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Original Article

A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS' OCCUPATION, HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVELS, AND PUPILS' RETENTION IN UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN BUNDIBUGYO DISTRICT.

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Abstract

Background.

While the UPE policy has significantly increased enrollment rates in primary schools, there is still a high rate of school dropout, particularly in rural areas. This study examined the relationship between parents' occupation, household income levels, and Pupils' retention in Universal Primary Education Schools in Bundibugyo District.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional study using the mixed method; a sample of 210 respondents was obtained from a population of 460 participants. Simple random sampling, convenience sampling, and purposive sampling were employed to select study participants. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 23. The researcher used descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression to examine the study findings.

Results.

117 (58.5%) were male respondents, and 68(50.7%) of pupils had less than 3 years of enrollment in the current school. There was a strong positive correlation (0.729) between household income and pupils' retention in primary schools, which indicates that higher household income is associated with better retention rates. There was a strong positive correlation (0.702) between parents' occupation and pupils' retention, indicating that the nature and stability of parents' jobs significantly affect their children's retention in school.

Conclusion

The strong positive correlation between household income and pupils' retention highlights that higher-income families are better positioned to provide essential educational resources and support.
The strong positive correlation between parents' occupations and pupils' retention indicates that the nature and stability of parents' jobs are critical factors influencing retention rates.

Recommendations.

Based on the findings, the government should implement programs that provide financial assistance to low-income families to help cover educational costs, such as uniforms and other supplies.
The government should come up with initiatives that encourage parents to engage in their children's education, such as workshops and seminars that highlight the importance of parental involvement.

Keywords: *Parents' Occupation, Household Income, Universal Primary Education, UPE Schools, Pupil Retention, Education Access, Bundibugyo District.*
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Background.

The pre-UPE era in Uganda witnessed various socio-economic and educational challenges. Access to quality education was limited, especially in rural areas like Bundibugyo District (Adu, 2023). Economic disparities and insufficient infrastructure hindered educational opportunities for many children. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy, introduced in Uganda in 1997, marked a significant turning point in the nation's educational history. This policy aimed to enhance access to primary education for all children, including those in remote and economically disadvantaged areas like Bundibugyo District. The government's efforts sought to address historical inequalities and promote inclusivity in education (Kan & Klasen, 2021). Despite the noble intentions of the UPE policy, challenges emerged in its implementation. Resource

constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and disparities in teacher distribution posed obstacles to the effective delivery of education in Uganda. These challenges had a direct impact on pupils' retention in UPE schools (Mugabe, 2021). Families with higher incomes generally have more financial resources to invest in their children's education. These include purchasing school supplies, paying for additional tutoring, or covering other educational expenses. On the contrary, lower-income families may face financial barriers that hinder their ability to support their children's education (Cooper & Stewart, 2021). Families with lower incomes may struggle to provide basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare. This can affect a child's ability to concentrate in school, leading to academic difficulties and a higher likelihood of dropping out (Schochet, Johnson, & Ryan, 2020). The nature of parents' occupations can impact the time and energy they can devote to their children's education. Occupations with long working hours or high demands may limit parental involvement in a child's academic life. Conversely, parents with more flexible or stable occupations may be more engaged in their child's education (Addai, 2024).

The type of occupation a child is exposed to at home may influence their aspirations. Children from families with professionals as parents may have higher aspirations for education and future careers (Davis-Kean, Tighe, & Waters, 2021). Examining the socio-economic dynamics is essential to understanding the unique challenges faced by families and communities. Economic factors such as poverty levels, household income, and parents' occupations may have influenced pupils' retention in UPE schools over the years (Akello & Bohlinger, 2021). Additionally, the UPE system has led to increased primary school enrollment rates, and there has been an increase in education for girls, the disabled, and orphans. However, despite these improvements, there are still challenges related to pupils' proficiency in numeracy and literacy (Masuda & Yamauchi, 2020). The impact of lifting primary school fees on educational outcomes has been analyzed, and it has been noted that the number of children out of school worldwide has been reduced by nearly half, and net primary enrollment has increased as a result of the UPE system (Bui, 2023). This study examined the relationship between parents' occupation, household income levels, and Pupils' retention in Universal Primary Education Schools in Bundibugyo District.

Methodology.

Research design.

