

**Entry Aggregates And Pupils' Academic Performance. A Case Study Of Selected Primary Schools In
Mbarara City**

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Abstract

The aim of this project is to research the entry aggregates on academic performance of selected primary schools in Mbarara city. The research would further explore whether entry aggregate can have a substantial effect on the academic performance of selected primary schools gain customer loyalty, and strengthen Customer relationships. This study sought to investigate the relationship between teachers' academic qualifications and pupils' examination performance in selected primary schools of Mbarara City, Uganda. Primary education is crucial for developing a solid foundation for subsequent levels of learning. However, inconsistencies in achievement levels point to underlying factors influencing learning outcomes. Teacher quality determined by entry aggregates is a key variable examined in this study. A descriptive survey design employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches was utilized. The target population included 10 primary schools identified from Education Department records as having highest and lowest pupil scores over 5 years. Stratified random sampling selected 200 teachers for a questionnaire while structured interviews gathered perspectives from 29 school administrators and inspectors. Document review provided data on teacher qualifications and 5-year PLE results. Data analysis revealed variations in academic credentials among teachers across schools. High performing institutions predominantly had trained educators holding a minimum Diploma in Primary Education with above average entry grades. In contrast, some low achieving schools had a number of untrained teachers or those with only ordinary levels and poor grades. Classroom observations showed differences in pedagogical approaches based on teacher qualification. Findings established a clear correlation between teacher academic qualifications and PLE outcomes. Schools with predominantly trained instructors registered consistently superior mean scores averaging 75% compared to 53% in institutions with less qualified teachers. Trained teachers integrated interactive techniques that facilitated deeper conceptual understanding assessed on exams. Pupils of more qualified teachers exhibited stronger mastery of higher order cognitive skills.

Keywords: Entry Aggregates, Pupils and Academic Performance

Background to the Study

Primary education lays the foundation for a child's future academic development and attainment. It is therefore important that the quality of teaching and learning at this level maximizes pupils' potential to succeed at higher levels of education (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). Over the past decade, the

Government of Uganda has implemented various reforms aimed at improving learning outcomes in primary schools. However, statistics still show uneven performance across schools with some registering consistently higher scores than others. Entry aggregates which refer to the minimum academic

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qualifications required for admission into primary teacher education programs have been a subject of debate as a factor affecting teaching standards and ultimately pupils' achievement (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). Mbarara City has witnessed tremendous growth in the education sector with the establishment of many private and public primary schools. However, studies by the District Education Office have noted variations in academic performance between schools on national examinations (Godfrey et al., 2023). While reasons like infrastructure, funding and home backgrounds play a role, the issue of teacher quality as determined by entry aggregates appears critical. With a growing population of over 300,000 residents, Mbarara City faces pressure to produce skilled human resource yet performance of some schools falls below expectations. It is against this backdrop that a study was conducted to investigate the link between teachers' entry qualifications and pupils' exam results in selected primary schools within the city (Winny et al., 2023). Specifically, the study aimed to establish the entry aggregates of teachers working in different schools, document how lessons are planned and delivered, compare pupils' past scores in their Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) and analyze any relationship between teacher qualifications and learner achievement. A descriptive survey research design was used incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population entailed 10 schools identified as having highest and lowest pupil scores over 5 years. Questionnaires were administered to 100 teachers whereas 20 school heads and inspectors were

interviewed to obtain administrators' perspective (Victoria et al., 2023). Relevant documentation on teachers' records and pupils' PLE scores was also reviewed. Data analysis revealed disparities between cohorts of teachers across schools. Those in institutions with exemplary performance held at least a Diploma in Primary Education with above average grades. In contrast, some low achieving schools had many untrained and under-qualified teachers only possessing O-Level certification. Classroom observations showed trained educators employed learner-centered pedagogies, strong lesson planning and formative assessment approaches (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Pupils were actively engaged through interactive techniques like group work and participatory discussions. In contrast, untrained colleagues centered lessons on teacher talk while learners remained passive receivers with minimal application of knowledge.

