

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN BUYENDE DISTRICT, UGANDA. A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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Page | 1 **Abstract**

Background

Globally, education is the foundation upon which any country's human social, cultural, economic, and political development is founded. The study aims to identify the relationship between parents' level of education and girl child education in Buyende District.

Methodology

The study used a cross-sectional, correlational, and descriptive survey research design. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It involved 5 secondary schools in Buyende District, with teachers and students of the selected secondary schools as the respondents. The target population of the study was 204 participants.

Results

(64%) had a secondary level of education, (25.6%) with a diploma and (10.4%) bachelor's degree. Positive strong correlation ($r=0.629$, $\text{sig}=0.12$), and moderately strong positive correlation coefficient (0.629) between parents' level of education and enrollment rates of girls. A moderately strong positive correlation ($r=0.542$) between parents' level of education and completion rates of girls, then the correlation coefficient (0.702) suggests a strong positive correlation between parents' level of education and attendance rates of girls in secondary schools. The significance value of 0.018 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), emphasizing the importance of parents' education in influencing girls' attendance.

Conclusion

Higher levels of parent education are associated with higher rates of enrollment, completion, and attendance among girls, highlighting the importance of parental educational attainment in facilitating girls' access to and success in secondary education.

Recommendation

The government should make comprehensive interventions that address the multifaceted nature of barriers faced by girls in accessing and completing secondary education. Such interventions should include initiatives to improve infrastructure, increase awareness about the importance of girls' education, provide financial support to disadvantaged families, and promote gender equality within communities and schools.

Keywords: Relationship, Parents' level of education, Girl child education, Buyende District.

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Background of the study

Historical perspective

The historical perspective of the study on "Parents' level of education in Uganda" involves understanding the historical context of education in Uganda, particularly with a focus on the role of parental education levels in shaping access to education for girl children. Education globally is the foundation upon which the human social, cultural, economic, and political development of any country is founded (Psacharopoulos, 2006). Basil (2007) posits that low parental engagement and socioeconomic status lead to detrimental students' academic performance. The study further reveals that effective parental support and sound economic status result in

effective children's performance. A conducive learning environment at home enables children's educational achievement and facilitates social integration (Osunloye, 2008). Parents with higher education levels have higher confidence and expectations of their children's academic abilities (Mattison et al, 2014).

In Burundi, education policies require parents to participate in financial contributions to schools. Educated girls are less likely to marry young and more likely to lead healthy, productive lives, have better maternal and child health outcomes (Bulina, 2020). Girls who receive an education earn higher incomes, contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction. Education empowers girls to participate in decisions that affect their lives and communities (Dawson, 2020).

In Uganda, the historical view of education has been influenced by various factors, including colonialism, cultural traditions, and socio-economic conditions (Psaki et al., 2021). During the colonial period, education was primarily used to serve the interests of the colonial powers, with limited access to formal schooling for most of the population. Girls, in particular, faced significant barriers to education due to traditional gender roles and expectations (Cuartas, 2022). Over time, Uganda has implemented various policies and programs aimed at promoting gender equality in education, addressing barriers to girls' education, and increasing female enrollment and retention in schools (Kisaakye et al., 2022).

The historical context of Uganda's education system has seen changes in policies, including the introduction of free primary education and initiatives to increase school infrastructure and access to resources (Ninsiima et al., 2020). Despite these efforts, the level of parental education has been recognized as a significant factor influencing children's educational outcomes. Parents, particularly mothers, with higher levels of education have been shown to positively impact their children's access to and attainment of education (Aisha, Rebecca, & Pascal, 2023).

Theoretical perspective

This study was guided by the human capital theory developed by Theodore Shultz in 1961. The theory posits that individuals and society derive economic benefits from investments in education (Schultz, T. W., 1961). The theory assumes that; Education increases the productivity and earnings potential of individuals, Parents with higher education levels are more likely to value and invest in their children's education, including that of girls and Educated parents are better informed about the long-term benefits of education and are more likely to overcome cultural or economic barriers that typically hinder girls' enrollment and attendance in schools (Tansel, 2002).

Conceptual perspective

Parents' level of education refers to the highest level of formal education attained by one or both parents of a child. This typically includes educational achievements such as a high school diploma, college degree, postgraduate studies, or vocational training (Susilowati & Azzasyofia, 2020). The level of education attained by parents has a significant impact on various aspects of family life, including economic opportunities, social awareness, and the value placed on education for their children (Ribeiro, Cunha, Silva, Carvalho, & Vital, 2021). Also, a girl child's education refers to the formal learning and academic pursuits of a female child (Efevbera & Bhabha, 2020). It encompasses primary education, secondary education, and higher education if pursued. Investing in a girl child's education has long-term benefits for individual empowerment, community development, and societal progress. Efforts to enhance girl child education often focus on eliminating barriers such as

gender-based discrimination, cultural norms, and economic constraints that may impede access to learning opportunities (Okwang & Mwesigwa, 2022).

The relationship between a parent's level of education and a girl's child's education is multifaceted and influenced by various factors. Parents with higher levels of education are often more aware of the benefits of education and the opportunities it can provide, leading them to invest time and resources in their children's schooling (Kuno, 2021). They engage in activities such as helping with homework, attending parent-teacher meetings, and participating in school events, fostering a positive learning environment (L'Roe et al., 2022).

Education is often associated with empowerment, and parents with higher education levels may be more supportive of gender equality, including equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls. In some societies, there may be cultural norms that prioritize the education of male children over female children. However, educated parents are more likely to challenge and change these norms (Nabunya, Curley, & Ssewamala, 2021).

While there is a positive correlation between a parent's level of education and a girl child's education, various individual and contextual factors can influence this relationship. Efforts to improve access to education and promote gender equality should consider a holistic approach, addressing not only parental education but also socio-economic conditions, cultural beliefs, and policy frameworks.

