

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DROPOUT RATE IN SELECTED PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN BUSIA DISTRICT.**

BY

NERICHE BETTY

REG: No. BU/UP/2022/0288

**RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF A DEGREE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION
OF BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY**

JUNE 2024

DECLARATION

I, Neriche Betty, declare that the contents of this research report is my original work and it has not previously in its entirety or in part, submitted it to any university for any award.

Signature Betty
Neriche Betty

Date 24/09/2024

Approval

This research report is entitled on factors influencing the dropout rate in selected primary schools in Busia District Uganda has been under my supervisor for approval.

Signature: Date: 24/09/24

SUPERVISOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby express my appreciation and gratitude to the following individuals who contributed towards the completion of this Research report:

My God who gave me the power, wisdom and patience to complete this Research report, through whom all things are possible.

My supervisor, Dr....., for his critical guidance and patience. He has been tireless and patient in refining my skills. I am very appreciative of his unrelenting wisdom and encouragement. Through his close supervision and guidance, it was possible to produce this document. He devoted an immense amount of time, commitment and concern ensuring that I completed my Research report. For this, he will always have my enduring gratitude.

I am indebted to my boss, who academically supported me throughout this study. Thanks to all the participants of the selected primary schools in Busia District Local Government for their support and tolerance during the interviews, for their time and willingness to share their experiences with me. They were very cooperative in providing valuable and reliable information concerning dropouts in their schools. Without them this study would not have been completed. It is my hope that they have learnt as much as they have contributed.

My beloved husband Mr. Wanyama Samuel Okamai, for his love, moral support, continuous encouragement, guidance and belief in my abilities throughout the study, his encouragement to continue striving towards my highest potential has always kept me focused throughout the duration of my educational journey. I would have not completed this without his support, especially financially.

My children Ian, Benton, Marvin, Patience and Precious, you have brought more to my life than I ever thought possible. You are the main reason I was motivated to complete this research project. And lastly to my mother Edith, your love, understanding and the instillation of the importance of education in me has led me this far.

It is truly impossible to thank all the people for their contribution towards the successful completion of this research project. But special thanks go to my research assistant Mr. Rocky Abuneeri. And to those whose names have not been mentioned are equally thanked.

ABSTRACT

The government of Uganda and the parent expect all learners to attend school daily to receive the best education so that they can have a bright future. Education prepares the learner for life; if the learner drops out, he/she will struggle to succeed in life. The ever-increasing rate of primary school dropouts in Uganda is of great concern as it has negatively impacted on education in the area. The education system as well as the Ugandan community has over the years been affected in various ways. For example, school dropouts become liabilities to the community as they are not able to contribute maximally to nation development. In most cases the dropouts engage in anti-social criminal activities. They also cause educational wastage in the form of resources. For these reasons, it was of paramount importance to determine the reasons for dropouts and establish the possible solutions to this national problem.

This study has examined factors influencing learners to dropout. It employed a qualitative research design, using focus group interviews and field notes to succeed in investigating the causal factors of learner dropouts. Purposive sampling was used for the research because it was convenient for the research in terms of time. By using purposive sampling, the researcher was able to include participants according to the relevant criteria based on the emerging research question: What are the factors influencing learner dropout? The main objective was to identify the factors influencing primary school learner dropouts in Busia District, Uganda.

The focus group interviews were made up of one Head Teacher and five educators from each of the selected three primary schools which are located in Busia District in Uganda. This type of sampling was used because the researcher wanted rich information from participants regarding the reasons for learner's dropping out of school.

It has emerged from the empirical findings of the study that learner dropout is among others caused by school and home related factors. The study revealed that some learners dropped out of school because they were orphans, while others dropped out of school after being absent for a number of weeks. Mainstream classrooms were also found to encourage dropping out because educators are not fully trained to address problems that learners with disabilities bring to the classrooms. Lack of parental involvement was found to drive learners away from

schools and into the streets. Due to poor financial situations learners leave school and are forced into child labor to better their families' living conditions. Teachers' attitude was found to be a factor because they lack the necessary skills in developing learners. Other learners decided to stop schooling totally after repeating a grade.

Due to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Busia, many learners are taken out of school to take care of their ill relatives. Some learners drop out of school after being abused and neglected. Due to the high unemployment rate and poverty in Uganda, many learners quit school to support their families. All the above causes for learners dropping out of school have been discussed in detail in chapter four.

These factors are complex issues, which should be handled by trained people. As learners spend a great deal of time in their school environments, the educators play an integral part in alleviating the learners' social problems. It is essential that learners with social problems seek professional help at an early stage. Educators are obliged to help these learners although they are not necessarily equipped to give the required assistance.

Suggestions

and recommendations are mentioned to alleviate the situation: The study recommends that primary school learners should be encouraged to complete their primary level education; The MOES should develop policy guidelines on inclusive education; facilitate legislation on compulsory basic education; improve teaching and learning conditions in all schools; abolish child labor especially at the border and the mining sites in Busia; create employment opportunities for parents to prevent child labor. All the above suggestions hoped to be solutions to the problems of learner dropouts as discussed in detail in chapter two

LIST OF ACRONYMS

UNEB - Uganda National Examinations Board

UPE - Universal Primary Education

HIV/AIDS - Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ILO - International

Labor Organizations **MDG** -

Millennium Development Goal

NER - Net Enrolment Rate

PRS - Poverty Reduction Strategy

PLE - Primary School Leaving Examination

SEN - Special Educational Needs

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

WHO - World Health Organization

LIST OF TABLES

- i. The description of Participants
- ii. Open Codes emerged from the focus group interviews.
- iii. Key for interpreting findings from the focus group interviews

THE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pages

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF ACRONYMS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 General Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Analytical/Central Research Question	4
1.4 Action/Practical question	4
1.5 General Objective	4
1.6 Specific objectives	4
1.7 Research questions	5
1.8 Hypotheses of the study	5
1.9 Significance of the study	5
1.10.0 Scope of the study	6
1.10.1 Geographical Scope	6
1.10.2 Time Scope	6
1.10.3 Content Scope	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.0 Introduction	7
2.1.0 Definition of key terms	7
2.1.1 Dropouts	7
2.1.2 School	8
2.1.3 Primary school	8
2.1.4 Primary school education	8
2.1.5 Educator	9

2.2.0	Theoretical Literature Review	10
2.2.1	The psychological theories.....	10
2.2.2	Sociological theory on deviance	10
2.3	Orphan-hood and primary children school dropout.....	11
2.4	Poverty and primary children school dropout	12
2.3	. Child Labour and primary children school dropout.....	13
2.4	Teachers' attitude and primary children school dropout	14
CHAPTER THREE		15
METHODOLOGY		15
2.0	Introduction	15
This chapter gives details above data presentation and analysis.		15
3.1	Research paradigm.....	15
3.2	Research design.....	16
3.3	Population.....	17
3.4	Sampling	17
3.5	Methods of data collection	19
3.6	Data Collection Strategies.....	19
3.7	.1 Focus group interviews	19
3.7.2	Field notes	20
3.8	Data analysis	20
3.9	Credibility.....	21
3.10	Authenticity	21
3.11	Limitations.....	21
3.12	Ethical Considerations.....	22
CHAPTERFOUR.....		22
4.1	Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2	Description of participants	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 4.2 Descriptions of participants		23
SCHOOL B		24
SCHOOL C		24
4.3	RESEARCH FINDINGS	24
Table 4.3 Open-codes emerged from the focus group interviews		25
4.4	FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS	
Table 4.4 Key for interpreting findings from the focus group interviews		26
4.5	Orphan hood	26

4.6	Child Labour	27
4.7	Teachers' attitude	28
4.8	Poverty	30
4.9	DISCUSSION	31
4.10	CONCLUSION	32
	CHAPTERFIVE.....	33
5.1	Introduction	33
5.2	Summary and Conclusion of Findings.	33
5.3	Recommendation.....	35
5.4	Recommendations for future Research	35
5.5	The limitations of this study	35
	REFERENCES	37
	APPENDIX A: Questionnaire	41
	APPENDIX B: A letter of Recommendation from the University.....	41

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the general background, contextual back ground, statement of the problem, central/analytical research question, practical/action question, objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses of the study, scope of the study and significance of the study.