The study employed a descriptive, correlational, and cross-sectional survey research design. It was also mixed research as it collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Data collection occurred at a single point in time, without any follow-up, which characterized the study as cross-sectional. This approach allowed the researcher to capture a snapshot of the situation regarding pupils' retention in primary schools in Bundibugyo District. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore the relationships between various study variables, aligning with its objectives through a correlational analysis. By utilizing figures, the researcher was able to quantify aspects of retention and identify patterns or correlations that existed among the variables. The quantitative design facilitated a systematic examination of the data, providing insights into the factors influencing retention rates in UPE schools.

Study Population.

The study utilized seven primary school pupils, head teachers, School Management Committee members, and teachers as respondents from selected primary schools in Bundibugyo District. The study was carried out in 6 UPE schools in Bundibugyo District, and these were: Mwiribondo Primary School, Babungi Primary School, Bundibugyo Demonstration Primary School, Nyahuka Primary School, Busaru Primary School, and Bundibugyo Muslim Primary School (Kajubi, 2017). These primary schools were selected due to the high school dropout rates of 38% (Kajubi, 2017).

Table 1: Population Size, Sample Size, and Sampling Techniques

Participants	Population size	Sample size	Sampling Technique
Pupils (P7)	304	134	Simple random sampling
School Management Committee Members	72	20	Convenience sampling
Head teachers	06	06	Purposive sampling
Teachers	78	50	Purposive sampling
Total	**460**	**210**	

Source: Bundibugyo District Education Department (2023)

According to the Bundibugyo District Education Department (2023), the selected primary schools had a total of 304 primary seven pupils, 72 School Management Committee Members, 6 head teachers, and 78 teachers. Consequently, the study population size included 460 participants comprising teachers, pupils, and parents.

Sample Size.

The sample size was determined using the guidelines provided by Morgan and Krejcie (1970) for calculating appropriate sample sizes for a given population. According to their table, the recommended sample size is influenced by the total population size and desired confidence level.

From a population of 304 primary seven pupils, a sample of 134 was selected using simple random sampling. With a total of 72 members, a convenience sampling method was employed to select 20 participants. The population consisted of 6 head teachers, and the sample included all 6. From a population of 78 teachers, 50 were selected using purposive sampling. This technique was chosen to focus on those teachers who had relevant experience or expertise, providing deeper insights into the educational context. Overall, the total sample size of 210 participants represents about 45% of the overall population of 460, which is within the acceptable range as per Morgan and Krejcie's guidelines.

Sampling Method

The study used simple random sampling, convenience sampling, and purposive sampling as follows.

Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling was used to select 134 out of 304 primary seven pupils. The desired sample size of 134 pupils was established based on statistical guidelines, ensuring that it would provide sufficient data for meaningful analysis while remaining manageable for the study. A random number generator was employed to select pupils from the sampling frame. Each pupil was assigned a unique number corresponding to their position on the list. The random number generator produced 134 unique numbers, each representing a pupil from the sampling frame. If a generated number corresponded to a pupil already selected, that number was disregarded, and another was generated to maintain the sample size. Once the sample was determined, the selected pupils were contacted through their teachers or school administrators to inform them about the study. This included explaining the purpose of the research and obtaining necessary permissions. Consent was sought from both the pupils and their parents or guardians. This step ensured ethical compliance and that participants understood their involvement in the study. After obtaining consent, the selected pupils participated in the study, providing their insights and experiences related to retention in school. This systematic approach to simple random sampling ensured that every pupil had an equal opportunity to be included, thereby enhancing the validity and generalizability of the study's findings.

Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling was employed to select 20 out of 72 School Management Committee members. This method was likely used due to practical considerations, such as ease of access and availability of committee members. Given the relatively small population size, convenience sampling allowed for a quicker and more efficient gathering of data while still obtaining valuable insights from key stakeholders.

Purposive Sampling.

All 6 head teachers were included in the sample using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is effective when researchers seek specific information from individuals with particular expertise or knowledge. Since there were only a few head teachers, all of them ensured that the study captured comprehensive insights. Also, a sample of 50 out of 78 teachers was selected through purposive sampling. Similar to the head teachers, purposive sampling was used to focus on teachers who had relevant experience or had been teaching in the primary seven class. This approach ensured that the study gathered detailed and pertinent information on challenges related to pupil retention.

Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used.