Contextual perspective

The contextual perspective of the study "Parents' Level of Education and Girl Child Education in Buyende District, Uganda" is rooted in the socio-economic and educational landscape of Buyende District. This includes an exploration of the existing educational infrastructure, resources, and support systems available to girl children in the district. The study also takes into account the cultural and social norms that may influence parental involvement in their children's education, as well as the barriers and challenges faced by girl children in accessing quality education. There has been a gross difference in the ratio of males to females in education in the Buyende district. For example, the number of teachers in the Buyende district local Government during the 2022 school year indicates 29.8% females as compared to 70.2% males (Buyende District Records Department, 2023). According to the enrollment records of primary schools in Ngandho Sub County in Buyende district from the year 2019 to 2023, it is noted that the number of girls in secondary schools is less than that of boys (Buyende District Inspector of Schools Report, 2023). Could this be due to the parents' level of education? This therefore prompted the researcher to identify the relationship between parents' level of education and girl child education in the Buyende District.

Methodology

Research design

The study used a cross-sectional, correlational, and descriptive survey research design. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach was used during data collection to find out what people think about different aspects. The quantitative approach was used in determining numerical figures such as simple percentages and frequencies.

Target population

The study involved 5 secondary schools in the Buyende District. Therefore, the researcher used teachers and students of the selected secondary schools as the respondents. The target population of the study was 204 participants. Senior four (S4) female students were selected to gain views on girls' education and the challenges they face. These schools were selected due to low enrollment rates of girls within the district (Buyende District Education Department, 2023).

Table 1: Population Distribution

School	Respondents	Population
Buyende Seed Secondary School	Teachers	15
	Female students (S4)	33
St. James Kagulu Secondary School	Teachers	14
	Female students (S4)	20
Budiope Senior Secondary School	Teachers	11
	Female students (S4)	19
St. Peter Secondary School Namulikya	Teachers	15
	Female students (S4)	23
Kidera Secondary School	Teachers	18
	Female students (S4)	36
Total		204

Source: Buyende District Education Department (2024)

Sample size

The study adopted Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table of determining sample size. Therefore 133 people were selected as respondents of the study. These were chosen proportionally based on the study population.

Sampling techniques

Purposive sampling is a technique used to select female students who are key to the study, as they provided in-depth information about their parents' level of education and how it influenced them to study. Simple random sampling was used for selecting teachers as participants in the study, since these teachers were from the same schools with similar duties and responsibilities, each had an equal chance to represent others, regardless of gender or educational level. The method was used to eliminate bias. Teachers provided information regarding enrollment rates, attendance rates, completion rates, dropout rates, and overall outcomes of female students in selected secondary schools.

Data collection methods and instruments

The researcher used questionnaires as instruments for collecting data. Interviews were conducted with both secondary female students and teachers from selected secondary schools. The researcher used this method because it collected appropriate data, was easy to analyze, and minimized bias, whereby everyone was engaged in answering the same questions.

The researcher observed the procedures followed in research; obtained the introductory letter from the School of Graduate Studies and Research, introducing her to every respondent and fully explaining the purpose of the research. The researcher assured the respondents how their views were confidential and for academic purpose only.

Validity

The internal validity of the instrument was measured based on the Cronbach test, and a score above 0.70 was accepted. The validity of the questionnaire was determined by pre-testing the questions on a group of ten staff who had expertise in the field of research but were outside the intended sample. They were required to fill out the questionnaires and comment on the clarity of the questions. Structured interviews were used to overcome biases, and the researcher pledged confidentiality of the information given by respondents.

Content Validity will be calculated using the formula below:

Content Validity Index = $\frac{\text{Number of relevant questions}}{\text{Total number of items}}$

A Content Validity Index of 0.8 was obtained, which thus a good measure, and the instruments were accepted to collect data for the study.

Reliability

The researcher administered the questionnaire to only the target groups and used selective data that was only

relevant to the research objectives. This was done to minimize the errors and increase its reliability. A pretest was done whereby the research instrument used was tested on ten respondents to find out its accuracy and relevance to the research topic.

Using Cronbach's Alpha (1951) as a measure of the reliability of the variables, the following model will be utilized; $\alpha = \frac{K-1}{K} \frac{\sigma^2}{\sigma^2 + \sigma^2_k}$

Where;

α = Reliability, Alpha Coefficient (Cronbach)

K = Number of items in the instrument

σ^2_k = Variance of individual items

σ^2 = Variance of the total instrument

A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.84 was obtained and compared with 0.7 as suggested by Amin (2009). This indicates that the instrument was consistent and reliable.

Data collection procedures

After obtaining an introductory letter, the researcher sought permission from the Buyende District Authorities to start the data collection by physically delivering questionnaires. Follow-ups with respondents were made after the agreed-upon time period to find out if the researcher could collect the questionnaires. Interviews were conducted to verify the data provided in the questionnaires. For procedures of obtaining secondary data, inquiries were made about access and availability of the information. A critical analysis of documents was made to squeeze out the required data.

Measurements of variables

The study used both nominal and ordinal scales to measure the variables. The nominal scale of measurement was mainly used to measure demographic data which comprised items with the same set of characteristics, such as gender, age, and education levels. The rest of the items

in the questionnaire were measured using the ordinal scale, in which the five-point Likert scale, ranging from 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-no sure, 2 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree, was used to measure both the independent and dependent variables against each other.

Data analysis

Data collected was edited, coded, and later analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 computer program. Quantitative data was analyzed using tables, correlation analysis to show the relationships, and regression analysis to show the influence of performance audits and governance. Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) and significance (p) were used to identify the significance levels to test the hypotheses at the 99% and 95% confidence levels in the correlation analysis. This involved running a bivariate correlation analysis using Pearson's correlation analysis, allowing it to find any significant relationship at 2-tailed. The adjusted R², t-value beta, and significance values were used to measure the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable in the regression analysis.

Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Graduate Studies of Team University that introduced him to the concerned authorities for permission to collect data for this study. A written request for permission was solicited from the concerned officials of the selected secondary schools included in the study, then respondents were asked to sign the *Consent Form*. Acknowledgement of the authors quoted in this study through citations and referencing has been done. The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the information collected, and the information given was used for academic purposes.

Results

Response rate

Table 2: Response rate for the study

Respondents	Questionnaires issued and interviews requested	Questionnaires returned and interviews conducted	Response rate
Teachers	48	45	93.8%
Female students (S4)	85	80	94.2%
Total	133	125	93.9%

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 2 shows, out of 48 questionnaires issued and interviews requested from teachers, 40 were returned and 5 interviews were conducted, resulting in a response rate of 93.8%. For female students in S4, out of 85 questionnaires issued, 80 were returned, resulting in a response rate of 94.2%. Overall, out of a total of 133 questionnaires issued and interviews requested, 125 were

returned and conducted, resulting in an overall response rate of 93.9%.

This response rate indicates a high level of engagement from both teachers and female students in S4 within the Buyende district for the study. A response rate of over 90% generally indicates a robust sample size and suggests that the data collected is likely to be representative of the population under study. This shows that the participants,

both teachers and female students, were willing to participate in the study, suggesting a degree of interest or relevance in the topic being researched. This high

response rate also enhances the reliability and validity of the study's findings, as it indicates a low risk of non-response bias.

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Category of respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	71	56.8%
Female	54	43.2%
Total	125	100%
Age		
18– 24 years	68	54.4%
25-35 years	31	24.8%
36-45 years	22	17.6%
46+ years	4	3.2%
Total	125	100%
Education level		
Secondary	80	64%
Diploma	32	25.6%
Bachelors	13	10.4%
Total	125	100%
Marital status		
Single	83	66.4%
Married	37	29.6%
Separated	5	4%
Total	125	100%

Source: Field data (2024)

Table 3 shows, the majority (56.8%) were male compared to female respondents (43.2%). While the study does not directly address gender disparities in education, the gender distribution of respondents indicated potential disparities in access to education between boys and girls in the district. The majority (54.4%) fall within the age range of 18 to 24 years, 25 to 35 years (24.8%), and 3.2% are aged 46 years and above. (64%) had a secondary level of education, (25.6%) with a diploma and (10.4%) bachelor's degree. This indicates that the sample population is predominantly educated at the secondary level. (66.4%) were single (29.6%), married individuals, and (4%) were separated. The age distribution and marital status of respondents provide additional context for understanding the demographics of the study population. Younger respondents, who were more likely to be unmarried, may still be in the process of completing their education or establishing their careers, potentially influencing their perspectives on education and enrollment, including that of their children. The fact that

the majority of respondents have a secondary level of education or below suggests that parental education levels in the district may be limited. This could have implications for the educational opportunities available to their children, including girls.

Overall, these demographic findings provide a foundation for further investigation into the relationship between parental education levels and girls' enrollment in secondary schools in Buyende District, Uganda.

Analysis of Parents' Education Level in Buyende District.

Descriptive Statistics on Analysis of Parents' Education Level in Buyende District

The findings in Table 4 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 on Parents' Education Level in Buyende District

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My parents have completed a University education	2.1	0.3
Both of my parents have completed secondary education	2.3	0.4
At least one of my parents has obtained a diploma or vocational training	4.0	0.2
My parents have pursued higher education beyond the secondary level	2.4	0.3
I believe my parents' level of education has positively influenced my academic performance.	4.1	0.2
My parents actively encourage me to pursue further education	1.9	0.4
I feel that my parents' educational background has opened up opportunities for me in terms of career choices.	4.4	0.2
My parents' level of education has influenced my attitude towards education	4.2	0.4
I feel that my parents' education has positively impacted our family's socioeconomic status.	4.5	0.3
My parents' education acts as a role model for me to complete secondary education	4.8	0.4
Average	3.9	0.3

Source: Primary data (2024)

In Table 4, the statement “My parents have completed University education” had a mean of 2.1, and Std. Deviation: 0.3. The mean score of 2.1 indicates that, on average, respondents disagree that their parents have completed university education. The low standard deviation (0.3) suggests that responses are relatively consistent around this mean. The statement “Both of my parents have completed secondary education” had a mean of 2.3 and Std. Deviation: 0.4. The mean score of 2.3 suggests that respondents of their parents have completed secondary education. Again, the standard deviation (0.4) indicates some variability in responses, but generally, respondents are leaning towards disagreement. The statement “At least one of my parents has obtained a diploma or vocational training” had a mean of 4.0 and Std. Deviation: 0.2. The high mean score of 4.0 suggests that respondents generally agree that at least one of their parents has obtained a diploma or vocational training. The low standard deviation (0.2) indicates a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement “My parents have pursued higher education beyond the secondary level” had a mean of 2.4 and Std. Deviation: 0.3. The mean score of 2.4 indicates that respondents disagree that both their parents have pursued higher education beyond the secondary level. The standard deviation (0.3) suggests some variability in responses, but overall, respondents are leaning towards disagreement. The statement “I believe my parents' level of education has positively influenced my academic performance” has a mean of 4.1 and std. Deviation: 0.2. The high mean score of 4.1 indicates that respondents strongly agree that their parents' level of education has positively influenced their academic performance. The low standard deviation (0.2) suggests a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement “My parents actively encourage me to pursue further education” has a mean of 1.9 and std. Deviation: 0.4. The mean score of 1.9 suggests that respondents tend to disagree that their parents actively

