

**COVID-19 PANDEMIC SCHOOL LOCKDOWN AND PUPILS 'ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE. A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
BUTALEJA SUB COUNTY, BUTALEJA DISTRICT**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that; this work has not been presented in any other University or institution of higher learning, for any academic award.

SIGN.....

WERE DENIS

11/9/2024

DATE.....

APPROVAL

This project “ Covid-19 Pandemic lockdown pupils’ Academic performance a case study of primary Schools, in Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District, Uganda’ has been written and submitted with my approval



Signed

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my dear children; Mugoya Shivan and Mugoya Shima Robinah for their endurance at the time they needed my parental love most. May you too get inspired and excel in your academic endeavours.

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Abstract

COVID 19 pandemic lockdown and pupils' academic performance a Case study of primary schools in Butaleja Sub-County Butaleja District, in general, was an issue of concern of the 21st century. The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county. The objectives were to find out the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure in primary schools, to assess the status of academic performance of learners, to assess the relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, in Butaleja District. A cross sectional survey research design, employing both qualitative, quantitative and focussed group discussion approaches. The study population of 12 teachers and 134 learners in government-aided schools participated in the study. A structured questionnaire and interviews guide were the instruments for collecting data. A content validity index [CVI] was computed. For reliability, a test to retest method was used and a Cronbach Alpha was computed and used after pretesting and after the whole data is collected.

It was concluded that: school closure due to covid-19 pandemic affected both pupils and teachers since pupils could rarely attend school, pupils' contact time with other learners was reduced and also pupils face to face interactions with teacher was reduced. Consequently, this affected pupils' discussion and learning schedules. There was a poor status of academic performance of learners since a given percentage of pupils could not count using mental head effectively, could not divide effectively in maths, scored poor grades and could not proficiently pronounce words which was an indicator of poor status of academic performance of learners. There was a highly positive significant relationship between effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners at the one percent level two tailed. These results implied that as school closure due to covid-19 pandemic contributed 59.4% to the status of the academic performance of learners and the remaining 40.6% was caused by other factors.

It was recommended that as school administrators observed the SOP's, it would adopt other means like online class so that pupils could attend school regularly, create discussion groups through Whatsap, Zoom to increase on the contact time with other learners. The school administration and stakeholders should provide extra classes and also provide extra support to those pupils that could not count using mental head effectively, divide effectively in maths to improve the status of academic performance.

Chapter One

Introduction

Background to the Study

In late 2019, an outbreak of Pneumonia of unknown origin was reported in Wuhan, Hubei province of China. Thus, an acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV2), was discovered in January 2020. This Pneumonia case was, epidemiologically linked to a human seafood Wholesale market. Corona Virus Disease pandemic of 2019 (COVID-19), according to the WHO, became a global outbreak of corona virus, an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndromecoronvirus2 (SARS-CoV-2) with immense social-economic impact on populations across the world.

Historical perspective

Historically, Scientists have debated the origin of COVID-19 and Macro, Massimo, Alessandro, Wan-can, Cheng; Sagio (2020) speculated that the disease was a product of laboratory manipulations. Estimates of the recent common ancestor of Coronavirus-19 date the epidemic to between November 2019 and the beginning of January 2020. On December 31st 2019, the WHO initially received a report. On January 30th, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak, a global health emergency and, on March 11th 2020, a global pandemic.

John Hopkins Medicine (2020) notes that 1 million patients were registered by March-April 2020 and, between August and December 2020, Lambda (Peru), Alpha (UK) and Delta Variants were first discovered, raising the COVID-19 reported cases to over a million deaths. The first COVID-19 human vaccine trial with Moderna as mRNA vaccine begun, found to be effective by November 2020. According to Moore (2020) by this period, Pfizer and Bio NTECH vaccine trials were over 90% effective and, the University of Oxford AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine showed effectiveness. By December 2020, the WHO issued its first emergency use Validation for COVID-19 vaccinations and, a billion COVID-19 Vaccine doses had been administered by April 2021. April 2020, the WHO released guidelines on Mask wearing.

Problem Statement

Understanding of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic school lockdown, on the academic performance of learners in general, helps developing and making existing education processes, policies and activities, more effective and efficient, with its related advantages to learners, teachers and schools alike. Thus the availability of full scale information about the COVID-19 pandemic, is a catalyst to sustainable understanding of learners' academic performance, in the new normal, by way of implementing full scale mitigation measures in the education processes, frameworks and activities (MoES, 2021)

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic school closure, on academic performance by learners in primary schools, has been reflected by some learners skipping classes, school drop outs, indiscipline learners and teachers, loss of interest in learning by some learners. This has equally been seen in some teachers abandoning the teaching profession for other lucrative greener pastures, limited access to school and school services, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies and, the general disruption of social activities like education among others. (Jenkins, 2020). Such failure by learners, teachers and the MoES, may disadvantage primary school learners in Butaleja Sub-county, in terms of socio-economic transformation and its related opportunities of District, regional, national and global competitiveness.

According to Rezvan, Housbang and Peter (2022), some of the reasons for the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on education in general, include forced schools closure for over two years, parents and learners forced to adopt to emergency remote teaching and learning (ERTL) as a substitute for the traditional face-to-face (F2F) classes. Other reasons included death of parents and, or guardians due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The government tried to use the abridged curriculum to help learners cover up the work but nothing much yielded as noted by Rezvan Housbang and Peter. This curriculum worked for only one year and by 2023, things came to normal (The new normal) and we are now following the old curriculum for learners, schools and education in general. This gap may result in poor pedagogical service delivery and poor learners' academic performance. Therefore, a methodical approach in finding out the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the learners' academic performance, despite all MoES interventions and other stakeholders' effort, is the mission of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives;

1. To find out the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District.
2. To find out the status of academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District
3. To assess the relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, in Butaleja District

Research Questions

The following questions were answered to achieve the respective objectives;

1. What are the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District?
2. What is the status of academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District?
3. What is the relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, in Butaleja District?

Scope of the Study

Geographical Scope: The study was conducted in the following schools; Butaleja primary school, Nakwasi Primary School, Mabale Primary School and Bugesa Primary School in Butaleja Sub-county Butaleja District, The study was centred specifically in primary five (P.5).

Content Scope; this study was limited to reading in the four core subjects that is, English, Social studies, Science and, Mathematics. The target was learners and teachers in upper primary in Government aided primary schools and the results from which, was expected to help in data analysis. The study focused on investigating the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure, on the academic performance of learners in primary schools, Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District .

Time Scope; the study was conducted between October and December 2023.