Primary Data

Primary data was obtained using interview and questionnaires. The questionnaires included both open and closed-ended questions, designed to collect information about parents' levels of income, and occupation. The selected pupils were equipped with information regarding their parents' economic status. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale for each objective.

Through interviews, the researcher collected information from teachers, head teachers and school management committee members (parents). These were first scheduled through phone calls with help of the head teachers.

Secondary Data.

Secondary data was obtained directly from magazines, journals, newspapers, academic reports, school databases, and the district's academic department records from 2019 to 2023. The information that was obtained included: attendance rates, enrollment rates, completion rates, and school dropout rates of pupils in selected primary schools.

Validity of Instruments.

The validity of an instrument refers to the appropriateness of the instrument to measure what it intends to measure. Validity refers to the truthfulness of findings or the extent to which the instrument is relevant in measuring what it is

supposed to measure. To ensure greater chances of data validity, the questionnaires were reviewed with the research expert. A Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.9 (19/20) was obtained by dividing the relevant questions by the total questions (CVI=n/N). The researcher compared the obtained Content Validity Index value with 0.7 as proposed by Amin (2005), and it was a good measure of validity.

Reliability of Instruments

To test the reliability of the research instrument, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's alpha is a way of assessing reliability by comparing the amount of shared variance, or covariance, among the items making up an instrument to the amount of overall variance. The idea is that if the instrument is reliable, there should be a great deal of covariance among the items relative to the variance. To measure the consistency and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher will use four respondents to pre-test the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha (α=) in SPSS as follows.

Where

C is the average inter-response covariance, v is the average variance, and N is the number of items in the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85 was obtained using SPPS and was also compared with 0.7 as suggested by Amin (Amin, 2005), and was found to be a good measure of reliability. Thus, for this study, the research instruments were consistent and reliable in collecting data.

Data Analysis.

Before the data was analyzed, it was carefully classified, edited, and coded based on clarity, completeness, accuracy, and consistency to ensure reliability. This process was carried out using SPSS version 23 for analysis. The Likert scale was used to examine the non-numerical findings of the study through descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. To investigate the relationship between the study variables, the Pearson correlation was employed. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between family socioeconomic factors, specifically parents' level of income, parents' occupation, and parents' level of education, and pupils' retention in Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools.

Ethical approval.

Permission was sought from the School of Graduate Studies and Research and obtained an introductory letter to carry into the field. The researcher wrote a consent notice to the respondents, requesting their participation in the study by providing all relevant information. Furthermore, the researcher informed the respondents about the purpose of the research project and the expected outcomes of the study. The respondents were assured that the information provided would be treated with maximum confidentiality and used for academic purposes only. Additionally, the researcher credited and expressed gratitude to all previous researchers whose literature contributed to the study and ensured that their work was not misappropriated.

Informed consent.

A consent form was filled by the respondents after explaining the purpose of the study to them. The respondents were assured of confidentiality as no name will appear on the questionnaire. No participant was forced to participate in the study and all the study materials used during the interviews were safely kept under lock and key only accessible by the researcher.

Results.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category of respondent	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	117	58.5%
Female	83	41.5%
Total	**200**	**100%**
Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Pupils	**134**	**67%**
8– 10 years (pupils)	91	45.5%
11-15 years (Pupils)	43	21.5%
Teachers/ head teachers/SMC	**66**	**33%**
26-35 years		
36+ years	42	21%

	24	12%
Total	**200**	**100%**
Education level	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Primary	134	67%
Secondary	9	4.5%
Diploma	32	16%
Bachelors	25	12.5%
Total	**200**	**100%**
Years enrolled at the current school (pupils)	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
0-3 years	68	50.7%
4-6 years	53	39.6%
7 & Above	13	9.7%
Total	**134**	**100%**

Source: Field data (2024)

Table 2 shows that the demographic characteristics of respondents in the study provide valuable insights into the context of family economic factors and their influence on pupils' retention in Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools in Bundibugyo District. On Gender Distribution, male respondents were 117 (58.5%) and female Respondents were 83 (41.5%). The gender distribution indicates a higher representation of male respondents. This imbalance reflects broader societal trends in education or cultural factors influencing school attendance and retention. On age distribution, pupils aged 8–10 years were 91 (45.5%), and those aged 11–15 years were 43 pupils (21.5%). The rest of the respondents were aged 26–35 years, representing 42 (21%), and those above 36+ years were 24 (12%). The age distribution shows that the majority of pupils fall within the younger age category (8–10 years), suggesting that many are in the early stages of their primary education. This age group is crucial for setting a foundation for retention, as early experiences influence long-term educational engagement. The teacher demographic, with a significant portion in the 26–35 age range, indicates a relatively young teaching workforce.

