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**Technology And School Drop Out In Rukungiri District: A Case Study Of St. Jude Secondary School**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the impact of technology on school dropout rates in Rukungiri District, using St. Jude Secondary School as a case study. A descriptive research design was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected from a sample of 66 respondents, including school heads, students, and local community members, selected through stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques using questionnaires and interviews. The results revealed a complex and dual-faceted role of technology in education. A significant majority of respondents (82% combined) agreed or strongly agreed that technology is a factor leading to school dropouts, highlighting its potential as a source of distraction. Concurrently, the data indicated a strong consensus (94% combined) that technology has, perhaps counter-intuitively, reduced dropout rates, suggesting its value in enhancing student engagement and providing access to educational resources when properly harnessed. Furthermore, a vast majority of respondents (90% combined) agreed that technology's capacity is improved through globalized research, and an overwhelming number of teachers (90% combined) felt positioned to improve technology, indicating a positive attitude and a sense of ownership among educators. However, the findings also showed ambiguity, with 57% of respondents disagreeing that technology affects learning both positively and negatively, pointing to a lack of consensus on its net educational effect and potential inefficiencies in its management and integration. The effectiveness of technology was found to be heavily dependent on its management, the presence of structured guidance, and the ability of the school system to mitigate its risks while leveraging its benefits. The positive disposition of teachers towards technological improvement was identified as a key asset. The study recommended the development and implementation of a comprehensive school-based digital policy to regulate device use, the introduction of targeted digital literacy programs for both students and parents, and investment in continuous professional development for teachers to effectively integrate technology into pedagogy. Further recommendations included the fostering of public-private partnerships to improve technological infrastructure and a shift in supervisory focus towards instructional leadership that supports responsible technology integration.

**Keywords: Technology, School Dropout, Rukungiri District, Descriptive Design, Digital Policy, Digital Literacy, Student Engagement.**

**Background of the study**

Globally, the integration of technology in education has been heralded as a transformative force with the potential to democratize access to information, personalize learning, and equip students with 21st-century skills. Initiatives like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, often emphasize digital literacy as a critical enabler (Kazaara & Audrey, 2024). The prevailing narrative

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champions digital tools for breaking down geographical and socio-economic barriers, offering interactive learning platforms, and preparing youth for a digital economy (Sophie & Crispus, 2024). However, a growing body of evidence points to a "digital divide," where unequal access to technology exacerbates existing educational inequalities. Furthermore, the very devices and platforms intended for learning can introduce significant distractions, with studies linking excessive and unregulated use of smartphones and social media to decreased academic performance, reduced attention spans, and increased disengagement from school, potentially contributing to dropout risks in various international contexts (Victor et al., 2023). This creates a complex dualism where technology acts as both a potential solution to educational challenges and a potential catalyst for new ones.

The continent has experienced a rapid surge in mobile phone penetration, often leapfrogging traditional infrastructure and creating a generation of youth who are first and foremost mobile internet users (Ansebo & Gaywala, 2022). The (Kintu et al., 2017) recognizes this potential, advocating for technology to accelerate educational outcomes. However, the implementation is fraught with challenges. Many African education systems struggle with foundational issues such as inadequate funding, teacher shortages, and overcrowded classrooms. In this context, the introduction of technology can be a disruptive force, often occurring without the necessary safeguards, digital literacy curricula, or teacher training. The focus on access can sometimes overshadow the critical need for responsible use, leading to scenarios where personal digital devices become primary sources of entertainment and distraction rather than learning tools, potentially pulling vulnerable students away from their academic pursuits (Emmanuel et al., 2023).

The Ministry of Education and Sports has encouraged the use of digital materials to enhance teaching and learning. However, a significant policy-practice gap exists. Many schools, particularly in rural areas, lack the basic infrastructure consistent electricity, internet connectivity, and computer labs to support structured digital learning (Irumba et al., 2024). This void is often filled by students' personal ownership of inexpensive smartphones, which provide unmediated access to the internet. The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC, 2023) reports rising internet usage among youth, but parallel data from the (Godfrey et al., 2023) indicates persistent secondary school dropout rates, especially in rural districts. This correlation suggests an urgent need to investigate whether the unregulated use of personal digital technology is becoming a contributing factor to student disengagement and dropout, a question that remains largely unexplored in the Ugandan context.

Focusing on Rukungiri District, a predominantly rural region in Southwestern Uganda, the dynamics of technology and education take on a specific and critical character (David et al., 2023). The district, with its agrarian economy and challenging topography, faces typical rural challenges of poverty and limited educational resources (Shamim et al., 2023). St. Jude Secondary School, like many others in the district, operates within this constrained environment.