1.2 General Back Ground

In every country education is believed to be a key to success, especially in these modern days; without it one can barely survive. Education helps people to become useful members of the society in which they live. Primary education lays the foundation for further studies. Based on the above; it's believed that, learners who drop out of school compromise their future. They cannot function effectively compared to other educated members of society. Cases of learners who dropped out are found all over the world, however, the focus of this study will be Busia district in Uganda. The main aim is to identify the factors that contribute towards primary school dropout rates in Busia district in Uganda.

Most fathers in Busia are part of the border labor force and the mining sites, meaning they spend long periods of time in the Busia border work and the mines. While the mothers have to be more responsible than usual. (Lekhanya 2008) stated that with so many of the community's members involved in such activities, the tension has lasting effects on the academic progress of Uganda's learners. Consequently, the place of the children in the society often becomes confusing and they develop negative attitudes towards formal learning since the elders in the families are earning from non-educational activities. The absence of fathers is part of the problem behind both the high dropout rate in Uganda's schools and the relatively small number of learners who study further than primary school level (Lekhanya 2008).

According to Lekhanya (2008:18), dropout rates among learners limit the capacity of the national growth equivalent to its maximum potential. The generational effects of high dropout rates have more consequences than those for an individual and present day society. Children raised by parents who are illiterate are in turn more likely to drop out of school, thus this continues to the next generation the adverse effects associated with learners dropping out of

school.

According to Mokone & Maphokwane (2011), the characteristics of dropout learners are as follows: excessive absenteeism, repeat grades frequently, violent behavior, poor work performance and many of them are poor and vulnerable. It is very important to carry out this study for several reasons due to the advent of the Universal Primary Education policy in Uganda. For one, it is expected that from primary 1-7 every learner should be in school by now; unfortunately, this is not the case. Learners are seen roaming the streets of Busia District and many stay in villages especially at the border point and the gold mines.

The primary care of children is offered by the immediate family and if they fail to take care of the children, the extended family can act as caregivers. In these institutions neglect normally leads to children dropping out of school to wander around in the streets. The informal arrangement of foster care within families also proved to be no longer suitable for a number of reasons such as the high rate of child abuse in these informal foster care arrangements, which further leads to learners dropping out of school and living in the streets (Sebatane 2009).

According to UNICEF (2007:5), in temporary care arrangements it is easy for learners to drop out of school and prefer living in the streets because of being abused by relatives. Orphaned learners get hired out by relatives as domestic workers or herd boys for cheap labor. They get physically, emotionally or even sexually abused or exploited. Sometimes they do not get equal opportunities to attend school because they have to perform certain chores for the families who are taking care of them. Hence life in the streets seems attractive as opposed to that of abuse and torture in the homes they live in. According to WHO and UNAIDS (2007:16), the vast majority of learners in Uganda are faced with various problems such as abuse, rape, disability, child labour and child neglect among other factors. Traditional beliefs such as boys herding cattle and education being considered unimportant for girls, contribute greatly towards their dropout of school in sub-Saharan Africa.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2008 report) showed that, border points' Learners went to school either half a year or abandoned it totally. Formal education had not been considered important for people at the border point such as Busia; they had to go to business and the mines in Busia as they grew older. Parents do not see the importance of formal education as an answer

to poverty and other social problems.

According to the education standards agency (ESA 2022 report), Uganda still has a long way to go before achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of Universal Primary Education. ESA (2022 report) stated that a combination of poverty, food insecurity and orphan-hood challenges most children's potential to be educated in Uganda. However, records from the MOES (MOES 2008 report), even with Universal Primary Education (UPE) published in 2000, poor household often cannot afford to send their children to school. Due to the increasing impoverishment, girls are frequently being removed from school to care for their siblings while their parents look for work.

Many orphans drop out of schools simply to look for a means to survive. The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in Uganda (MOES 2007:8) indicated that the education system faces challenges. Enrolment increased but the completion and dropout rate increased due to poverty, lack of scholastic materials required for children to keep in schools. For those learners who do enroll at school, on average walking to school takes over an hour and learners arrive at school already hungry and yet they have no lunch meals at school hence attend classes irregularly which results in increased dropout rates.

1.2 Problem Statement

The ministry of Education through the policies like Universal Primary Education (UPE), Education standards Agency (ESA), among other policies aims at improving the enrollments and quality of education in Uganda education system. The main objective of adoptability of the MDGs in education was to improve enrollments in schools and reduce school dropout rates among primary schools as well as reduce illiteracy amongst Ugandans (MOES 2008 report). In view to achieve the above stated aims, The government of Uganda introduced the education reforms to vocationalize schools, pay teachers' salaries, improve the infrastructures in schools through the construction of classroom blocks and staff quarters, avail the necessary teaching learning materials for effective and efficient teaching learning process and involved Parents in the management of their schools through School management bodies such as School management Committees (SMCs) (MoFPED report to Parliament 2022).

Though government has such interventions in place, Uganda's goal of a proposed increase in

the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at the primary school level is still undesirable and raises a serious concern amongst scholars. J. Nalunkuuma reported in Nile Post (2023:08), that School dropout rates in Uganda are high, with about 45% of primary school children and 30% of secondary school children dropping out before completing their education. This is in line with UNESCO (2021 Report) which showed that school dropout is most likely to increase from 45% in 2023 to a slightly higher percentage in 2024 due to poverty levels amongst Ugandans, child labour amongst border point and the mountainous areas schools, poor attitude amongst the educators and the orphan hood rate in families. In addition, recent review of the education sector by the World Bank revealed that 15% of primary school-aged children still remain outside the formal schooling system in Uganda regardless of the existence of programs like UPE.

If such interventions have been put in place to curb school dropout rate in primary schools in Uganda, why is school dropout of primary schools children in Busia district still a challenge?

1.3 Analytical/Central Research Question

Why do primary schools children in Busia district dropout of school despite all the efforts of government and other stakeholders have put in place to ensure children stay in schools?

1.4 Action/Practical question

What can government and other stakeholders do to curb the high rates of school dropout rates of primary school children in Busia district?

1.5 General Objective

To find out why school going children in Busia district are dropping out of school?

1.6 Specific objectives

1. To examine how orphan hood lead to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District.
2. To establish how child labour lead to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District.
3. To assess how students' educators contribute to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District.
4. To find out how Poverty leads to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District.

1.7 Research questions

The research questions that were investigated in the study are;

1. How much does orphan hood lead to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District?
2. How does child labour lead to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District?
3. How do students' educators contribute to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District?
4. How does Poverty leads to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District?

1.8 Hypotheses of the study

1. Orphan hood lead to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District.
2. Child labour lead to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District.
3. Students' educators contribute to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District.
4. Poverty leads to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District.

1.9 Significance of the study

This study will provide an opportunity for the stakeholders who understand education issues to express and share their views about school dropouts.

The study contributes to remedies on school dropouts in primary school children in the country and guide policy makers on setting policies that consider limitation on school dropout in primary school children in Uganda.

The study analyses how several parameters lead to school dropout of children in primary schools in Uganda.

The study strengthens the already existing work of other researchers on the questions on school dropout amongst children in primary school in Uganda.

For the researcher, the study is conducted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a degree in Primary education of Busitema University in Uganda.

1.10.0 Scope of the study

1.10.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted among selected primary schools in Busia district. Busia District borders Tororo District to the north, Busia County, Kenya to the east, Namayingo District to the south, and to the south-west, and Bugiri District to the west. Busia, Uganda, the site of the district headquarters, is approximately 35 km (22 mi) by road south of Tororo, the nearest large town. Busia 384,000 Population [2020] – Projection 734.1 km² Area 523.1/km² Population Density [2020] 3.0% Annual Population Change [2015 → 2020]. Dominant languages spoken include Lusamia - Lugwe, Ateso, Kiswahili and Luganda. The district is located 200km from Kampala, the capital city. Administratively the district has got one county (Samia - Bugwe) and two parliamentary constituencies i.e. Samia-Bugwe North and Samia - Bugwe South.

Agriculture is the major economic activity in Busia County and the climatic condition of the region favours production of robusta coffee. The main economic activities include trading, farming both crop (with sugarcane as the main cash crop) and livestock farming. The Marachi people in Butula Sub County are culturally known for making of Marachi sofas and pottery.

