Causes Of Girl Child School Dropout in Primary Schools in Rukungiri District, Uganda a Case Study of Bwanda Parish and Buhunga Sub-County

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ABSTRACT :*With the help of multiple study objectives—to accurately assess the effect of home-to-school distance on girl-child drop-out, to look into the impact of household income on school drop-outs, and to look into the effect of pupil-teacher relationship issues on girl-child drop-out—this study looked into the causes of girl-child drop-outs among primary schools in the Rukungiri District. The sample size for the study was calculated using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula, which resulted in a sample of 63 teachers. The study was carried out using a cross-sectional research approach, and data were gathered using questionnaires. In the examination of the study's objectives, it was revealed that for every increased kilometer students had to travel between their homes and schools, the dropout rate rose by one girl. Income of a household affects school drop-out, in such a way that low-income households were found to have higher chances of drop-outs by 2 girls compared to those households with high income. The study also found out that if there is a weak relationship between teachers and their pupils, drop-out rates increase by 5 girls compared to the case when the relationship was strong. The study recommended that Parents should take their children to nearby or boarding schools, there should be creation of parent-learner associations, and also, more emphasis is needed to target low-income households in giving government development money.*

Keywords: School dropouts, girl child education

Background to the study

A student who has withdrawn from school, especially a juvenile, is one who no longer takes classes but has not yet been issued a diploma (Law Insider, 2021). A essential human right, primary education acts as a catalyst for both social and economic advancement. Additionally, it is well established that educating young girls in particular can start a positive cycle of growth. For instance, many educated girls marry later, give birth to children who are healthier, earn more money to reinvest in their families and communities, and take more active roles in leading their communities and nations (World Bank, 2014). However, a variety of variables connected to school and families affect students' academic performance globally, which eventually leads to higher dropout rates, especially among girls when compared to boys (Shahidul & Karim, 2015). As a result, dropout rates vary by gender, with females typically leaving high school earlier than boys.

According to Elin Martnez, a children's rights researcher at Human Rights Watch, "Africa has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the world, but many governments insist on handling this social and public health crisis by punishing girls and jeopardizing their future." Governments should emphasize on helping girls in preventing unwanted births and supporting their efforts to remain in school, they stressed (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Human Rights Watch categorically stated on the Day of the African Child that discriminatory laws and practices are keeping millions of teenage females from attending university because they are pregnant and married (HRW, 2018). In sub-Saharan Africa, over 49 million girls drop out of primary and secondary school, with 31 million of those walking out of secondary school, undermining their rights and reducing their opportunities (Tibasima, 2017).

The average primary school dropout rate in Uganda is 45%, but this rate is much higher among girls (The Huracan Foundation, 2019). This has largely been attributed to cultural factors like domestic work, child marriage, and teenage pregnancies as well as a lack of basic needs like adequate nutrition, clothing, and child slavery. According to Ministry of Education statistics, an alarming number of kids leave school before they complete primary school (Mabala, 2020). Less than 800,000 of the more than 1.8 million students who begin Primary One finish the Primary Leaving Examinations (NTV, 2021). As according observers, this may be a result of a variety of factors, including the high expense of education, the unavailability of sanitary products for girls, the bad learning environment, and parents who assign their kids to labor-intensive jobs. With more girls dropping out of primary school than boys throughout time, the dropout rate for primary school has grown (GRC, 2019).

Although there is very little information on Rukungiri District's enrollment and graduation rates for primary schools. Enrollment is highlighted in the district statistics profile for 2013/14 by a ratio of 1:1 for the year 2013 that is 23,175 males and 22,407 female pupils enrolled in primary schools in the same year. The attendance in elementary schools in the Rukungiri District keeps improving in gender equality, according to the research. The completion rate for male students is 15.1%, comparable to 13.6% for

female students, in the same statistics report. This demonstrates that the district had a greater rate of female students quitting school before the end of the primary cycle.

Description of the issue

According to the NPA's District Statistical Profile Report 2013/2014, primary school dropout stood at 3.31% higher among females compared to their counterparts - the boys - in the past ten years in Rukungiri District, notably among girl children before graduating primary seven (Mwesigye, 2018). (NPA, 2015). The government of Uganda generated the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program for those who were dropping out due to financial constraints, in an effort to reduce girl child dropout rates and increase their enrollment in school (Grogan, 2008); however, this has been technical barriers by low quality education, particularly in rural regions due to limited monitoring and limited procurement of material (Kan & Klasen, 2020). Similar to this, the government has ordered all schools to allow pregnant girls to continue their studies in an effort to lower their dropout rates (Ategeka, 2020); nonetheless, many organizations have been rigorous about just this policy. While all of these and numerous other efforts have been made to lower the number of girl students dropping out of school substantial issues such as those probably stems from the schools and families from which these girls travel to pursue their education, such as religious and cultural beliefs held in many homes and schools that compel them to follow government directives, have not been addressed.

