

Evaluation of the relationship between socio-economic status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District.

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between socio-economic status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District were evaluated. Correlated in this study were socio-Economic Status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District, Uganda. Objectives were to establish the relationship between socio-economic status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District. The family stress model guided the study. The study population was 10 head teachers, 80 teachers, and 240 students in the selected secondary schools in Ibanda District, computed using the Sloven's formula. Simple random sampling was used to select 80 teachers and 240 students. Ten head teachers were purposively sampled. Self-administered questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson's Linear Correlation Coefficient were utilized to analyze data. The findings showed a positive significant relationship between socio-Economic Status and quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District at ($r=0.132$, $p=0.016$).

Keywords: Socio-economic, education, Ibanda district and cultural orientation.

INTRODUCTION

Santrock [1] mentioned that usually in establishing socio-economic status, the factors considered include; income, occupation, education, neighborhood, and political power. For each of these five factors, the consideration of how fixed each one is also contributes to another. For example, if a family is considered low income because one of the parents is in school to eventually get a better job, then the family is not really in the same socio economic status as their neighbors who have little hope of a better job. According to Wool folk, [2], each year students attend schools that represent a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Socio economic status refers to the level of education, income, and professionalism of an individual or group. Although students of higher and lower social economic statuses both attend school, the effect of lower socioeconomic status on student achievement is difficult to ignore. Students of a lower socioeconomic status often face additional challenges including a dearth of learning resources, difficult learning conditions and poor motivation

that negatively affect their academic performance. The quality of a nation's education is a key factor in the economic growth of nations in the labour market performance of individuals and in providing a pathway out of poverty. Over and above performance in the labour market, being literate and numerate empowers people to meaningfully participate in society [3]. In all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation are at the centre. This means that the focus is on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes; and which creates for children, and helps them create for themselves and others, places of safety, security and healthy interaction [4]. Families with a lower social economic status often struggle with providing academic support for their children. Limited time and financial resources

make it difficult for parents to create a home-based learning environment. Parents in a low socioeconomic household cannot afford reading materials, technology and tutors for their children. When children do not have a positive learning environment at home, it negatively affects their academic achievement level in school [4]. Learning involves interaction of students with the learning resources. Teaching and learning resources include classrooms, libraries, playing fields, textbooks among others. Indeed learning resources go a long way in creating an effective teaching and learning. School environment plays a profound role in academic achievement for low socioeconomic status children. Teacher turnover, limited resources and low academic performance are all characteristics of schools in lower socioeconomic communities. Consequently, highly-qualified teachers often avoid such schools by committing themselves to more affluent school communities, leaving low socioeconomic status children with teachers who often lack expertise in their subjects [6; 7; 5]. Student's achievement is largely determined by the school quality, which in turn is determined by the performance of the teachers whose effectiveness in working partly depends on the school environment. According to Rumberger [8], school administrators could devise strategies to assist the students on good performance. He advises that school administration could develop programmes that are in course with the students' interest, needs and understanding. If educational programmes were made interesting to the teachers and students, teaching and learning would become enjoyable. Lower socioeconomic status students often display difficulty with language skills and struggle with reading. In comparison to higher socioeconomic status children, they are not as accurate when completing mathematical tasks such as word problems or addition and subtraction. As schools become aware of low student performance, students are often assigned to lower school tracks. Consequently,

students on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum are forced to take lower level courses or vocational courses that do not necessarily prepare them for higher education. Lower socioeconomic status ultimately contributes to lower academic performance and slower rates of academic progress [6; 5]. Students' academic attainment is determined by the family's socio-economic characteristics and social environmental factors that are outside the school. Ichado [9] indicates that the environment that students come from largely influences their school performance. Rothman [10] suggests that children from low socio-economic conditioned families do not have a study environment in their homes to have a positive influence on their academic achievement at school. [11] explains that students' low academic achievement has personal and institutional reasons. Personal reasons are related to an individual's intelligence, knowledge and talents while institutional reasons are associated with familial and parental influences, social reasons, school-related reasons, relationships between the student and the instructor, home and living conditions. Students in lower socio-economic communities are more likely to exhibit behaviour-related learning problems because they feel as if they do not belong in school due to their working class background. These feelings of loneliness and inadequacy often influence the decision to drop out for many students. Additionally, as low socioeconomic status students become aware of high college tuition fees, they often lose the motivation to perform well due to their inability to pay for higher education, ultimately affecting the influence of socioeconomic status on student achievement [7; 5]. The student's role in education is crucial and should go beyond the traditional view of student as customer or recipient of knowledge. In addition to the roles of buyer and recipient, "students are the raw materials for education and the primary products of educational transformations; and most important...students are key members of

the labor force involved in creating education” [12]. Also, the increasing diversity of individual differences among students can be seen in time management, learning styles, maturity, demographics, experiential background, cultural orientation, and interests. As such, [13] suggest that teachers should be “producers of environments that allow students to learn as much as possible”. Access to education for all has been a relatively recent development in human history when viewed from a historical perspective. Access to education has over many years of human development been a prerogative of those that could afford it and as a result it was a defining element as to the social class of a person. Wealthier parents could afford to send

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between socio-Economic Status and quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District Uganda.