1.10.2 Time Scope

The study analyzed data and reports of primary schools in Busia district over a period of three years 2021 up to 2023. The data analysis and report writing process was done in June 2024.

1.10.3 Content Scope

The study investigated why primary school going children in Busia district are dropping out of school. The researcher therefore studied how Orphan hood, Child Labour, Students' Educators and Poverty lead to school dropout in primary school children in Busia district. The study considered the variables in Orphan hood, Child Labour, Students' Educators and Poverty.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights key literature on the topic presented under the sub headings: theoretical review, orphan hood and school dropout in primary school, child labour and school dropout in primary school, students' educators and school dropout in primary school, Poverty and school dropout in primary school children in Busia District in Uganda. This provided the researcher varying perspectives from various researchers in this field to draw comparisons on the topic and determine the literature gaps in different scholars' work. MacMilan & Schumacher (2010) state that, literature review is done to establish the important links between existing knowledge and the research problem being investigated, which enhance significance and provide helpful information about methodology that can be incorporated into a new study. Sebatane (2009) also maintains that a literature review is important because it sharpens and deepens the theoretical foundation of the research.

2.1.0 Definition of key terms

2.1.1 Dropouts

Dropouts are learners who temporarily or permanently stop attending school before completing an education cycle, for example, primary level. Lekhesa (2007:8) view dropout's as those learners who leave school before the final year of the educational cycle in which they are enrolled, which could be the primary level in this case. Dropout statistics can be used to monitor the success of schools and identify learners needing special attention. In addition, statistics would provide an overall indication of the success of the educational system. In this study, dropouts are described as learners who have dropped out for reasons other than promotion, transfer, completion of school, and death, including those who dropped out because of exc

cessive absence from school (Lekhesa 2007:8).

2.1.2 School

A school is an institution designed for the teaching and learning of students or learners under the direction of educators. Most countries have systems of formal education which are commonly compulsory. In these systems, learners progress through a series of schools. The names for these schools vary by country but generally include primary school for young learners and secondary school for fourteen to sixteen year olds who have completed primary education (Longman Contemporary English Dictionary as cited in Lekhesa 2007:11). There are non-governmental schools called “private schools”. Private schools may be required when the government schools do not supply adequate or special education. Private schools can be religious, such as Christian schools, have a higher standard of education or seek to foster other personal achievements. Schools for adults include institutions of corporate training, military education and business schools. In homeschooling and online schools, teaching and learning take place outside of a traditional school building (Longman Contemporary English Dictionary as cited in Lekhesa 2007:11).

2.1.3 Primary school

Lekhanya (2008) stated that, primary school is an institution in which children receive the first stage of compulsory education known as primary or elementary education. Learners normally attend primary school from around the age of 6 until the age of 12 or 13. In some places primary schooling has been divided into lower and higher primary schools. In this study, primary school is referred to as the compulsory education offered to learners aged 6 to 12 or 13 and it starts with grade 1 to 7. When learners have graduated in grade 7, a certificate is given and that learner is considered to be one who has completed primary school (Lekhanya 2008:15).

2.1.4 Primary school education

Primary school education is inclusive of grades. It is considered the building blocks of a learner’s educational future. The first part of it is in the lower grades. The main emphasis of primary education is to establish a strong academic foundation. If a learner has not

benefited from quality instruction in most of these grades, he/she will struggle throughout middle and high school. Primary schools often have after-school programs to reinforce skills and provide tutoring for learners who are behind their classmates Sebatane (2009). The goal of primary education is to identify learners who are at risk academically and behaviorally and address their problems before they progress into the upper levels of education. Primary schools tend to have smaller classes and have more staff who are trained to notice learning problems and help learners overcome them. The importance is that it sets the tone for the learners' perception of their abilities, which will remain with them throughout school and life. It is the place where learners can be positively or negatively influenced about the desire and motivation for learning. The major goals of primary education are achieving basic literacy and numeracy amongst all learners, as well as establishing foundations in all areas Sebatane (2009).

In this study, primary education refers to education provided in schools where the learners will stay in steadily advancing classes until they complete it and move to secondary or high school. Learners are usually placed in grades with one educator who will be primarily responsible for their education and welfare for that year. The continuity with a single educator and the opportunity to build up a close relationship with the class is a notable feature of the primary school education (Lekhanya 2008).

2.1.5 Educator

According to Lekhesa (2007:13) an educator is a person who provides education for learners and students (adults). The role of the educator is often formal and ongoing, carried out at a school or other place of formal education. In many countries, a person who wishes to become an educator must first obtain specific professional qualifications or credentials from a college or university. Educators may use lesson plans to facilitate learning by providing a course of study which is called the curriculum. An educator's role may vary among cultures. Educators may provide instruction in literacy, numeracy, vocational training, the arts, religion, civics, community roles or life skills. An educator who facilitates education for an individual may also be described as a personal tutor or, largely historically, a governess. In some education systems; educators may have responsibility for learners' discipline (Lekhesa 2007). In education, educators facilitate

learning, often in a school, an academy or perhaps in another environment such as outdoors (Lekhesa 2007).

Certificate is given and that learner is considered having completed primary school level (Lekhanya 2008).

2.2.0 Theoretical Literature Review

This study adopted two theories; the psychological theories and Sociological theory on deviance. The adopted theories are discussed in detail and their relationship to dropouts and their implications for the learner's education is explained as below:

2.2.1 The psychological theories

In an attempt to analyze

the relationship between motivation and behavior, Mokone & Maphokwane (2011:18) outlined the five basic needs of human beings in the form of a pyramid divided into the psychological and physiological needs. The psychological needs include the need for affection, belonging and achievement (Lekhanya 2008). Among the physiological needs are food, water, sleep, rest and activity. These have implications for education because if food is not available at home, learners cannot adjust to the school environment. The results are that the hungry learners cannot cope with school work and in most cases they end up dropping out of school.

The death of a parent/Parents cause physiological issues in children and this leads to children to find surviving mechanism that violate their right to support all basic needs. When parents are living, children have hope and feel secure as they pursue their education. However, the loss of parents cause physiological damages to the children hence leading to drop out in bid to search for a better place and living standards that would have been provided by their parents.

Every child needs to be loved, to belong to the group and to achieve goals. Some educators use authoritative leadership styles in the class, where learners have little to say. As a result, learners feel they are not loved and lack interest in attending school.

2.2.2 Sociological theory on deviance

This study is therefore based on the sociological theory of deviance and dropouts. Sociology is the study of society as a whole, including certain elements of society such as the family unit, religion and the evolution of social structures. Sociological theory on deviance and dropouts was used to increase the study's trustworthiness and eliminate research bias through its symmetrical principles. Sociology is the study of society, its structure, dynamics and impact on human behavior (Mokone & Maphokwane 2011).

Deviance means departure from expected norms and values of society. It also means breaking the rules set by the society. Deviance means deviation from normal acceptable behavior in a particular situation or society. The general causes of deviance leading to school dropouts are lack of required material for learning such as; uniforms, books, shoes, inadequate health care and hunger and starvation while at school. These in most cases are due to extreme poverty in households where children come from. When parents in such low income families forcefully send their children they subject them to: Compulsory attendance where some learners attend school through no desire of their own. They may have been forcibly sent to school by their parents or guardians against their will. Subsequently, the results of compulsory attendance include, among others, passive attitudes towards education hence dropping out of school; educators' poor attitude towards teaching causes frustration in some learners. Students' Educators contribute a lot on the completion of school level among children. The poor attitude may force them to leave school before the expected time and hence leading to high dropout rate. The poor attitude may result from poor and untimely pay of the remunerations and or the unfavorable working conditions at school (MOES, 2019 report). This study is based on this theory because it is about problems or controversies that directly or indirectly affect people of a society in relation to their moral values.

2.3 Orphan-hood and primary children school dropout

The MOES (2007:69) final report of consultancy on education policies and programs in Uganda relating to disadvantaged learners stated that the disastrous AIDS pandemic has increased the problems for special education in Uganda in two ways. Firstly, it has increased the number of learners who may be regarded as having special educational needs, in that orphans are vulnerable to emotional and behavioral problems. Secondly, the rise in the number of orphans requiring social and financial support has

preoccupied authorities and may be absorbing resources from which the disabled might otherwise benefit. Of learners who are double orphans, the most statistical returns for 2006 show 30513 at the primary level. The estimated numbers of learners who have lost either one or both parents are much larger; they were reported in the MOET joint review of September 2007 as 141792 at the primary level.