Significance of the study

The findings of the study might inform the Ministry of Education Sports on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure, on the academic performance of learners in primary schools and how the effects may be handled

The study may help school managers to trace and monitor the effects of COVID-19 on the academic performance of learners in primary schools in order to address the salient issues arising out of the effects in primary schools in general and the primary school classes in particular.

The study might also help the teachers consider the urgent need for assisting the learners to improve their academic performance and so, improve their classroom practices to overcome the challenges learners face during the teaching and learning process in the new normal.

The study might equally arm the parents to assist the learners to concentrate on improving their academic performance in the new normal, in order to catch up, on the losses they experienced in education due to the prolonged school closure in the country.

Conceptual Framework

Below is a conceptual framework showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is the effect of COVID-19 pandemic while the dependent variable is learners' academic performance in Primary schools.

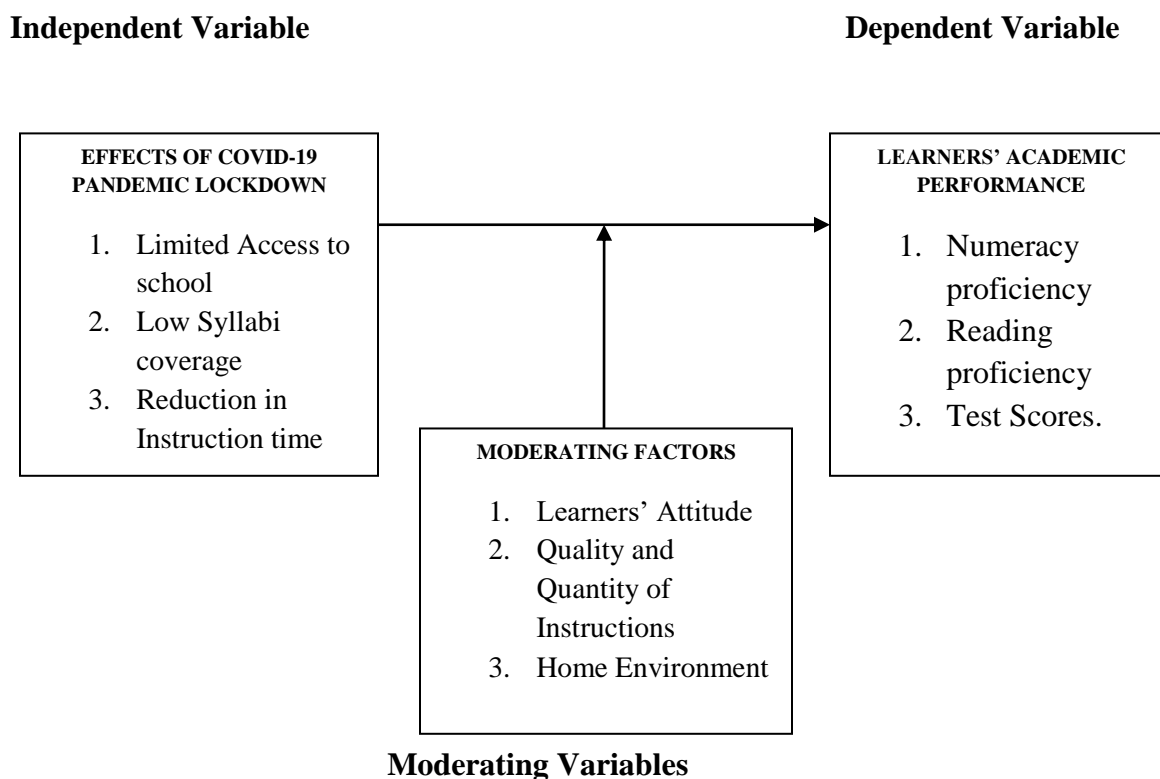


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed from the Literature review (Rezvan et al, 2022; Ruguth et al, 2015)

The Conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows the relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in terms of limited access to school, low syllabi coverage and, reduction in instruction Time and, learners' academic performance, which includes numeracy proficiency, reading proficiency and, Test scores. In terms of educational productivity theory (Walberg, 1981), understanding the effects of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown is very important if, learners' academic performance in the new normal is to be realized. Therefore, for schools and learners to improve academic performance in the new normal, there should be high-level mitigation against the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. Access to school aims at reaching education services, syllabi coverage is to improve say, test scores while instruction time enhances both numeracy and reading proficiency.

A part from the independent variable, there is the dependent variable describing some of the sub-variables that are prudent in the learners' academic performance by way of; numeracy proficiency, reading proficiency and test scores. There are also certain moderating variables, which influence learners' academic performance in primary schools, which may include Learners' attitude, quality and quantity of instruction and, home environment. However, the moderating factors, which influence the learners' academic performance, will be beyond the scope of this study. The above variables will be measured using the three levels of low, moderate and, high.

Chapter Two

Review of related literature

2.0

2.1 Theoretical perspective

This study was guided by the Walberg (1981) theory of educational productivity, which posits that the Psychological characteristics of individual students and their immediate Psychological environments, influence educational outcomes. It talks about the influences on learning that affect the academic performance of a student. Walberg's theory identifies eleven key and influential domains of variables that influence educational outcomes classified into three major areas as; the characteristics of the student, the quality and quantity of instruction and, the Psychological environment. The theory explains that these variables have certain effects that might cause problems with the academic performance of students, if not properly guided. The theory further notes that, giving importance to a certain variable such as Psychological environment (e.g. COVID-19) can mean a big impact with the students' academic performance

2.2 Conceptual Review

According to Britannica dictionary (2023), and as in this study, effects are changes that result when something is done or happens. An event, condition or state or affairs that is produced by a cause. And in the words of Merriam Webster (2023) and in this study, effects mean something that inevitably follows an antecedent such as a cause or agent

COVID-19 is an acronym for Corona Virus Disease 2019. according to WHO (2020), and as in this study, COVID 19 is an illness caused by a novel Corona Virus called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome CoronaVirus2 (SARS- CoV-219), formally called 2019-nCoV. The name COVID-19 was used in order to avoid stigmatizing the virus's origin in terms of population, geography or animal association. While to John Hoskins Medicine (2020) COVID 19 pandemic and, as it is in this study, is a disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, corona virus that emerged in December 2019. According to Mugisha et al. (2020) this study is a wide spread occurrence of infectious disease over a whole country or world. While the Cambridge Dictionary (2020) as is also in the study, defines the concept pandemic as a disease existing in almost all of an area or all of a group of people, animals or plants.

