgrounds. Students from low-SES schools enter high school 3.3 grade levels behind students from higher SES schools. In addition, students from the low-SES groups learn less over 4 years than children from higher SES groups, graduating 4.3 grade levels behind those of higher SES groups [36]. There is paucity of literature to the contrary. Therefore, it implies that the students likely reported their performance with social desirability, that is, the tendency of survey respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favourably by others. It can take the form of over-reporting "good behaviour" or under-reporting "bad" or undesirable behaviour. Or, it implies that relative to the standards back home, the students felt that they had made tremendous progress in holistic educational achievement.

CONCLUSION

From the study findings, and in accordance with the study objective, one conclusion was drawn: From the students' responses, the quality of education in Ibanda District is generally high. However, there was a mixed reaction

from the qualitative responses, with majority of the key informants siding with low level of quality. Hence it can be concluded that the quality of education could be rated as both high in some instances and low in others.

RECOMMENDATION

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

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