The Education Statistics Bulletin (2010) revealed that the number of orphans has been fluctuating over the years with an increase due to Covid-19 and other related diseases between 2020 and 2023. Most orphans dropout of schools while others do not enroll in school at all after the death of their parents. According to the MOES (2020/2021 report to Parliament) evaluation of Universal Primary Education in Uganda, the growing number of paternal orphans makes it difficult for the country's education system to reach its goal of education for all. The surviving parent, who is usually central to learner's education, is forced to look for work to support her family, resulting in children being taken care of either by their grandparents or other relatives. Those caregivers are not always able to monitor schooling and may not prioritize the learner's education as it may be with the natural/biological parents. Eventually these learners who experience frequent interruptions dropout of school in order to seek employment to help maintain families.

Lepheane & Maphokwane (2011) explains that, with the multitude of problems experienced by orphaned children, it is quite clear that their rights to survival, life and development are being violated. The situation of these learners does not conform to society's standard of what is acceptable under prevailing cultural norms for this particular age group. Cultural practices such as early marriages violate their rights and make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection and tend to interrupt their access to education. School dropouts are increasing, as many more parents die as a result of HIV/AIDS, the recent Covid-19 among other related infections. When this happens, learners are left to fend for themselves and take on the responsibility of caring for their young siblings. Learners in these situations may become overwhelmed by their new roles and duties. Finally, they quit school because they cannot deal with the conflicting roles as a learner and a house keeper at the same time.

2.4 Poverty and primary children school dropout

There are other reasons for learners not attending school despite the removal of barriers to schooling which are as comprehensive as they are complex. There is no doubt that there are increasing socio-

economic pressures that include growing poverty and unemployment. There were reports of boys at the border still being denied access to education despite the removal of fees, and girls being hired as domestic workers due to poverty in the households (MOES 2008). The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2011:43) estimated that 21.3% of learners between the ages of 10 and 14 in Uganda are working, boys as herders and girls as domestic workers.

2.3 . Child Labour and primary children school dropout

UNICEF (2023 report) showed that “Child labour is a significant factor that leads to school dropouts. It is noted that most children after reaching the age of 10 and above prefer making money other than going to school. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics a total of 2 million children approximately 16% of all children are involved in work classed as child labour. Only limited progress has been made in recent years in reducing the rate of children’s employment, it decreased by just 1.4% in the period 2006-2012 (UBOS, 2013). In this perspective therefore, if child labour is a significant factor in school dropout, it follows that national and local efforts to improve education participation need also to take account of, and respond to the child labour challenge.

The government of Uganda has established a legal framework to address child labour. However, the employers in different sectors have violated this law as stipulated in Employment Act No. 6, 2006 which says that no child below 14 shall be employed other than in light work supervised by an adult. Light work is permissible from age 12. The Employment (Employment of Children 2012) Act further elaborates provisions on employment of a child.

Child labour is one of the major obstacles to the realization of universal primary education in low- and middle-income countries. Child labour deprives children of their chances to acquire the required skills for the development of their potential. This is akin to a child trying to prepare for an exam while carrying a heavy backpack of worries, fears, and distractions on their back which affects their desired outcome. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), child labour is “work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling” (ILO, 2002). Child labour affects children's education cumulatively since it influences school attendance, skipping of classes, and long-term school

completion (Boutin & Jouvin, 2022).

Besides stifling individual children's educational advancements, child labour also hinders actualization of universal basic education, affecting the global village (Goulart & Bedi, 2008). This means that the devastating effects of child labour are not limited to the households but have a significant influence in the global world. The incidence of this phenomenon differs based on the nature of the country, since there are approximately 160 million children in the world classified as child labourers (UNICEF, 2022), which manifest as the result of an increase in poverty, political conflicts, and natural or forced displacement. This latest global estimate of child labour specifically stated that children between the ages of 5 to 17 years will engage in rigorous labour in 2020 in which 63 million girls and 97 million boys will engage in rigorous labour (ILO & UNICEF 2021).

International Labour Organization (2020) emphasized that 1 in 10 million children engage in child labour and 79 million children which is almost half of the population of child labour are involved in hazardous work which endangers their health, safety and psychological development. Prevalence of child labour is higher in rural areas as ILO and UNICEF (2021) estimated that 122.7 million rural children are involved in child labour unlike urban areas where 37.3 million children are involved in child labour. Since 2016, the progress against child labour has stagnated while the absolute number of children engaging in child labour has risen by over 8 million (ILO, & UNICEF 2021). This could be attributed to a decade of growing gaps between the rich and the poor which have forced millions of children out of school and into work (Cockburn, 2001). This has resulted in a decrease in school enrolment as these children find it difficult to combine school and work. Studies have indicated that children who work are more or less likely to enroll in school (Beegle et al., 2009; Guarcello et al., 2006). Furthermore, Putnick and Bornstein (2015) reported that there is a significant negative relationship that exists between child labour and school enrolment with strong indication that the relationship is more consistent for family work and household chores than work outside the home. However, other studies revealed that child labour has no significant relationship with school enrolment (No et al., 2012; Ravallion & Wodon, 2000).

2.4 Teachers' attitude and primary children school dropout

Attitude is a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward something or someone exhibited in one's beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior (Myers 2022). It is a social orientation and an underlying inclination to respond to something either favorably or unfavorably. Age, academic and professional qualifications and poor motivation linked to unfavorable working conditions may be determinants of teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of UPE. On the other hand,

gender and teaching experience influenced teachers' attitudes. Marete CELizabeth (2021) argued that, government should employ more teachers to achieve a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:40; parents to be enlightened more on their role as far as pupils' learning is concerned.

The high pupil enrolments experienced after the abolition of fees in early 2000, grossly affected the teacher pupil ratio hence causing undesirable working environment and creating poor attitude of teaching amongst the teachers in primary schools in Uganda. The government once again re-affirmed her commitment of achieving effective and quality education in Uganda, through the establishment of Education Standards Agency (MOEST, 2003). However, the attitude of teachers have continued to drop due to the segregated salary increment amongst teachers in Uganda and this has twiggged the ineffective teaching and poor attitude of teachers towards teaching in primary schools.

Unavailability of facilities to schools both physical and human appear to persist more than before and hence leading to poor attitude towards teaching amongst the teachers. These challenges have been a major draw' back in efforts to develop effective ways of implementing quality education and keeping the teachers attitude towards teaching a key important factor that can lead to reduced dropouts in primary education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives details above data presentation and analysis.

3.1 Researchparadigm

A research paradigm is a way of looking at the world, a particular way of thinking about theworld. It can also be referred to as grammar of thinking, theoretical framework, theoreticalassumptions, a form of discourses, a meta-theory or a form of rationality (Le Roux 2009: 15).MacMillanandSchumacher(2010:5-6),asserthatmethodologyissometimescalledresearch methods which areapproachesto

designing studies and collecting information. The design of a research study begins with the selection of a topic and a paradigm. A paradigm is essentially a world view, a whole framework of beliefs, values and methods within which researchers work. This study was conducted within the interpretative paradigm.

3.2 Research design

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. The research design describes the procedure for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained (Schumacher 2010). The study conducted a focus group interview with participants in three primary schools of Busia District because a focus group interview is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Lekhesa 2008).

A qualitative approach is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants, asks broad or general questions, collects data consisting largely of words or texts from the participants, and describes, analyses and conducts an inquiry in a subjective manner (Creswell 2008:46). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:320) claim that qualitative research is an accepted methodology for many important questions and makes significant contributions to both theory and practice.

Qualitative designs can vary significantly depending on the theoretical framework, philosophy, assumptions about the nature of knowledge and field of study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:459) explain qualitative as a type of research that refers to an in-depth study using face to face or observation techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings. In qualitative research numerous forms of data are collected and examined from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multi-faceted situation

(Tsomo,2012:50).