2.3 Effects of Covid-19 pandemic lockdown

Huck (2021) notes that COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching consequences on nearly every aspects of society, including education and adds that, COVID-19 pandemic compelled educators to transition from the traditional face-to face learning to digital platforms for remote teaching. He reported that studies in USA indicated that 90% of school principals reported that their schools lacked internet access, 40% reported that access to technology and or internet was a barrier to their teaching. However, this study was in a developed country while this current study was carried out in Butaleja Sub-county, Uganda.

Pokhnel and Chhetri (2021) opined that COVID-19 pandemic created the largest disruption of education systems in human history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 200 countries. While Bozkurt, Karaya, Castellanos-Reyes (2022) reported that the rapid and unexpected onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic generated a great degree of uncertainty about the future of education and required teachers and students alike to adopt to anew normal to survive in the new educational ecology. Pokhnel and Chhetri (2021) further noted that through this experience, educators learned many lessons including how to navigate through the uncertainty by recognising their strength and vulnerabilities, shifting educational roles, digital pedagogy or emergency remote education. However, this study was done in more countries yet the current study will be carried out in Butaleja District.

Huck (2021) collaborates the above study saying that the education system was affected at all levels and forced to respond to the crisis to transition emergency modes since the pandemic was a phenomenon with many unknowns. Meanwhile, Moyini and Habib (2023) argued that schools and universities being shut down as a preventive response to contain the pandemic impacted more than 1 billion and 575 million students in 188 countries worldwide. Moyini and Habib further noted that more than 17.5 million students were sent home during the lock down. Moyini and Habib equally claim that education being that important had to continue. As such, e-learning had to be adopted and how it could be achieved, remained problematic in many primary and secondary schools. However, this study was made in higher education while the current study was carried out in primary schools.

Lu et al. (2020) claims that, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in achievement of gaps between learners from different social backgrounds. Different socio-

economic backgrounds have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, with limited access to technology. Tel et al. (2020) examined the potential academic impact of COVID 19 on primary school learners and postulate that, the students learning gains in Mathematics, reduced by 44 – 63% due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic. They also emphasized that the importance of targeted interventions and equitable access to learners, to mitigate the adverse effects on learning outcomes. Lee (2020) in discussing the psychological effects of COVID 19 pandemic on primary learners revealed that the pandemic included stress, fear and detrimental effects on the health, of students, depression and, reduced motivation for learning. Asif et al. (2020) suggested that a shift to virtual learning due to COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges for primary school learners, including limited access to technology, internet connectivity, and difficulty in adapting to online educational platforms.

Abasi, Sing, and, Rajesh (2020) posit on education sector issues and challenges faced by primary school learners in India due to the COVID 19 pandemic and highlighted issues such as lack of access to online learning, increased screen time and, disruption in the teaching-learning process. Abasi and others specifically focused on the shift to online performance and suggested strategies to mitigate effects on education focusing on the challenges and opportunities of remote teaching and learning, while not limited to primary school learners, it provides insight. However, this article primarily focuses on the elderly, it briefly discusses the impact of COVID 19 on different age groups, including primary school learners.

Chabikuli and Karani (2020) discusses specifically the shift to online performance and suggests strategies to mitigate effects on education particularly focusing on the challenges and opportunities of remote teaching and learning while not limited to primary school learners, it provides insight. Butt, Saleem, Rashid and Ikram (2021) argue that the 2020 pandemic forced students to take online classes, increasing their stress levels. Butt and others maintain that the pandemic became the greatest public health challenge globally. The social distance policy led to the closure of education institutions, directed to make significant and timely amendments in their present education systems to provide education and maintain the academic progression of students supporting remote learning.

As a result, Butt et al (2021) claim education institutions switched from on-campus to online learning. Butt and others argue that students felt stressed because of increased workload, time management issues and lack of technical skills.

2.4 Status of Academic performance of Learners in primary schools

Arief (2019) notes that students' academic performance is a 'net result' of their cognitive and non-cognitive attributes as well as, the socio cultural context in which the learning process takes place. He opines that Psychological, contextual factors contribute to the academic achievements of learners with various socio-demographic and socio cultural backgrounds. While Shahjahan, Ahmed, Hadram, Islam, Hossain and, Khan (2021) have it that, poor academic performance is challenging for students, parents and teachers. These authors note that academic performance correlates with irregular class attendance, fathers' low education, partial family cooperation, use of social media and excessive time spent for gossiping.

Armitage and Nellums, (2020) examined the academic performance of primary school students in Turkey through various indicators. These researchers collected data from a sample of students and analyzed the results to understand the factors that influence academic performance. While Noemy, Ines, Izquierday and Ajenjo (2017) opine that academic performance has always been associated to the evaluation tests results, which are those corresponding to students' IQ and leaving aside other personal characteristics. Among such characteristics, the importance of emotional intelligence is worthy highlighting.

Noemy et al. (2017) continue to note that today than never before, there is a clear need for education to learn about the factors that influence a student's academic performance. Considering their performance to be the quantitative results obtained during the learning process, based on the evaluations carried out by the teachers through objective test evaluations. Noemy and others also note that academic performance is not only associated with intellectual quotient (IQ) but there are multiple variables and dimensions to which certain predictive value can be attributed. In addition, that there is need for implementing an appropriate counselling strategy to follow up the academic performance of the poor performing students. Moreover, the latest

patterns in this area highlight the importance of considering other variables beyond intellectual capabilities (Noemy et al., 2017)

Bugwek (2023) postulates that factors such as personal conditions, study habits, home related factors and lecturer factor, have low impact on the academic performance of elementary teacher education students. Bagwek continues to argue that on the other hand, school related factors have moderate impact on the academic performance of elementary teacher education students. While Husain and Shukor (2023) observe that students' academic performance is vital for assessing students' standing within University and, that it makes it possible for academic staff, educational administrators and decision makers to precisely evaluate students taking various courses throughout the semester. Husain and Shukor maintain that additionally, it serves as a cautionary tale for the students to assess their performance level and make subsequent improvements.

Ssebunya, Kyohairwe and Lubwama (2016) found out that both home and school environments have lacuna that needs to be bridged, if students are to perform in accordance to the expectations. Equally, Ozcan (2021) found out that family education levels affect students' academic success in terms of academic support, being role models, concern, intellectual motivation, and creativity. Ozcan further notes that school management affects students' academic success in terms of operation and socioeconomic effects. That teacher affects students' academic performance in terms of professional competence, being a role model, communication, attitude, motivation and guidance. Akessa and Dhufera (2015) note that in a given class, it is sometimes seen, that there is a difference in achievements are a result of different factors, which affect the academic performance of students.