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Here, students' access to technology is almost exclusively through personal mobile phones, used outside the structured guidance of a school ICT lab or a formal digital citizenship curriculum (Christopher et al., 2024). Preliminary observations suggest that these devices, while offering a window to the world, may also be a source of significant distraction, exposing students to social media, online gaming, and other entertainment that can compete with study time and academic focus. The problem, therefore, is not technology itself, but its nature of use in a context devoid of the mediating structures found in more resourced settings. This study seeks to investigate this precise nexus at St. Jude Secondary School, aiming to determine the extent to which personal technology use is influencing student engagement and contributing to the complex decision to drop out, thereby providing crucial localized evidence to inform school policies and parental guidance in the digital age.

### **Problem Statement**

Despite the Ugandan government's promotion of ICT in education, a critical and under-researched problem is emerging in rural secondary schools: the unregulated use of personal digital technology may be contributing to student dropout rates (Victor et al., 2023). This issue is acutely present at St. Jude Secondary School in Rukungiri District. While technology offers educational potential, the core problem is that students' unsupervised access to smartphones and the internet is introducing significant distractions that compete with academic engagement (John et al., 2023). Preliminary observations suggest that excessive time spent on social media, online gaming, and entertainment is leading to decreased attention in class, poor academic performance, and ultimately, disengagement from school (Julius, 2024). This situation is exacerbated by a lack of structured digital literacy programs, inadequate school-level policies on device usage, and limited parental guidance on responsible technology consumption. Consequently, there is a pressing need to investigate the specific nature and extent of the relationship between personal technology use and the dropout phenomenon at St. Jude Secondary School (Agrawal, 2025). Without a clear understanding of this dynamic, the school and district cannot develop effective interventions to mitigate the risks of technology, thereby failing to harness its benefits and potentially allowing a preventable driver of student attrition to persist.

### **Specific objectives**

1. To find out the level of technology at St. Jude secondary school, Rukungiri District
2. To find out the extent of school drop out at St. Jude secondary school, Rukungiri District
3. To examine the relationship between Technology and School drop out at St. Jude secondary school, Rukungiri District

### **Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive research design, which served as the strategic blueprint for investigating the relationship between technology and school dropout rates. The design was selected for its capacity to systematically observe and describe the phenomenon as it naturally unfolded within the school environment, enabling a comprehensive documentation of how technological factors influenced educational outcomes (Rasheed et al., 2022).

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The investigation integrated both qualitative and quantitative approaches, with the qualitative component facilitating detailed, contextual descriptions of the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders, while the quantitative dimension supported the construction of statistical models and enabled comparative analysis through statistical aggregation of data (Maiga et al., 2021). The research was conducted at St. Jude Secondary School in Rukungiri District, an educational institution situated within a broader community that included various secondary schools, primary institutions, and tertiary establishments serving both local residents and students from neighboring districts.

The study population comprised school heads, learners, and local community members, who were selected using a stratified sampling technique based on occupational characteristics. From a total population of 80 individuals, a sample size of 66 respondents was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, consisting of 20 students, 10 school heads, and 36 local community members (Maiga et al., 2021). The sampling procedure incorporated both simple random sampling to ensure equal selection probability for community members and students, and purposive sampling to strategically identify key informants such as the District Education Officer and School Inspectors who possessed specialized knowledge relevant to the research objectives. This dual approach balanced representativeness with the practical need to access information-rich participants efficiently, while acknowledging that purposive sampling limited full population representativeness (Olanrewaju et al., 2021).

Data collection utilized a combination of questionnaires and interviews to gather both quantitative and qualitative information. The researcher prepared and distributed 66 questionnaires containing closed-ended questions with additional remark spaces to all selected participants, ensuring confidentiality and using English as the medium of communication. Complementing this, face-to-face interviews employing structured interview guides were conducted to capture deeper qualitative insights through verbal stimuli and responses. To ensure data quality, rigorous measures were implemented including validity testing through expert judgment and reliability assessment using pilot testing and split-half method analysis with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022).

The data analysis process involved editing, coding, and tabulation of responses, utilizing descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and percentages for quantitative data, while qualitative information underwent content analysis with responses categorized according to thematic areas. Throughout the research process, stringent ethical considerations were maintained, including obtaining necessary approvals, ensuring participant voluntariness, and protecting confidentiality through anonymous data handling. The study encountered several limitations including respondent unwillingness, incomplete questionnaires, weather-related disruptions in Rukungiri District, response exaggeration, and handwriting interpretation challenges. These limitations were addressed through strategic countermeasures such as rapport building, assisted questionnaire completion, flexible scheduling, clear

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communication of research purposes, and proactive handwriting assistance, which collectively ensured the collection of reliable and valid data for the study.