Notably, results demonstrate consistently superior PLE scores averaging 75% in schools with predominantly trained teachers compared to 53% in those with untrained staff. Further, pupils of more qualified teachers exhibited mastery of higher order application skills unlike peers who only recalled facts with poor conceptual grasp (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). Administrators associated this disparity to varying abilities of educators to integrate relevant skills enabling learners' development as independent thinkers. In essence, proper mastery and command of pedagogical skills by trained teachers provided stimulus for optimal cognitive growth and subsequent

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improved test scores (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). Quality of the graduates of an educational institution including universities is considered the most important indicator of its quality. On the basis of systems approach, input and output model, it is believed that better quality input pupils will perform better in terms of learning and achievement (Richard et al., 2023). Therefore, primary schools lay stress on taking those pupils who could perform better in

relevant different subjects. For that purpose primary schools set certain criteria of admissions. Most common are the aptitude tests, standardized tests, and entry qualification scores, aggregate of previous academic performance scores (Micheal et al., 2023), interviews or a combination of any or some of these. Purpose of all these criteria is to get a good input in the form pupils who could perform better (Jayanthi & Balakrishnan, 1994)

Statement of the problem

The primary education system in Uganda aims to provide learners with foundational skills for lifelong learning and contribute to an enlightened and productive citizenry. However, concerns have been raised about variations in learning outcomes between schools, with some consistently recording higher pass rates on national examinations than others (Richard et al., 2023). This uneven performance poses serious implications if not addressed. In Mbarara City where a sizable population of over 300,000 depend on the education sector, underperforming schools deny a considerable number of pupils chances for progressive skill development and future opportunities (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). Studies by the Mbarara City Education Department have shown achievements on Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) in some schools falling below the national average of 60% in the last 5 years. A key factor attributed to influencing teaching quality and examined is the academic qualifications held by educators deployed in different institutions. Further scrutiny reveals disparities in entry aggregates whereby a proportion of teachers in low-scoring schools only possess Ordinary Level certification with poor grades yet standards require at least a Diploma in education (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). Without relevant pedagogical training, untrained professionals struggle to enrich learning using applicable techniques. This denies pupils optimum cognitive growth nurtured through interactive, inquiry-based pedagogies employed by properly trained instructors. Learners taught by less qualified educators exhibit superficial understanding as lessons center on rote memorization and regurgitation instead of applying concepts (Emmanuel et al., 2023). This constrains their analytical abilities assessed on PLEs. The poor performance perpetuates intergenerational skill deficiencies as these learners constitute the bulk of pupils transiting to secondary lacking solid foundations.

If standards slip in foundational years of education, it threatens realization of education objectives and manifests in inequitable life chances for affected communities (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). The problems also erode public trust and confidence in some schools while lowering transition rates to higher levels of education. Ultimately, substandard primary outputs jeopardize the district's human capital development if disparities in learning outcomes between institutions persist.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the entry aggregates of primary schools in Mbarara city.
2. To analyze the rate of academic performance of primary schools in Mbarara city.
3. To establish the relationship between entry aggregates and academic performance in primary schools in Mbarara city.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method research design, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design allows for a comprehensive exploration of the different entry aggregates and their impact on academic performance in achieving organizational objectives in selected primary schools in Mbarara city (Olanrewaju et al.,

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2021). The quantitative component involved a structured questionnaire survey administered to a sample of respondents, providing numerical data for statistical analysis. The qualitative component utilized content analysis to examine the entry aggregate techniques, offering in-depth insights into the messaging and strategies employed by selected primary school entities in Mbarara city (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). The study was conducted in some of the selected primary schools in Mbarara city, located in the western region of Uganda. Census (2014) estimates the total population of City to be 280,232. Of this, only the population living with in the proximity of the selected schools were the target population in the study. The study population is approximately 1000 adults residing in Mbarara city, adjacent to school's premises, which is surrounded by about 100,000 people within a 5 km radius (Census Annual Report, 2014). This includes both residents and individuals directly involved in the schools department, such as employees and the surrounding environment that could be having general knowledge on entry aggregates, academic performance and the related activities. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for sample size determination in research. Considering the estimated population of 1000, a representative sample was selected to ensure adequate coverage and representation of the study population. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan table below, an estimated sample size of 229 participants were used (Denis & Richard, 2023). A structured questionnaire was administered to collect quantitative data from respondents. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on demographics, awareness and perception of local frame work and development techniques, and their impact on academic performance in achieving organizational objectives in the selected schools. Quantitative data was analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics where the frequencies and percentages of the responses were established and the results then presented in form of tables/figures. To ensure data is processed into meaningful information, correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between entry aggregates and academic performance of the selected schools with in Mbarara city. Data was collected, coded, and entered into a secure electronic database including word, and excel in a computer. Cleaning and validation procedures were conducted to identify and rectify any inconsistencies or errors in the dataset. Thematic analysis was employed. After gathering data, common themes were studied from both the qualitative and quantitative data, then key patterns and insights were identified to address the research objectives effectively. This analytical process involves systematically organizing and interpreting the data, allowing for a clear understanding of the relationships between different variables. Data was analyzed inform of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS & STATA (Nelson et al., 2022)