Objective of the Study

1. To establish the relationship between socio-economic status

Research Design

The study was both quantitative and qualitative in dimension. The quantitative paradigm was used to study generalizable information measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures (16) about socioeconomic status and the quality of education among the students.

Study Population

The target population of the study was estimated at 3430 potential participants. This was composed of 10 Head teachers and 3420 students from a random sample of 10 selected schools. For purposes of confidentiality, the 10 schools were coded with letters A- J.

Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive and random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique were used in obtaining key informants - the head teachers of the selected schools because they were considered to be having specific information that enabled the

their children to better schools and generally because they were better educated and they were able to make a more informed decision as to which school their children should attend [14]. All over the world education is regarded as the bedrock to economic, political, and technological advancement of a nation and this is why it is often emphasized that no nation can rise above its educational system. Higher education, particularly, secondary, technical and university education are being demanded all over the world owing to the fact that economic and social factors are increasingly driven by the advancement and application of knowledge being provided by them [15].

and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District.

Research Question

1. Is there a relationship between socio-Economic Status and the quality of education in secondary schools?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

researcher to respond properly to the objectives of the study. Students were subjected to random sampling from the bigger population in the selected schools because they were considered to be having specific information that enabled the researcher to respond properly to the study objectives.

Sample Size

Using the Survey Monkey Sample Size Calculator accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/>, a sample of 346 students were to be drawn for the quantitative study at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. However, questionnaires were distributed to 400 students to cater for attrition. A total of 352 student respondents provided fully completed questions, thus rendering more than 100% response rate. The qualitative information provided by the 10 head teachers was considered for the study.

Table 1: Showing the expected respondents.

Respondents	Target Population	Population Sample
Head teachers	10	10
Students	3420	352
Total	3430	362

Source: Primary data

Research Instruments

The researcher used a closed ended questionnaire to collect data from the student respondents. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. Section A had 13 items that sought demographic data and students' academic achievement scores. Section B was the 15-item questionnaire containing Likert type items for measuring family socio economic status adapted from [17]. The scale was scored on different Likert points ranging from zero to 10. Sections C and D were modified from [18] scales in *Measuring the Quality of Education by Means of Indicators*. Section C contained 18 items for measuring the quality of school learning environment on a 4-point Likert scale, 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Section D was the scale for measuring the quality of learning attained by the students. It contained 33 items scored on a 4-point Likert scale, 1 (*very low*) to 4 (*very high*). The data gathered via the questionnaires were easy to be analysed, compared, described, and quantified in order to determine the level and the degree of association between the variables in the study context. The questionnaire consisted of general background information about respondents' profile, the effects of socio-Economic Status on the quality of education, the level of quality education and the relationship between socio-Economic Status and the quality of education.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument the researcher used expert judgment method in which the researcher made use of the university supervisor and

other senior /experienced lecturers in the faculty of education and Directorate of Postgraduate Studies and Research (DPGSR) to evaluate the relevance, wording and clarity of questions or items in the instrument. These individuals were asked to give their judgment on whether or not the items in the instrument were valid for evaluation of socio-Economic Status and quality of education in secondary schools of Ibanda District or not. Their ideas were taken into consideration and highlighted mistakes were corrected accordingly to make the instrument accurate and worth to be used for data collection. Out of the eight experts who reviewed the instrument seven validated the instrument and these gave a content validity index co-efficient of 0.96. The coefficient of 0.96 made the instrument to be accepted as valid. This indicates the instruments were valid. The reliabilities of the instruments were tested using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient which is provided in SPSS. The reliability results indicate that Section B had $\alpha = 0.77$, Section C had $\alpha = 0.79$, and Section D had $\alpha = 0.84$, which means that the instruments were reliable and hence internally consistent [18] and therefore acceptable for use in the study.