As a result, the study aims to identify the causes that drive females out of school, which arise from both domestic and school-related norms.

Specific objectives

1. To find out the impact of home-to-school distance on girl-child drop-out
2. To investigate the influence of household income on school drop-outs.
3. To investigate the impact of pupil-teacher relationship on girl-child drop-out.

Research Hypotheses

Ho: The distance from home to school has little influence on a girl's decision to leave school.

Ha, home-school distance affects a girl's probability of dropping out of school.

Ho: Household income has no bearing on the school dropout rate for girls.

Ha: Household income affects the school attendance of girl children.

Ho: The relationship between students and teachers has little bearing on the school dropout of girls.

Ha: Student-teacher relationships do not affect the school dropout of female students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used a cross-sectional research design. The selection of this design is because the data to be used for analysis was to be collected by the researcher from the field of study (from primary schools). Therefore, the study used primary data which was collected once and then analyzed for inferring about the causes of school dropout among girls in primary schools.

Target Population.

Primary schools from the Rukungiri District were included in the study. Schools in Bwanda Parish and Buhunga Sub-County were included in the study. Bwanda Parish was chosen because it was one of the parishes most adversely impacted by girl primary school dropout (Mbabazi et al., 2014). Bwanda Parents (117 students), Bwanda Nursery (85 students), Kanyondo Elementary (275 students), Keihumure Primary (171 students), and Omurushere Primary are the five primary schools in the parish (294 pupils). Out of these five schools, the research focussed on four (while excluding Bwanda Nursery because it predominantly serves as a nursery school).

Sample Size Determination

The sample to be included in the study will be determined by the Krejcie & Morgan, (1970) formula for sample size determination. The formula is given by;

$$n = \frac{x^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + x^2 P(1-P)}$$

$n =$ Required sample size

$N =$ Given Population size

$P =$ Population proportion magnitude (0.5) yielding the maximum possible sample size

$d =$ Degree of accuracy reflected by the amount of error

$x^2 =$ Table value of chi-square for degrees of freedom = 1, relative to the desired level of confidence (which is 95% or 0.95); in other words, $x^2 = 1.96$ (from Chi-Square tables)

The total population size for teachers in the 4 schools is 13+25+15+22=75 teachers according to the Uganda Schools Guide (https://ugandaschools.guide/?parish=6662&action=search)

$$n = \frac{3.84^2 \times 75 \times 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.5^2 \times (75 - 1) + 3.84^2 \times 0.5(1 - 0.5)} = 63 \ teachers$$

Sampling Techniques and Procedure

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used in the experiment. Cluster sampling and simple random sampling were two sampling methods. At the parish level, cluster sampling was used, and because Bwanda Nursery is more of a nursery school than anything else, it was clustered out. Four clusters—Bwanda Parents, Kanyondo Primary, Keihumure Primary, and Omurushere Primary—were taken into account by the researcher in this case. The researcher employed proportional sampling techniques to calculate the number of instructors who would be drawn from each school after selecting these four clusters. The formula for proportional sampling is provided by;

$$n_i = \frac{N_i}{N} \times n$$

$n_i =$ The sample to be drawn from each school (or cluster)

$N_i =$ The total number of pupils in each school (or cluster)

$N =$ The total population of the pupils in all the four schools.

$n =$ The total sample size to be used (the sum of the 4 schools' samples)

Simple random sampling was then used to draw teachers to be part of the study from each school. Simple random sampling is a probability sampling technique in which all members of the study population have an equal chance of being selected to take part in the study.

Data Collection Methods

These include specific techniques that the researcher used to collect data from the respondents. The researcher used face-to-face interview, questionnaire design and key informant interview methods of data collection.

Data collection instruments.

These refer to tools used to collected data from respondents. The researcher used questionnaires and interview guide to collect data related to the study.

Validity and reliability of data collection instruments

Data quality control techniques ensured that data collected was valid and reliable and the tools were tested first to ensure validity and reliability.

Validity of the instrument.

Validity is described as the accuracy and relevance of an inference that is based on research findings. The supervisor, academic colleagues, and experts were handed the draft questionnaires and interview guide in order to assess the reliability of the tools or instruments. They were asked to comment on the phrasing of the question, the depth of the resources available, and the tool's suitability for achieving the stated goals of the study. The feedback was intended to assist improve the research tools or instruments.