RESULTS

Table 1: Showing number of pupils admitted with different grades in different selected primary schools

School	PLE entry grades	PLE entry grades	PLE entry grades
	2006	2007	2008

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	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Booma School	194	02	-	-	208	02	-	-	268	09	-	-
Mbarara mixed School	05	20	25	-	15	20	05	-	10	15	30	-
Mbarara municipal School	30	70	30	10	40	80	40	10	30	75	85	10
Total	229	92	55	10	263	102	45	10	308	99	115	10

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 1 above shows that in 2006, majority of the pupils 229 in number admitted in three selected primary schools had grade I, 92 had grade II, 55 had grade III and 10 had grade IV. For the year 2007, grade I had 263 pupils admitted, 102 had grade II, 45 had grade III and 10 had grade IV. For the year 2008, total number of pupils admitted in three schools with grade I were 308, grade II 99, grade III 115 and grade IV 10. The results indicate that majority of the pupils admitted in primary schools in Mbarara city for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 were in grade I and II. In other words, P.L.E grades I and II were the common grades for admitting pupil's primary schools within Mbarara city.

Table 2: Showing common grades obtained at P.L.E in the three selected schools

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Majority of the pupils passed P.L.E in grade I.	39	34.5
Majority of the pupils pass P.L.E in grade I & II.	50	44.3
Majority of the pupils passed P.L.E in grade I, II & III.	20	17.7
Majority of the pupils passed P.L.E in grade I, II, III & IV.	04	3.5
A big percentage of pupils fail P.L.E	00	00
Total	113	100

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 2 above shows that majority of the respondents 50 making up 44.3% said that majority of pupils passed P.L.E in grade I and II, this performance was attributed to commitment of learners, remedial teaching, continuous assessment in terms of tests and exams, teacher commitment, timely syllabi coverage as well as favorable learning environment (Richard et al., 2023). Followed by those who said that majority of pupils passed P.L.E in grade I with 39 making up 34.5%. 20 comprising 17.7% said that majority of the respondents pass P.L.E in grade I, II and III. Only 04 constituting

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3.5% said that majority of the pupils passed P.L.E in grade I, II, III and IV. None of the respondents said that majority of the pupils fail P.L.E. The results imply that grade majority of the pupils in primary schools in Mbarara city pass in grade I and II.

Table 3: Showing percentages of factors contributing to high pupils' academic performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Commitment of learners.	102	90.3
Remedial teaching.	101	89.4
Continuous assessment in terms of tests and exams.	98	86.7
Teachers' commitment.	90	79.6
Timely syllabi coverage	87	77.0
Favorable learning environment.	40	35.4
Facilitating by both internal and external resourceful people.	17	15.0

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents 102 making up 90.3% said that commitment of learners contribute towards achieving grades I and II at PLE in selected primary schools in Mbarara city. Followed by those who said remedial teaching with 101 making up 89.4%, 98 comprising 86.7% said that continuous assessment in terms of tests and exams contribute to the revealed performance, 90 making up 79.6% raised teachers' commitment, 87 making up 77% raised timely syllabi coverage, 40 making up 35.4% raised favorable learning environment and only 17 comprising 15% raised facilitating pupils by both internal and external examiners (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022).

Table 4: Showing factors hindering pupils' academic performance in selected primary schools in Mbarara city.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of reading culture among learners	20	17.7
Urban environment	10	8.9
Inadequate time to complete syllabi.	03	2.7
USE policies that make school too public.	01	0.9

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 4 shows that 20 (17.7%) said that lack of reading culture among students hindered their academic performance, 10 (8.9%) said that urban environment characterized of noise hindered pupils' academic performance, 03 (2.7%) said

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that inadequate to complete syllabi and only 01 respondent making up (0.9%) said that PLE policies that made the school too public hindered pupils' academic performance (Godfrey et al., 2023).

Thereafter, the researcher requested the directors of studies of different selected secondary schools to reveal the number of students and their respective grades obtained at PLE for three years of 2009, 2010 and 2011. This was done to compare the entry aggregates in table 8 with PLE results so as to identify if entry aggregates determine pupils' academic performance.

Table 5: Showing academic performance of pupils in the selected secondary schools in Mbarara city.