Data Gathering Procedures

The procedures consisted of Collection of transmittal letter: A transmittal letter was obtained from the Directorate of Post Graduate Studies and Research for the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from respective head teachers and learners in the selected secondary schools. Delivering the questionnaires; the researcher prepared the questionnaires for distribution purposes. The research assistants were selected and oriented with reference to the sampling

and data collection procedures in order to be consistent in administering the questionnaires. The researcher and his research assistants requested the respondents to answer as objectively as possible and not to leave any option not answered. Collecting the answered questionnaires; the researcher and research assistants held a brief discussion with the respondents and explained to them the purpose of the study. On retrieval, all returned questionnaires were checked to see if they were all answered.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data processing and analysis. The total score range on the family socio-economic status scale was 4-69. Scores in the range of 4-36.5 were interpreted as low socio-economic status while scores in the range 36.6-69 were interpreted as high social economic status. For the scale measuring quality of school learning environment, scores ranged from 18-72. Low quality learning environment scores ranged from 18 to 45 while high quality learning environment scores ranged from 46 to 72. The quality of learning which was measured as the level of performance of the learners in different aspects ranged in score from 33 to 132. A score in the range 33-82.5 was interpreted as low performance hence indicating low quality learning, while a score in the range 82.6-132 was interpreted as high performance and hence high quality learning. Descriptive statistics, that is, frequency, mean, standard deviation, and percentages were used in answering objective one and two. Qualitative work from head teachers was analyzed by coding and putting in themes.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Background Information of the Primary Respondents

The demographic information of the student participants was summarised

Ethical considerations

To ensure confidentiality of information provided by the respondents and to ascertain the practice of ethics in this study, the following activities were implemented by the researcher: A letter from the DPGSR was presented to the School authorities and permission sought from the concerned officials of the secondary schools involved in the study. The participation in this study was voluntary. In addition, a copy of the consent form document is attached to the appendices section. Respondents' names were not reflected in this study, to further ensure confidentiality. The schools where the respondents came from were not mentioned. In addition to the above, the protection of rights and integrity of human participants was granted. The researcher acknowledged the authors quoted in this study through citations and referencing. The researcher worked under the accepted norms of research. Given the nature of this study, it may not necessarily require formation of Community Advisory Boards (CABs), but nevertheless, the researcher worked closely with the community in order to attain the highest possible standards. The researcher assured the respondents that this study was not to expose respondents to any major risks, but rather, it was of great benefit to them and other stake holders if the necessary information was provided. The study followed all the sequential steps involved in research, to ensure scientific validity. Justice was ensured while selecting the respondents. This was done through use of proper sampling methods and procedures. The findings of this study were presented in a generalized manner.

using the number of students in each category of the demographic and the percentage this number represents. The results are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Showing demographics of the student participants

		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Sex	Male	250	71.0
	Female	102	29.0
Community	Village	264	75.0
	Town	88	25.0
Class	S2	26	7.4
	S3	56	13.1
	S4	62	17.6
	S5	82	23.9
	S6	126	35.8
	Combination	Arts	116
Sciences		100	28.4
School type	Government	152	43.2
	Private	200	56.8
USE or Non-USE	USE	112	31.8
	Non-USE	228	64.7
Nature of school	Boarding school	82	23.3
	Boarding and day school	270	76.7
Attendance schedule	day scholar	32	9.1
	Boarder	320	90.9
Religious affiliation	Muslim	22	6.3
	Pentecostal	28	8.0
	Protestant	102	29.0
	Catholic	152	43.2
	Other	48	13.6
School change	No change	230	65.3
	Yes, changed	122	34.7

The background information of the respondents considered were sex, class, community, school type, nature of school, attendance schedules, religious affiliations and school change on socio-

Economic Status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District as shown above. The findings from Table 2 above showed that of the respondents 250 (71%) were males

whereas females were 102 (29%). This shows clearly that the majority of the respondents were males. This was as a result of given socio-cultural issues where boys are favoured in schooling while girls are meant for house chores and later married off. Majority of the students, 264 (75.0%), came from village communities while the minority 88 (25.0%), came from towns. This implies that many communities in Ibanda District are still remote and likely to have low socio-economic statuses. There were more respondents in private schools, 200 (56.8%), than in government schools, 152

(43.2%). This is in support of the fact that about eighty percent of secondary schools in Uganda are private schools and so most students study in private schools. Despite the public-private partnership in some secondary schools, still majority of the students, 228(64.7%), were in non-USE schools while the minority, 112 (31.8%), were in USE schools. This could be indicative of popular belief that the quality of education provided in USE schools is low such that most parents prefer to shoulder the burden of 'quality' education in private schools.

