



Influence of Family structure and size on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo Town Councils, Kasese District, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine whether family structure and size lead to significant differences in students' academic performance among students in the secondary schools of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils in Kasese District. The objectives were to examine and establish whether family structure and size lead to significant differences in students' academic performance in the secondary schools of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design on a sample of the study targeted at a total population of 354 while 245 were the sample size of respondents drawn from students, teachers, and head-teachers. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Data were collected using a questionnaire and an interview guide. Quantitative data was compiled using the SPSS 16.0 computer package and is presented in frequency tables, pie charts, and others. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. Data was also obtained from quotations and people's experiences. The findings revealed that family structure and size are vital for students' academic performance. Finally, recommendations have been given to parents, teachers, policymakers, and administrators across the education sector.

Keywords: Family Structure, Family Size, Academic Performance, Secondary School

INTRODUCTION

Education is globally accepted as the mirror of human civilization yet academic performance is seen as the major fruits and harvests of the learning process. Conditions in the socioeconomic background of students are a crucial aspect in determining their performance. High socioeconomic background is what lays a firm foundation for better performance which is the main reason parents put their children in school [1]. Good academic performance of candidates gives morale to teachers and other students in school. It promotes continuity of learning and motivates other learners to study to become better citizens. However, the success of students highly depends on the level of socio-economic background in which they come [1, 2]. To make matters worse, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are becoming an increasing share of the student population. On one hand, children from high socioeconomic backgrounds have access to homework, and scholastic materials, and their parents can communicate with them in English, and guide them in decision-making making, career choices. Yet, families with low socioeconomic backgrounds usually lack financial, social, and educational support that is fully enjoyed by families with high socioeconomic backgrounds [3]. Parents, in such homes, face a major challenge in providing optimal care and education for their children. Educational textbooks, pens, uniforms, and so on cannot be availed due to lack of resources [4]. Thus, this study was carried out to establish how parental income influences students' academic performance among students in the secondary schools of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils in Kasese District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Whereas family structure is the combination of relatives that comprise a family, family size is the actual number of members in a given household [5]. Family structure is a term for the configuration of people who live together and make up a family [6]. It deals with the components and their manner of arrangement in consisting of a whole. According to Miller-Kerreean and Dictionary of Medicine, nursing, and allied health [7], family structure is how a

family is organized according to roles, rules, power, and hierarchies. In the context of this research, the family structure will take single-parent families, two-parent families, small-sized (nucleated) and big-sized families, or extended families [8]. A single-parent family is a family that has split or separated for various reasons such as the death of a parent, separation, divorce, or abandonment that may lead children to be raised by single parents, step-parents, or relatives [8]. On the other hand, a two-parent family is a family with both parents and children intact [9]. Several scholars have discussed the relationship between family structures on academic performance. [8], gave a deep insight into this form of family. In his exposition, parents in two-parent families can give more time, affection, and supervision, to their children. He adds that just the presence of a father and mother is good enough for effective psycho-socio development and academic growth. This is, however, not possible with single parents. Marjoribanks has also shown that children from single-parent households do not perform as well in school as children from two-parent households. There are several different explanations for this achievement gap. For instance, Single-parent households have less income and there is a lack of support for the single-parent which increases stress and conflicts [10]. Unfortunately, the extent and growth of single-parent families are fast growing across the globe [11] yet still, single-mother families are growing more than single-father families [12]. Nevertheless, children from single-parent families become more delinquent because they are most times denied the chance of security, protection, and love that comes from both parents [13, 14]. As if that is not enough, single-parent families have a record and history of lower income than two-parent families [15]. They are more constrained in securing adequate financial resources to meet the learning needs of their children. Members in this kind of home spend most of their time struggling and working for survival [8]. Generally, most youngsters were born to and raised by marital parents. Whereas some children live in both-parent homes others live with single parents or guardians [16]. [17], reveals that it is well documented that qualities and quantities of parental or guardian involvement in the learning of children differ across socioeconomic backgrounds [18]. Yet, in current decades, the living plans of youngsters have turned out to be progressively shifting unsteadily [19]. In a study carried out relating to the above, it was found that most youngsters still lived in wedded groups of both parents in the past years; however, the extent has, from time and again declined in the past few decades. According to the findings, in 2009, 67% of youngsters lived in this family structure, though in 1970, this figure was 84% [19, 20]. Around 23% of youngsters lived in single-parent families in 2009 versus 11% out of 1970. Approximately one-half of children hope to spend some portion of their adolescence outside of a wedded parent family [21]. These examples are more articulated among minority and low-income youngsters. In 2009, 35% of black youngsters lived in two-parent wedded families, and half lived in single-parent families. Among Hispanic youngsters, 64% lived in two-parent wedded families and 25% lived in single-parent families in 2009. The practical identical figures for white youngsters were 76% and 18% respectively [22, 23]. Half of poor youngsters live in a solitary-parent family [24]. In any case, [25] a cross-country investigation testing the impact of family structure on academic accomplishment, found that in all nations, the impact of family structure declined by a quarter and a half when considering a family's financial foundation [25]. Research recommends that youngsters encounter better instructive, social, intellectual, and behavioral results when they live with two marital parents instead of other family units. Take the example, that stepparent and single-parent homes cannot affect children's health, nutritional balance, or rate of retentive memory among others [26, 27, 28]. Researchers concur that these examples are a result of an arrangement of commitments and prizes that characterize marriage in the United States; yet, additionally mirror the financial and enthusiastic assets that select a few grown-ups into stable relational unions [29]. Togetherness, determination, and insurance form the shape of child nurturing, parent-youngster connections, accessibility to social help, organization of the home, and family time use in ways that are worthwhile to youngsters [30, 31]. Youngsters brought up in agreeable, two-parent family units tend to be better than youngsters in single-parent family units. The amicable two-parent families will most likely cut down levels of pressure and have a likelihood of partition [32]. They have higher scholarly rankings; and will most likely enter secondary school than youngsters [11]. Further still, they have substantially less behavioral issues. Their parents have reliably been seen to have the ability to contribute additional time and money-related help to the youngsters. It's no wonder that organized dually headed family units give a sufficient parental contribution, guidance, hope, support, time, and direction for better academic attainment. [33], pointed out that parents have specific parts to play in children's training. The father is relied upon to give each vital gadget to the educational progression; in any case, the mother is required to supplement the endeavors of the father. However, in a circumstance where the father is truant and the mother is not sufficiently favored to give sustenance to all the basic and educational needs, the children will wind up yielding poor academic results.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the impact of family structure on the learners' academic performance in the secondary schools of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils, Uganda.
2. To examine how family size affects the academic performance of learners in the secondary schools of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils, Uganda.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does family structure affect students' academic performance in the secondary schools of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils, Uganda?
2. How does family size influence academic performance among secondary school students of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils, in Kasese district, Uganda?

METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional research design [34], which submits that a cross-section design is useful in basic research because it examines the relationship between exposure and outcome in a defined population at a single point in time. The justification for this cross-section design is that it is flexible and provides opportunities for considering many different aspects of a problem in-depth at a particular time [35]. This study applied qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Also, the application of a cross-sectional study design was that it will allow the researcher to compare many different variables including age, gender, and educational level about how socioeconomic background affects school involvement among secondary schools. The use of qualitative helped in capturing fresh statements from respondents and the quantitative research approach helped in counting or use of numerical figures while determining something. This study was conducted in the secondary schools of Kitwamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils in Kasese district. Rugendabara Town Council is located along Fort-portal-Kasese Road, ten kilometers from Hiima Town Council along Fort-portal Kasese Road in Western Uganda, while Kitwamba Town Council is located five kilometers off Kasese-Fort-portal Road, branching off from Rugendabara Town Council on the left. Five different secondary schools were sampled for this study. Taking these schools helped the researcher to achieve the relationship between socioeconomic background and students' academic performance. Furthermore, the study population is all universal objects over which research is to be carried out. This involves the selection of people/objects that help to get the necessary data about the study [35]. [36], population is the totality of persons or objects with which the study is concerned. [37], asserts that population is "the complete set of individuals, objects or measurements having some common observable characteristics." The population was a total of 1,112 senior to three students for the questionnaire survey and 5 head teachers for the interview guide. The students easily reported about their socio-economic background and academic performance while the head teachers supplemented their responses.

The sample size was 286 for the questionnaire survey was determined using the table [38]. The sample of students from each school was determined by proportionate sampling to ensure proportionate representation. The proportionate sample has been calculated as follows:

Proportion Sample: $n_1 = \frac{\text{size of entire sample}}{\text{target population}} \times \text{sample size}$

For example, the sample for school A has been determined as follows:

$$n_1 = \frac{354}{872} \times 245 = 99.5$$

RESULTS

The following analysis shows the responses received from two hundred thirty-five (235) respondents in the secondary schools of Kitwamba-Rugendabara town councils in Kasese district.