2.5 The relationship between COVID-19 pandemic school closures and the academic performance of learners

Li, Kang, Miles and Khan (2023), point out that understanding the factors that affected academic performance of students during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures helped design effective interventions for improving students' academic performance during emergencies as well as, during regular academic environments. Li and others also contend that students who spent more time studying on college work were less likely to have poor academic performance. In addition, UNICEF (2023) reported that education system were already failing our children even

before the pandemic. UNICEF maintains that COVID-19 only exacerbated this learning crisis and children in almost every country have fallen behind in their learning.

Andersen, Leon, Patel, Lee and Simanton (2022) reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, medical students at Kirk Kerkorian School of medicine at UNLV have demonstrated decreased examinations performance, study more at home and have poor relationships with their peers and faculty. Andersen et al, argue that looking at all the variables, it is likely, relationships exist between them and that for example, COVID-19 Pandemic, study location and relationships may contribute to academic performance. On the other hand, Ocana, Chocano, Navio and Serrano (2021) suggested that circumstances arising out of the exceptional situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have affected all socioeconomic areas in the last two years.

Ocana et al. (2021) further reported that the field of education has not been exceptional and the management of the situation seems to have caused an increase in the level of perceived stress among students and that, students were exposed to various situations that did not only affect their academic performance but also their mental health during the lockdown.

Hammerstein, Konig, Dreisoolner and Frey(2012), the COVID-19 pandemic led to numerous governments deciding to close schools for several weeks in the spring of 2020. Empirical evidences on the impact of COVID-19 related school closures on academic achievements are only just emerging. Hammerstein et al, have it that, studies indicate a negative effect of school closures on student achievement, especially in young students and students from families with low socioeconomic status. While Bradox, Smedt and, Molamberghs (2023), claimed that multitudes of studies show that the school closures also had a negative impact on different components of wellbeing such as academic achievements, time spent on learning and mental health. Bradox and others continued to claim that the school closure affected not only the children and adolescents, but also the parents that were forced to provide more childcare and with schoolwork.

Bradox et al.(2023) noted that studies on academic achievements after the first lockdown led to mixed results. For primary and secondary school children, declines, stability and improvements were discovered for different topics countries. Bradox and others claim that in Flanders specifically, significant learning losses in language and mathematics were observed by

the end of the year 2019-2020 compared to the previous cohorts. During the school year 2020-2021, teachers, students and parents were better adapted to remote learning. Therefore the expected effects of the COVID-19 related school closures on achievements, are less severe compared to the first lockdown.

According to Kuhfield, Saland and Liu (2020), as the COVID-19 upended the 2019-2020 school year education systems scrambled to meet the needs of students and families with little available data on how school closures may affect learning. Kuhfield and others also noted that during the extended school closures, many working parents were to educate and care for their children. Moreover, that, extended time out of school almost certainly affected students' achievement and that impact is hard to estimate given all the unique aspects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on schooling and society.

Equally, Anger, Dietrich, Patzina, Sander, Lerche, Bernhard and Toussaint (2020) noted that although schools supported their students by providing learning material on a regular basis, students in their final year of school related activities and worried about their academic performance and their future occupational careers. Anger and others claimed that school closing forced teachers to adjust their teaching methods in a matter of days with majority of students still interacting regularly with their schools and received learning materials. However Anger and others also discovered that low performing students invested less time in homeschooling.

Engzell, Frey and Verhaen (2021) noted that suspension of the face-to-face instruction in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic led to concerns about the consequences for students' learning. Studies from the Netherlands, according to Engzell and others reveal a learning loss of about three percentile points or 0.08 standard deviation, with a loss of one fifth of a school year and, Losses of up to 60% larger among students from less educated homes, confirming the uneven toll of the pandemic on the children and families. These findings from the Netherlands, according to Engzell et al. implied that students little or no progress while learning from home and suggest losses even larger in countries with weaker infrastructure or longer school closures like Uganda. Learning loss was prominent among students from disadvantaged homes.

Kuhfield and Tarasawa (2020), disclose that as the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic closed schools a cross-nations, education systems went crumbling to meet the needs of millions of students, schools and families. Kuhfield et al also argue that the economic impact and trauma of recent events will also have far-reaching effects that will likely exacerbate long-standing opportunity gaps. They continue to say, it is difficult to speculate on what missing months of school may mean for students achievement, and that, students showed patterns of academic set back throughout the extended closure and COVID-19 slowdown.

Asakawa, and Ohtaka (2021) studying the academic performance of 5th-6th grade primary school students in Japan, found out that there was lowered mathematics scores in the short term. They note that, students with disadvantaged living conditions around school vacations saw their mathematics scores fell in the bottom 25% of their 4th grade academic performance. Sakawa and Ohtaka report that the study found out that a temporally school closure or a reduction in school days decreased students' academic achievement and that the learning was due to temporally school closure was about \$16,000 per student.

Ndejjo, Tusubira, Kiwanuka, Diallo, Egbende, Bangboye, Egbende, Afolabe and Leye (2023), in a study of consequences of COVID-19 across four sub-Saharan African Countries, discovered that, between 48 to 120 weeks' school closures, led to desirable and unanticipated consequences. These included, inadequate education continuity among students, disrupted students' progress and grades, increased sexual violence including transactional sex, rise in teenage pregnancy and school dropouts, demotivation of teachers' and less structural learning. Ndejjo et al, note that the closure of schools had several effects some of which had not been foreseen. The unprecedented and abrupt interruption of learning risked reversing earlier gains made in increasing school attendance and quality of education in Africa.

Kizito (2021) in a study of effects of school closures in COVID-19 era reveals that, the speed of closures and the rapid move to distance learning gave very little time for planning or any other alternative form of learning which, disrupted the education of up to 15 million children. Kizito claims that learners had to spend most of their time at home playing, helping their parents with home chores, engaging in Agriculture and spare some few hours a day to study. Kizito maintains that the education of learners was impacted greatly, since

learners were deprived of opportunities for growth and development when schools were closed, with disadvantages disproportionate for under privileged learners who tend to have fewer education opportunities.

2.6 Gaps in Literature

The review of related literature revealed several studies on the effects and impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the academic performance of students. However, in many of the studies, the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic have been limited to losses and, impact in general terms. Besides, many studies are limited to the effects on school attendance and effects on education systems in general terms with no specifics on academic performance (Kizito, 2021; Ndejjo et al, 2021; Moyini, 2023).

