



# Stakeholders' Perspectives on Correlates of Academic Underachievement in Public Primary Schools in Iganga District, Uganda

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*Received July 16, 2020; Revised July 29, 2020; Accepted July 31, 2020*

**Abstract:** *This study investigated stakeholder's perspectives on the cause of academic underachievement in public primary schools comparing views of the different stakeholders in Iganga District. The objective was to relate the wide clear understanding of the causes by the affected people for a positive remedy. Data was obtained from 428 respondents using purposive and cluster sampling techniques. The data gathering tools included interview guide, observation check list and document analysis. A causal-comparative relationship design was used to obtain predominantly qualitative findings. This approach was helpful in getting in-depth views of individuals concerning academic underachievement. Findings revealed, Leadership Ability of the Head teacher, regular teacher/ pupil absenteeism at school, parents' negative attitude and value of education, level of education and roles and school managers and teacher time on task. The recommendations of the study include; capacity building for head teachers and teachers, improvement in school funding by government, provision of current policy for school management committees, providing teacher accommodation at schools and improvement in teacher welfare/ salaries.*

**Keywords:** *Stakeholders, Academic Underachievement, Public Primary schools, School management committees, Correlates*

## How to reference this article (APA):

Waiswa, M. M & Kinuthia, B. (2020). Stakeholders' perspective on correlates of academic underachievement in public primary schools in Iganga District, Uganda. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education* 4(3), 113-122.

## 1. Introduction

The low achievement results of learners in public primary schools in Iganga district in the national examinations for the past consecutive five years, necessitated an investigation into the causes from the stakeholders. Their view provides a mutual relationships (correlates) between the learners, teachers, school managers and administrators who are directly involved in order to provide a framework solution to the problem.

Academic underachievement is all about the failure of a learner, teacher or institution to achieve short or long-term educational goals (Hlalele & Nooe, 2015). Countries assess academic performance differently but in Uganda, academic underachievement was observed using lower scores than average marks in Primary Leaving Examinations or continuous assessments of regular tests and exercises to children (Salmah, Azizah, & Shaifol, 2016).

Globally, the problem of academic underachievement is reported to be increasing in the United States, and some European countries like Britain and Germany. The latest Program for International Students results from 2012 show that 22.1 % of European students had low achievement in mathematics, 17.8 % in reading, and 16.6 % in science (European Commission, 2013). The common attributes for global academic underachievement relate out of school factors, i.e. peer group influence, learners' socio-economic background, educational level of parents and language barrier (Teodora & Vansteenkiste, 2016). However, reports keep differing among countries and regions.

Educational hints in African countries also reflect increasing cases of academic underachievement indicated by reduction in levels of school grades at an average of 43% for learners who sit for national examinations in a single year in different countries (Binet & Simon, 2013) and this is attributed to

financial constraints, school environment factors, home environment, and peer-group influence (Adeyemi, Moradeyo, & Semiu, 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore the way by which different stakeholder of public primary schools view the causes of academic underachievement in Iganga District.

## 2. Literature review

The literature was sourced from journals, and textbooks to widen knowledge about what current authors attribute academic underachievement to. The section is arranged in sub-themes that give information in support of the factors that explaining academic underachievement.

**Teacher factor:** Research by Brown and Cave (2010) shows that the teacher factor is the most important factor explaining academic achievement in schools moderating the effect of other risk factors like parents' educational level of attainments, gender of pupils, socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Emphasizing the importance of teachers, Buck (2016) points out that the teachers are responsible to the kind of learning and experiences pupils engage everyday plus setting of educational goals and total personality development.

Walekie (2012) noted that the teacher is charged with the responsibility of molding the child into a functional adult that will contribute to national development with the following qualities; knowledge of the subject matter being taught far ahead of that of the pupils; professional skill or know-how to awaken a child's interest in what is being taught and to enkindle in his pupils a love of learning and a good moral character.