Table 1. Showing the Response Rate

Response rate	Targeted respondents	Sampled respondents	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Students	233	159	67.7	67.7
Teachers	115	71	30.2	97.9
Headteachers	6	5	2.1	100.0
Total	354	235	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The study targeted 354 respondents and out of these only 235 respondents. Students were 159 (67.7%), teachers were 71 (30.2%) and head teachers were 5 (2.1%) respectively. There were variations in these numbers as some respondents could not be found at schools or even their homes.

Table 2. Showing the Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Males	75	31.9	31.9
Females	160	68.1	100.0
Total	235	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The majority of the respondents were females representing 68.1% while males were represented by 31.9%. the study was gender-based as it involved both males and females. However, females were available at schools as compared with males and this is why most respondents were females as compared to males who were few.

Table 3. Showing the Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
14 – 20years	160	68.1	68.1
21 – 30years	12	5.1	73.2
31years and above	63	26.8	100.0
Total	235	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The study shows that the majority of the respondents were between the age of 14–20years and represented 68.1% as the minority. This means that the majority of the respondents were students and had various socio-economic backgrounds which affected their performance and this was relevant in providing data about how socio-economic backgrounds affect their performance.

Table 4. Showing the Response on Whether Students Study from a Private or Government School

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Government aided	102	35.1	64.2
Private	57	19.6	35.8
Total	159	54.6	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2023

It is established by the majority 35.1% that they were in government schools as compared with 19.6% of the respondents who were in private schools. This means that the data acquired affected many of those students who were coming from government schools as it is one of the reasons why they had joined government schools compared to private schools.

Table 5. Showing the Response on which Class are the Respondents

Class	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Senior one	39	24.5	24.5
Senior two	10	6.3	30.8
Senior three	10	6.3	37.1
senior four	60	37.7	74.8
Sat senior four	40	25.2	100.0
Total	159	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The majority of the respondents were in senior four representing 37.7% as compared with the least from Senior two and three and these all represented 6.3% respectively. This indicates that most of the students had experience with how socio-economic background affects students' academic performance in the secondary schools of Kitswamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils.

Table 6. Showing the Response on Whether Learners Live in Small Family or Big One

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Small family	69	29.4	29.4
Big family	166	70.6	100.0
Total	235	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Most of the respondents 70.6% were living in big families while a few respondents were coming from small families representing 29.4% of the respondents. This shows that most of the learners were affected by socio-economic challenges in terms of having scholastic materials like books and pens.

Table 7. Showing the Response on How Many Members Are in Your Family

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
6-10	54	23.0	23.0
11-15	154	65.5	88.5
16-25	16	6.8	95.3
26 and above	11	4.7	100.0
Total	235	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The majority of the respondents 65.5% revealed that many families had households of between 11-15 members while a few respondents 4.7% said that families have 26 and above members. This indicates that most households were many in a family and the students who were coming from these families had socio-economic challenges.

Table 8. Showing the Response to Whether Learners Were Living with Their Parents

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single parent	39	24.5	24.5
Both parents	20	12.6	37.1
No parent	28	17.6	54.7
With relatives	68	42.8	97.5
Alone	4	2.5	100.0
Total	159	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The majority of the respondents 42.8% revealed that they live with relatives as compared with a few respondents 2.5% who said that they live alone. This means that, as the majority were living with relatives, they had challenges with finances to support them in school well.

Table 9. Showing the Response on Whether Single Parents and the Cause of Singleness

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Imprisonment or went to work	34	21.4	21.4
Divorced	20	12.6	34.0
Separated	28	17.6	51.6
Death	73	45.9	97.5
Just like	4	2.5	100.0
Total	159	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2023

As established above, most of the students were living with relatives due to financial assistance from the relatives as indicated by 45.9% and the cause was the Death of one or both of the parents though a few respondents 2.5% said that they just liked living alone. This means that death was among the factors that led to learners staying away from their homes.

The Effects of Family Size on the Learners' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Kitswamba and Rugendabara Town Councils

Table 10. Showing the Effects of Family Size on Learners' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