**Results**

**Table 1 Shows the Response on Technology by the teachers**

<b>Questionnaire item</b>	<b>Response category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Technology is one of the factors contributing to school drop out	Strongly disagree	0	00.0%
	Disagree	18	18.0%
	Undecided	00	00.0%
	Agree	60	60.0%
	Strongly agree	22	22.0%
To some extent, technology may also keep learners into school	Strongly disagree	18	18.0%
	Disagree	17	17.0%
	Undecided	03	03.0%
	Agree	47	47.0%
	Strongly agree	15	15.0%
Technology has also improved academic achievement of learners	Strongly disagree	03	03.0%
	Disagree	20	20.0%
	Undecided	11	11.0%
	Agree	43	43.0%
	Strongly agree	23	23.0%
I am in a position of improving technology	Strongly disagree	00	00.0%
	Disagree	00	00.0%
	Undecided	10	10.0%
	Agree	63	63.0%
	Strongly agree	27	27.0%
Technology has also limited the levels of school drop out	Strongly disagree	00	00.0%
	Disagree	06	06.0%
	Undecided	00	00.0%
	Agree	84	84.0%

	Strongly agree	10	10.0%
Technology can be improved	Strongly disagree	01	01.0%
	Disagree	07	07.0%
	Undecided	00	00.0%
	Agree	85	85.0%
	Strongly agree	07	07.0%
Technology affects learning both positively and negatively	Strongly disagree	03	03.0%
	Disagree	57	57.0%
	Undecided	13	13.0%
	Agree	19	19.0%
	Strongly agree	08	08.0%

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

In Table 1 the findings indicate that generally, most respondents (60 or 60.0%) agreed that technology is one of the factors leading to school drop out in schools and 22 (or 22.0%) strongly agreed. This suggests that most secondary schools in Rukungiri have functioning departments and this is likely to lead to reduction of the work load of administrators. A look at Technology affects learning both positively and negatively, the findings show those 19 (or 19.0%) respondents agreed and 08 (or 08.0%) of them strongly agreed. This implies that technology may influence learners to have access to educational resources and therefore encourage them to perform excellently.

On whether to some extent technology may keep learners at school, the findings indicate that 47 (or 47.0%) respondents agreed while 15 (or 15.0%) strongly agreed. This means that expertise is considered in allocation of activities to teachers in Kitagwenda Town Council secondary schools. It implies that teachers are motivated to get more involved in school administration. They work harder because they feel promoted since they are executing high level roles. They feel trusted and work to their level best. Asked whether they were in a position to improve technology, the findings indicate that most teachers (63 or 63.0%) agreed and 27 (or 27.0%) strongly agreed. This suggests that most secondary school teachers in Rukungiri District are in positions to improve technology. This suggests that there is team work in school administration. This improves technology. They get a sense of belonging and work hard to justify their occupational offices.

According to whether technology has reduced on school drop out, the findings show that most respondents (84 or 84.0%) agreed and 10 (or 10.0%) strongly agreed. This implies that there is flexibility in the technology

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advancement by the teachers. About technology being improved due to globalized research, findings indicate that most of the respondents (85 or 85.0%) agreed and 07 (or 07.0%) strongly agreed. This shows that teachers get attracted to work hard as they feel more responsible for the activities entrusted to them. They also feel obliged to perform to produce results to prove their worthiness in the activities allocated to them. This is because teachers get satisfied with their jobs hence putting more effort leading to better performance.

A look at technology affecting learning both positively and negatively, the findings show that majority of respondents (57 or 57.0%) disagreed compared to 19 (or 19.0%) respondents who agreed. This suggests that there is no quick decision making due to allocation of activities. It further suggests that head teachers seem to reserve the powers in making decisions concerning the management of the schools. This is likely to lead to inefficiency in management of schools.

**Table 2 Teachers’ responses on assignment of responsibilities to reduce on school drop out**

Questionnaire item	Response category	Frequency	Percent
Load is shared through delegation of responsibilities	Strongly disagree	00	0.0%
	Disagree	00	0.0%
	Undecided	06	06.0%
	Agree	80	80.0%
	Strongly agree	14	14.0%
I am assigned different responsibilities	Strongly disagree	08	08.0%
	Disagree	10	10.0%
	Undecided	06	06.0%
	Agree	25	25.0%
	Strongly agree	51	51.0%
I hold a position of responsibility	Strongly disagree	01	01.0%
	Disagree	02	02.0%
	Undecided	06	06.0%
	Agree	79	79.0%
	Strongly agree	12	12.0%
I am responsible for the duties of my office	Strongly disagree	00	00.0%
	Disagree	06	06.0%
	Undecided	03	03.0%