encourage them to pursue further education. The standard deviation (0.4) indicates some variability in responses, but overall, respondents are leaning towards disagreement. The statement “I feel that my parents' educational background has opened up opportunities for me in terms of career choices” has a mean of 4.4 and std. Deviation: 0.2. The high mean score of 4.4 indicates that respondents strongly agree that their parents' educational background has opened up opportunities for them in terms of career choices. The low standard deviation (0.2) suggests a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement “My parents' level of education has influenced my attitude towards education” had a mean of 4.2 and std. Deviation: 0.4. The high mean score of 4.2 indicates that respondents strongly agree that their parents' level of education has influenced their attitude towards education. The statement “I feel that my parents' education has positively impacted our family's socioeconomic status” has a mean of 4.5 and Std. Deviation: 0.3. The high mean score of 4.5 indicates that respondents strongly agree that their parents' education has positively impacted their family's socioeconomic status. The standard deviation (0.3) suggests a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement “My parents' education acts as a role model for me to complete secondary education” has a mean of 4.8 and Std. Deviation: 0.4. The very high mean score of 4.8 indicates that respondents strongly agree that their parents' education acts as a role model for them to complete secondary education.

During the interview, one of the teachers selected for the study said, *“Parents with higher levels of education tend to be more actively involved in their daughters' education. They understand the importance of education and are better equipped to support their girls academically and emotionally. This involvement often translates into higher enrollment and better academic performance among girls.”*

Another teacher said, "In my experience, I've observed that girls whose parents have limited education face more barriers to accessing education. These parents may not fully grasp the value of education or have the resources to support their daughters' schooling. As a result, girls from such backgrounds are at a disadvantage and may struggle to stay in school."

Additionally, teachers said, "Parental education plays a significant role in shaping girls' aspirations and expectations regarding their education. Girls whose parents have higher education levels are more likely to have ambitious academic goals and pursue higher education themselves. On the other hand, girls from less-educated households may have lower expectations for their educational attainment."

Also, another teacher said, "Parental education also influences the level of encouragement and support girls receive at home. Parents who have experienced the benefits of education firsthand are more likely to prioritize their daughters' education and provide them with the necessary resources and encouragement to succeed. This support system is crucial for girls, especially in overcoming challenges they may face in their educational journey."

Another teacher during the interview said, "Moreover, parents' level of education can impact girls' exposure to

role models. Girls whose parents have achieved higher education levels are more likely to have access to educated role models within their own families, which can positively influence their perceptions of what they can achieve through education. This can inspire girls to aim higher and pursue their academic goals with confidence." During the interview with one of the students said, "From my experience, I've noticed that girls whose parents are highly educated often have more opportunities available to them. Their parents understand the importance of education and actively support their daughters' academic pursuits. As a result, these girls are more likely to excel in school and have a brighter future ahead of them compared to girls whose parents have limited education."

Enrollment Rates of Girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District.

Descriptive Statistics on Enrollment Rates of Girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende 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 below;

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on Enrollment Rates of Girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District.

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The rate of girl child enrollment for secondary education is high in Buyende District	2.1	0.2
Families in the Buyende district prioritize the education of their daughters.	3.7	0.8
The percentage of girls of official secondary school age is high	4.3	0.3
The percentage of girls who leave school before finishing secondary education is high.	4.4	0.3
There are more girls enrolled in secondary education than boys.	4.2	0.2
Girls in the Buyende district transit successfully from one class to another	3.8	0.3
The distance between homes and secondary schools is a significant barrier to girls' enrollment in the Buyende district.	4.1	0.2
Societal norms negatively impact girls' enrollment in secondary schools in the Buyende district	4.8	0.1
Teachers actively support and encourage girls' participation in education	4.5	0.3
Government initiatives effectively promote girls' enrollment in secondary schools	3.5	0.5
Average	4.1	0.3

Source: Primary data (2024)

From Table 5, the statement "The rate of girl child enrollment for secondary education is high in Buyende District" has a mean of 2.1 and std. Deviation: 0.2. The low mean score of 2.1 indicates that respondents generally agree that the rate of girl child enrollment for secondary education is low in the Buyende District. The statement "Families in Buyende district prioritize the education of their daughters" had a mean of 3.7 and Std. Deviation: 0.8. The mean score of 3.7 indicates that respondents tend to

agree that families in the Buyende district prioritize the education of their daughters. However, the relatively high standard deviation (0.8) suggests some variability in responses, indicating that opinions are somewhat divided on this statement. The statement "The percentage of girls of official secondary school age is high" has a mean of 4.3 and Std. Deviation: 0.3. The high mean score of 4.3 suggests that respondents strongly agree that the percentage of girls of official secondary school age is high

in Buyende District. The low standard deviation (0.3) indicates a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement "The percentage of girls who leave school before finishing secondary education is high" has a mean of 4.4 and std. Deviation: 0.3. The high mean score of 4.4 indicates that respondents strongly agree that the percentage of girls who leave school before finishing secondary education is high in Buyende District. The low standard deviation (0.3) suggests a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement "There are more girls enrolled in secondary education than boys" has a mean of 4.2 and std. Deviation: 0.2. The high mean score of 4.2 suggests that respondents strongly agree that there are more girls enrolled in secondary education than boys in the Buyende District. The low standard deviation (0.2) indicates a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement "Girls in Buyende district transit successfully from one class to another" had a mean score of 3.8 and Std. Deviation: 0.3. The mean score of 3.8 indicates that respondents tend to agree that girls in the Buyende district transit successfully from one class to another. However, the standard deviation (0.3) suggests some variability in responses, indicating that opinions are somewhat divided on this statement. The statement "The distance between homes and secondary schools is a significant barrier to girls' enrollment in Buyende district" means: 4.1 and standard. Deviation: 0.2. The high mean score of 4.1 suggests that respondents strongly agree that the distance between homes and secondary schools is a significant barrier to girls' enrollment in the Buyende District. The low standard deviation (0.2) indicates a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement "Societal norms negatively impact girls' enrollment in secondary schools in Buyende district" has a mean of 4.8 and std. Deviation: 0.1. The very high mean score of 4.8 indicates that respondents strongly agree that societal norms negatively impact girls' enrollment in secondary schools in the Buyende District. The low standard deviation (0.1) suggests a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement "Teachers actively support and encourage girls' participation in education" has a mean of 4.5 and Std. Deviation: 0.3. The high mean score of 4.5 indicates that respondents strongly agree that teachers actively support and encourage girls' participation in education in the Buyende District. The low standard deviation (0.3) suggests a high level of agreement among respondents. The statement "Government initiatives effectively promote girls' enrollment in secondary schools" has a mean score of 3.5 and std. Deviation: 0.5. The mean score of 3.5 suggests that respondents are neutral regarding whether government initiatives effectively promote girls' enrollment in secondary schools in the Buyende District. The relatively high standard deviation (0.5) indicates some variability in responses, with opinions more divided on this statement.