Other ways in which teachers are responsible for academic underachievement include; poor background knowledge, no work experience in the subject area, particularly for practical subjects, relationships with colleagues either too social or a lack of rapport, relationships with pupils- again, too close or not, prioritizing personal errands over workload, prioritizing younger years over older years, personal problems preexisting teaching, lack of engagement with support provided by more experienced teachers (Mohammed, 2016).

**Frequency of Checking Teachers' Schemes of work:** The responsibility of checking the professional documents like teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans lies in the hands of the head teacher. This may be done in person or he may delegate to the deputy head teacher or the senior teacher. Preparation and use of schemes of work by the teachers enhances sequential teaching and results to improved achievement (Evans & Harper, 2009). In one other study, the frequency of checking teachers preparations indicated that head teachers randomly check the teachers' schemes of work only once a term, which reflects that head teachers do not do any follow up on curriculum implementation during the course of the term.

**Inadequate Supervision by Ministry of Education Personnel:** Mills (1997) asserted that supervision has direct effect on staff performance in that supervisors assign tasks and clear responsibilities for accuracy and punctuality from assignees. Also supervision gives the right direction to teachers as it seeks to equip them with necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to make them useful to immediate community and country at large.

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**Leisure activities:** these help children to steam off stress and engage in learning activities that build their self-esteem. Through sports and games, children "believe in themselves, gain analytical and decision making skills, general life skills"(Uganda Rural Fund , 2012), and become advocates of societal change as they influence suspension and expulsion do not appear to reduce undesirable behavior, and both are linked to increased delinquent behavior.

**Educational tours:** It is during educational tours that school going children get to know what is happening in other parts of Uganda, listen to the testimonies of people who have been successful in life, and come to understand that there are opportunities ahead of them if they devote their time to study hard. It is during education tours that children are provided with "a safe space to discuss issues affecting their lives and identify opportunities for personal, educational, leadership, social, and career development" (Uganda Rural Fund, 2010). As young people interact with several professionals in the areas of health, psychology, politics, sports, business, agriculture, counseling, etc., during the education tour programs, the process provides a platform to promote behavior change, improve morality, and teach the youth basics on how to live responsible lives.

**Reading culture:** Inculcating reading culture in the young children empowers them to understand the past events for human behaviors, widens their mind towards a culture of reading, and thus, children have not developed reading and inquisitive analytical skills, then they cannot take their time to look for pertinent information necessary to enable them attain better academic grades (Uganda Youth Skills Training Project, 2014).

**Poor nutrition:** A study has shown the benefits of having breakfast gives the pupil the ability to think clearly. A pupil who is lacking essential vitamins or minerals, taking in a steady intake of junk food, and isn't eating enough will be affected academically. Emotional factors conflicts with family, friends, siblings, or teachers can contribute to achievement as well. Marital problems in a family will often contribute to underachievement. Illnesses, accidents affecting anyone close, a death in the family or with a friend, family violence, as alcohol- or drug-related problems may all play a role. The more length and impact, the greater the chances school performance will be affected negatively (Janelle, 2011).

**Home Environment:** The quality of a child's early learning in the home environment relates positively to the development of intelligence and reading skills, and parental involvement in schooling also predicts achievement (Tamis & Lemonda, 2017). Various home factors, namely; mother's responsiveness, discipline style, and involvement with the child; organization of the environment; availability of appropriate learning materials; opportunities for daily stimulation help to enhance concentration in class and finally bring about excellence in academics (Sietske, 2018). Parents who provide a warm, responsive, and supportive home environment; encourage exploration; stimulate curiosity; and provide play and learning materials accelerate their children's intellectual development (Xuan & Amanda, 2018).