On Education Level of Respondents, 134 (67%) had primary education, 9 (4.5%) had secondary education and 32 (16%) had Diploma and 25 (12.5%) had bachelor's Degree. A significant majority of respondents have attained primary education, highlighting that the focus of the study is well aligned with the educational level of the pupils being assessed. The presence of teachers and committee members with diplomas and degrees suggests a varied educational background among adults involved in the education system. In the years enrolled at the current school, 68 pupils (50.7%) had less than 3 years of enrollment, 53 pupils (39.6%) had 4-6 years, and 13 pupils (9.7%) had 7 years and above enrolled at the current primary school. The data indicates that half of the pupils have been enrolled in their current school for 0–3 years, which correlates with the younger age demographic. This finding is critical for understanding retention, as those who are newer to the system may be more vulnerable to dropping out.

Parents' Level of Household Income in Bundibugyo District.

Descriptive Statistics on Parents' Level of Household Income in Bundibugyo District.

The findings in table below were capture using Likert 5-point scale where 5= strongly agree, 4=agree, 3= Neutral, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree. These were summarized and presented using descriptive statistics as follows.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Parents' Education Level in Buyende District

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My parents pay school fees on time	2.112	0.336
My parents buy me enough scholastic materials	2.324	0.441
My parents pay for my study trips	2.126	0.241
My parents pay for my extra coaching	2.432	0.316
My parents have enough money to cover basic needs	1.854	0.239
My parents often worry about money for daily expenses	1.710	0.443
My parents struggle to pay for my school fees for my siblings	2.410	0.226
My parents have stable jobs that provide a consistent income.	1.278	0.468
My parents save money for future needs	1.186	0.327
My parents have assets that generate monthly income	1.345	0.427
Average	1.843	0.3112

Source: Primary Data (2024)

Table 3 shows that, on the statement "My parents pay school fees on time", the mean was 2.112, and the Standard Deviation was 0.336. A mean of 2.112 indicates that pupils generally disagreed with the statement that their parents pay school fees on time. This suggests financial instability, as delayed payments can lead to penalties or barriers to accessing education. On the statement "My parents buy me enough scholastic materials", the Mean is 2.324, and the Standard Deviation is 0.441. A mean score of 2.3 indicates that pupils felt their parents did not provide sufficient scholastic materials. This lack may hinder their retention in school. The statement "My parents pay for my study trips" had a Mean of 2.126 and a Standard Deviation of 0.241. Similar to school fees, the low mean indicates that parents struggle to pay for study trips. Educational experiences outside the classroom are essential for holistic learning, and financial constraints may limit staying in school for longer periods. The statement "My parents pay for my extra coaching" had a Mean of 2.432 and a Standard Deviation of 0.316. A mean of 2.4 reflects a consensus among pupils that parents find it challenging to afford extra coaching. This lack of support may lead to gaps in knowledge and understanding, ultimately affecting retention rates. The statement "My parents have enough money to cover basic needs" had a Mean of 1.854 and a Standard Deviation of 0.239. With a mean of 1.8, pupils strongly disagreed that their parents have enough money to cover basic needs. This indicates significant financial strain within households, which can negatively impact educational stability and retention. The statement "My parents often worry about money for daily expenses" had a mean of 1.710 and a Standard Deviation of 0.443. The low mean score suggests that parents frequently worry about daily expenses. Such stress can affect family dynamics and may detract from parents' ability to support their children's education.

The statement "My parents struggle to pay for my school fees for my siblings" had a Mean of 2.410 and a Standard Deviation of 0.226. A mean of 2.4 indicates that many pupils feel their parents struggle to pay for their siblings' school fees. This points to a broader issue of financial burden on families, which sometimes leads to school dropouts. The statement "My parents have stable jobs that provide a consistent income" has a mean of 1.278 and a Standard Deviation of 0.468. A mean of 1.278 strongly indicates that parents do not have stable jobs providing consistent income. The statement "My parents save money for future needs" has a Mean of 1.186 and a Standard Deviation of 0.327. The very low mean indicates that most parents do not save money for future needs. This lack of savings can leave families vulnerable to financial crises, which can directly affect their children's educational opportunities. The statement "My parents have assets generating monthly income" has a Mean of 1.345 and a Standard Deviation of 0.424. A mean of 1.345 suggests that very few parents possess assets generating a monthly income. This limits their financial flexibility and ability to invest in their children's education.