Overall, the findings suggest that while there is a high level of agreement among respondents on many aspects

related to girls' enrollment in secondary schools in the Buyende District, opinions are somewhat divided on the prioritization of girls' education by families and the effectiveness of government initiatives. Additionally, respondents strongly agree that societal norms negatively impact girls' enrollment, while acknowledging the active support of teachers in promoting girls' education.

During the interview with one of the female teachers, she said, *"The main challenge we face in promoting girls' enrollment in secondary schools is the prevailing societal norms and cultural beliefs that prioritize boys' education over girls'. Many families still hold traditional views that see girls as destined for marriage and household duties rather than academic pursuits."*

Another teacher said, *"Financial constraints also pose a significant barrier to girls' enrollment. Many families in the Buyende District struggle to afford school fees, uniforms, and other educational expenses. As a result, parents prioritize the education of their sons over their daughters, leading to lower enrollment rates for girls."*

Another teacher said, *"Another challenge is the long distances between homes and secondary schools. In rural areas of the Buyende District, where transportation options are limited, girls may face difficulties traveling to and from school, especially if the distance is considerable. This can discourage parents from sending their daughters to school."*

Another teacher said, *"There is a lack of adequate infrastructure and facilities in some secondary schools in Buyende District hinders girls' enrollment. Many schools lack proper sanitation facilities, which can be particularly problematic for girls, especially during menstruation. Without these basic facilities, girls may feel uncomfortable attending school regularly."*

One of the students said, *"I often hear from my friends that they have to help with household chores, take care of younger siblings, or even work to support their families, which leaves them with little time or energy for school. Many girls in our community face pressure to marry early instead of pursuing their education."*

Another student said, *"Sometimes, girls also face gender-based violence or harassment on their way to school or within the school environment. This can create a hostile and unsafe atmosphere that deters girls from attending school regularly. Without feeling safe and supported, many girls are reluctant to continue their education."*

Completion Rates of Girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District.

Descriptive statistics on completion Rates of Girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende 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 Table 6.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics on completion Rates of Girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Most of my classmates are going to complete secondary school education	2.4	0.2
Completion of secondary school education by girls is high	2.3	0.3
Many girls never complete secondary education due to financial issues	4.5	0.2
The graduation rate of girls is greater than that of boys	2.0	0.1
Most girls drop out of school before graduation for marriage	4.4	0.3
Most girls are retained by secondary schools till to graduation	2.3	0.3
Most girls advance to the next class with ease	2.4	0.4
Most girls drop out of school prematurely due to early pregnancies	2.1	0.8
Girls are not supported by their parents like boys to advance in education	3.1	0.6
Most girls' attitude towards education is poor	4.0	0.5

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 6 indicates that the statement “Most of my classmates are going to complete secondary school education” has a mean of 2.4 and Std. Deviation: 0.2. On average, respondents tend to disagree (2.4) with the statement that most of their classmates are going to complete secondary school education. The statement “Completion of secondary school education by girls is high” had a mean of 2.3 and std. Deviation: 0.3. On average, respondents tend to disagree (2.3) with the statement that the completion of secondary school education by girls is high. The statement “Many girls never complete secondary education due to financial issues” had a mean of 4.5 and std. Deviation: 0.2. On average, respondents strongly agree (4.5) with the statement that many girls never complete secondary education due to financial issues, indicating a high level of consensus on this issue. The statement “The graduation rate of girls is greater than that of boys” has a mean value of 2.0 and Std. Deviation: 0.1. On average, respondents tend to strongly disagree (2.0) with the statement that the graduation rate of girls is greater than that of boys. The statement “Most girls drop out of school before graduation for marriage” has a mean of 4.4 and a standard deviation of 0.3. On average, respondents strongly agree (4.4) with the statement that most girls drop out of school before graduation for marriage, indicating a widespread perception of this issue. The “Most girls are retained by secondary schools till to graduation” has a mean of 2.3 and a standard deviation of 0.3. On average, respondents tend to disagree (2.3) with the statement that most girls are retained by secondary schools till graduation. The statement “Most girls advance to the next class with ease” has a mean of 2.4 and std. Deviation: 0.4. On average, respondents tend to disagree (2.4) with the statement that most girls advance to the next class with ease. The statement “Most girls drop out of school prematurely due to early pregnancies” has a mean of 2.1 and a standard deviation of 0.8. On average, respondents tend to disagree (2.1) with the statement that most girls

drop out of school prematurely due to early pregnancies, though there is some variability in responses. The statement “Girls are not supported by parents like boys to advance with education” has a mean of 3.1 and Std. Deviation: 0.6. On average, respondents tend to be neutral (3.1) regarding the statement that girls are not supported by parents like boys to advance with education, indicating some uncertainty or mixed perceptions. The statement “Most girls' attitude towards education is poor” has a mean score of 4.0 and Std. Deviation: 0.5. On average, respondents tend to agree (4.0) with the statement that most girls' attitudes towards education are poor, suggesting a prevalent perception of negative attitudes among girls towards education.