Family structure and size	Very great extent	Great extent	Moderate extent	Low extent	No extent
	1	2	3	4	5
Has the absence of a mother or father affected my academic performance seriously?	60(25.5%)	106(45.1%)	5(2.1%)	30 (12.8%)	34 (14.5%)
I was limited by a lack of parental involvement while completing class assignments and homework	60(25.5%)	24(10.2%)	8(3.4%)	107(45.5%)	36 (15.3%)
Lack of space due to many members at home affected my academic performance	60(25.5%)	100(42.6%)	15(6.4%)	27(11.5%)	33 (14.0%)
Staying with only a Single parent family left a lot of psychological torture to me since only one parent struggles for food and other basic needs alongside school support	60(25.5%)	31(13.2%)	13(5.5%)	100(42.6%)	31(13.2%)
Many people and noise at home affected my home revision and study	60(25.5%)	29(12.3%)	7(3.0%)	102(43.4%)	37 (15.7%)
Lack of time and energy at home affected my academic performance negatively	60(25.5%)	29(12.3%)	7(3.0%)	102(43.4%)	37 (15.7%)
Caring for the elderly and sickly family members affected my academic performance negatively	60(25.5%)	102(43.4%)	4(1.7%)	34 (14.5%)	35 (14.9%)
Because of the many members at home, it is not easy to distribute all resources to us equally for educational needs	60(25.5%)	102(43.4%)	5(2.1%)	33(14.0%)	35 (14.9%)
My brothers and sisters, uncles and aunties are dumping children to my parents for care	53(22.6%)	106(45.1%)	14(6.0%)	31(13.2%)	31(13.2%)

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Respondents were asked whether there were effects of family size on the learners' academic performance in secondary schools in Kitswamba and Rugendabara-Kikongo town councils and here were their responses; Majority of the respondents to a great extent 45.1% established that the absence of a mother or father affected academic performance seriously while 12.8% said that it was to a low extent, this means that to a great extent, absence of

mother or father affected academic performance despite many students doing some activities even when they were not staying with their parents. To a low extent as established by the majority 10.2%, they said that limitation by lack of parental involvement while completing class assignments and homework did not affect their academic performance though 15.3% said that it affected their academic performance to a greater extent. It was said that even if parents fail to get involved, students can read with friends and even get guidance from other people apart from their parents. This means that limitation by lack of parental involvement while completing class assignments and homework did not affect the performance of students but their own making. Furthermore, lack of space due to many members at home affected academic performance, and respondents said this was to a great extent as indicated by 42.6% of the respondents. It was said that it was the responsibility of the students to identify silent places at home where they can easily read however, a few respondents 11.5% said that this was to a low extent that lack of space due to many members at home affected my academic performance. It was indicated that staying with only a single-parent family did not leave a lot of psychological torture to them since only one parent struggles for food and other basic needs alongside school support and this was to a low extent as shown by 42.6% while few respondents 13.2% said that it was to a great extent. As revealed by the respondents, many children who lived with single parents were mistreated especially when it came to doing domestic work and this affected the student's time of concentrating on the work and other academic activities. In addition, many people and noise at home affected my home revision and study and this was to a greater extent as indicated by 43.4% of the respondents while a few respondents 12.3% said that this was to a low extent. It was said that some households had several children ranging from 8-10 and this disturbed the reading concentration level of the students and led to poor performance in class. This means that many people and noise at home affected my home revision and study of the learners. It was further established by 43.4% that lack of time and energy at home did not affect the academic performance negatively of the student though 12.3% of respondents said it to a great extent. It was indicated that most of the students as they reach home, have no time to read as they are engaged in domestic activities, and by the time they need to sleep, they become tired hence at the end of the day they perform poorly in class. Caring for the elderly and sickly family members affected academic performance negatively and this was to a great extent as indicated by 43.4% of the respondents however, 14.5% said it was to a low extent. This meant that caring for the elderly and sickly affected students' performance in class. It was further established that due to many members at home, it is not easy to distribute all resources to us equally for educational needs though it was to a low extent as revealed by the majority 43.4% of the respondents. It was said that many people are many in the family, but have attained education and have been clever in class; some respondents were arguing that being a good performer in class is sometimes a gene within someone. It was established that brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts are dumping children to their parents for care as was indicated by the majority 45.1% and this was said that it was to a greater extent though few respondents 13.2% disagreed with the idea.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The objective of this study was to establish how family structure and size influenced academic performance in secondary schools. The hypothesis derived from the objective was to the effect that students' family structure and size lead to significant differences in students' academic performance. The test hypothesis test results and qualitative analysis revealed that family income level was a significant determinant of the variation in students' academic performance. It was established by 45.1% that the absence of a mother or father affected academic performance seriously and this was supported to a great extent while 12.8% said that to a low extent, it was indicated that, to a great extent, the absence of a mother or father affected academic performance the fact that many students were doing some activities even when they were staying with their parents. This also concurs with the idea that family structure will take single-parent families, two-parent families, small-sized (nucleated), and big-sized families or extended families [8]. A single-parent family is a family that has split or separated for various reasons such as the death of a parent, separation, divorce, or abandonment which may lead children to be raised by single parents, step-parents, or relatives [39]. Research findings indicated that to a low extent majority 10.2% of the respondents limited by lack of parental involvement while completing class assignments and homework did not affect their academic performance though 15.3% said that to a greater extent, it affected their academic performance. It was said that even if parents fail to get involved, students can read with friends and even get guidance from other people apart from their parents. It was also established that limitations by lack of parental involvement while completing class assignments and homework did not affect the performance of students but their own making. This also relates to the idea that to some level, many students perform poorly due to parents' failure to be involved in helping them to read in the evening [12].