None of these studies particularly looked at the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closures on the academic performance of learners in Butaleja Sub-county. Some scholars explored limited effects on single subjects like Mathematics (Sakawa & Ohtaka, 2021). While others looked at the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on academic achievements of University students (Kizito, 2021; Ocana et al., 2021; Tadese et al., 2022). This leaves a number of questions on the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic School closures on academic performance unanswered.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter described the research design and population, sampling strategies, data collection, procedure and instruments. Data management, data analysis, procedure, ethical considerations employed during the study and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to obtain data from sampled respondents by subjecting them to open and closed ended questions. The design was cross-sectional in nature because the study was meant to analyse data from a certain population at a certain point in time (Creswell, 2014).

3.2 Study Population

The study population consisted of upper primary learners and teachers in schools in the sub-county which include; Butaleja primary school, Nakwasi Primary School, Bugesa primary school, and Mabale Primary Schools. The teachers and the learners were considered under this study because they were key implementers and participants respectively, of interventions put up by the government and the related sector ministries during the two year's COVID-19 pandemic school closure. These were looked at as among the implementers and participants of the intervention measures against the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the performance of the learners in primary schools, respectively

Table 1: Study population

School	No of teachers teaching P5	No of pupils in P5
Butaleja Primary School	03	30
Nakwasi primary school	03	104
Mabale Primary School	03	60
Bugesa P/School	03	40
Total	12	234

3.3. Sample Size Determination

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample determination was used to select the sample basing on the population. All schools in the Sub-county were stratified according to categories of geographical location and foundation body. The different categories of participants was as shown in Table 2. Using the Krejcie and Morgan table, the population of 234 learners gave rise to a sample minimum number of 144 learners, but the study considered a higher number of 148 to cater for attrition. While a population of 12 teachers gave rise to a sample minimum number of 10 teachers but the study considered a higher number of 12 to take care of attrition.

The primary five teachers in the four government aided schools were asked to fill the questionnaire. These teachers participated in the study because they were the ones tasked to implement the intervention measures provided by government to offset the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure on the academic performance of learners. The learners participated in the study by responding to questions in an interview guide, which were analysed differently from those of the teachers and, the findings were compared/ triangulated.

Table 2: The size of the population for the Study

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Method
Teachers	12	12	Proportionate and simple Random sampling
Learners	234	148	Purposive
Total	146160		

Source: Krejcie & Morgan (1970) Determination of Sample size from a given Population and sampling method

3.4 Sampling Strategies

All the government schools in the sub-county were to be stratified into categories of geographical location, and foundation body. A sample of four schools in the sub-county was conveniently selected. Twelve teachers in the above schools were selected using simple random sampling and, proportionate sampling was used to arrive at the number of 148 out of the overall 234learners and, to obtain qualitative data (Table 2). Teachers in the selected schools participate because they were the ones who implement the COVID-19 Ministry of Education and Sports intervention measures and, monitor learners' academic performance.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires were used to solicit quantitative data from teachers since it is relatively cheap, quick and efficient, in obtaining large amounts of data from large samples. Moreover the teachers and learner of primary five were used because they were able to read and write.

Focused interviews were used to solicit qualitative information from learners by probing with open-ended questions. The collected data was triangulated with quantitative data to give an in-depth understanding of the results

Documentary review was also employed to collect information about the performance of learners. This was done by observation as these were provided by primary five teachers like assessment sheets, report cards as tools of collecting data.

Instruments of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire having 20 items: Six items focused on the demographics, five items on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, five items on the academic performance of learners and, four items on the relationship between the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the academic performance of the learners in primary schools was administered to the teachers. The teachers' questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data. The teachers' questionnaire was close-ended and scored on a %-point likert scale as; Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Strongly Disagree and, Disagree. One focused interview was conducted with the Centre Coordinating Tutor for Butaleja Sub-county to generate qualitative data. Guided questionnaires were used to collect data from learners of primary five class in these four government aided schools in the sub-county.

3.7 Quality of data collection Instrument

Validity of the questionnaire guide: The questionnaire was subjected to two (2) experts to assess which questionnaire was valid according to the objectives of the study. The content validity index (CVI) was computed using the formulae;

$$CVI = \frac{\text{No of questionnaire declared valid}}{\text{Total No. of questionnaire in the questionnaire}}$$

Reliability of the questionnaire; To ensure reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted. The questionnaire was subjected to two schools' participants who were not to participate in the main study. Data from the pilot study was entered into the SPSS. A Cronbach Alpha was computed as recommended by Amin (2005).

Table 3: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
7.2222	130

Source: SPSS version 25

Procedure

An introduction letter was obtained from the department of Bachelor of Education Primary (BEP) Faculty of Science Education, Department of Education of Busitema University.

The letter was taken to the DEOs office to obtain permission to carry out research in the schools in Butaleja Sub-county. Thereafter necessary appointments with school head teachers was fixed for questionnaire filling in and interviews. The researcher then proceeded to the sample schools for teachers to fill in the questionnaires and to the.

3.8 Data Management

Questionnaire Data: For quantitative data, the questionnaires were collected from all schools, which participated. Those, which were fully filled-in were sorted out and coded in preparation for entry in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) system version 25 for analysis and, the scores were categorized in levels as shown in table 4 indicating the quantitative data levels.

For quantitative data in table 4, the level of COVID-19 effects was interrelated as low, Moderate and, high. While the level of learners' academic performance, was also interpreted as low, moderate and high. For qualitative data, the information was typed out, organized and interpreted for phenomenological analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data was analysed according to the objectives of the study. For objective one and two, quantitative data was analysed using SPSS software and presented in descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and, standard deviation which were employed to determine the status of COVID-19 effects (low, moderate and, high) and, the level of learners' academic performance (whether high, moderate or Low). This was triangulated with qualitative data from the structured interviews which, was analysed under emerging themes using discursive and, thematic methods.

Objective three which ought to examine the relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, quantitative data was used to determine the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between the status of the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the level of learners' academic performance.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

During the planning, collection and processing of data, the following ethical considerations were adhered to. Informed consent of participants was sought before

administering data collection instruments. It was also made known to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that, they were free to withdraw from the study at any time or not answer questions they were uncomfortable with. Due respect was accorded to the respondents' privacy and confidentiality, in which case, names and identity of the given participants were concealed.

Permission was sought from the District Education office to gain access to the schools followed by officially writing to the head teachers requesting them to allow the study to be conducted (Amin, 2005) in their schools. Objectivity was one of the guiding principles during the study to avoid bias, as well as, display a high degree of confidentiality with the data collected from the respondents. The sources of all materials such as journals, reports, books and, book chapters used in the study were at all times credited as originally were taken care of.

Limitations

The study presented limitations that were encountered during the research and interactions with the respondents.