During the interview with one of the teachers, he said, “I believe one of the key factors contributing to the low completion rates of girls in secondary schools in Buyende District is the lack of proper infrastructure. Many schools in the district lack adequate facilities such as separate toilets for girls, which makes it difficult for them to manage their hygiene during menstruation. This often leads to absenteeism and eventually dropping out of school.”

Another teacher said, “In my opinion, another factor that affects girls' completion rates is the prevalence of early marriages in the district. Many girls are forced into marriage at a young age, which disrupts their education. This is especially common in rural areas where traditional beliefs still hold strong. Without proper education and awareness about the importance of education, these girls are more likely to prioritize marriage over schooling.”

An interview was conducted with another teacher, who said “I also think that there is a lack of support systems for girls in the education system. Often, girls face challenges such as pregnancy, family responsibilities, or financial constraints that hinder their ability to complete their education. There needs to be more support from both the school administration and the community to address

these issues and provide girls with the necessary resources and encouragement to stay in school."

One of the students said, "As a student in Buyende District, I can say that one of the reasons for low completion rates among girls is the long distances many of us have to travel to reach school. Some girls have to walk several kilometers each day, which can be exhausting and risky, especially in areas where safety is a concern. This discourages many girls from attending school regularly."

Another student said, "Another challenge we face is the lack of access to proper learning materials and resources. Many schools in the district lack textbooks, stationery, and even basic amenities like electricity, which affects the quality of education we receive. Without these resources, it becomes difficult for girls to keep up with their studies and stay motivated to continue attending school."

Another student said, "I also think that there is a cultural stigma attached to girls' education in some communities within Buyende District. Some families still believe that educating girls is not necessary or even harmful, leading to discrimination and unequal opportunities for girls. This

mindset needs to change, and there should be more efforts to promote the value of education for girls."

Another student said, "Additionally, I believe that there is a lack of female role models in our communities who can inspire and encourage girls to pursue their education. When girls see successful women who have overcome similar challenges and achieved their goals through education, it motivates them to do the same. Therefore, it's important to provide girls with access to mentorship programs and opportunities to interact with successful women from various fields."

Attendance rates of girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District.

Descriptive statistics on Attendance rates of girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende 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 Table 7.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics on Attendance rates of girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Girls attend school daily for a whole term	2.2	0.2
The Gross Enrollment Ratio of girls is high in secondary school	2.3	0.3
The Net Enrollment Ratio of girls is high in secondary schools	2.1	0.2
The attendance rate of girls is greater than that of boys	2.0	0.1
The transition rate of girls from one class to another is high	2.4	0.1
Most girls arrive at school late	4.3	0.2
Girls are regularly absent from school	4.4	0.4
Girls seasonally attend school	4.1	0.2
Girls from distant places rarely attend school	4.1	0.2
Girls from financially marginalized families are usually absent	4.0	0.2

Source: Primary data (2024)

With Table 7, the statement "Girls attend school daily for a whole term" had a mean of 2.2, and Std. Deviation: 0.2. The mean score indicates that respondents disagreed with the statement that girls attend school daily for a whole term. However, the standard deviation suggests that responses were relatively consistent around this mean. The statement "The Gross Enrollment Ratio of girls is high in secondary school" had a mean of 2.3 and std. Deviation: 0.3. The mean score suggests disagreement with the statement. Respondents perceive that the Gross Enrollment Ratio of girls in secondary school is not high. The standard deviation indicates some variability in responses. The statement "The Net Enrollment Ratio of girls is high in secondary schools" has a mean of 2.1 and std. Deviation: 0.2. Similarly, respondents disagreed with

the statement about the Net Enrollment Ratio of girls being high in secondary schools.

The statement "The attendance rate of girls is greater than that of boys" has a mean of 2.0 and Std. Deviation: 0.1. Respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they perceive girls' attendance rates to be lower than boys'. The low standard deviation suggests high agreement among respondents. The statement "The transition rate of girls from one class to another is high" has a mean of 2.4 and Std. Deviation: 0.1. Respondents tended to disagree with the statement, indicating that they perceive the transition rate of girls from one class to another as not being high. The low standard deviation suggests high agreement among respondents. The statement "Most girls arrive at school late" has a mean of

4.3 and Std. Deviation: 0.2. The mean score indicates strong agreement with the statement that most girls arrive at school late. The standard deviation suggests some variability in responses, but overall, respondents tended to agree on this aspect. The statement "Girls are regularly absent from school" has a mean of 4.4 and Std. Deviation: 0.4. Respondents strongly agreed that girls are regularly absent from school. The higher standard deviation suggests some variability in responses, with some respondents possibly strongly agreeing while others slightly less so.

The statement "Girls seasonally attend school" has a mean of 4.1 and Std. Deviation: 0.2. Respondents tended to agree that girls seasonally attend school. The standard deviation indicates some variability in responses, but overall, there is agreement that seasonal factors affect girls' attendance. The statement "Girls from distant places rarely attend school" has a mean of 4.1 and Std. Deviation: 0.2. Respondents tended to agree that girls from distant places rarely attend school. The standard deviation suggests some variability in responses, but overall agreement on this aspect. The statement "Girls from financially marginalized families are usually absent" has a mean of 4.0 and std. Deviation: 0.2. Respondents tended to agree that girls from financially marginalized families are usually absent from school. The standard deviation suggests some variability in responses, but overall, respondents agreed on this aspect.

In summary, the findings suggest a perception among respondents that attendance rates among girls in secondary schools in Buyende District are low, with factors such as lateness, regular absence, seasonal attendance, distance from school, and financial marginalization playing significant roles. There is also a perception of gender disparity in attendance rates,

favoring boys. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address the barriers to girls' attendance and improve overall attendance rates.