3.3 Population

A population can be described as all possible elements that can be included in the research. It can be people or TV programmes or curricula or anything that is investigated as the focus of the research project Chadzuka (2008). MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:129), affirm that a population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to the specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research. This group is also referred to as the target population or universe. MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:461&489) stated that participants are identified by describing the population of interest and how the probability sample will be drawn from the population. They further explain a population as a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which results can be generalized. In addition, a population is a collection of objects, events or peoples with the same characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying.

The population, who are respondents in this study, are the Head Teachers of the three primary schools and educators in Busia District region, Uganda, in Berea district. The first school which is referred to as school A is a church school, the second school is a government school and is referred to as school B and the last school is a private school referred to as school C. The population for this study was chosen and some participants were used as the sample in the study.

3.4 Sampling

MacMillan & Schumacher (2010:129 & 490), describes sampling as a group of individuals from whom data is collected, often representative of a specific population. The sample can be selected from a larger group of persons, identified as the population or can simply refer to the group of subjects from which data is collected.

A few participants were selected and used as the sampling in the study. From each school, one Head Teacher was selected and five educators. That means the sample consisted

of a total of three Head Teachers and 15 educators, which makes up 18 participants.

These participants were chosen for various reasons, including the following: the Head Teachers were hoped to have all the information needed through school records regarding the dropouts. Educators were expected to provide rich information because they deal directly with these learners. A sample could be part of a population which can be involved in the study to represent the whole population (Chadzuka: 2008:05). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:326), contend that qualitative sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from small samples. The sample is chosen because it is likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon which the researcher is investigating. Purposive sampling was employed in this phenomenological qualitative research study to provide the researcher with a sample from whom to obtain the information about factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Busia District, Uganda. Rodolo (2008) stated that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that will best help the researcher to understand the research question.

Purposive sampling was employed in this phenomenological qualitative research study to provide the researcher with a sample from whom to obtain the information about factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Busia District, Uganda. According to Creswell (2008), purposeful sampling seeks information-rich cases for in-depth study and is used to ensure certain types of individuals or persons displaying certain attributes are included in the study. Creswell (2008:183) stated that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants who will best help the researcher to understand the research question.

Based on the above discussion, the target population in this study was purposively chosen from the large number of the population, meaning few participants were selected and used as the sample for the study. For this study, the researcher needed participants who had experienced the problem of losing learners by dropping out of school. The researcher purposefully selected schools which had experienced the problem of learner dropout from school. When constructing the sample, the

researcher considered first and foremost the purpose of the study.

From each school, a Head Teacher was selected and five educators. That means sampling constituted a total of three Head Teachers and fifteen educators, which made eighteen participants. The researcher interviewed the participants several times over a three months period of data collection. The researcher also conducted several follow-up telephone interviews to solve some of the issues that emerged during the analysis of the data. The

researcher also considered the availability of the informants. The informants in this study were relatively easy to identify and locate.

3.5 Methods of data collection

MacMillan & Schumacher (2010:486), proclaim that data means the results obtained by the research from which interpretations and conclusions are drawn. The focus group interviews provided reliable data on dropouts. The researcher was the interviewer and maintained a neutral stance during the interaction with the participants. In this study, information-

rich participants were used for data collection. According to Berg (2009), the focus group interviews help in reaching the parts that other methods cannot reach, revealing dimensions of understanding that often remain untapped by more conventional data collection techniques (Nachmais & Nachmais 2008). Interviewing is often done to offer contextual data on settings, interactions or individuals (Denscombe 2007:88).

3.6 Data Collection Strategies

3.7 .1 Focus group interviews

The data in this study was collected to address the research questions of the study. The data was collected through focus group interviews. According to Nachmais and Nachmais (2008), a focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. A focus group interview is further described as a form of interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data. A focus group is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of

interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Lekhanya 2008).

Researchers choose focus group interviews because group processes can help to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in one on one interview. They will also help researchers to tap into the many different forms of communication that people use in day to day interactions, including jokes, anecdotes, teasing and arguing. Focus groups gain deeper access than other methods, revealing dimensions of understanding that often remain untapped by more conventional data collection techniques, Lekhesa (2008). To collect data I visited each of the three primary schools and conducted a focus group interview in each school. The fieldwork for the study was done between October and December 2013. During this time, at least three visits were made to each of the three schools and a group of five educators and one Head Teacher were interviewed.

3.7.2 Field notes

Field notes are the primary type of data. The ethnographer takes notes of observations and experiences and later develops them into detailed, formal field notes (Lekhesa 2007:82). Field notes also involve interpretation and are part of the analysis rather than the data collection (Densecombe 2007:88). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) Pitney and Parker (2009), field notes are taken throughout the observations and are focused on what is seen.

3.8 Data analysis

Data means information about a sample and „collection“ means gathering information. Raw data cannot provide the required answers to the research questions, unless it is organized into meaningful patterns. The data

collected was analyzed and synthesized in order to develop efficiency in the presentation of findings. The findings were then analyzed using categories that emerged during the focus group interviews. Data was transcribed and coded and, from this various themes emerged.

McMillan & Schumacher (2010:367), declare that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. In this study the collected data was structured by using open codes and developing themes and categories to address the main question of the study, and how these phenomena can be solved. The repetitions in the themes across participants were taken as shared understandings (Bell 2010:211).

The researcher analyzed the data collected and the data was transcribed in detail in order

to allow for optimal understanding of participants' views and experiences after which it was coded because coding reduces information in ways that facilitate interpretation of the findings (Wilson 2009:104).

3.9 Credibility

The credibility criteria involve establishing that the results of the qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research Mqulwana (2010:61). The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participants' point of view. Only they can legitimately judge the credibility of the results. According to Creswell (2009:191), the use of rich and thick description

will transport the reader to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences. Lekheisa (2007) explain that for the research findings to be credible, a detailed description of the setting and all the steps taken should be provided.

In this study, the researcher has provided a detailed description of the setting and all components of the population in this study. The steps taken are also discussed.

Furthermore, Rubin and Babbie (2007:103) define credibility as the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration.

3.10 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the extent to which the researchers fairly and faithfully show a range of different realities (Bray 2007). To ensure authenticity of the study, negative information that runs counter to the themes and the tone of the participants was offered (Creswell 2009:192). In this study, all information that ran counter to the themes was presented in as realistic a way as possible.

3.11 Limitations

This study was limited to the Busia district in Uganda. The study was conducted with the participants from one district as it's where the issue of school dropout emerged most in Eastern Uganda. Including other districts would incur more costs and require more time than anticipated.

Due

to the limited research conducted on Ugandan primary schools, some of the literature that was consulted for the purpose of this study reported mainly on secondary data though there was integration with primary data. Due to the limited scope of the research, the emotional difficulties experienced by learners who dropouts were not included in the study.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the participants and allowed them to ask questions before conducting the study. The researcher informed the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and those who did not wish to participate were free to decline the invitation. The participants' consent to participate voluntarily in the study was considered. The researcher informed the participants that all the information that they disclosed would remain confidential and anonymous, and names would not be mentioned in the study.

Table 4.2 Description of participants

INSTITUTIONS	TYPE OF SCHOOL	SUBJECT AREAS	LOCATION	GENDER
SCHOOL A	Registered as a Government primary school	All primary school subjects	Busia Town Council Busia District	Males and females
SCHOOL B	Registered as a government primary school	All primary school subjects	Majanji Busia District	Males and females
SCHOOL C	Registered as a Community primary school	All primary school subjects	Buhehe Busia District	Males and females

SCHOOL A

This school is situated in Busia town council Busia District; Learners in this school are from within the town council and other villages surrounding the town council. The school operates from primary 1 to 7 and is the mainstream primary school. The learners' ages range from 6 to

18. The school caters for normal and the disabled learners. The learners are placed in this school through their parents' choice. All learners are day scholars; there is no boarding in this school. This is a government aided school. In this school, all learners' mother tongue is Lusomya Lugwe but the language of teaching and learning is English with little Swahili being near Kenya.

SCHOOL B

School B is also a primary school situated in Majanji Busia, Busia District, and learners are from surrounding villages. The school runs from primary 1 to 7. Learners' ages range from 6 to 15. All the learners in this school are placed there by their parents. The school is a government aided and it offers all primary school subjects and it is a mixed primary school.