Relationship between Socio-Economic Status and the Quality of Education in Secondary Schools in Ibanda District

Quantitative relationship between Socio-economic status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District

Pearson correlation coefficient at 95% of level of significance at 0.05 margin of error was used to correlate socio Economic Status and quality of education as indicated in the Table 3 below.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between Socio-Economic Status and quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District (Level of Significance = 0.05)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Socioeconomic status	1					
2. S1-S3 aggregate	-.091	1				
3. S4 aggregate	-.129	-.719	1			
4. S5 points	-.028	-.917*	.476	1		
5. School environment quality	.139	.147	-.310*	.058	1	
6. Student performance quality	-.064	.086	-.147	-.006	.411**	1

Note. * = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 3 indicate that the relationship between socio-economic status and quality of education in terms of both quality of school learning environment and quality of learner performance was not statistically significant. This implies that the family socio-economic status did not associate in any way with the students' academic attainments.

The results further indicate that the aggregate scored by the learners at Senior 4 was significantly negatively related to the quality of the school learning environment ($r = -.310, p < .05$). This implies that the higher the quality of the school environment, the lower the aggregate (and hence the better the performance) scored at Senior 4.

Conversely, it implies that the lower the quality of the school environment, the higher the aggregate (and hence the poorer the performance) scored at Senior 4.

Qualitative relationship between Socio-economic status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District

Contrary to the quantitative findings from the student data, all the respondents in the qualitative survey observed that the level of family socio-economic status affects the learners' performance. For example, Respondent 1 gave the following account:

If parents are poor and cannot avail all the needs of the child, it will impact negatively to their performance in school.

Quality teaching is compromised because teachers who are not paid properly and lack teaching materials will obviously not deliver as expected. Community/parental involvement in a school situation will be very low if the parents/ community is of low SES. Parents who are poor will never fundraise for the school. A community that is poor will never motivate its citizens to support the school. The social economic status of course affects school/work readiness of the learners as low social economic status families would find it rather difficult to systematically provide scholastic materials like books and pens to students. Such families might not provide enough meals to the learners and could find it rather difficult to pay for their children. All these above hinder the readiness of the school to deliver as expected in as far as motivating learners is concerned. Learners who lack a lot in terms of supportive school materials will never concentrate well. Respondent 2 similarly observed that:

The level of socio-economic status affects the learners' quality of education because poor students are always absent in class since they don't pay fees in time unlike those from rich families. Due to the fact that schools whose majority of students are poor families [sic], teachers are not paid fully their remuneration and morale goes down. This affects the quality of teaching unlike schools with students from rich families. Schools whose incomes are low due to the fact of having students from low income earners can't have functions that can host parents/community several times as schools with students from high income earners' families. According to Respondent 3, "the level of socio-economic status affects the quality of education." In showing how learners' performance is affected, Respondent 3 notes that Level of income in a family determines social relationship, type of school the child goes to and the bond between family members - short of the above will affect the child's education. Well to do families will do all it takes to attain best quality of education because they are able to pay best teachers to

attend to their children. Whereas those in poor families can't even afford to buy a candle for their children to read from. [Concerning] community/parental involvement, quarrelsome families will never allow ample time for children to study. A child whose parents are always at war because of money problems will never feel secure and this adversely affects his/her studies. Some community members do not feel well when some families take their children to school; thus they will try all means to change the minds of these children. Many communities are 'infested with bars.' These bars have greatly affected education in most areas as many children have mastered the art of boozing instead of going to school.

However, it was noted by Respondent 3 that communities can be helpful in improving the quality of education in the following ways: involvement in voluntary community services like cleaning around school roads and bushes; providing casual labour to the educational institutions; sharing common facilities like football pitches, water taps and wood lots; and involvement in decision making process of the educational institutions as it is represented on different fora such as BOG and PTA. Respondent 3 made a special note: "Modern technology has also greatly affected the education of children. Children are more interested in music (on phones), internet, Whatsapp, etc. instead of paying schools fees, they buy expensive phones where they can access pornography through internet. "Taking a rather liberal stand, Respondent 4 agreed that socio-economic status affects the quality of education in some cases. With regard to learners' performance, the respondent argued that "Some parents do not pay fees in time hence some learners miss lessons. Some learners are kept at home by parents to help in work e.g. harvesting/picking coffee in the gardens instead of coming to school. Some learners want to make quick profits by dodging lessons to go to the gold mines e.g. Nyarukiika and this affects their performance". About the quality of teaching, Respondent 4 noted that "some

teachers, in order to make ends meet, engage in business hence have little time for learners." Concerning community/parental involvement, the respondent observed that "parents are preoccupied with these economic activities and have little or no time to participate in school activities. Some only