The average mean score of 1.843 across all statements indicates a pervasive sense of financial hardship among respondents. The relatively low standard deviations suggest a consensus among pupils regarding their parents' financial struggles.

During the interview with one of the head teachers, when asked, "How does household income influence pupil retention at your school?" she replied, *"Household income plays a significant role in pupil retention. Families with higher incomes often have more resources to support their children's education, such as access to tutoring, extracurricular activities, and technology. Conversely, lower-income families may struggle to afford school supplies, uniforms, or transportation, which can lead to increased absenteeism. We've seen that when families face financial hardships, students are more likely to drop out or transfer to schools that might offer more financial support.*"

One of the head teachers, also when asked whether he notices any patterns in pupil retention related to parents' income levels, replied, "*Absolutely. In our community, we've observed that students from lower-income households tend to have higher dropout rates. This is attributed to various factors, such as the need for older students to contribute to the family income or a lack of stable home environments."*

One member of the School Management Committee said, *"I see firsthand how income disparities affect families. Parents with limited income often face multiple challenges, including job instability and health issues, which directly impact their children's education. When financial pressures mount, education sometimes takes a back seat. We're working to create a more inclusive environment by offering resources and support to families in need, which we hope will improve retention rates."* Another member said, *"In my experience, I've noticed that students from lower-income families often come to school with more stress and fewer resources. They miss classes to work or take care of siblings. It's heartbreaking because these kids want to learn, but their circumstances make it difficult."*

Also, one of the teachers from the primary schools said, *"Schools need to be proactive in offering support services. For instance, implementing programs that provide academic support and mental health resources can make a big difference. Creating a community where parents feel connected and supported. When parents see that the school cares about their children's well-being, regardless of their income, they are more likely to keep their children enrolled. It's all about building trust and community."*

Parents' occupation in Bundibugyo District.

Descriptive Statistics on Parents' Occupation in Bundibugyo District

The findings in the table below were captured using a Likert 5-point scale where 5= strongly agree, 4 agree, 3= Neutral, 2= disagree, and 1= strongly disagree. These were summarized and presented using descriptive statistics as follows

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Parents' Occupation in Bundibugyo District.

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My parents have stable jobs that provide a consistent income	2.193	0.341
My parents' occupation motivates me to finish school	2.379	0.490
My parents' work hours allow them to participate in my education	2.064	0.240
My parents feel satisfied with their current jobs	2.471	0.313
My parents often bring work-related stress home	4.192	0.267
My parents' occupation is recognized and respected in our community.	1.924	0.426
My parents have opportunities for skill development in their occupations	1.424	0.216
My parents' jobs provide health benefits for our family	1.237	0.428
Average	**2.243**	**0.316**

Table 4 indicates that, explores various aspects of parents' occupations in Bundibugyo District through a 5-point Likert scale. The statement "My parents have stable jobs that provide a consistent income" has a Mean of 2.193 and a Standard Deviation of 0.341. A mean of 2.193 indicates that respondents generally disagreed with the statement about job stability. This suggests that many parents may face instability in their employment, which can adversely affect their ability to provide for their children's educational needs.

The statement "My parents' occupation motivates me to finish school" has a Mean of 2.379 and a Standard Deviation of 0.490. A mean of 2.379 indicates that while some pupils feel that their parents' occupations motivate them to finish school, this sentiment is not strongly held. This may imply a lack of clear pathways for success tied to their parents' jobs, potentially diminishing motivation.

The statement "My parents' work hours allow them to participate in my education" has a Mean: 2.064 and Standard Deviation: 0.240. With a mean of 2.064, respondents felt that their parents' work hours limit their participation in their education. This may affect parental involvement in school activities and support at home, which are crucial for academic success.

The statement "My parents feel satisfied with their current jobs" has a Mean: 2.471 and Standard Deviation: 0.313. A mean of 2.471 indicates that while some parents are somewhat satisfied with their jobs, overall satisfaction levels remain low. This could reflect a lack of fulfillment in their work, potentially affecting their emotional well-being and capacity to support their children.

