

**INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL AND HOUSEHOLD FACTORS ON THE COMPLETION RATE
OF STUDENTS. A CASE STUDY OF BUIKWE DISTRICT, UGANDA**

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Abstract: In the backdrop of global consensus on the pivotal role of education in national development, this study delved into the multifaceted factors influencing the completion rate of the girl child in Universal Secondary Education (USE) Schools within Buikwe District. A comprehensive exploration of social, cultural, and economic dynamics underscored the criticality of education in shaping individual lives and contributing to societal progress. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the study utilized qualitative methodologies to capture the complex interplay of factors influencing girls' completion rates. Data from key informants, teachers, and dropout girls were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and documentary analysis. The quantitative aspect, facilitated by statistical analysis using SPSS, aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Results indicated a weak and statistically insignificant correlation between household factors and completion rates, suggesting limited influence. Similarly, the lack of school uniform was not a significant determinant, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to address diverse challenges faced by female students in Buikwe District. In conclusion, the study illuminated the nuanced dynamics influencing the completion rates of the girl child in Buikwe District's USE Schools, with implications for education policies and interventions. Recommendations include targeted interventions addressing school-related factors and financial constraints faced by families, emphasizing the importance of a multifaceted approach to enhance the completion rate of the girl child.

Key words: School Factors, Household factors and Completion rate.

Background of the study.

All over the world, everyone agrees that the education of the population is essential for the development and progress of the country (Victoria et al., 2023). According to a 2015 World Bank report, education plays a critical role in determining how people's lives unfold and how opportunities within and between different social groups are affected. In addition to improving one's own life, education has positive ripple effects that benefit society and the economy in general by developing the human capital that is acquired during formal education (Mark et al., 2023). The continuing existence of educational disparities is highlighted by declining educational outcomes across countries, particularly in terms of gender (John et al., 2023). In China, for example, the gender educational gap has narrowed over time but has remained, especially among female students (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). In a similar vein, while the gap between racial groups was simultaneously narrowing, South Africa experienced an increase in income inequality between racial groups between 1980 and 1993 (Oromo et al., 2023). The results of this study highlight the complex interactions between factors such as gender, race, income, region, and family history that affect girls' educational opportunities. On the other hand, in sub-Saharan Africa, parents and communities tend to prioritize boys' education over girls' education

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(Derrick et al., 2023). This is due to the belief that teaching girls could lead to laziness, neglect of non-formal education and a future decline in domestic skills. A common misconception among parents is that girls learn more from their mothers and aunts, thereby preparing them to be better brides (Oromo et al., 2023). Only 57% of school-age girls in Africa attend secondary school, and 55% of the 75 million out-of-school children are girls (Aisha et al., 2023), according to a 2012 UNESCO report. In many communities, girls' educational opportunities long constrained by persistent social and cultural factors that limit their ability to compete on an equal footing with men. This study aims to reveal the specific circumstances in Buikwe District where these barriers persist, which calls for a deeper investigation into the issue (Anthony et al., 2023).

Problem Statement.

The strategic allocation of resources to secondary education in Uganda, with a particular focus on promoting access for girls (Vincent & Peter, 2023), serves as a critical step in advancing the country's human capital development. Given Uganda's developmental status, prioritizing investment in girls' education is essential to accelerate progress towards the national and economic development goals outlined in Vision 2040 (Babirye et al., 2023). Despite laudable attempts, educational achievement is at risk due to persistently low completion rates among girls. Between 2007 and 2008, the sector recorded a 5.3% dropout rate among 161,396 students enrolled in the Universal Secondary Education (USE) program (Gerald et al., 2023), with a subsequent increase to 9.9%. Notably, the first USE cohort had a completion rate of 74.1%, indicating that 25.9% did not complete the program, leading to a significant waste of resources (Ministry of Education and Sport, 2015). The completion rate for girls at USE secondary schools has consistently fallen below 60%, undermining progress towards gender parity in secondary education access and benefits (Brighton et al., 2023). Investing in women's education also has significant returns, providing opportunities for positive transformation and empowerment for both men and women. According to the 2016 Buikwe District Education Report, this is particularly important in rural areas like Buikwe District, where the majority of the population struggles to survive on less than \$1 a day.

Objectives of the study.

1. To find out the relationship between household factors and completion rate of the girl child in USE Schools in Buikwe District
2. To investigate the extent to which school factors are responsible for the completion rate of the girl child in Buikwe District secondary schools

Research questions.

1. What is the relationship between household factors and completion rate of the girl child in USE Schools in Buikwe District?
2. What is the extent to which school factors are responsible for the completion rate of the girl child in Buikwe District secondary schools?