**Encouragement of children to go to school regularly:** The most out of education, children need to go to school every day because school attendance has a major influence on educational outcomes in that pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve better results at school and are more likely to complete their schooling (Jackjackpeter & Beetwought, 2017). Parents can encourage their child to attend school by first having a positive attitude to learning and education, themselves, then instilling the same among children through counseling and guidance, among other means (Karey, 2019). Poor school attendance patterns can start as early as the first day of going to school and it is important that from the first day of school parents set an expectation that their children will be at school every day (Nina, 2017). Parents can also reassure a child about school by helping the little one with his homework and since the parents are more knowledgeable about their child's comprehension level, they can explain a class lesson in a way that the kid can better understand (Muthamba, 2017). However, helping does not mean doing all the work for the child, all parents need to do is explain the assignment further to him; the child has a peaceful and quiet place at home where to do his homework and study his lessons (Mangeni, 2016)

Parents have the most direct and lasting impact on children's learning and development of social competence and when they are involved, pupils achieve more, exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior, and feel more comfortable in new settings (Kagoiya, 2018).

Early childhood providers need to reach out to families in order to build the kind of relationships that engage them as active partners early in their children's education.

Educational toys, games and books may appear to be luxuries, and parents may not have the time, energy, or knowledge to find innovative and less expensive ways to foster young children's development. Even in the families with the above average incomes, parents often lack the time and energy to invest fully in their children's preparation for school, and they sometimes face a limited array of options for high-quality child care both before their children start school and during the early school years (Anapol, 2017).

**Listening to Children's Ideas and Requests:** Parents and schools always have expectations of their children. Whether children could eventually meet the expectations depends on a range of social, cognitive developmental and behavioral factors. Parents and schools very often get disappointed once children fail to do so (Mangeni, 2016). However, adults seldom question themselves whether they have set realistic expectations for children, whether the expectations have any impact on children's emotional well-being, whether they ever listen to children's voices and consequences if the voices are ignored.

**Provision of necessary materials to school:** Children are more successful at school when parents are involved. Better yet, teachers, too, are positively affected when parents take interest. That's because involved parents promote positive classroom behavior, make sure children do their homework, and help them be more organized, enforce disciplinary measures, and validate their effort. For teachers, involving parents boosts positive self-perception and job satisfaction (Covell, Howe, & McNeil, 2010).

**Provision of breakfast to children before school:** Almost a third of children regularly go without breakfast before school and are more likely than classmates to be inactive, unfit and obese. While 68% of pupils eat before leaving home, 32% do not (Campbell D. , 2010). The study of 4,326 children, aged 10-16, in England was reported in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition and found that 26.6% of boys and 38.6% of girls skipped breakfast some or all of the time. Boys often blame lack of time, while many girls missed breakfast because they believe doing so would help them lose weight (Rufino, 2016).

**Provision of time to do homework and to read at home:** The advocates of not giving homework to children note that homework dominates after-school time in many households and has been dubbed the 21st century's "new family dinner." Overtired children complain and collapse. Exasperated parents cajole and nag. These family fights often end in tears, threats, and parents secretly finishing their kid's homework (Covell, Howe, & McNeil, 2010).

**Counseling:** Many schools have full-time counselors on staff in order to support pupils who are experiencing personal or academic challenges (Mangeni, 2016). School counselors might teach sex education classes, provide information to pupils about bullying, or offer seminars on study skills. School counselors often help pupils mediate conflicts with their peers, teachers, or parents. Many school counselors also provide therapy and counseling services to pupils during school hours (Adams & Barombarg, 2014)

**Pupils' Behaviors:** Pupil's behaviors can be first looked at on a point of absenteeism. In America, Nearly 1 in 5 high school pupils is "chronically absent" from classes, and the percentage of pupils who miss at least 15 days in the course of an academic year only rises among pupils of color (Clerks, 2013). More than 6.5 million pupils (13% in the USA) are chronically absent. That figure includes 18 percent of all high school pupils, or 3 million pupils, and 11% of elementary school pupils, or 3.5 million pupils. In high school, 20% or more black, Latino, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders are chronically absent, as are multiracial pupils and those still learning English (Lauren, 2016).