Chapter Four

4.0. Data Presentation, Interpretation and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of the study are presented and discussed. The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county. The data were analysed around key objectives of the study; To find out the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District; To find out the status of academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District; To assess the relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, in Butaleja District.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics

Response rate

Table 4: Response rate

Respondents	Amount
Target sample	160
Received samples	130
Difference	30

The response rate shows that 160 questionnaires were issues to teachers and 130 were returned making a difference of 30 questionnaires. The returned questionnaires were enough to be analysed for the study.

Qualification of respondents

Table 5: Qualification of respondents

		Qualification			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Certificate	52	40.0	40.0	40.0
	License	78	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 5 show that majority (60%) of the respondents qualification licensed teachers as opposed to the 40% who were certificate holders. This finding showed that at least most of the primary schools are taught by qualified teachers.

Gender of respondents

Table 6: Gender of respondents

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	104	80.0	80.0	80.0
	Female	26	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data (2023)

Findings in Table 6 indicate that majority of the respondents were male (80%) and 20% were female, implying that the primary schools in the study had more male teachers as opposed to female.

4.3 Class taught by respondents

Table 7: Marital status

Class taught				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Upper primary (P.5-P.7)	130	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 7 show that all the respondents were upper primary (P.5 – P.7) teacher which is evident that the study was carried out on the upper primary section.

Age group of respondents

Table 8: Age group

Age group				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20-29	78	60.0	60.0	60.0
30-39	52	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 8 indicates that 60% of the respondents were in the age group of 20-29 year while the other 40% were in the age group 30-39 years. This finding shows that the primary schools in the study area are taught by young teachers who are still energetic.

Marital status of respondents

Table 9: Marital status

Marital status				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Single	130	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 9 shows that all (100%) the respondents in the study were single probably because they have just finished school and still establishing themselves.

4.4 The effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure in primary schools

The research objective one was to find out the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure in primary schools and to achieve this, a questionnaire with five items was issued. Following a scale where 5= strongly agree (SA), 4 = agree (A), 3= undecided (U), 2 = disagree (D) and 1= strongly disagree (SD).

Table 10: Pupils rarely attend school due to covid-19 impact

My pupils rarely attend school due to covid-19 impacts				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	52	40.0	40.0	40.0
strongly agree	78	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Findings in Table 10 shows that 60% of the respondents agreed that pupils rarely attend school due to covid-19 impact while 40% disagreed. Majority of the respondents agreed with the statement implying that pupils rarely attended school due to covid-19 impact and its related problems.

Table 11: There was low syllabi coverage during covid-19

There was low syllabi coverage during covid-19

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	78	60.0	60.0	60.0
agree	52	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Findings show that 60% of the respondents disagreed to having low syllabi coverage during covid-19 while 40% agreed, implying that syllabi coverage during covid-19 was averagely covered by the teachers of the primary schools in the study.

Table 12: I reduced on instruction time on the job

I reduced on instruction time on the job

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	78	60.0	60.0	60.0
agree	52	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 12 indicates that 60% of the respondents disagreed to having reduced on instruction time on the job as opposed to 40% who agreed, implying that most of the teachers did not reduce on their instruction time on the respective primary schools.

Table 13: Pupils' contact time with other learners was reduced

My pupils' contact time with other learners was reduced

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	26	20.0	20.0	20.0
agree	52	40.0	40.0	60.0
strongly agree	52	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Findings in Table 13 revealed that 80% of the respondents agreed that pupils' contact time with other learners was reduced as opposed to 20% who disagreed with the same. This implies that pupils' contact time with others was reduced, hence limited discussion time and space.

Table 14: Pupils had face to face interactions with teachers reduced

My pupils had face to face interactions with teachers reduced					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	disagree	26	20.0	20.0	20.0
	agree	78	60.0	60.0	80.0
	strongly agree	26	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 shows that 80% of the respondents agreeing that pupils had face to face interactions with teachers reduced while 20% of the respondents disagreed, implying that pupils had face to face interactions with teachers reduced due to the discouraged movement and contact which were put in place.

Qualitative findings

Interviews were conducted to pupils to find out the effect of covid-19 pandemic school lockdown and findings are provided. One pupil from primary school A was asked if they attend to Radio lessons during COVID-19 Pandemic school lockdown while at home. He said that,

“I was at home for some time, then my father sent me to the village where there was no radio for all children, it was only for the grandfather and sometimes grandmother because there was no electricity.”

This implies that radio lessons were not attended at home by the pupil.

Another pupil from School B said that,

“Radio lessons, I attended very little because I was wanting to play with my friends at home and they used to call me out to play.”

This implies that radio lessons were not attended at home by the pupil.

Pupil from primary school A was asked if they attend to television lessons while at home during the COVID-19 pandemic school lockdown. She said that,

“The Television lessons, attended little because my older brother and sisters wanted to watch other things like movies.”

This implies that television lessons were not attended at home by the pupil.

Another pupil had this to say,

“For me I attended for only one week, after I used to attend very little because I wanted to play outside with my friends.”

This implies that television lessons were not attended at home by the pupil.

Pupil from primary school C was asked if they used internet/social media platforms for study during the COVID-19 Pandemic school closures. She said that,

“No, my mother did not have air time and data for social media. My father refused us from touching his phone that we might spoil it.”

This implies that internet/social media platform was not used for studying by the pupil.

Another pupil from school D said,

“For me I wanted but our school did not have internet classes or social media. They just gave us some work once from school to do at home.”

This implies that internet/social media platform was not used for studying by the pupil.

Pupil from primary school B was asked if they received study materials for their studies during the COVID-19 pandemic school closure. He said that,

“My school gave us once reading materials that were provided by the government. Since then, they never gave us anything.”

This implies that pupils received reading materials but it was insufficient.

4.5 Status of academic performance of learners in primary schools

The second research objective was to find out the status of academic performance of learners in primary schools and to achieve this, a questionnaire with eight items was issued. Following a scale where 5= strongly agree (SA), 4= agree (A), 3= not sure (U), 2= disagree (D) and 1= strongly disagree (SD).

Table 15: Pupils can count properly

My pupils can count properly				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	104	80.0	80.0	80.0
strongly agree	26	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Findings in Table 15 revealed that all the respondents in the study agreed that their pupils can count properly. This shows a good academic performance of learners in the primary schools.

Table 16: Pupils can count using mental head effectively

My pupils can count using mental head effectively				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	78	60.0	60.0	60.0
agree	52	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 16 shows that 60% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 40% agreed, implying that pupils cannot count effectively using their mental head. Hence an indicator of the poor status of the academic performance of learners in the primary schools.