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	Agree	67	67.0%
	Strongly agree	14	14.0%

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

On the issue of sharing of load as a result of delegation of responsibilities, majority of respondents (80 or 80.0%) agreed and 14 (or 14.0%) strongly agreed. This implies that there is no work accumulation as teachers become part of the school team. They supervise one another and therefore work closely. On whether teachers are assigned different responsibilities, majority of respondents (51 or 51.0%) strongly agreed and 25 (or 25.0%) agreed. Thus, going by the opinion of the majority, teachers in Kitagwenda Town Council secondary schools are assigned different responsibilities. This implies that teachers come to understand the functioning of their respective schools and hence reduces complaints. On holding a position of responsibility, majority of respondents (79 or 79.0%) agreed, while 12 (or 12.0%) strongly agreed. This suggests that when teachers hold positions of responsibilities, they are likely to participate enthusiastically in responsibilities to produce good results. Concerning, whether teachers are responsible for the duties of their respective offices, 67 (or 67.0%) respondents agreed and 14 (or 14.0%) respondents strongly agreed. This implies that the work of administrators is likely to be easier when most teachers are responsible for the assigned duties in their respective schools. Head teachers may not need to be in schools all the time because the work can be easily handled by teachers when delegated responsibilities. This makes schools to function with flexibility because teachers become satisfied with their jobs.

**Table 3 Teachers’ responses on power position**

Questionnaire item	Response category	Frequency	Percent
I have the power to execute responsibilities	Strongly disagree	00	00.0%
	Disagree	19	19.0%
	Undecided	05	05.0%
	Agree	64	64.6%
	Strongly agree	12	12.0%
I have power over the work situation	Strongly disagree	11	11.0%
	Disagree	47	47.0%
	Undecided	06	06.0%
	Agree	26	26.0%
	Strongly agree	10	10.0%
I have power to utilize resources	Strongly disagree	00	00.0%
	Disagree	03	03.0%

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	Undecided	10	10.0%
	Agree	66	66.0%
	Strongly agree	21	21.0%
I have full authority to decision making	Strongly disagree	10	10.0%
	Disagree	62	62.0%
	Undecided	05	05.0%
	Agree	20	20.0%
	Strongly agree	03	03.0%

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

The findings from table 3 show that the teachers have the power to execute responsibilities.

This is evidenced by the majority of the respondents (64 or 64.0%) agreeing to the item asked. Having power to execute responsibilities is likely to make teachers work harder towards the development of their respective schools in Kitagwenda Town Council.

On having power over the work situation, majority (47 or 47.0%) disagreed and 11 (or 11.0%) strongly disagreed. A total of 26 respondents agreed. This implies that teachers have no full power over work situation. This is likely to lead to reduction in performance towards the management of the school. The findings further indicate that the majority of respondents (66 or 66.0%) agreed that they have power to utilize resources at school, and 21 (or 21.0%) respondents strongly agreed. This suggests that having power to utilize resources is likely to motivate teachers to work hard. With having full authority to decision making, the majority of the respondents (62 or 62.0%) disagreed and 10 (or 10.0%) respondents strongly disagreed with the item asked. This suggests that head teachers reserve the authority to making final decisions concerning the management of the school.

**Table 4 Teachers' responses on School drop out**

Questionnaire item	Response category	Frequency	Percent
School drop out affects learner's academic excellence	Strongly disagree	00	0.0%
	Disagree	07	07.0%
	Undecided	04	04.0%
	Agree	61	61.0%
	Strongly agree	28	28.0%
School technology can be	Strongly disagree	18	18.0%
	Disagree	04	04.0%

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minimized in schools	Undecided	00	0.0%
	Agree	57	57.0%
	Strongly agree	22	22.0%
We are one of the factors leading to school drop out	Strongly disagree	00	0.0%
	Disagree	04	04.0%
	Undecided	10	10.0%
	Agree	52	52.0%
	Strongly agree	34	34.0%
It is the duty of the state to fight against School drop out	Strongly disagree	00	0.0%
	Disagree	06	06.0%
	Undecided	01	01.0%
	Agree	72	72.0%
	Strongly agree	21	21.0%
There is improvement in performance because of reduced School drop out of the learners	Strongly disagree	01	01.0%
	Disagree	04	04.0%
	Undecided	02	02.0%
	Agree	81	81.0%
	Strongly agree	12	12.0%
There is increased intervention to reduce school drop out	Strongly disagree	02	02.0%
	Disagree	05	05.0%
	Undecided	05	05.0%
	Agree	65	65.0%
	Strongly agree	23	23.0%