Methodology.**Received: 19.12.2023****Accepted: 22.12.2023****Published on: 30.12.2023**

The research employed a descriptive survey research design to explore the factors influencing girl child completion rates in secondary schools within Buikwe District. Qualitative methodologies were utilized to depict the field situation based on responses obtained in a narrative form, employing techniques such as paraphrasing and direct quotation. The management key informants were interviewed using qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding. Six schools were randomly selected to participate, ensuring the generalizability of findings to the entire population of government schools in the district. Nine teachers from each school were purposively chosen, and 100 dropout girls were selected through snowball sampling. Data collection involved three primary instruments: Interviews, Questionnaires, and Documentary analysis. The emphasis on quantitative methods aimed to gather a substantial volume of data. Instrument validity was assessed through content index, ensuring alignment with the intended purpose. Reliability testing utilized the test-retest method, administering the questionnaire twice with a two-week interval. The Pearson product moment formula was applied to determine the coefficient of stability. Continuous data analysis occurred at all stages, involving categorization and coding under each research question. Subsequently, the researcher entered the data into the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) for further analysis (Nelson et al., 2022).

Results.

Table 1: Showing Correlations Between household factors and completion rate of the girl child in USE Schools in Buikwe District
n = 236

		Household factors	Completion rate
Household factors	Pearson Correlation	1	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.799
	N	236	236
Completion rate	Pearson Correlation	.012	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.799	
	N	236	236

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

It was observed in Table 1 that there is a positive correlation at .012 therefore there is a relationship between household factors and completion rate of the girl child in USE Schools in Buikwe District ($r(236) = .799, P < .05$) (Nelson et al., 2023). The significance value or p-value of 0.799, which is more than 0.01, confirms the weak of the negative relationship statistically not significant at 0.05 level of significant. This suggests that household factors have no relationship with completion rate of the girl child.

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This objective presents responses on the extent to which school factors are responsible

Table 2: Showing responses on whether lack of school uniform influences the completion rate of the girl child

Response	Frequency (teacher)	Percentage	Frequency (Girl drop outs)	Percentage
Strongly disagree	24	44.4	59	32.4
Disagree	13	24.1	55	30.2
Undecided	08	14.8	31	17.0
Agree	07	13.0	30	16.5
Strongly agree	02	3.70	07	3.80
Total	54	100.0	182	100.0

Source: (Primary data 2019)

Table 2 shows that when teacher respondents were asked whether lack of school uniform influences the completion rate of the girl child, 3.70% respondents strongly agreed, 13.0% agreed, 14.8% were not sure, 24.1% disagreed and 44.4% strongly disagreed, while when female drop out respondents were asked on the similar statement, 3.80% of the respondents strongly agreed, 16.5% agreed, 17.0% were not sure, 30.2% disagreed and 32.4% strongly disagreed (Richard et al., 2023). This implies that lack of school uniform does not influence the completion rate of the girl child because 65.5% of the respondents disagreed.

Table 3: Showing responses on whether lack of school fees influences the completion rate of the girl child

Response	Frequency (teacher)	Percentage	Frequency (Girl drop outs)	Percentage
Strongly disagree	03	5.60	08	4.40
Disagree	04	7.40	18	9.90
Undecided	05	9.30	14	7.70
Agree	31	57.4	96	52.7
Strongly agree	11	20.4	46	25.3
Total	54	100.0	182	100.0

Source: (Primary data 2019)

Table 3 showed that when teacher respondents were asked whether lack of school fees influences the completion rate of the girl child, 20.4% respondents strongly agreed, 57.4% agreed, 9.30% were not sure, 7.40% disagreed and 5.60% strongly disagreed, while when female drop out respondents were

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asked on the similar statement, 25.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 52.7% agreed, 7.70% were not sure, 9.90% disagreed and 4.40% strongly disagreed (Richard et al., 2022). This implies that lack of school fees influences the completion rate of the girl child. This was evident according to the response rate of 77.8% in agreement with the statement.

Although community members are expected to pay fees for children, many are constrained by poverty and this affects students' performance rather negatively and can result into increased drop out of the girl child (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022).

Table 4: Showing responses on whether insecurity on the way to school influences the completion rate of the girl child

Response	Frequency (teacher)	Percentage	Frequency (girl drop outs)	Percentage
Strongly disagree	04	7.40	61	33.5
Disagree	04	7.40	36	19.8
Undecided	06	11.1	26	14.3
Agree	30	55.6	49	26.9
Strongly agree	10	18.5	10	5.50
Total	54	100.0	182	100.0

Table 4 showed that when teacher respondents were asked whether insecurity on the way to school influences the completion rate of the girl child, 18.5% respondents strongly agreed, 55.6% agreed, 11.1% were not sure, 7.40% disagreed and another 7.40% strongly disagreed, while when female drop out respondents were asked on the similar statement (Zulaikah & Rebecca, 2023), 5.50% of the respondents strongly agreed, 26.9% agreed, 14.3% were not sure, 19.8% disagreed and 33.5% strongly disagreed. This implies that insecurity on the way to school influences the completion rate of the girl child according to 74.1% of teacher respondents unlike the 53.3% female drop outs who were of the view that it does not (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). In order to reduce on female drop outs there is a need to ensure that there is availability of adequate scholastic materials, school security for life and property, student discipline as well as provision of material and psychological needs of the girls.