Table 17: Pupils can do subtractions effectively

My pupils can do subtractions effectively

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	26	20.0	20.0	20.0
strongly agree	104	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Findings shows that all respondents agreed that their pupils can do subtractions effectively, hence an improved status of the academic performance of learners the primary school under study.

Table 18: Pupils can divide effectively in Maths

My pupils can divide effectively in maths

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	104	80.0	80.0	80.0
agree	26	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 18 revealed that 80% of the respondents disagreed that pupils can divide effectively in maths while 20% agreed with the statement. This finding implies that pupils in the primary schools under study cannot divide effectively in maths an indicator of poor status of the academic performance of learners.

Table 19: Pupils can effectively read

My pupils can effectively read

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	26	20.0	20.0	20.0
agree	104	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 19 revealed that 80% of the respondents agreed that their pupils can effectively read while 20% of the respondents disagreed with the same, implying that pupils in the primary schools under study can effectively read. Hence a good status of the academic performance of the learners.

Table 20: Pupils can construct meaningful sentences

My pupils can construct meaningful sentences

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	52	40.0	40.0	40.0
agree	78	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Findings in Table 20 showed that 60% of the respondents agreed that pupils can construct meaningful sentences while 40% disagreed. This finding implies that pupils in the primary schools under study can construct meaningful sentences, hence a good status of the academic performance of learners.

Table 21: Pupils score good grades

My pupils score good grades

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	26	20.0	20.0	20.0
disagree	78	60.0	60.0	80.0
agree	26	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 21 showed that majority 80% of the respondents disagreed to pupils scoring good grades while 20% agreed with the statement. This implies that pupils in the primary schools under study score poor grades, hence a poor status of the academic performance of the learners.

Table 22: Pupils proficiently pronounce words

My pupils proficiently pronounce words				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	130	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 22 shows that all the respondents disagreed with the statement, implying that pupils do not proficiently pronounce words. Hence a poor status of the academic performance of learners in the primary school under study.

4.6 The relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners in primary schools

Table 23: Correlation

Correlations			
		Dependent	Learners' academic performance
Dependent	Pearson Correlation	1	.594**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	130	130
Learners' academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.594**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	130	130

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 18 shows Pearson's correlation co-efficient index $r = 0.594^{**}$ sig = 0.000 less than 0.05. This suggests that there is a highly positive significant relationship between effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners at the one percent level

two tailed. These results implied that as school closure due to covid-19 pandemic is available the poorer is the status of the academic performance and the reverse is true.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the study, conclusions and recommendations based on the study findings.

5.2 The effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure in primary schools

Findings on this objective revealed that school closure due to covid-19 pandemic affected both pupils and teachers since pupils could rarely attend school, pupils' contact time with other learners was reduced and also pupils face to face interactions with teacher was reduced. Consequently, this affected pupils' discussion and learning schedules.

These findings are supported by Pokhnel and Chhetri (2021) who opined that COVID-19 pandemic created the largest disruption of education systems in human history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 200 countries. While Bozkurt, Karaya, Castellanos-Reyes (2022) reported that the rapid and unexpected onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic generated a great degree of uncertainty about the future of education and required teachers and students alike to adopt to anew normal to survive in the new educational ecology. Pokhnel and Chhetri (2021) further noted that through this experience, educators learned many lessons including how to navigate through the uncertainty by recognising their strength and vulnerabilities, shifting educational roles, digital pedagogy or emergency remote education. However, this study was done in more countries yet the current study will be carried out in Butaleja District.

Further, Huck (2021) collaborates the above study saying that the education system was affected at all levels and forced to respond to the crisis to transition emergency modes since the pandemic was a phenomenon with many unknowns. Meanwhile, Moyini and Habib (2023) argued that schools and universities being shut down as a preventive response to contain the

pandemic impacted more than 1 billion and 575 million students in 188 countries worldwide. Moyini and Habib further noted that more than 17.5 million students were sent home during the lock down. Moyini and Habib equally claim that education being that important had to continue. As such, e-learning had to be adopted and how it could be achieved, remained problematic in many primary and secondary schools. However, this study was made in higher education while the current study was carried out in primary schools.

Tel et al. (2020) also examined the potential academic impact of COVID 19 on primary school learners and postulate that, the students learning gains in Mathematics, reduced by 44 – 63% due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic. They also emphasized that the importance of targeted interventions and equitable access to learners, to mitigate the adverse effects on learning outcomes. Lee (2020) in discussing the psychological effects of COVID 19 pandemic on primary learners revealed that the pandemic included stress, fear and detrimental effects on the health, of students, depression and, reduced motivation for learning. Asif et al. (2020) suggested that a shift to virtual learning due to COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges for primary school learners, including limited access to technology, internet connectivity, and difficulty in adapting to online educational platforms.

5.3 Status of academic performance of learners in primary schools

Findings on this objective showed a poor status of the academic performance of learners since a given percentage of pupils could not count using mental head effectively, could not divide effectively in maths, scored poor grades and could not proficiently pronounce words. Consequently, this was an indicator to a poor status of the academic performance of learners. However, a small percentage of pupils could count properly, could subtract effectively, could effectively read and also construct meaningful sentences.

These are in line with studies by Further, Bugwek (2023) who postulates that factors such as personal conditions, study habits, home related factors and lecturer factor, have low impact on the academic performance of elementary teacher education students. Bagwek continues to argue that on the other hand, school related factors have moderate impact on the academic performance of elementary teacher education students. While Husain and Shukor (2023) observe that

students' academic performance is vital for assessing students' standing within University and, that it makes it possible for academic staff, educational administrators and decision makers to precisely evaluate students taking various courses throughout the semester. Husain and Shukor maintain that additionally, it serves as a cautionary tale for the students to assess their performance level and make subsequent improvements.

Further, Armitage and Nellums, (2020) examined the academic performance of primary school students in Turkey through various indicators. These researchers collected data from a sample of students and analyzed the results to understand the factors that influence academic performance. While Noemy, Ines, Izquierday and Ajenjo (2017) opine that academic performance has always been associated to the evaluation tests results, which are those corresponding to students' IQ and leaving aside other personal characteristics. Among such characteristics, the importance of emotional intelligence is worthy high lighting.

5.4 The relationship between the effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners in primary schools

Findings on objective three shows Pearson's correlation co-efficient index $r = 0.594^{**}$ sig = 0.000 less than 0.05, hence suggesting that there is a highly positive significant relationship between effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners at the one percent level two tailed. These results implied that as school closure due to covid-19 pandemic contributed 59.4% to the status of the academic performance of learners and the remaining 40.6% was caused by other factors.