Reliability

The researcher employed information and comprehend and instruments that were appropriate for the respondents to ensure the reliability of the research tools. The directions were as simple and unambiguous as possible. In order to ensure consistency in the participants' responses, questions were carefully phrased. The pilot performed a pre-test of the instruments.**Data Analysis**
Data collected was subjected to some preparation which entails editing, coding and entry before being summarized. Data was entered into the computer using the Statistical Packages like STATA and Microsoft Excel for analysis. The data was analyzed according to the research questions. Tables were used to describe sample characteristics. The causation effect between the dependent and independent variables was measured using a multiple linear regression model. This was preferred to other methods like Pearson Moment Correlation method because some of the variables had dummies.

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

4.1.1 Sex of the Respondents
The respondent's sex was important to analyse because it helps to rule out any possibility of discrimination based on gender of respondents, and the analysis is presented below.

Table 1: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Male	Female	Total
Frequency	20	43	**63**
Percent	31.75%	68.25%	**100%**

Source; primary data, (2022)

Table 1 shows that women contribute at a higher rate than men, who are their counterparts. While 20 male respondents made up 31.75 percent of the overall survey respondents, 43 female teachers were participated in the study and provided their respective responses, adding to the analysis of the causes why girls drop out of school. Table 1 further shows that the researcher made an effort to ensure that both sexes participated in the study in order to eliminate gender discrimination.

Education of the Respondents
The respondent's education levels was an important variable to analyse because it helps to rule out any possibility of using a language and terms that would sound foreign and therefore, inappropriate to some of the respondents because of their possibly lower teacher-training level. Table 2 below presents the results of the academic background of the study participants.

Table 2: Education Background

Education Level	Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Total
Frequency	22	30	11	**63**
Percent	34.92%	47.62%	17.46%	**100%**

Source; primary data, (2022)

Table 2 demonstrates that the majority of the teachers had a diploma (47.62%), followed by teachers with a certificate (34.92%), and finally teachers with a degree (17.46%). The results indicate that certificate or diploma level instructors represent the majority of elementary teachers, especially in rural areas. Therefore, any advice given to teachers about how to motivate girls to continue in school must be in line with the general educational proficiency of those teachers.

Analysis of the Study Objectives

An analysis of the research questions and the research was made easier with the help of a regression model. The number of observed drop-outs among female students was the dependent variable in this case, while the dependent variables were the following: the distance between home and school (in kilometers), the parents' income (0 = high, 1 = middle, and 2 = low), and the students' relationships with their teachers, which were measured by the educators' eagerness to approach their teachers with problems (0 – Share all their problems, 1 – Share only severe issues, 2 – Never share). The analysis of the objectives is displayed in Table 3 below, along with the interpretations.

Table 3: Regression (ª) Coefficients

Num._Drop-Outs	Coef.	Std. Err	t	P > |t|	95% Conf. Interval	
Distance (Km)	0.8580	.0184	3.57	0.001	0.1027	0.2893
Income						
Middle (1)	-0.0288	0.1529	-0.19	0.851	-0.2773	0.3349
Low (2)	2.0710	0.1405	2.68	0.010	0.6584	1.0957
Relationship (problem sharing)						
Only Severe Issues (1)	-0.0804	0.1428	-0.56	0.576	-0.366	0.2056
None of the Issues (2)	5.1677	0.1355	2.35	0.027	0.3391	1.1821
Constant	1.0530	0.1711	6.16	0.000	0.7104	1.3955

Source; primary data, (2022)

Ho: Home -to-school distance does not influence girl child school drop-out.
Ha: Home -to-school distance influences girl child school drop-out.
Ho: Household income does not influence girl child school drop-out.
Ha: Household income influences girl child school drop-out.
Ho: Pupil-to-teacher relationship does not influence girl-child school dropout.
Ha: Pupil-to-teacher relationship does not influence girl-child school dropout.

Impact of Home-to-School Distance on Girl-Child Drop-Out

According to Table 3, if all other factors stayed the very same, an increase of one percent in the travel distance to school would, on average, result in an increase of 0.85 in the number of dropouts. Given that the p-value for Distance is less than 0.05 and 0.001, this is statistically significant.

Given that distance has a significant impact on dropout rates, it follows that females, who are generally weaker than boys, find it difficult to travel great distances rather than become fatigued.

Influence of Household Income on School Drop-Outs

Triple assessments of income were made; (0 – for high income, 1 – for middle income, and 2 – for low income). As a result, the reference dummy group in the analysis was high income (0). The following conclusions are reached using Table 3's results.

In comparison to a household with a high income, a low-income household has a higher drop-out rate. The coefficient for low income in this example is positive (2.0710), which means that on average, a poor income-earning household will have around 2 more females (2.07) drop out of school than a household with high income.