In addition, research conducted in various developing countries suggests that the children who are not in school are disproportionately female, impoverished, and rural, and in some instances, these children are doubly disadvantaged if they are female and belong to poor families or if they are female and reside in rural areas. These children are less likely to acquire the benefits of education as they transition into adulthood (Kazeem, Jensen, & Shannon, 2015).

Sharing with my friends: Some of the things some children find very difficult is having the self-assurance to share their friends with others. They might suffer feelings of jealousy, feel left out or worry that their friend prefers the company of someone else (McCracken, 2010). Shared Reading is an interactive reading experience that occurs when pupils join in or share the reading of a big book or other enlarged text while guided and supported by a teacher or other experienced reader. Pupils observe an expert reading the text with fluency and expression. The text must be large enough for all the pupils to see clearly, so they can share in the reading of the text. It is through shared reading that reading and reading strategies that readers use are demonstrated. In shared reading, children learn critical concepts of how print works, get the feel of learning and begin to perceive themselves as readers (Rasingchildrennetwork.com, 2016).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Study Design

McCombes (2019) defines a research design as a framework for planning research and answering

research questions. Its function is to ensure that requisite data in accordance with the problem at hand is collected accurately and economically. Omondi (2019) states that a research design comprises a statement of objectives of the study or the research output, a statement of the data inputs required based on which the research problem is to be solved and the methods of analysis used to treat and analyse the data inputs. For this study, which investigated the stakeholders' perspectives into correlates of academic underachievement in public primary schools, Sareena (2016) recommends the use of a causal-comparative relationship design which is used to determine the causes of a problem just as the categorical factors causing academic underachievement in this study.

The researchers used the qualitative strategies in data collection, analysis, and inference techniques for the broad purpose of breadth and in depth understanding and corroboration (Onwegbuzie & Turner, 2007). The researchers collected information through observations, documentary analysis and interview guide and generate themes and findings, leading to drawing inferences on qualitative approach which helped in depicting information concerning the current status of the phenomenon.

### 3.2. Population and sampling techniques

The study was carried out in 16 public primary schools in Iganga District targeting head teachers, teachers, school prefects, school management committee chairpersons and district education officers. A population sample of 205 teachers, 16 Head teachers, 179 Prefects, 27 School management committee chairpersons and 1 District education officer were sampled.

Given the nature of the population, the study adopted purposive and cluster sampling methods. Purposive sampling was used to select the head teachers, chairpersons of the school management committees and the district education officer who were directly responsible for administration of the schools; they are close supervisors and custodians of policy and performance in the schools. They have reliable information and measures ever employed for the situation as it seems not to be new in the district.

According to Cameron & Miller (2015), Cluster sampling technique was employed to select the teachers and the school prefects in the study. All teachers and primary seven pupils in the randomly selected primary schools participated in the study. Therefore, the teachers and primary seven pupils in the selected schools of the study acted as the representative group for all other teachers and pupils. The teachers and primary seven pupils are key respondents since they are the implementers of the teaching and learning from which achievement can be measured.

**Table 1: Categories of Sample**

Category	Total per school	Population	Sample population
Head teachers	1	16	16
Teachers	15	240	205
Prefects	17	272	179
SMCs	2	32	27
D E O		1	1
Total		561	428

### 3.3 Research instruments

The research instruments used were interview guide, observations checklist and documents. These tools were developed through proper conceptualization of the variables from literature. The interview guides contained open-ended questions to provide balanced arguments about a subtheme.

### 3.4 Data gathering procedure

The researcher secured a letter from the Director of Graduate studies, University Ethics committee of University of Eastern Africa Baraton, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology to introduce him to the field to carry out the study officially. A letter of introduction was also obtained from the University to seek for the research permission from the district and sub-county authorities before embarking on the study. The researchers made appointments with key respondents and then visit the site for the data gathering exercise within the area of study.