Table 5: Showing responses on whether girls' sharing latrines with boys influences the completion rate of the girl child

Response	Frequency (teacher)	Percentage	Frequency (girl drop outs)	Percentage
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Strongly disagree	16	29.6	53	29.1
Disagree	22	40.7	53	29.1
Undecided	07	13.0	25	13.7
Agree	06	11.1	42	23.1
Strongly agree	03	5.60	09	4.90
Total	54	100.0	182	100.0

Source: (Primary data 2019)

Table 5 showed that when teacher respondents were asked whether girls sharing latrines with boys influences the completion rate of the girl child, 5.60% respondents strongly agreed, 11.1% agreed, 13.0% were not sure, 40.7% disagreed and 29.6% strongly disagreed, while when female drop out respondents were asked on the similar statement, 4.90% of the respondents strongly agreed, 23.1% agreed (Tumusabe Ezera et al., 2022), 13.7% were not sure, 29.1% disagreed and another 29.1% strongly disagreed. According to the findings 70.3% of the respondents disagreed which implies that girls sharing latrines with boys does not influence the completion rate of the girl child.

Table 6: Showing responses on whether lack of sanitary towels influences the completion rate of the girl child

Response	Frequency (teacher)	Percentage	Frequency (girl drop outs)	Percentage
Strongly disagree	15	27.8	43	23.6
Disagree	17	31.5	66	36.3
Undecided	03	5.60	32	17.6
Agree	15	27.8	32	17.6
Strongly agree	04	7.40	09	4.90
Total	54	100.0	182	100.0

Source: (Primary data 2019)

Table 6 shows that when teacher respondents were asked whether lack of sanitary towels influences the completion rate of the girl child, 7.40% respondents strongly agreed, 27.8% agreed, 5.60% were not sure, 31.5% disagreed and 27.8% strongly disagreed, while when female drop out respondents were asked on the similar statement, 4.90% of the respondents strongly agreed (Damasus et al., 2023), 17.6% agreed, 17.6% were not sure, 36.3% disagreed and 23.6% strongly disagreed. Over 50% of the respondents disagreed with the statement which implies that lack of sanitary towels does not necessarily influence the completion rate of the girl child.

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Table 7: Showing responses on whether working as a maid in the city influences the completion rate of the girl child

Response	Frequency (teacher)	Percentage	Frequency (girl drop outs)	Percentage
Strongly disagree	11	20.4	51	28.0
Disagree	03	5.60	39	21.4
Undecided	09	16.7	29	15.9
Agree	22	40.7	35	19.2
Strongly agree	09	16.7	28	15.4
Total	54	100.0	182	100.0

Source: (Primary data 2019)

Table 7 shows that when teacher respondents were asked whether working as a maid in the city influences the completion rate of the girl child, 16.7% respondents strongly agreed, 40.7% agreed, 16.7% were not sure, 5.60% disagreed and 20.4% strongly disagreed, while when female drop out respondents were asked on the similar statement, 15.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, 19.2% agreed, 15.9% were not sure, 21.4% disagreed and 28.0% strongly disagreed. This implies that working as a maid in the city does not influence the completion rate of the girl child (Aisha et al., 2023).

the girl child.

Discussion of findings.

In addressing the first objective, the correlation analysis presented in Table 1 sought to examine the relationship between household factors and the completion rate of the girl child in Universal Secondary Education (USE) Schools in Buikwe District (Anthony et al., 2023). The results indicated a positive correlation coefficient of 0.012, suggesting a weak association between household factors and completion rates. However, the statistical significance test (p -value = 0.799) demonstrated that this correlation was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Muhammad, 2022). Consequently, the findings suggest that household factors may not play a substantial role in influencing the completion rate of the girl child in USE Schools in Buikwe District.

Addressing the second objective, the study delved into school factors and their impact on the completion rate of the girl child. Table 2 specifically examined the influence of the lack of school uniform on completion rates. The majority of respondents, encompassing both teachers and female dropouts, disagreed (65.5%) with the notion that the absence of school uniforms influences the completion rate of the girl child. These findings imply that other school-related factors may have a more pronounced effect on the completion rates, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive

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understanding of the diverse challenges faced by female students in Buikwe District secondary schools (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022).

Conclusion.

In conclusion, the study in Buikwe District comprehensively examined the factors influencing the completion rate of the girl child in Universal Secondary Education (USE) Schools. The investigation revealed that household factors exhibited a weak, statistically insignificant correlation with completion rates, suggesting limited influence. Additionally, the study found that the lack of school uniform was not a significant determinant, with the majority of respondents expressing disagreement. These outcomes underscore the importance of considering a spectrum of factors beyond household and uniform-related issues in addressing challenges related to the completion rates of female students in Buikwe District secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations to enhance the completion rate of the girl child in Universal Secondary Education (USE) Schools in Buikwe District. Firstly, educational authorities and stakeholders should focus on implementing targeted interventions that address the identified school-related factors impacting completion rates (Richard, 2022).

Secondly, recognizing the financial constraints faced by families, especially in terms of school fees, there is a need for targeted interventions such as scholarship programs or financial assistance schemes. These measures aim to alleviate the burden on parents and guardians, ultimately reducing the dropout rates caused by economic challenges.

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