Furthermore, lack of space due to many members at home affected my academic performance and respondents said this was to a great extent as indicated by 42.6% of the respondents. It was said that it was the responsibility of the students to identify silent places at home where they can easily read however, a few respondents 11.5% said that this was to a low extent and that lack of space due to many members at home affected my academic performance. This relates to the ideas of [8] who gave a deep insight into this form of family. In his exposition, parents in two-parent

families can give more time, affection, and supervision, to their children. He adds that just the presence of a father and mother is good enough for effective psycho-socio development and academic growth. This is, however, not possible with single parents. It was indicated that staying with only a Single parent family left a lot of psychological torture to me since only one parent struggles for food and other basic needs alongside school support and this was to a greater extent as shown by 42.6% while few respondents 13.2% said that it was to a low extent. As revealed by the respondents, many children who lived with single parents were mistreated especially when it came to doing domestic work and this affected the student's time of concentrating on the work and other academic activities.

In addition, many people and noise at home affected my home revision and study and this was to a greater extent as indicated by 43.4% of the respondents while a few respondents 12.3% said that this was to a low extent. It was said that some households had a number of children ranging from 8-10 and this disturbed the reading concentration level of the students and led to poor performance in class. This means that many people and noise at home affected my home revision and study of the learners. It was further established by 43.4% that lack of time and energy at home affected academic performance negatively of the student though 12.3% of respondents said to a low extent. It was indicated that most of the students as they reach home, have no time to read as they are engaged in domestic activities, and by the time they need to sleep, they become tired hence at the end of the day they perform poorly in class. It is further indicated by the respondents that caring for the elderly and sickly family members affected academic performance negatively and this was to a great extent as indicated by 43.4% of the respondents however, 14.5% said it was to a low extent. It is revealed that caring for the elderly and sickly affected student's performance in class. Some families have been found with a majority of elderly persons and these people do not have assistance instead, the young ones are the ones to help and, in the process, they are committed to care and hence fail to get time to read or else they end up performing poorly in class [8].

In addition, due to many members at home, it is not easy to distribute all resources to us equally for educational needs though it was to a great extent as revealed by the majority 43.4% of the respondents. Furthermore, many people are many in the family, but have attained education and have been clever in class; some respondents were arguing that being a good performer in class is sometimes a gene within someone. It is indicated by [40] that many families are always in extended families and these homes and the members present do not give space to the students for them to read and this affects their academic performance in class. It was established that brothers and sisters, uncles and aunties are dumping children to their parents for care as it was indicated by the majority 45.1% and this was said that it was at great extent though few respondents 13.2% agreed with the ideas. In an interview with a mother in Rugendabara town council, she revealed that;

'I was staying with my mother, my brothers and sisters produced kids and these kids had no help later, my parents stopped me from continuing with school while saying that I could care for the children who had been dumped by my siblings'

This kind of scenario shows that most of the children, and students are stopped from schooling because their brothers and sisters can produce anyhow and this affects them. This also relates to the ideas that African communities and people produce anyhow and this directly affects many young ones [41].

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that family structure and size influence the learners' academic performance in secondary schools. It further concludes that absence of mother or father, lack of parental involvement while completing class assignments and homework, lack of space due to many members, staying with only a Single parent, many people and noise at home, Lack of time and energy at home and caring for the elderly and sickly family members affect the students' performance so much.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, there is a need for educating parents of the students, especially those parents who are not educated to give their children some time so that their children can have time to read at home, especially in the evening so that they can improve performance. Students at their homes having enough time to read may improve their performance instead of concentrating on domestic work among other activities. Teachers should have a profile study of every child so that they can use the teaching methods that suit all types of students. Besides, they need also to give many homework activities to the learners so that these students can read comprehensively and perform better in classes. This is based on the fact that some teachers fail to give their students work so these learners can concentrate and the students end up reaching home late and fail to get time to read hence performing poorly. School administrators should employ strategic leadership styles that favor all types of learners depending on family background. This will enable learners from single and two-parent families to reap as equally as those from small and big families. Parents should manage time for their children by establishing timetables for reading in the evening so that if the children are involved in domestic work, it can be planned. Finally, the government and all policymakers should sensitize parents on the importance of family planning methods such as child spacing and setting aside some resources for every child born in a family.

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