SCHOOL C

This school is a community primary school situated at Buhehe in Busia District. Learners in this school are from the surrounding villages. The school operates from primary 1 to 7. Learners' ages range from 6 to 15 and learners have been referred to this school by their parents. Some learners are disabled in this school. The school offers subjects that are taught in the other primary schools. The school falls partially under the government because, in most cases, the government sponsors the school.

4.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Although the interview method has advantages and disadvantages, it enables the interviewer to follow up on incomplete or unclear responses by asking additional probing questions (Tsomo 2012). Focus group interviews were used to collect data on factors influencing primary school dropouts in Busia District. The following themes emerged:

Table 4.3 Open-codes emerged from the focus group interviews

OPEN-CODES	SUB-CODES	CODES
Orphanhood	Death of parents	Caring for siblings, heading families and providing family Income
Child labour	Poverty	Poor school condition, family financial situation and unemployment.
Teachers' attitude	Unqualified and low motivated educators	Drive away learners, lack guidance, have low quality work, not committed, lack classroom Management skills.
Poverty	Low educational level of parents unemployment	Low educational levels of parents, homelessness, it is challenging to place poor learners in classrooms, do not complete assignments, study for tests, can't concentrate or focus and are unable to interact with peers and adults.

Table 4.4 Key for interpreting findings from the focus group interviews

Key of abbreviations
P: participants
P1-6: Focus group 1
P7-12: Focus group 2
P13-18: Focus group 3
For example, P1 will refer to participant 1

The different themes that emerged from this data were used to gain an understanding of the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Busia District, Uganda. The data from the focus group interviews was first analyzed and the relevant themes were identified. Some of the themes that emerged were confirmed through field notes. At a certain point data became saturated and there was no need to continue interviewing participants as answers were being repeated.

Field notes were also used as a method of data gathering, where the researcher takes notes of observations and experiences and later develops them into detailed, formal field notes. The researcher took field notes throughout the observations and focused on what was seen (Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Pitney & Parker 2009). The themes emerged from the focus group interviews, and field notes. The themes that emerged not only addressed the research questions outlined in the tool, but also provided information on the home-related situations from which the dropout learners are coming from.

The factors influencing learner dropout in primary schools varied. The themes that emerged from focus group interviews are discussed in the following sections and are complemented by observations.

4.2 Orphan hood

Most of the participants indicated that they had many orphans in their schools, most of which dropped out because of the status of being orphans: “I had learners who were

double orphans in my class. They lack many things related to school, for example: uniform, shoes and most of the time comes to school untidy, does not do their homework, does not actively participate in class activities and end up dropping out of school” (participant 11). The MOES (2007:69) stated that the rise in the number of orphans requiring social and financial support has increased in district at the border and those in landing sites. Participants stated that these learners need to quit school to take care of their siblings after their parents’ death. Participant 6 explained that “normally the older child steps up and assumes a parental role by being head of the family in different ways such as working as domestic workers for girls, being housekeepers or, the worst, by being sex workers”. Boys became dealers at the border and later move to Kenya for “Magendo” (black Market). The Statistics as per UBOS (2021 report) showed that the number of orphans has been fluctuating over the years at the border point districts and the landing sites in Uganda. There has been a minor decline in enrolment of orphans from 2008-2011. That means most of them dropped out from schools while others did not enroll at school at all after the death of their parents.

The majority of the participants from all the three focus groups indicated that Orphan hood leads to many learners dropout of school as it’s associated with absenteeism for some couple of weeks in search for survival.

4.6 Child Labour

Another group of learners who are not participating in schooling is one that involved in employment. The majority of whom are gold miners, black market traders, herd boys or domestic workers. From a human rights perspective, child labour robs children of their childhood (MOES 2008). “There is a problem of child labour in my school which promotes learner dropout in the school. In many cases in my school we discovered that when a learner dropped out of school, it is not necessarily because of the irresponsible parenting, but it is due to the family financial situation” (Participant 15). Participant 9 further explained that “when learners leave school, they become potential workers. In fact, many learners have to work to go to school; otherwise they could not afford the tuition and other fees as associated with attendance”. Participant 17 indicated that “some learners in the school have to acquire an education through the support of the working siblings. The learners work and often abandon school to better their family’s condition and to ensure the survival of their family and themselves”. Participant 15 indicated that “schooling problems also contribute to child labour,

whether due to the inaccessibility of schools or the lack of quality education that spurs parents to enter their children in more profitable pursuits. The low quality education often makes attendance a waste of time for the learners. As a result, parents find no use in sending their children to school when they could be home learning a skill and supplementing the family income". Participant 16 further indicated that "the poor conditions in their school contributed a lot to learners dropping out of school to do child labour". The poor conditions result in high levels of disruption and declining quality and eventually learner's dropout of school (MOES 2008:10).

4.7 Teachers' attitude

The participant 14 indicated that teachers' attitude contribute a lot to learners dropping out as they neglect the learners and leave them lacking guidance. They are not committed to ensuring that all learners achieve their full educational potential and do not establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with learners. The Teachers' attitude is poor most of the time. They do not understand use range of teaching approaches, classroom management strategies are not employed, and they do not follow the assessment requirements and arrangements for the subjects". Lekhesa (2007) outlined that lack of interest by educators is considered as the general causes of deviance leading to school dropouts. Learners' confidence has to be earned; failure to earn their confidence may lead to dropout.

The participant 17 stated that "due to the poor Teachers' attitude, they are ill-prepared, do not set and assess homework, fail to establish a purposeful, safe learning environment which complies

with current legal requirements and, mostly, they fail to manage learners' behavior constructively by establishing and maintaining a clear and positive framework for discipline". Teachers have to understand that they are in school for the learners and they are expected to act in the best interest of the learners (Lekhesa 2007). One of the participants acknowledged that "My student educator confessed that she was supposed to do assessment but she did not, which pushes some already vulnerable learners to dropout instead of supporting them (Participant 9). The participant 5 stressed that "the attitude of teachers result in failing to promote learners' self-control, independence and cooperation through developing their social, emotional and behavioral skills and in the long run its found to be the main cause of learner dropout". The participant 18 indicated that "there are many parents' cases at the Head Teachers' offices

whereby they appeal to the school to take care of these problem and that most of parents complained that they do not like the Teachers' attitudes as they seem to be destructive and disastrous hence affect the teaching of their children". Participant 16 clarified that "it is the country's policy of education that the Teachers have to practice effective teaching in their schools. However, Parents threaten to take their children to the schools where the Teachers' attitude have positive attitude towards teaching than sending their children to teachers who have negative attitude towards teaching".

The poor attitude of teachers and the poverty levels of households cause child abuse and neglect. Neglected learners score lower on reading and tests. They exhibit more learning disabilities and are more likely to repeat a class. As a result a child may feel obliged to drop out of school. "Neglected learners perform poorly" (Participant 15). Participant 1 testified that as the Head Teacher in the school, "I experience a huge challenge of learners dropping out of school due to neglect. When making follow-up, in many cases it was found that those learners were staying with their relatives who were physically abusing them". "The abused and neglected learners showed many warning signs before dropping out of school. The signs include a sudden lack of interest, depression, mood swings, writing that shows despair and isolation, lack of anger management skills, talking about death or bringing weapons to school. The learners therefore decided to quit school and escape to the streets where there is freedom" (Participant 12).

According to the MOES (2018), it is educator's responsibilities to make education attractive to learners by creating a learning environment, in which they recognize the intrinsic worth of all learners in the classroom through a child-centered and inclusive curriculum because children, need to feel safe, secure and cared for. Failure to observe that, then expect absenteeism and hence dropout. The participant 13 said that "learners fell behind their school work, got discouraged and ended up quitting school. The participants 4 indicated that "learners with chronic absenteeism stay away from class due to feelings of disconnectedness and inadequacy, and have more difficulty forming relationships and participating in school activities. These learners feel disconnected from academics and believed that the lessons are not relevant to their lives" since the teachers' attitude do not attract them to think positive. The following quote was similar to the responses from the other six participants: "Most learners who dropped out in my class were disconnected. They were

bored; never volunteer to do any activity throughout the lesson or to answer any question. They fell behind their classmates and lack confidence to do anything in their presence” (Participant 16). The participant 6 stated that “disconnected learners lack accountability which can lead to behavioral issues and poor academic achievement many learners with excessive absences were dealing with poor attitude to attend school due to the attitude of the teacher at school”.