Data gathering by the questionnaires and the observation was done concurrently in each school that had been selected for the study. Questionnaires content was explained to the respondents and also the observation check and the purpose of the study. In each school visited, the teachers and primary seven pupils was given the questionnaires under the supervision of the researcher. As respondents filled questionnaires, the researcher made observation taking note of the observed areas of interest to the study.

### 3.5 Treatment of data

The data obtained through interviews, Focus group discussions, Observations and documentary analysis from respondents was organized into themes and sub-themes, analyzed and presented in descriptive manner to ascertain the situation in an exploratory approach.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This section comprises of purely qualitative data. The results form 428 respondents were obtained through interviews using interview guides to groups and individual basing on the category of respondents. Findings form respondents were paraphrased and presented in line with the respective subthemes to clearly establish the stakeholders 'perspectives on the causes of academic underachievement.

### 4.1 Leadership ability of the head teacher and his or her Staff

Generally, leadership is known for determining the trend which development takes in the school set-up. The direct implication of this is that if a leader does not have direction then school development is unseen and so, is the level of pupil and teacher performance. Respondents stated related and other statements to portray an in-depth implication of leadership on performance in schools. At the district level, the District Education officer, Inspectors of schools and the staffing officers are responsible for everything that takes place in individual primary schools. It is from this that they make reports communicating the state of school performance on the side of administrators, teachers, and pupils. Iganga DEO claimed that the general conduct and leadership approaches that head teachers manifest in turn influence the state of events in his or her school. The DEO cited that in some schools, head teachers do not fulfill their responsibilities regularly.

**Late reporting:** Iganga District Education Officer raised concern over the time head teachers arrive at school and related it to the nature of conduct that teachers in turn adopt. The DEO gave an example of head teachers who come to school later than 8.00 am the official arrival time at work, indicating that since the head teacher is regarded as a role-model, late reporting can be emulated by teachers in the same school. To obtain logical evidence about the head teachers' time of arrival, the researcher made observations in four low performing and four high performing public primary schools. The researcher visited each of the two categorical schools for four consecutive days arriving at 7.00 a.m. one hour earlier than 8.00 am the official reporting time. Observations in the low performing school indicated that on the first day, the head teacher arrived at 11.00 am

and on the second day at almost 10.18 am. On the contrary, in the high performing school, the head teacher arrived at 7.30 am and on the second day, he arrived at 7.35 am. The researcher also noted that in low performing schools visited the head teachers stay a distance away from the school compared to their counterparts in the high performing schools. By implication, head teachers in high performing schools arrive early enough to monitor arrival of their teachers and pupils, and this is not the case in low performing schools. To the head teachers, arriving late at school was not a mistake. In fact one of the head teachers in a low performing public primary school reported that in an environment where teachers are treated as kings by the government, no condemnation for late coming is done, and worse of it all, they do not succumb to any form of punishment given to them in a bid to curb late coming, there is no significant reason as to why head teachers need to come to schools early.

***Failure to meet some of the responsibilities:*** school systems are run on policies and programs set by the top management. At a micro level of the school, the head teacher and deputy bear the sole responsibility to make sure everything is moving on well in the school including ensuring that teachers come to school regularly and attend classes as well as enable pupils have regular lessons. However, according to the DEO, many head teachers do not do this, and those who do it, lack regular commitment towards it. The DEO emphasized that head teachers who closely monitor their teachers' commitment towards work later benefit from their efforts in terms of good academic outputs while the reverse is true to head teachers who do not do the same. In some schools, the DEO reported that head teachers delegate deputies to exercise supervisory duties, and given the fact that deputies are more or less teachers, it is unlikely that teachers may honor deputies as they could be to the head teachers. The end of it all is unchanged situation and continuous reports on academic underachievement. More investigations on whether this is common in both low and high performing public primary schools from the DEO revealed that this habit of not closely supervising individual teachers' work cannot be blamed on specific public primary schools. The DEO stressed that such cases are even more common in what people regard as high performing schools. Based on this argument, as far as weaknesses in supervising teachers' work are concerned, both high and

low performing primary schools share the blame, and this leads to another aspect of teacher negligence, which also manifests an unfavorable environment for enhancing academic performance.