Relationship between Socio-Economic Status and the Quality of Education in Secondary Schools in Ibanda District

The third objective of this study was to establish the relationship between socio-economic status and the quality of education in secondary schools in Ibanda District. The results in Table 3 indicate that the relationship between socio-economic status and quality of education in terms of both quality of school learning environment and quality of learner performance was not statistically significant. This implies that the family socio-economic status does not really affect the students' academic performance. Four alternatives are possible: some high socioeconomic status students perform highly while others perform poorly, and some low socioeconomic status students perform highly while others perform poorly. On the one hand, it is reasonable to think that in the wake of scientific awareness, some low socioeconomic status parents and students want to overcome impoverishment and come up to high socioeconomic status. Hence they strive to outperform their better placed peers in the high socioeconomic status class by concentrating on academics. On the other hand, the possessions of high socioeconomic status families could turn out to be distractions to students from such families. In line with this argument, [20] observes that even in families with above average income parents, often lack the time and energy to invest fully in their children's preparation for school, and they sometimes face a limited array of options for high-quality child care both before their children start school and during the early school years. Kindergarten teachers throughout the country report that children are

pay fees and think that is the end. "The findings above generally indicate that though the relationship between family socio-economic status and the quality of education is not statistically significant, the former affects the latter in subtle ways that need be mitigated.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

increasingly arriving at school inadequately prepared. It is also noteworthy that the gap between the poor and rich in Ibanda District may not be so pronounced so as to produce a significant relationship. However, these findings are in opposition to popular study findings including the qualitative findings in this study which link family socioeconomic status to learner performance. For instance, according to [21], families from low-SES communities are less likely to have the financial resources or time availability to provide children with academic support. Aikens & Barbarin [22] found out that children's initial reading competence is correlated with the home literacy environment; number of books owned and parent distress. According to [23], parents from low-SES communities may be unable to afford resources such as books, computers, or tutors to create this positive literacy environment. When enrolled in a program that encouraged adult support, students from low-SES groups reported higher levels of effort towards academics [24]. In addition, increasing evidence supports the link between lower SES and learning disabilities or other negative psychological outcomes that affect academic achievement. For example, children from lower socioeconomic status households are about twice as likely as those from high-SES households to display learning-related behaviour problems. A mother's socio economic status is also related to her child's inattention, disinterest, and lack of cooperation in school [25]. Identifying as part of a lower/working class in college has been associated with feelings of not belonging in school and intentions to drop out of school before graduation [26]. Perception of family economic stress

and personal financial constraints affects emotional distress/depression in students and their academic outcomes [27].

APA [28] describes the relationship of family socioeconomic status to children's readiness for school. Across all socioeconomic groups, parents face major challenges when it comes to providing optimal care and education-for their children. For families in poverty these challenges can be formidable. Sometimes, when basic necessities are lacking, parents must place top priority on housing, food, clothing, and health care. Educational books and other necessities like mathematical sets and calculators may appear to be luxuries, and parents may not have the time, energy, or knowledge to find innovative and less-expensive ways to foster young children's development.

Families with low socioeconomic status often lack the financial, social, and educational supports that characterize families with high socioeconomic status. Poor families also may have inadequate or limited access to community resources that promote and support children's development and school readiness. Parents may have inadequate skills for such activities as reading to and with their children, and they may lack information about childhood immunizations and nutrition. Lareau [29] states that low maternal education and minority-language status are most consistently associated with fewer signs

The level of family socioeconomic status does not affect the level of education among students in Ibanda District. High performing students come from both

of emerging literacy and a greater number of difficulties in preschoolers. Having inadequate resources and limited access to available resources can negatively affect families' decisions regarding their young children's development and learning. As a result, children from families with low socioeconomic status are at greater risk of entering kindergarten unprepared than their peers from families with median or high socioeconomic status. The results further indicate that the aggregate scored by the learners at Senior 4 was significantly negatively related to the quality of the school learning environment, implying that the higher the quality of the school environment, the lower the aggregate (and hence the better the performance) scored at Senior 4. Conversely, it implies that the lower the quality of the school environment, the higher the aggregate (and hence the poorer the performance) scored at Senior 4. This is contrary to the findings of a study in India by [30] in which there was no significant relationship between School Environment and Academic Achievement of standard IX students. But it is consistent with most study findings including one by [31] in the neighbouring Kenya in which a positive learning environment focuses the student to study hard and to perform at his or her best. It implies that the environment must be structured properly in order to achieve effective teaching and consequent learning amongst students.

high- and low-socioeconomic status families, and similarly low performing students also come from both high- and low-socioeconomic status families.

CONCLUSION

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