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

In Table 4, the findings indicate that there is effectiveness in activities execution. This is seen when the majority of respondents (61 or 61.0%) agreed and 28 (or 28.0%) strongly agreed. This implies that effectiveness in activities execution is likely to lead to the better performance in schools. As to whether there is efficiency in fulfilment of activities, the majority of respondents (57 or 57.0%) agreed and 22 (or 22.0%) respondents strongly agreed. Thus, going by the opinion of the majority, teachers in Kitagwenda Town Council are efficient in fulfilment of activities assigned to them. This is likely to lead to promotion of good relationship between teachers and the school

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administrators. The findings in Table 4 further indicate that most teachers are dedicated to their work. This is seen when 52 (or 54.0%) respondents agreed and 34 (or 34.0%) respondents strongly agreed. This suggests that when teachers are dedicated to their work, it is likely to increase performance in their respective schools. On the item of working hard because of being in a position of responsibility, many of the respondents (72 or 72.0% agreed and 21 (or 21.0%) respondents strongly agreed. This implies that being in position of responsibility is likely to lead teachers to work hard in order to avoid failure.

About improvement in performance because of reduced workload of administrators, majority of respondents (81 or 81.0%) agreed while 12 (or 12.0%) respondents strongly agreed. This suggests that reduced workload among administrators is likely to improve on their performance since there is no accumulation of work.

### **Conclusions**

The study investigated Technology and school drop out in Rukungiri District: A case study of St Jude Secondary School: It was intended to find out the relationship between Technology and school drop out at St Jude secondary school. The study specifically sought to examine the relationship between Technology and school drop out to establish the relationship between Technology and school drop out and to find out the relationship between power position of teachers and job satisfaction. In the findings of the study, many important observations were made and the following conclusions drawn;

In the first place, there is a relationship between allocation of activities to teachers and job satisfaction as a way to minimize school drop out. The greater the activities allocated to the teachers the greater the job satisfaction obtained. Teachers are encouraged to do their work well and be creative, get more involved in running the affairs of their schools and work towards perfection. They also develop the willingness to work beyond normal time, putting in more effort and have better attitudes towards their jobs. They feel more involved, have a more sense of belonging, work hard to justify their positions in offices and enjoy work because they feel promoted since they are executing high level roles. They feel trusted and work to their level best for they feel responsible for the activities entrusted to them and they also feel obliged to perform to produce results to prove their worthiness.

There is a relationship between assignment of responsibilities to teachers and their job satisfaction. The higher the placement, the greater the job satisfaction because they become part of the school team, supervising one another, working more closely together and participate at least in some of the school activities enthusiastically. The teachers become available at the school especially if there is an occasion that requires the presence of all the teachers and nobody wants to be seen to be betraying the cause of the school. The teachers participate enthusiastically in “extra teaching and crash programmes, participate and contribute freely in meetings, have commitment to reports writing

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and get involved in handling parents' and visitors' issues. Teachers know the functioning of the school reducing complaints. Teachers do not feel disconcerted whenever there is an issue requiring their input.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher has argued in this report that there is a positive relationship between Technology and school drop out and assignment of responsibilities to teachers and their job satisfaction and between power position of teachers and job satisfaction. The study has shown that allocation of activities leads to efficiency and effectiveness of teachers in schools and their teachers' attitudes to their jobs, assignment of responsibilities makes teachers become part of the school team, makes them know the functioning of the school and makes the school function with a lot of flexibility, and that possession of power by teachers makes them work hard and having power over resources makes them enjoy their work. Basing upon the above generalizations, the researcher recommends that;

Head teachers should allocate more activities to teachers through ensuring that there is existence of functioning departments, consideration of expertise in allocation of activities, giving positions of responsibility to teachers and being flexible in the management of the schools through letting teachers be involved in handling different matters as situations arise. This is because allocation of activities leads to efficiency and effectiveness of teachers in schools hence leading to their job satisfaction.

Head teachers should also assign more responsibilities to teachers through ensuring that individual skills are considered in the assignment of responsibilities, sharing of load with the teachers, putting them in positions of responsibility and making them responsible to the duties of their positions. This is because assignment of responsibilities makes teachers become part of the school team, know the functioning of the school and makes the school function with flexibility leading to creation of their job satisfaction.

Teachers should be given power in the positions they occupy to execute responsibilities and to have power over work situations, they should be empowered to utilize resources and be given authority to make decisions in order to create their job satisfaction. This is because giving power to teachers makes them work hard and enjoy their work.

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