The statement "My parents often bring work-related stress home" has a Mean: 4.192 and Standard Deviation: 0.267. The high mean of 4.192 suggests that parents frequently bring work-related stress home. This stress can create a challenging home environment, negatively impacting children's emotional well-being and focus on education.

The statement "My parents' occupation is recognized and respected in our community" has a Mean of 1.924 and a Standard Deviation of 0.426. A mean of 1.924 indicates that most respondents felt their parents' occupations were not

well recognized or respected in the community. This lack of recognition may contribute to low self-esteem for both parents and children, influencing their attitudes toward education. The statement "My parents have opportunities for skill development in their occupations" has a mean of 1.424 and a Standard Deviation of 0.216. A mean of 1.424 indicates that very few parents have opportunities for skill development in their occupations. This limitation can hinder career advancement and economic stability, further affecting their ability to support their children's education.

The statement "My parents' jobs provide health benefits for our family" has a Mean of 1.237 and a standard Deviation of 0.428. The very low mean of 1.237 suggests that most parents do not receive health benefits from their jobs. This lack of benefits can lead to financial strain, especially in times of medical need, impacting overall family well-being. The average mean score of 2.243 across all statements reflects a generally negative perception of parents' occupations and their implications for family life and education. The low scores on key factors such as job stability, satisfaction, community recognition, and opportunities for skill development highlight significant challenges faced by families in Bundibugyo District. During the interviews, the Chairperson of the School Management Committee at one of the selected primary schools said, *"In Bundibugyo, many parents work in agriculture or small-scale trading. These occupations require significant time and effort, which can lead to pupils missing school to help with family responsibilities. When children are pulled out of school for work, it directly affects their retention. We need to find ways to engage parents and show them the long-term benefits of education."*

The Treasurer of the SMC also said *"The economic situation here often forces families to prioritize immediate income over education. Many parents, especially those involved in subsistence farming, cannot afford school fees or materials. This financial strain can result in pupils dropping out. We are working on partnerships with local NGOs to provide scholarships and educational resources to alleviate this burden."*

One Secretary of the SMC said, "We've observed that in families where at least one parent has a stable job, children are more likely to stay in school. It emphasizes the importance of economic stability in education. We advocate for vocational training programs to help parents develop better income-generating skills, which in turn can support their children's education."

Pupils' retention in primary schools in Bundibugyo District.

Descriptive Statistics on Pupils' Retention in Primary Schools in Bundibugyo District

The findings were recorded on a five-point scale where 5-strongly agree, 4- agree, 3- Neutral, 2-Disagree and 1-strongly disagree, and they had varying responses. The findings were recorded and presented in the Table 5.

Table 5: Showing descriptive Statistics on Pupils' Retention in Primary Schools in Bundibugyo District.

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I enjoy going to school every day	2.174	0.267
Most pupils drop out of school	4.133	0.264
School attendance is low in upper primary classes	4.326	0.373
The number of pupils completing primary education is low	4.416	0.373
I feel safe and secure at school	4.226	0.217
I don't intend to continue studying next year	3.827	0.342
I only study the third term	4.124	0.218
I enjoy going to school every day	1.816	0.126
Average	3.116	0.326

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 5 examines various aspects of pupils' retention in primary schools in Bundibugyo District using a 5-point Likert scale. The findings reveal significant insights into students' experiences and perceptions regarding their education. The statement "I enjoy going to school every day" has a Mean: 2.174 and Standard Deviation: 0.267. A mean of 2.174 indicates that pupils generally disagreed with the statement about enjoying school. This suggests a lack of enthusiasm and motivation among students, which can negatively impact their overall engagement and retention.

The statement “Most pupils drop out of school” has Mean: 4.133 and Standard Deviation: 0.264. A mean of 4.133 reflects strong agreement that most pupils drop out of school. This highlights a significant concern regarding retention, indicating systemic issues that may be driving students to leave the educational system.

The statement “School attendance is low in upper primary classes” has a Mean of 4.326 and a Standard Deviation of 0.373. The high mean score of 4.326 suggests that there is a widespread belief that school attendance is particularly low in upper primary classes. This trend may indicate increasing challenges as students progress, possibly related to academic pressure or socio-economic factors.