4.8 Poverty

The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2011), estimated that 21.3% of children between the ages of 10 and 14 in Uganda are working, boys as casual laborers and girls as domestic workers. This is due to high rate of unemployment and poverty in Uganda, most children quit school to maintain their families. Poverty is considered by the majority of the participants as a major risk factor for school dropout. Some of the factors related to poverty that may place a learner at risk for academic failure are being very young, low educational level of or single parents, unemployment, abuse, neglect and poor attitudes of students’ educators. Poor learners do not complete assignments, do not study for tests or do not come to school prepared to learn because of poverty related circumstances in the home environment. Poor learners are unable to concentrate or focus. They are unwilling or unable to interact with peers and adults in school in an effective manner. Participant 4 stressed that “most of our learner’s dropout because of poverty. They come to school with empty stomachs and were always tired in the class during lessons and yet they walk to and stay in school on empty stomachs. They lack almost everything related to school because their parents cannot afford them. They always miss the educational trips and feel uncomfortable when others discuss the trip in the class and decided to drop out of school”.

One participant stated that, “the poor learners have difficulty in making friends. They behave in a hostile manner or are totally withdrawn due to past attempts at making friends. They also come to school with no records from their previous schools and it is difficult for schools to track this private records. Educators have no clue as to what these learners have been taught. It is challenging for schools to place poor learners in classrooms and get the additional services they may need. Even if the placement is successful, they likely move again within the school year or quit school completely” (Participant 10). The MOES (2008) stated that there are increasing socio-

economic pressures that include growing poverty and unemployment. There were reports of children still being denied access to education despite the removal of fees due to poverty in the households.

4.9 DISCUSSION

This study examines the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Busia District, Uganda. The participants indicated that the majority of these learners dropping out of school are orphans; therefore, the older learners need to quit school to take care of their siblings after their parents' death.

Teachers' attitude does not give them room to associate with learners; educators do not have time for learners as they do not take up their right and respective expected roles. Educators often do not provide the support and extra time that the learners need because they are not in mood always.

Poverty is also considered as one of the main factors which contribute to learner dropouts because poor learners do not enjoy school; instead, they become shy and bored. Parents have significant impact on learners' learning and development processes. Therefore, their economic status contributes much on their academic progress or regress. Lekhesa (2007:40) further proclaims that another factor perpetuating high rates of school dropouts include lack of parental support. Quality of parent-educator interaction has predicted improvement in learner's behavior and achievement. An engaged parent notices the flags leading to learner dropout and may intervene immediately. But the findings here showed that poverty and poor households have contributed to dropout. Because of low or insufficient family income or a family's financial situation, learners have to leave school and become potential workers in order to support their sibling's education and maintain the family income. This was in line with the MOES (2008 report) which indicated that, the family social economic background conditions are key contributors to dropout. In addition to that, neglected learners perform worse than their counterparts and decide to quit school and escape to the streets where there is freedom. This is similar to what Lekhanya (2008) stated that, an abused or neglected

learner may feel obliged to drop out of school.

Teachers' attitude are also contributing factors to dropout since the teacher is always ill prepared, do not set or assess homework, and do not establish a purposeful and safe learning environment which complies with current legal requirements.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the findings and discussions on the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Busia District, Uganda. It is clear that the empirical findings prove that primary school Head Teachers and educators are experiencing learner dropouts due to school and home related problems affecting learners. The researcher believes that all three schools are aware of the problem and are trying their best to decrease the number of learner dropouts. The researcher hopes that with a proper management of the factors that lead to school dropout, more learners can be easily prevented from dropping out of school and they would be able to get support when needed.

It emerged from the empirical findings that learner dropouts in this region are caused by school related problems such as Teachers' attitude and then home related problems such as orphanhood, poverty, and child labour. These factors are complex issues which should be handled by skilled people. It is essential that learners with problems must at an early stage get professional help. Based on the research findings and discussions in this chapter, the limitations, implications and the conclusions of the study will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations drawn from results in chapter four. The study was conducted to discover the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Uganda and to find the remedies which will benefit everyone in the field of education in Uganda, especially planners and managers of learners in primary schools.

5.2 Summary and Conclusion of Findings.

The major finding from this study show that “orphan hood, child labour teachers’ attitude and Poverty leads to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District. All the four variables are said to be significant influencing factors to school dropout in primary school children in Busia District in Uganda as summarized below;

They proved to be school related and home related. Of particular value with reference to the interviews is that participants perceived orphanhood as one major cause of dropout among the many other factors. They indicated that there were many orphans in their schools most of whom dropped out because of the state of being orphans. These learners need to abandon school to take care of their siblings after their parents’ death. The total number of orphans which was provided by the participants from the selected primary schools in Busia was 144.

Poverty was considered by the majority of educators from the selected primary schools as the most key at risk factor for school dropout. These participants claimed that poor learners do not complete assignments, do not study for tests or do not come to school prepared to learn because of poverty related circumstances in the home environment. The participants from the schools agreed that poor learners come to school with no records from their previous schools and it is difficult for schools to track the records down.

The findings point to financial constraints as the most prominent factor explaining both non-enrolment and high drop-out rates. Approximately 81% of the households’ lack of money was the reason why their children dropped out of school, while 58% claimed financial

constraints was the reason their children never enrolled in school in the first place. Other major indicators resulting in low enrolment rates and high drop-out rates include child's involvement in domestic work, long distances to school and child's obligations towards the family business and family farm.

Most educators said that they have discovered that an engaged parent notices the red flags such as failing marks or poor attendance from a learner. According to these educators, the important intervention opportunities are missed by the busy and the ignorant parents and the learner continues down a path that leads to dropping out. The majority of participants from each of the focus groups agreed that parental involvement is the biggest problem facing their schools because they are dealing with an unsupportive community due to poverty. The educators indicated that the learners with unsupportive parents always have lower grades, lower test scores, poor school attendance, low motivation, poor and low self-esteem, high rates of suspension and have more instances of violent behavior, which are all the major factors of dropping out from school.

A few participants from the focus group interviews indicated that there is a problem of child labour in their schools which promote learner dropouts. Other educators found out that many learners have to work to go to school; otherwise they could not afford the requirements and other fees associated with attendance. Some learners in the school have to acquire an education through support from their working siblings. Most educators from the interviews indicated that school problems also contribute to child labour. They indicated that the poor conditions in their schools contributed a lot in learners dropping out of school to engage in child labour.

A few participants from each of the focus groups of each school indicated that Teachers' attitude contributed a lot to learner dropout in their schools. They said that these educators cause the learners from schools into the streets because they lack guidance, are not committed to ensuring that all learners can achieve their full educational potential and do not establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive relationships with learners. These results in failing to promote learners' self-control, independence and co-operation through developing their social, emotional and behavioral skills. These were found to be many of the contributing factors of learners dropping out in these schools. Approximately 28% of the participants reported that a child's lack of interest in school contributed to high drop-out rates, while 20% claimed

that teachers' poor attitude towards teaching was a major factor. Busia has the highest proportion (53.1%) of respondents that listed working on the family farm or business as a reason why children drop out of schools.

5.3 Recommendation

From my informal conversations with educators, the researcher realized that the educators needed to work very hard to build positive relationships with their learners in order to gain their trust so that learners may feel free to discuss any issue with them.

School administration should ensure good working conditions and motivation of teachers to build a positive attitude towards teaching with the teaching staffs.

Government should provide necessary learning materials for pupils in schools and timely delivery of teaching learning aids for effective teaching and learning process.

Government should ensure active laws and policies regarding child labour, and ensure all persons engaging children in labour be punished and where possible such companies' license be revoked.

5.4 Recommendations for future Research

- A future study could be undertaken on dropouts in secondary schools, in rural and urban areas in Uganda. This would give an opportunity to compare the situation of secondary schools and primary schools.
- Effect of border trade on the learners attendance in border schools in Uganda
- Effect of Social economic status of teachers on their performance in primary schools in Busia Municipality, in Uganda

5.5 The limitations of this study

A qualitative research design was used to investigate the causes of primary school dropouts in Busia District, Uganda.