***Teacher Negligence and lack of collective spirit to uplift quality of education:*** In an interview with the DEO, it was established that some teachers cannot be delegated to perform certain responsibilities. More specifically, head teachers in certain public primary schools are not free to send teachers to represent them in workshops in that teachers may end up either not attending the workshops or they also delegate. In this case, the idea that head teachers should at times delegate responsibilities to let teachers have exposure to professional chances does not work out clearly here. In relation to the curriculum, a head teacher believes that by delegating a teacher, it is an opportunity for them to listen and adjust to the new advocated teaching methodologies. Rather than a head teacher attending to the workshop and getting time to explain to the teachers, sending a teacher would automatically work out. However, based on results, this was not the case because head teachers were identified to have very little trust in teachers.

## 4.2 Learner's physical needs

FGDs with the school prefects revealed that parents had a number of required physical needs that they were not taking seriously to provide to their children. During the FGD with prefects from school N, prefects reported that parents fail to provide meals at school a situation that forced some of them not to be able to attend afternoon classes because of staying hungry the whole day. *"The reason why I escape from school and do not attend classes at times is because I get hungry and even feel sick so I go and lie down under the mango tree in the school garden till time for going home, said one of them"*. The researchers during observations noted that a good most of the schools and mainly those among the low performing did not have a feeding program for their teachers and learners. However in the performing schools, teachers and learners had a feeding program organized by the school administration and management through mobilization of the parents. This was evident in school L where learners and teachers were served with a lunch meal as shown below.



**Figure 1: Serving of mid-day meals at school L**

It was also noted from the school prefects that some parents could not give to them some requirements as they could give priority to their brothers and sisters that were in the upper classes or secondary schools first. Noted from the prefects in schools O,A, and J where most of them stated that parents do not pay for their educational tour, do not what to provide them with better scholastic materials like counter books with reasons that they will have them when the join secondary schools. Noting the New vision reporter, Asiimwe (2018) reported the parliamentary committee on human rights to the ministry and minister of education to strengthen the efforts of sensitizing the parents on their role on education to their children. The committee said sensitization of the parents, community and other stakeholders would curb the violation of human rights such as parents not providing food for their children while at school, scholastics, sanitary towels and any other necessary to help the child feel comfortable at school

### **4.3 Teacher exposure to current knowledge**

According to school management committee, many teachers lack adequate professional training and yet even primary schools they operate lack appropriate reference materials for curriculum implementation. On that note, with the availability of who can barely prepare incapable teachers, and in a situation where society keeps changing but the teacher educators still employ the traditional methods of teaching pupils, there is doubt that academic improvement may very soon become a reality.

While interviewing the head of SMC for school K, on how his school has tried to keep on recommendable learner performance, he stated that, “Not everything found in the books teachers use is correct. And yet some of our teacher just trusts whatever is in the reference book given to him or her”. The DEO stated that, “some of our schools that are performing well are helping their teacher’s at list to keep up to standard with the current knowledge. They organize CPDs internally for their

teachers, take them out for bench marking with other good schools outside the district, and this gives them challenge to work hard”. Responses from heads of school management committees in schools J, M, and N indicated that some of the teachers base their teaching on what they were taught and the text books they refer to, are not updated to the current curriculum. Reports from these schools continue to indicate that teachers are not interested in seeking to know the newest content in the curriculum and thus, follow it. The fact that teachers are key in the public primary schools, their “pedagogical content knowledge” (knowledge about how to teach particular subject matter content) is central to their effectiveness, thus they are required to always go for Continuous professional development courses so that they enrich their teaching methodologies and not only aim at enhancing academic performance but sustaining it in public primary schools. To harmonize the situation, there is need to borrow from ideas of Andrade (2018) who establishes that many professional development events are planned without input from the intended audience and that whereas administrators often decide on their own what is “best” for their teachers and are puzzled when the results are less than satisfactory, if teachers are allowed to use their own experiences to “zero in” on critical content and instructional issues, they are apt to find what is needed to boost student achievement.