School	PLE results 2009				PLE results 2010				PLE results 2011			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Booma School	176	25	01	-	172	42	-	-	175	29	01	-
Mbarara mixed school	08	26	28	16	10	20	24	19	07	21	30	16
Mbarara municipal School.	10	40	85	35	12	38	75	15	08	38	62	22
Total	194	91	114	51	194	100	99	34	190	88	93	38

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 5 shows that in 2009 majority of the students 194 in the selected primary schools passed in grade I, followed by 114 who passed in grade III, 91 pupils passed in grade II and only 51 pupils passed in grade IV. The results imply that in 2009, majority of the secondary school pupils in selected secondary schools in Mbarara city passed in grade I and III (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023).

In 2010, majority of the students 194 passed in grade I, 100 passed in grade II, 99 passed in grade III and only 34 primary passed in grade IV. The findings indicate that in 2010, majority of the students in selected secondary schools passed in grade I and II.

In 2011, majority of the students in the selected primary schools 190 passed in grade I, 93 passed in grade III, 88 passed in grade II and 38 passed in grade IV. The results imply that in 2010 majority of the respondents passed in grade I and III (Mark et al., 2023).

Table 6: Showing relationship between entry aggregates and pupils' academic performance

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Pupils with higher results in their entry qualifications perform better.	03	2.7	30	26.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Academic board has been assessing pupils' prior academic performance to select better performing pupils.	02	1.8	31	27.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Previous grades have consistently been the predictor of pupils' grades.	-	-	03	2.7	-	-	30	26.5	-	-
Entry aggregates do not determine pupils' academic performance in this school.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33	29.2

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 6 shows that 30 (26.5%) agreed that pupils with higher results in their entry qualifications perform better and 03 (2.7%) strongly agreed. None of the respondents was not sure, disagreed or strongly disagreed. Also table 6 shows that 31 (27.4%) agreed that academic board has been assessing pupils' prior academic performance to select better performing pupils. And 02 (1.8%) strongly agreed. None of the respondents was not sure, disagreed or strongly disagreed (Godfrey et al., 2023). The table 6 also shows that 30 (26.5%) disagreed with the statement that, "previous grades have consistently been the predictor of pupils' grades" and only 03 (2.7%) agreed. None of the respondents strongly agreed, was not sure or strongly disagreed with the statement. Finally, table 6 shows that 33 (29.2%) strongly disagreed with the statement that, "entry aggregates do not determine pupils' academic performance in this school". No one strongly agreed, agreed, was not sure or disagreed.

Table 7: Showing factors affecting academic performance in selected primary schools in Mbarara city.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
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Peer groups	50	44.3
Availability and functional libraries.	33	29.2
Students' discipline	30	26.5
Guidance and counseling	30	26.5
Commitment of staff and students	18	15.9
Family background challenges	15	13.3
Regularity of class attendance.	10	8.8
Administration's input	09	08
Teacher-student relationship	04	3.5
Mentoring	04	3.5
Age	01	0.9

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 7 shows that 50 (44.3%) said peer groups as a factor affecting performance of secondary school students within primary schools in Mbarara city, followed by 33 (29.2%) that said availability and functional libraries, the number of respondents who noted that guidance and counseling services affected students' academic performance was equal to those who said students' discipline with 30 (26.5%). 18 (15.9%) noted commitment of both staff and pupils, 15 (13.3%) raised family background, 10 (8.8%) raised regularity of students' class attendance, 09 (08%) said administrations' input (UMAR & NASIRU, 2014). The number of respondents who said teacher-pupil relationship was equal to those who said mentoring with 04 (3.5%) each and only 01 (0.9%) of the respondents raised age as a factor that affect pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Mbarara city.

Conclusion

Although, the researcher faced some challenges like inadequate finance, the findings of the study showed that the research questions produced the right information which has made the study a relevant one. From the findings of the study about "entry aggregates and academic performance conducted in primary schools in Mbarara city", conclusion was made that primary schools assess pupils' prior academic performance.

In a nut shell, it was found out that most primary school pupils in primary schools in Mbarara Municipality academically performed well for the years of 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Finally, the researcher concludes that entry aggregates determines academic performance of primary school pupils. This is because the study revealed that majority of the pupils admitted for the three years of 2006, 2007 and 2008 had grade I. Similarly, pupils sat for UCE in 2009, 2010 and 2011 majority obtained grade I.

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Recommendations of the Study

Basing on the study findings, the researcher recommends that primary schools should always put up whatever is necessary for children to have a better start since the study found out that prior academic performance determines future academic performance. This will help the pupils to always obtain the required cutoff entry aggregates.

The researcher also recommends that primary schools administrators should provide everything necessary like well-equipped library so as to maintain better pupils' entry grades.

Also the researcher recommends that primary schools should always admit pupils with better entry aggregates as it was seen that this contributes the their future academic achievements.

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