Impact of Pupil-Teacher Relationship on Girl-Child Drop-Out

The instructor relationship was likewise measured in triplicate, much like the income variable. The relationship in this instance was contextualized as being strong when along with all of their matters or issues with the teacher (taking a dummy of 0 - the reference group), moderate when along with only the most serious problems or issues with their teachers (taking a dummy of 1), and weak when along with none of their matters or issues with their teachers (taking a dummy of 2). Table 3 above analyses and summarizes the study's findings.

According to Table 3, a weak relationship between female students and their teachers causes a spike in female dropout rates. When compared to strong ties, drop-out rates are higher when weak relationships exist. This is statistically significant since the p-value is smaller than 0.05, say, $(p > |t| = 0.027 < 0.05)$.

Conclusions

According to a study on the effect of home-to-school distance on the dropout rates of girls, living further and further from school leads to higher dropout rates overall. This result is consistent with (Nekatibeb, 2014), who notes that young girls tend to drop out of school if it is deemed to be too far from home because of their vulnerability to sexual harassment.

According to the report's results on the impact of household income on school drop-out rates, families with low incomes have higher drop-out rates than those with high incomes. This result is consistent with Levine and Ibrahim's (2015) identification of poverty as the primary and is furthermore of out-of-school female youth. On the impact of pupil-teacher relationship on girl-child drop-out, the study found out that weak relationships between teachers and their pupils are associated with increased drop-out rates compared to strong relationships, and this conclusion is in line with Nuwagaba, (2018) who found out that poor teacher-pupil relationship is one of the profound factor that contributes highly to girl dropout.

Recommendations

Following are the recommendations that the researcher offers in light of the study's findings.

To limit the distance that children must travel to get to school, parents should enroll their children in schools that are close to where they live. To avoid long commutes from home to school, parents might instead enroll their kids in boarding school parts.

Teacher-Learner Associations must be established in schools in addition to Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) in order to strengthen the bond between teachers and students and pupils. As an example, the newly added "Parish Development Model" should ensure that low income earning households are given top priority to access funding from the government for development. This would enable such households to provide many of the necessary requirements to their girls, such as sanitary pads and other school requirements, in order to reduce on their risk of dropping out of school due to a lack of resources.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Introduction to Study Questionnaire

I am **Nshabaruhanga Ronald** a student of Kyambogo University. I am conducting a study on "Causes of girl child dropout from selected primary schools in Rukungiri District". The information you provide will be used for research purposes only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please do not write your name and that of your school.

Statement of Consent
As a study participant that has been included in the sample to provide responses about the topic, I understand the goals of this study and accept that participation in this study is voluntary, and no one has forced me to participate. I remain liable to any response that I provide in this study, and the views and opinions I give do not reflect those of the researcher, rather my personal views.

…………………………….   …………………………….

Name of the Respondent   Date

Appendix B: Respondent Demographic Information

Demographic information about the respondent (Tick where appropriate)

1. Gender

Male ☐   Female ☐

2. Age of the respondent

18-25 years ☐   26-35 years ☐   Above 35 years ☐

3. Subject taught

Mathematics ☐   Science ☐   English   SST ☐

Appendix C: Causes of Girl-Child Dropouts
(**Tick where appropriate**)

Item No.	Parameter	Question	Feedback/Opinion	
1	DISTANCE	Are there some pupils who move more than 5km to school?	Yes No	☐ ☐
2		What percentage of girls in your class move longer than 5km to school?	Less than 25% ☐ 25%-50% ☐ More than 50% ☐	
3		Have you got cases of girls being caught with boda or any motorist try to quote them in the sense of giving a ride/lift?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
4		Generally, to what extent do you think long distances moved have contributed to girl dropout?	Larger extent Moderately Smaller extent	☐ ☐ ☐
5	DOMESTIC/HOUSE HOLD INCOME	What percent of your pupils normally take longer to pay school dues?	Less than 25% ☐ 25%-50% ☐ More than 50% ☐	
6		What percent of your girl pupils have been reported to dodge classes due to lack of necessities like sanitary napkins?	Less than 25% 25%-50% More than 50%	☐ ☐ ☐
7		To what extent do you think household income poverty has been responsible for the dropout of these girls?	Larger extent ☐ Moderately ☐ Smaller extent ☐	
8	TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP	As teachers, do you normally cain pupils especially over academic concerns?	Yes No	☐ ☐
9		Are there any other forms of coporal punishments that you teachers use?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
10		To what extent do you think teacher-pupil relationship in this school is liable for girls' dropout?	Larger extent ☐ Moderately ☐ Smaller extent ☐	