The statement “The number of pupils completing primary education is low” has a Mean of 4.416 and a Standard Deviation of 0.321. A mean of 4.416 indicates that pupils feel that the number of students completing primary education is low, though there is some disagreement. This perception can contribute to a lack of aspiration and motivation to remain in school. The statement “I feel safe and secure at school” has a Mean of 4.226 and a Standard Deviation of 0.217. A high mean of 4.226 indicates that pupils feel safe and secure at school. This is a positive finding, as a safe environment is crucial for fostering engagement and retention.

The statement “I don’t intend to continue studying next year” has a Mean of 3.827 and a Standard Deviation of 0.342. A mean of 3.827 suggests that many pupils are neutral or slightly agree with the statement about not intending to continue studying next year. This ambivalence can be concerning, as it reflects uncertainty about their educational futures. The statement “I only study third term” has a Mean of 4.124 and a Standard Deviation of 0.218. A mean of 4.124 indicates that pupils often study only during the third term. This finding may suggest a lack of consistent engagement with their studies throughout the year, potentially contributing to lower retention rates.

The average mean score of 3.116 reflects a mixed perception regarding pupils' retention in primary schools. While safety at school is positively acknowledged, the overall enjoyment and motivation for learning appear low, coupled with a strong recognition of high dropout rates and low attendance in upper primary classes.

During the interview, one selected teacher said, *"Many of our students come from families involved in subsistence farming, and when there's a labor shortage, children are often pulled out of school to help. This affects their attendance and ultimately their retention. We try to encourage parents to see the long-term benefits of education, but it’s a constant struggle."*

Another teacher said, *"Another issue we face is the lack of resources in our schools. Many children don’t have textbooks or supplies, which makes it hard for them to keep up with their studies. When they fall behind, it’s easy for them to lose interest and drop out. We need more support from the district and local organizations to provide these materials."*

Another teacher said, *"Cultural attitudes towards education can be a barrier as well. In some communities, there’s a perception that boys should prioritize work over school, which leads to higher dropout rates for them. We need community engagement programs to change these mindsets and promote the value of education for all children."*

Another teacher said, *"Health issues, including malnutrition, also play a significant role. Many students come to school hungry, which affects their concentration and performance. When they struggle academically, it discourages them from continuing. We are trying to implement feeding programs to help with this, but it requires more funding and support."*

One of the selected head teachers said, *"Retention is a multifaceted issue. Economic hardships are a major factor, but we also have to consider the infrastructure of our schools. Many classrooms are overcrowded, and this can deter parents from sending their children to school. We are advocating for better facilities and more trained teachers to improve the learning environment."*

Another head teacher said, *"Communication with parents is key. We often hold meetings to discuss the importance of education, but attendance is low. We need to find better ways to reach out to parents, perhaps through home visits or community events. Building strong relationships can help keep families engaged in their children’s education."*

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Original Article

Correlation Findings of the Study

Table 6: Correlational Findings

		Household income	Parents' occupation
Family socioeconomic factors	Pearson Correlation	0.729	0.702
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	0.018
	N	200	200

. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 examines the relationships between family economic factors, including household income and parents' occupation, and their effect on pupils' retention in primary schools in Bundibugyo District.

There was a strong positive correlation (0.729) between household income and pupils' retention in primary schools, which indicates that higher household income is associated with better retention rates. The significance level (0.012) suggests that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, meaning that there is a strong likelihood that the relationship is not due to random chance. This implies that families with higher incomes can provide more resources and support for their children's education, leading to increased retention.

There was a positive strong correlation (0.702) between parents' occupation and pupils' retention indicates that the nature and stability of parents' jobs significantly affect their children's retention in school. The significance level (0.018) confirms this correlation is statistically significant, suggesting that parents with stable and respected occupations can provide a supportive environment conducive to education, thus enhancing retention.

Discussion of results.

Household Income and Pupils' Retention in Primary Schools in Bundibugyo District.

There was a strong positive relationship between household income and pupils' retention in primary schools, which indicates that higher household income is associated with better retention rates. The findings of the study emphasize the critical role that household income plays in influencing pupil retention in primary schools. Higher household income correlates strongly with better retention rates, suggesting that families with greater financial resources can provide essential educational materials, tutoring, and access to extracurricular activities that enhance learning experiences. This aligns with Mughal (2020), who noted that financial stability allows families to invest in their children's education, which ultimately improves academic performance. Moreover, the research underscores that higher-income families often reside in neighborhoods with better-funded schools, characterized by smaller class sizes, experienced teachers, and more diverse opportunities, as highlighted by Pov, Kawai, and Murakami (2022). This environment significantly impacts children's educational outcomes, further contributing to retention.