Given the explanatory nature of this study, a qualitative research design was purposefully chosen with a small sample. Purposeful sampling was conducted to ensure that the

selected participants were homogenous and would be able to meet the necessary research requirements. The study focused on a specific population, namely Head Teachers and educators in selected primary schools and for this reason care should be exercised in generalizing the findings to other context. However, the findings are sufficient to make meaningful recommendations to the Ministry of education and sports.

The study was limited to only three primary schools in the Busia District in order to save costs. The participants per school were only the Head Teacher and five educators interviewed and there were no learners and the parents to represent their opinions about this phenomenon.

REFERENCES

- Bell, (2010). *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science*. 5th ed. Glassgow: McGraw Hill Open University Press.
- Berg, B. L. (2009). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS): The National Labour Force and Child Activities Survey 2011/12. (Kampala, UBOS, 2013). Available at:
www.ilo.org/ipecc/informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_26415/lang--en/index.htm.
- Boutin, D., & Jouvin, M. (2022). Child Labour Consequences on Education and Health: A Review of Evidence and Knowledge Gaps. <https://hal.science/hal-03896700>
- Cockburn, J. (2001). *Child work and poverty in developing countries* [Ph.D., University of Oxford].
<https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.249798>
- European Commission. (2020). Child labour is keeping millions of children out of school. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/stories/child-labour-keeping-millions-children-out-school_en
- Goulart, P., & Bedi, A. S. (2008). Child labour and educational success in Portugal. *Economics of Education Review*, 27(5), 575–587.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2007.07.002>
- Guarcello, L., Lyon, S., & Rosati, F. C. (2006). *Child Labour and Education For All: An Issue Paper* (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 1780257).
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1780257>
- Bogdan, R. & Bikler, J. (2007). *Introduction to qualitative research methods*. Wiley ISBN
- Bray, L. (2007). Developing an activity to aid informed assent when interviewing children and young people. *Journal of research in nursing*: 447 SAGE Publications Vol 12 (5) 447-457 *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 12(5), 447-457 (Follow this pattern for all journal items)
- Chadzuka, E. T. (2008). *Primary schools dropout rate in Mutema District*. Zimbabwe: Tshwane University of Technology.

Costley, C., Elliott, G. and Gibbs, P.(2010). Doing work based research: Approaches to enquiry for insider-researchers. Washington, D.C.: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J.W.(2007). Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Creswell, J.(2009). Research design: Qualitative and mixed methods approach. SAGE.

Cristenson, S. L., Sinclair, M. F., Lehr, C. A. & Godler, Y. (2007). Prompting successful school completion: Critical conceptual and methodological guidelines. School Psychology Quarterly, 16, 468-484.

Denscombe, M. (2007). The good research guide for small scale research projects. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Education Statistics Bulletin (2010). Planning Unit: Uganda. Uganda

National Examinations Board (UNEB) (2012). Maseru, Uganda.

Friesen, B.(2010). Designing and conducting your first interview projects. San Francisco: Jossey-Base.

International Labour Organization (ILO) (2011). Uganda.

Jakuja, D. P. (2009). An investigation into social experiences of dropouts following their reenrollment in secondary schools in the Stutterheim District: Implications for school leadership. KWT: Fort Hare University.

Jegede, O. (2009). A concise handbook: Research methods. University of Uganda.

Josselson, Anderson and McSpadden, (2011). First interview project. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lekhanya P. (2008). Factors promoting primary school dropouts. National University of Uganda.

Lekhesa, M. (2007). Causes and effects of school dropouts. National University of Uganda.

Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone & Mophokoane, (2011). Factors that cause children to live in streets Uganda. National University of Uganda. Roma.

LeRoux, (2009). G.P.S. 612 Module 1. Philosophy of Education: University of the Free State.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2009). Statistics Office, Maseru.

Macmillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2010). Research in education: Evidence based inquiry. Pearson.

Mqulwana, N. M. (2010). Evaluating the impact of public participation on the Formulation and implementation of the integrated development plan. The case of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. K.W. T. Fort Hare University.

Mid-term review (MTR) of the Uganda Schools
(2008). Millennium Development Goal (MDG) (2011). Uganda.

MOES (MOET) (2008).

Maseru Uganda. MOES (MOET) (2007). Planning Unit Maseru.

Nachmais, C.F. & Nachmais, D.

(2008). Research methods in the social sciences. 5th ed. New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

NAMCOL (2008). NAMCOL Strategic Development Plan 2009-2011. Windhoek: NAMCOL.

Obeng, (2007). Teachers' views on the teaching of children with disabilities. International Journal of Special Education, 22(1), 96-102.

Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). (2007). Uganda.

Pridmore, (2007). Access to conventional schooling for children and young people affected by HIV and AIDS: London Institute of Education.

Rodolo, N.G. (2008). The practice of inclusive education in the Lusikisiki Mega District: with special reference to Flagstaff sub-district (Eastern Cape). University of South Africa.

Rubin, A. and Babbie, E. (2007). Essential research methods for social work. USA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Schutt,

P.K. (2009). Investigating the social world: the process and practice of Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.

Sebatane, M. (2009). The implications of the proposed abolition of primary school leaving examination. National University of Uganda.

Springer, K. (2010). Education research: A contextual approach. USA: John Wiley.

Terhoeven, L. (2009). The role of the teachers support teams in preventing early school dropout in a high school. Cape Town: University of Stellenbosch.

Tsomo, N.G.D. (2012). Factors contributing to the dropout rate of learners in King Williams Town: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

UNESCO, (2011). Education for All global monitoring report.

Uganda. UNICEF, (2007). Report on Education. Uganda.

WHO and UNAIDS, (2007). Report on Education. Uganda.

Wilson, E. (2009). School-based research: A guide for educating students. Washington DC: SA

APPENDIXA: Questionnaire

Preliminary information

1. Designation of respondents (headteacher, pupils, Educator) **Tick one**
2. Age group. **Tick one** (10-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50)
3. Date of interview.....
4. Place where interview was carried out
5. Education level:.....
6. Occupation:.....
7. Sub county:.....

PART ONE

Tick only one answer (**YES** or **NO**)

1. Do you know of any primary school learner who left school and is at home?

A **YES**

B **NO**

Give one or more examples:.....

2. Does the education system has any plan of do away with the factors leading to school drop out?

A **YES**

B **NO**

Explain your answer briefly with examples:.....

.....

PART TWO

1. Do you think the parents and teachers are happy with the children who drop out of school?

(Tick one answer only)

A **YES**

B **NO**

C **I DO NOT KNOW**

Explain your answer briefly:.....

.....

2. Does the local community of Busia District helped the Primary School Drop out to be self-reliance?

A **YES**

B **NO**

C **I DO NOT KNOW**

Explain _____ your _____ answer
briefly:.....

.....

3. The problem of school dropout should not bother anybody as long as they can find what to do to live.

A **TRUE**

B **FALSE**

C **I DO NOT KNOW**

Explain _____ your _____ answer
briefly:.....

.....

PART THREE

FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Which category of learners drop out of school more, boys or girls? Why is it so?

.....

2. What do school drop outs do to earn a living? How do you feel about it?

.....

.....

3. What do you think are the factors influencing school dropout in Busia District? Why do you say so?.....

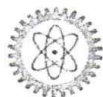
.....

4. How can the Busia Community without Government improve lives of School drop outs?.....

.....

5. What advise can you give to Education system about how to solve the problem of school drop out?.....

APPENIX B: A letter of recommendation from the University



**BUSITEMA
UNIVERSITY**
Pursuing Frontiers

P.O.Box 236, Tororo
Gen: +256-454448842
Dir: +256-454448864
Mob: +256-782999874
Fax: +256-454436517
Email: ar@acadreg.busitema.ac.ug
Website: www.busitema.ac.ug

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

06th May, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION, PRIMARY

MR/Ms. NERICHE BETTY is a student
of Bachelor of Education, Primary of Busitema University, Faculty of Science and Education,
Nagongera Campus. His/her Registration Number is BULUP/2022/0288

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 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DROP OUT
RATE IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN BUSIA DISTRICT,
UGANDA

Yours Sincerely,


Dr. Kaweesi Muhammad
P.O BOX 236, TORORO (U)
Head of Department, Education

**BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION**

06 MAY 2024 ★