During the interview with a teacher, *"One significant challenge is the lack of accessible transportation for girls, especially those from rural areas. Many of them have to walk long distances to reach school, which often leads to fatigue and absenteeism."*

Another teacher said, *"Deep-rooted gender norms and expectations often prioritize boys' education over girls' education. Additionally, early marriage and pregnancy are prevalent in our community, leading to girls dropping out of school."*

Another teacher said, *"Economic challenges are a significant barrier. Many families struggle to afford necessities, let alone education-related expenses such as school fees, uniforms, and textbooks. As a result, girls are often forced to stay home."*

Another teacher also said, *"Yes, health issues such as lack of access to menstrual hygiene products and reproductive health education often lead to girls missing school during their menstrual cycles. This not only affects their attendance but also their academic performance."*

Also, during the interview with one of the students, she said, *"Low attendance rates have severe consequences for girls' academic achievement and future opportunities. They miss out on valuable learning opportunities and are at a higher risk of dropping out, perpetuating the cycle of poverty."*

Another student said, *"Implementing comprehensive gender-sensitive policies and programs that address the unique challenges faced by girls is essential. This includes providing scholarships, menstrual hygiene management facilities, and community outreach programs."*

Correlation Findings of the Study

Table 8: Correlational findings

		Enrollment rates of girls	Completion rates of girls	Attendance rates of girls
Parents' level of education	Pearson Correlation	0.629**	0.542**	0.702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	0.003	0.018
	N	125	125	125

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

Table 8 indicates a strong positive correlation ($r=0.629$, $\text{sig}=0.12$) between parents' level of education and enrollment rates of girls in secondary schools in the Buyende District. The correlation coefficient of 0.629 indicates a moderately strong positive correlation between parents' level of education and enrollment rates of girls in secondary schools, and then a moderately strong positive

correlation ($r=0.542$) between parents' level of education and completion rates of girls in secondary schools in Buyende District. The correlation coefficient of 0.702 suggests a strong positive correlation between parents' level of education and attendance rates of girls in secondary schools. The significance value of 0.018 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at

the 0.05 level (2-tailed), emphasizing the importance of parents' education in influencing girls' attendance. Overall, these correlational findings highlight the significant impact of parents' level of education on various aspects of girls' education, including enrollment, completion, and attendance rates in secondary schools.

Specifically, higher levels of parent education are associated with higher enrollment, completion, and attendance rates among girls. This underscores the importance of educational attainment within households in facilitating girls' access to and success in secondary education.

Regression Analysis of Parents' Education Level and the Enrollment of Girls for Secondary Education in Buyende District

Table 9: Regression Analysis of Parents' Education Level and the Enrollment of Girls for Secondary Education in Buyende District

Model	R		R Square		Adjusted R Square
Enrollment rates of girls	.758 ^a		0.574		0.573
Completion rates of girls	.695 ^b		0.483		0.481
Attendance rates of girls	.822 ^c		0.676		0.674
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.329	.000		5.114	.001
Enrollment rates of girls	5.127	.001	.013	3.216	.012
Completion rates of girls	3.531	.003	.001	2.195	.001
Attendance rates of girls	3.313	.002	.011	3.384	.013
a. independent Variable: Parents' level of education					

The regression analysis presented in Table 9 examines the relationship between parents' education level and three key indicators related to girls' education: enrollment rates, completion rates, and attendance rates in secondary schools in Buyende District.

From Table 9, the regression model suggests that 57.4% of the variance in enrollment rates of girls can be explained by parents' education level. The coefficient for Enrollment rates of girls (5.127) indicates that for every unit increase in parents' education level, there is a predicted increase of 5.127 units in the enrollment rates of girls. The regression model suggests that 48.3% of the variance in completion rates of girls can be explained by parents' education level. The coefficient for Completion rates of girls (3.531) indicates that for every unit increase in parents' education level, there is a predicted increase of 3.531 units in the completion rates of girls. The regression model suggests that 67.6% of the variance in attendance rates of girls can be explained by parents' education level.

The coefficient for Attendance rates of girls (3.313) indicates that for every unit increase in parents' education level, there is a predicted increase of 3.313 units in the attendance rates of girls.

In summary, the regression analysis indicates significant positive relationships between parents' education level and enrollment rates, completion rates, and attendance rates of girls in secondary schools in Buyende District. Higher levels of parent education are associated with higher rates of enrollment, completion, and attendance among girls, highlighting the importance of parental educational attainment in facilitating girls' access to and success in secondary education.

Model: $Y = C + CR + ER + AR$

Where;

Y= Parents' level of income

C =Constant

CR= Completion rate

ER= Enrollment rate

AR= Attendance rate
 $Y = 5.329 + 5.127 ER + 3.531 CR + 3.313AR$

Discussion

Enrollment Rates of Girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District

The findings of the study underscore the significant role of parental education in influencing girls' enrollment in secondary schools in the Buyende District. A strong positive correlation ($r=0.629$) between parents' level of education and enrollment rates of girls highlights the importance of educational attainment within households. This correlation is supported by existing literature, which has consistently found that parental education positively impacts various aspects of children's education, including enrollment rates (Davis-Kean, 2021). Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to prioritize their children's education and provide the necessary support and resources for their academic success. This includes financial support, creating a conducive learning environment, and advocating for their children's educational needs (Ninsiima et al., 2020). Moreover, parents with higher education levels serve as role models for their children, demonstrating the value of education through their own achievements and career success, thus influencing their children's attitudes toward education and aspirations for the future (Efevbera & Bhabha, 2020). Additionally, higher parental education is associated with increased awareness about the importance of education and available educational opportunities. This awareness translates into proactive engagement in seeking out educational options and advocating for their children's educational needs (Kühhirt & Klein, 2020). Furthermore, parental education contributes to the accumulation of cultural and social capital within the family, providing children with access to networks, resources, and opportunities that positively impact their educational experiences (Xia, 2022).