Conversely, lower-income families face numerous challenges, including inadequate housing, food insecurity, and limited access to healthcare, which can detract from a child's ability to focus and succeed in school (Zorbaz, 2020). The pressure of financial instability often compels students to work part-time or take on caregiving roles, detracting from their academic commitments and increasing dropout rates (Chikhungu, 2020). The study also reveals that lower-income students typically have limited access to support services such as counseling and academic tutoring, further hindering their academic success and increasing dropout risk (Lee & Boyle, 2021). This aligns with findings that show a consistent pattern of lower retention rates among students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Satti & Jamil, 2021).

Interestingly, while household income significantly affects dropout rates, it is important to acknowledge that it is one of many contributing factors. Studies by Whannell (2011) and Bratti (2007) suggest that emotional engagement, parental education, and social class also play critical roles in students' educational journeys. This multifaceted nature of dropout rates highlights the need for comprehensive policies that address not only economic disparities but also social and emotional support for students. In conclusion, the study's findings indicate a strong positive correlation between household income and pupil retention, with statistical significance suggesting that economic resources directly influence educational outcomes. Addressing these disparities through equitable educational policies could help improve retention rates and promote greater success for all students, irrespective of their socioeconomic backgrounds (Neville et al., 2022).

Parents' Occupation and Pupils' Retention in Primary Schools in Bundibugyo District.

There was a strong positive correlation between parents' occupation and pupils' retention, indicating that the nature and stability of parents' jobs significantly affect their children's retention in school. Byekwaso (2019) highlights the pivotal role of parents in socializing children, establishing that the family is foundational in nurturing productive citizens. This underscores the idea that parents' occupational status directly impacts their ability to provide educational support and stability.

The study by Mudassir and Abubakar (2015) points to the performance disparity between children of formally employed versus informally employed parents, suggesting that formal employment correlates with better educational outcomes. This aligns with the study's findings, as parents in stable occupations are likely to have higher incomes, which can be allocated toward educational resources, thus positively influencing retention rates. This dynamic likely contributes to higher dropout rates among children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Their results indicate that children from families with high-ranking occupations tend to achieve better academic outcomes, which likely translates into higher retention rates. This insight complements the current study's findings, reinforcing the notion that the stability and status of parents' jobs contribute significantly to their children's educational journeys.

Jamila (2019) further argues that parents in high-ranking occupations can provide the necessary materials and emotional support, thereby fostering a conducive learning environment. This supports the study's conclusion that the nature of parents' jobs significantly influences pupil retention, as higher occupational status often correlates with greater financial stability and a supportive home environment. Lastly, Isiko (2022) highlights the need for concerted efforts to improve parents' occupational levels to enhance their children's educational achievements. This emphasizes the systemic nature of educational challenges, suggesting that interventions aimed at improving family socioeconomic status could have a direct positive impact on pupil retention.

In summary, the literature and the study findings collectively illustrate that the nature and stability of parents' occupations are crucial determinants of pupils' retention in school. Educated parents in stable, respected occupations provide better support and resources, leading to higher retention rates. Addressing the occupational disparities among parents could be a vital step toward improving educational outcomes and reducing dropout rates.

Conclusion.

The strong positive correlation between household income and pupils' retention highlights that higher-income families are better positioned to provide essential educational resources and support.

The strong positive correlation between parents' occupations and pupils' retention indicates that the nature and stability of parents' jobs are critical factors influencing retention rates.

Recommendations.

Based on the findings, the government should implement programs that provide financial assistance to low-income families to help cover educational costs, such as uniforms and other supplies.

The government should come up with initiatives that encourage parents to engage in their children's education, such as workshops and seminars that highlight the importance of parental involvement.

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List of abbreviations

CVI	Content Validity Index
HHI	Household Income
UPE	Universal Primary Education
SES	Social Economic Status
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
USA	United States of America

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Conflict of interest.

No conflict of interest was declared.

Availability of data.

Data used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Author's contribution

GM designed the study, conducted data collection, cleaned and analyzed data and draft the manuscript and MS supervised all stages of the study from conceptualization of the topic to manuscript writing.

Author's biography.

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