### **4.4 Managerial roles of school managers**

Uganda’s Education Act 13(2008) states the functions of the SMCs below.

1 “A management committee shall manage the school for which it has been established in accordance with the Act and these regulations, subject to any directive which may be given under by the Act by the minister on matters of general policy”.

2 “ The function of the school management committee shall, in so far as they relate to the day-to-day administration, proper and efficient conducted by the school, be performed by the head teacher of the school on behalf of management” pg 51-52. Basing on the

regulations, the managers are almost left with no clear roles to play in the day-to-day managerial duties.

**Meetings for SMC:** In primary schools and other educational institutions, meetings are important because they bring about participation of the parents and the larger community lending much-needed support on ways to bring about change and strengthening school's relationship with local community members. Schools hold management meetings at different intervals of the year. Managers from schools P, N,J, and M reported that they hold meetings anytime it is deemed necessary. In these schools, if a head teacher sees a need, then he or she informs the chairperson of school management who in turn Okays the convening of members to discuss the issue on ground. The most commonly discussed issues relate to school budget, head teachers report about the school, be informed of the numbers of pupils in the school, the teacher in case of some new and transfers, feeding of children at school and in case of any new development by the government in the school. This was also identified in other schools.

General Parents meetings; parents have a responsibility of attending school meetings to contribute ideas to make learning better for their children. However, the response towards school meetings is very poor. Out of four hundred parents in a given primary school geographical location, you can register only fifty parents and the majority of whom being women as reported by the managers during the interview. This indicates a low level of cooperation between parents and schools. Two-way communication between parents and schools was absent. In a situation where the minority decides for the majority, such school meetings are meaningless. The cause for this is that parents have a misconception that meetings are meant to ask them to contribute money towards the school academic programs and the few who take the trouble to attend when they go back to their counter parts are blamed for taking wrong decision.

**Support supervision:** Responding to whether they conduct support school supervision, managers from the low performing schools regarded support supervision as work of head teachers and stressed that anything that happens with the school on regular programs is fully the head teachers' responsibility. Nonetheless, some managers reported that once in a while, they visit the school, not to supervise teachers in the teaching but seeing how teaching goes on in the school and also give support and encouragement to their teacher. "Teachers need counseling if they are to perform well in the school as managers when they see us they take our advice and yet to their head teacher they see him or her as an administrator who forces them to work" manger school G.

**Level of Education for SMC:** The level of education for the SMC greatly determines the kind of information that comes out of their mind as contribution to development. In the selected primary schools, school management committees predominantly comprise illiterate or semi-

illiterate fellows. One of the challenges that come as a result of being illiterate is that managers in many schools do not supervise work to see to it that schools are progressing as well as it is expected. The reasons for having managers with low levels of education on the board partially include that determination of suitable members sometimes depends on the founding body that looks around and nominates members of the foundation body faith they fell competent to represent their interests in the school. Besides, the government does not have a policy that stresses the minimum academic level/qualification for the SMC.

## 4.5 Parent's attitudes toward value for education/rate of return of education

The value of education or the rate of return of education was given by many head teachers and school manager during the interviews. Our parent have negative attitude towards education. That is why they do not take time to encourage children to attend school regularly, School J. On the same note the head teacher school M, stated that most of our schools do not have examples of successful people who have gone through our school and are now better because of education. So our pupils lack those to refer to so as to get encouraged to study hard for success, school M. manager from school E said that the only example of the educated person whom the community could have looked at and encourage children to take education as something useful would have been the teacher. But unfortunately the teachers are the poorest in the communities where they teach. Therefore our parents do not see the rate of return of education that they can put in the little money they have to support their children and the schools.