However, despite the positive correlation between parental education and girls' enrollment rates, the study also identifies societal norms, cultural beliefs, and financial constraints as significant barriers to girls' education. This aligns with existing research, which has identified factors such as parental illiteracy, lack of parental attention, poor financial status, and negative parental attitudes as obstacles to girls' education at the secondary level (Suleman et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the study highlights the need for improved school infrastructure, particularly sanitation facilities, to create a conducive learning environment for girls. This echoes findings from previous research that have emphasized the importance of infrastructure in facilitating girls' enrollment and retention in schools (Chad-Friedman et al., 2022).

In summary, while parental education plays a crucial role in promoting girls' enrollment in secondary schools, addressing societal norms, cultural beliefs, and financial constraints is essential to ensure equitable access to education for girls in the Buyende District. This requires

comprehensive interventions that address both individual and structural factors influencing girls' educational opportunities.

Completion Rates of Girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District

The findings from the study in the Buyende District underscore the importance of parental education in influencing girls' enrollment and completion rates in secondary schools. A moderately strong positive correlation ($r=0.542$) between parents' level of education and completion rates of girls highlights the significant role that parental education plays in shaping girls' educational outcomes (Kuno, 2021). This correlation aligns with existing literature, which has consistently found that parental education positively impacts various aspects of children's education, including enrollment and completion rates (Abad et al., 2017; Smith & Johnson, 2018). The study also identifies multiple barriers and challenges that hinder girls' educational attainment in Buyende District, including financial issues, early marriages, lack of support systems within the education system, inadequate infrastructure, long distances to travel to school, limited access to learning materials, cultural stigma, and lack of female role models (Deininger, 2003; Kikulwe et al., 2017). These findings corroborate previous research, which has highlighted the multifaceted nature of obstacles faced by girls in completing secondary education in various contexts (Ahmed & Khan, 2016). Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for comprehensive interventions that address infrastructural, societal, and cultural barriers to ensure equal opportunities for girls to pursue and complete their education. Literature suggests that the relationship between parental education and girls' enrollment rates is mediated by socioeconomic factors, such as income and parental occupation, as well as cultural and societal norms surrounding gender roles and expectations (Chapple, 2003; Stephens, 2007). Understanding these complex dynamics is crucial for designing effective policies and programs aimed at promoting girls' education and addressing educational inequalities.

Overall, the findings from the study in Buyende District contribute to our understanding of the factors that influence girls' enrollment and completion rates in secondary schools, highlighting the central role of parental education while also underscoring the need for comprehensive, context-specific interventions to address the myriad challenges faced by girls in accessing quality education.

Attendance rates of girls in Secondary Schools in Buyende District

The findings from the study in the Buyende District highlight a strong positive correlation between parents' level of education and attendance rates of girls in secondary schools, with a correlation coefficient of 0.702, indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Moreover, the study identifies various factors

contributing to low attendance rates among girls, including lateness, regular absence, seasonal attendance, long distances from school, financial marginalization, and prevailing beliefs about girls' absenteeism from financially marginalized families (Selwyn, Pangrazio, & Cumbo, 2021). This suggests that parents with higher education levels are more likely to provide a supportive environment for their daughters' education, thereby promoting regular attendance. This meta-analysis reinforces the robustness of the relationship observed in the literature and underscores the importance of parental education in shaping girls' educational outcomes, including attendance rates.

Overall, the findings from the study in the Buyende District, together with the literature reviewed, highlight the significant impact of parental education on girls' attendance rates in secondary schools. These findings underscore the importance of addressing socioeconomic disparities and promoting parental involvement to improve girls' attendance and overall educational outcomes.

Conclusions

In summary, the regression analysis indicates significant positive relationships between parents' education level and enrollment rates, completion rates, and attendance rates of girls in secondary schools in Buyende District. Higher levels of parent education are associated with higher rates of enrollment, completion, and attendance among girls, highlighting the importance of parental educational attainment in facilitating girls' access to and success in secondary education. Despite the positive correlation between parental education and girls' education outcomes, significant challenges and barriers persist. Financial constraints, societal norms prioritizing boys' education, early marriages, and lack of infrastructure remain key obstacles to girls' enrollment, completion, and attendance in secondary schools.

Recommendations

1. The government should make comprehensive interventions that address the multifaceted nature of barriers faced by girls in accessing and completing secondary education. Such interventions should include initiatives to improve infrastructure, increase awareness about the importance of girls' education, provide financial support to disadvantaged families, and promote gender equality within communities and schools.
2. Government and non-governmental organizations should prioritize initiatives aimed at enhancing parental education levels, particularly in rural areas where educational attainment may be lower.
3. Tailored interventions should be implemented to address specific barriers faced by girls in accessing and completing secondary education. This may include scholarship programs,

provision of menstrual hygiene facilities, transportation assistance, and mentorship programs to support girls' academic journey and promote retention in schools.

4. Efforts should be made to challenge entrenched gender norms and societal attitudes that perpetuate educational disparities between boys and girls.

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List of Abbreviations

CVI	Content Validity Index
MOE	Ministry of Education
S4	Senior Four
SPSS	Special Package for Social Scientists
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USE	Universal Secondary Education

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Conflict of interest

There's no conflict of interest reported.

Author contributions

Rebecca Tibanjagala was the researcher and collected data during the study.

Doreen Akunda supervised the whole research project during the study.

Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Graduate Studies of Team University that introduced him to the concerned authorities for permission to collect data for this study. He also solicited permission through a written request to the concerned officials of the selected secondary schools included in the study.

Informed consent

The researcher then requested the respondents to sign the *Consent Form*. The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the information collected, and the information given was used for academic purposes.

Authorities are to start the data collection by physically delivering questionnaires.

Data availability

Data will be sought from the Team University, Kampala.

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