These findings were supported by studies of Li, Kang, Miles and Khan (2023), who pointed out that understanding the factors that affected academic performance of students during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures helped design effective interventions for improving students' academic performance during emergencies as well as, during regular academic environments. Li and others also contend that students who spent more time studying on college work were less likely to have poor academic performance. In addition, UNICEF (2023) reported that education system were already failing our children even before the pandemic. UNICEF

maintains that COVID-19 only exacerbated this learning crisis and children in almost every country have fallen behind in their learning.

Furthermore, Andersen, Leon, Patel, Lee and Simanton (2022) reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, medical students at Kirk Kerkorian School of medicine at UNLV demonstrated decreased examinations performance, study more at home and have poor relationships with their peers and faculty. Andersen et al, argue that looking at all the variables, it is likely, relationships existed between them and that for example, COVID-19 pandemic, study location and relationships may contribute to academic performance. Ocana et al. (2021) further reported that the field of education has not been exceptional and the management of the situation seems to have caused an increase in the level of perceived stress among students and that, students were exposed to various situations that did not only affect their academic performance but also their mental health during the lockdown.

5.5 Conclusions

School closure due to covid-19 pandemic affected both pupils and teachers since pupils could rarely attend school, pupils' contact time with other learners was reduced and also pupils face to face interactions with teacher was reduced. Consequently, this affected pupils' discussion and learning schedules.

There was a poor status of academic performance of learners since a given percentage of pupils could not count using mental head effectively, could not divide effectively in maths, scored poor grades and could not proficiently pronounce words which was an indicator of poor status of academic performance of learners.

There was a highly positive significant relationship between effects of COVID-19 pandemic school closure and the academic performance of learners at the one percent level two tailed. These results implied that as school closure due to covid-19 pandemic contributed 59.4% to the status of the academic performance of learners and the remaining 40.6% was caused by other factors.

5.6 Recommendations

It was recommended that as school administrators observed the SOP's, it would adopt other means like online class so that pupils could attend school regularly, create discussion groups through Whatsapp, Zoom to increase on the contact time with other learners

The school administration and stakeholders should provide for extra classes and also provide extra support to those pupils that could not count using mental head effectively, divide effectively in maths to improve the status of academic performance.

5.7 Areas for further research

Due to constraints of time and a wide scope of the study variables, this study was done on effects of covid-19 school closure and status of academic performance. However, there are other factors that may affect academic performance like school environment, family type, school policy, etc. which may need attention of future researchers to investigate how these affect performance.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Letter of Permission to collect Data

Appendix 2

Consent Form

Participants' Consent Form

I.....voluntarily agrees to participate in this research whose purpose is to establish the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic school closure on the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county, Butaleja District , Uganda.

1. I understand that the decision to participate in this study is entirely up to me and that, even if I agree to participate now, I may refuse to take part in the study at any time without any consequences of any kind.
2. I understand that, I was selected as a possible participant, because I am a pupil/ Teacher in one of the primary schools sampled in Butaleja Sub-county and I am involved in the information on the research topic mentioned above.
3. I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
4. I understand that all the information I provide for this study will be treated with respect and confidentiality.
5. I understand that signed consent forms and original questionnaires will be retained at the University until the examinations board confirms the results of the research report.
6. I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in this research to seek clarification and information.

Consent

The signature below indicates that I have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study. I have read and understood the information provided herein. I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this form to keep along with any other printed material deemed necessary.

Name of participant (**Print**).....

Signature of the participant.....

Name of researcher.....

Appendix 3

Interview guide for Learners in form five in government aided primary schools in Butaleja Sub-county.

Dear participant,

You have been identified as a suitable participant in this study, I therefore request you to respond to the following questions. Any information you give shall be treated with confidentiality except for academic purposes

School.....

SECTION A: Personal information

In this section, you are requested to provide your personal information where appropriate.

1. Your position in the school (prefect?).....
2. What is your class?.....
3. How old are you?.....
4. What is your gender?.....

SECTION B: Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on academic performance of learners in primary Five

1. Did you attend to Radio lessons during COVID-19 Pandemic school lockdown while at home?
2. Did you attend to television lessons while at home during the COVID-19 pandemic school lockdown?
3. Did you use internet/social media platforms for study during the COVID-19 Pandemic school closures?
4. How did COVID-19 pandemic school closure (lockdown) affect your studies?
5. How did the COVID-19 pandemic school closure affect your academic performance during and after the lockdown?
6. Which class did you join when schools opened after the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown?
7. Did COVID-19 pandemic lockdown affect your academic performance? How?
8. Were you worried about your academic performance during COVID-19 pandemic school lockdown/ closure?
9. Did you receive study materials for your studies during the COVID-19 pandemic school closure?
10. Was it easy for you to organise your everyday study while at home during the COVID-19 school closure?
11. Are there learners you know of who did not return to school when schools were declared open after the COVID-19 lockdown?

Thank you for responding to this interview.

Section B: Effect of covid-19 pandemic lockdown

Tick the alternative most appropriate to you by indicating whether you disagree (SD), disagree (D), Not sure (NS), strongly agree (SA), agree (A), strongly

No.	Item	SD	D	NS	A	SA
1	My pupils rarely attend school due to covid-19 impacts					
2	There was low syllabi coverage during covid-19					
3	I reduced on instruction time on the job					
4	My pupils' contact time with other learners was reduced					
5	My pupils had face to face interactions with teachers reduced					

Section C: Learners academic performance

Tick the alternative most appropriate to you by indicating whether you disagree (SD), disagree (D), Not sure (NS), strongly agree (SA), agree (A), strongly

No.	Item	SD	D	NS	A	SA
6	My pupils can count properly					
7	My pupils can count using mental head effectively					
8	My pupils can do subtractions effectively					
9	My pupils can divide effectively in maths					
10	My pupils can effectively read					
11	My pupils can construct meaningful sentences					
12	My pupils score good grades					
13	My pupils proficiently pronounce words					

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Appendix 5

Table for Determining sample Size from a given population

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	750000	382
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384



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**FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

06th May, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

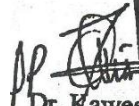

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION, PRIMARY

MR/Ms..... WERE DENIS is a student
of Bachelor of Education, Primary of Busitema University, Faculty of Science and Education,
Nagongera Campus. His/her Registration Number is.....

The purpose of this letter is to formally request you to allow him/her to access any information in
your organization which is relevant to his/her research.

His/her research topic is..... Covid-19 Pandemic school
lockdown and pupils' academic performance.

Yours Sincerely,


 **BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY**
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION
06 MAY 2024 ★
Dr. Kaweesi Mukhammad
Ag Head of Department, Education
P.O BOX 236, TORORO (U)