The managers from school C stated that, most of the rich people in our villages around are common people who have not seen many blackboards. Most of them went through these school up to P7 and others not. But through growing sugarcanes and trading in our common agricultural products the better off than those who have gone through classes and schools. Therefore, our parents do not see why they should be battered with their children's education after all they are not earning alive through education. Noting the research conducted by Education for All (2005), established that supportive teachers and their ability to explain clearly were the most influential factors that impacted students' satisfaction. Furthermore, whether parents send their children to school at all is likely to depend on judgments they make about the quality of teaching and learning provided upon whether attending school is worth the time and cost for their children and themselves.

## 4.6 Pupil regular absenteeism

Majority of the head teachers from low performing schools reported regular absenteeism of pupils as one

of the problem they find in maintaining the school standard in performance. In their responses, they stressed that it is not easy to envisage effective teaching/learning process because pupils keep on missing classes day to day. The deputy head teacher for school B emphasized the same and to show evidence, led the researcher to a primary seven class where only 13 out of 23 pupils were present in class that afternoon. Pupils absenteeism was attributed to the rain season that parents retain pupils at home to help them in the gardens or stay with their young brothers and sister as the parents are the gardens working. Pupil absenteeism was also attributed to child labor mainly to the boys. The DEO stated that many low performing schools have a problem of teacher and pupil absenteeism. Absenteeism due to working in sugar plantations was noted in Nawandala Sub County and rice growing in Makutu where children are kept home to scare away birds from eating rice.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

Some of our low performing schools have got weak head teachers and also the teaching staff who do not take the initiative to supervise teachers' work, thus, no teacher has the excuse to start teaching in the term without all work prepared. The teachers follow what I do. Head teachers do not have capacity to monitor and put right teachers' messes because they keep either out of office or out of school doing private business.

Parents do not provide nor pay for meals at school a situation that forces pupils not to attend afternoon classes some times because of hunger and psychological tremor. In some of the performing schools, the teachers and learners had a feeding program organized by the school administration and management through mobilization of the parents.

Teacher Exposure to Current Knowledge; Some teachers are not good and only base their teaching on what they were taught and the text books we give to them to refer to, which we also have and the only ones. It was not easy for their school to conduct some refresher workshops for their teachers because of money. And yet when you ask some of the schools that are able they don't want to join hands with some of us because they think our improvement will make them loss pupil. Therefore we work in a competition which is unfriendly.

Apart from the routine responsibility of the head teachers to call SMC meetings, school managers cause the head teacher to meet if anything requires attention even when the head teacher is not ready for it. The researcher also noted that most of the managers lack the knowledge of the roles and depended only on the head teacher. Therefore where the head teacher lacked clear guidance on how best to run the school activities, so were the managers.

It was also noted from the responses of majority of the head teachers from the commonly low performing schools that one of the problem they find in maintaining the school standard in performance was the regular pupil absenteeism in school. Teachers attributed this phenomenon of pupil absenteeism to the rain season that parents retain pupils at home to help them in the gardens or stay with their young brothers and sister as the parents are the gardens working. Pupil absenteeism was also attributed to child labor mainly to the boys.

### 5.2 Recommendations

There is need for facilitating capacity building for teachers to enhance effective and ever current information delivery by the teachers to their learners in the current changing and dynamic world, teachers need to be kept anew all the time through capacity building workshops. District education department together with the school head teachers need to have termly budgets to cater for the continuous professional development of teachers.

Further, there is need for additional funding to schools since most low performing schools have parents of a low income who find it hard to have additional support of funding to the needs of their schools to run effectively, it is obligatory that government supplements the capitation grants for such schools. School managers and parents should take up the example of private school where parents contribute towards the needs of their schools. Government also needs to change to system of uniform funding of schools but check on the school needs before funding.

Due to the scope of this study which could not cover all information, the following were suggestions for further study;

- (a) There is need to investigate why parents in public primary schools express negative attitudes towards education
- (b) The causes for variations in infrastructural development among schools despite having same size of administration and similar description of stakeholders

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