

Child Labour and Academic Performance of Pupils in Kizinda Kigoma Town Council of Bushenyi District, Uganda

Atuhaire Prudence, Ainembabazi Earnest, Tukur Muhammad, Zulaihat
Bagiwa Lawal and Lucy Aja

Faculty of Education Kampala International University

ABSTRACT

This study examines child labour and academic performance of pupils in Kizinda-Kigoma schools of Bushenyi District. Findings revealed that the aspects of child labour engaged by pupils in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council of Bushenyi District include working as maids, carrying heavy utensils to fetch water, working at teachers' gardens, with the older family members, fetching water and cooking for teachers. Findings further revealed that the causes of school dropout among children in Kizinda-Kigoma town include school fees problem, poor learning environment, discrimination within the community, stigmatization by other pupils, poor means of transport to and from school, lack of motivation to the disabled group, and lack of facilities that fit the learning ability of the disabled children. Based on the findings, the study calls for the need to create gender-sensitive learning spaces for girls to ensure equitable education, and safeguarding girls in classrooms by eliminating violence there is need to encourage the student to attend school frequently and participate in at least one extracurricular activity at school or with other students. More so, there is need to Improve education quality to enhance student retention and success. Furthermore, there is urgent need to cost of acquiring education including school feeding facilities, and increase universal child payments as part of a country's social safety system and other policy instruments that could promote more equitable education access.

Keywords: Academic performance, Child labour, Education, Learning environment, Pupils

INTRODUCTION

Globally, child labour and out-of-school children are major challenges confronting the world[1]. There are 264 million within the age of 5–17-year-olds working worldwide, according to the ILO[2]. Children most often drop out of school because they have to work. Poor families require children to labour, which stops them from attending school and leads to dropout. Even prosperous nations like Portugal deal with child labour. Goulart and Bedi[3] discovered that child labour reduces an individual's scholastic progress and prevents universal education, which impacts the country. Dropping out severely reduces a student's college prospects. Thus, school dropouts earn less and reduce the nation's human capital, which hurts economic growth[4]. In addition to financial loss and lost opportunity costs (such as for a country's development), a lack of job prospects leads to social problems like robbery and other crimes. Handa [5] found that between 2014 and 2016, the net enrolment rate for primary school-aged children with intellectual disabilities rose from 82 to 90 percent in developing regions

like Africa. Northern Africa, Eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-Eastern Asia had at least 95% of primary-age children in school. Over half of out-of-school children are in sub-Saharan Africa. South and West Asian countries have reduced their out-of-school children by two-thirds from 39 million in 1990. Since 1990, the Education for All (EFA) program has pushed educational opportunities for all children, but statistics suggest that 58 million children worldwide are not in school, primarily in poor and least-developed countries. In South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, child labour and poverty are the main causes [6]. Child labour and school dropouts are frequent in underdeveloped countries. Gubbels, Vander-put and Assink [7] observed that children who worked long hours were more likely to drop out than those who did not or worked few hours. In addition, Huisman et al.[8] examined household effects and contextual factors of school dropouts in 30 developing countries. Results demonstrated that a family's socioeconomic resources—parental education, father's work, and

existence of children to generate income and wealth—influenced school dropout rates. Primary and secondary school dropouts are common in Mexico [9]. Due to work's interference with schooling, child labour and dropping out are often seen positively. Child labour hindered school enrollment and dropout in China. In disadvantaged locations, 14.2% of Chinese junior high school students dropped out [10]. African emerging nations have high rates of school dropouts and child labour. The European Commission [11]

The level of school dropout in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council, Bushenyi District.

In almost all developing countries, school dropout or low completion rates have been a subject of interest to academics, researchers, and policy makers for a long time [12]. There are many factors associated with the process of dropping out from school. Some of these factors belong to the individual child, such as poor health, under-nutrition or lack of motivation to learn [13]. Ill health resulting from diseases and poor nutrition affects students in lower classes makes them to drop out of school. Some of the students die before they complete the primary school cycle. Apart from poor health, there are some students who drop out because they and their parents are not motivated to go to school [14]. Another important factor that is often related to drop out is parental education level. Parents with low levels of education are more likely to have children who do not attend school. If they do, they tend to drop out in greater numbers [8]. Generally, the main reason for leaving primary school is finance. Studies have shown that poverty is the main reason that is forcing children out of school.

In Uganda, statistics from Emaus [15] stated that the inability to pay school fees by some parents accounts for 62 percent of drop-outs. The second highest cause of drop-out is pregnancy and marriage, accounting for 11 percent. UNESCO [16] report identified causes of drop out in developing countries as low income, poverty, exposure to child labour, conflict and natural disasters, migration and displacement, HIV and AIDS, disability, gender and ethnicity.

The relationship between child labour and school dropout

The State Council issued a directive to discourage students, especially in distant and impoverished areas, from dropping out and increase compulsory education attendance. The circular advises all levels of government to vigorously execute the compulsory education law and the Law on the Protection of Minors to defend students' education rights. They must also oversee and encourage parents and statutory guardians to send their children to school and encourage dropouts to return. The circular emphasized cultural market and school management. Video arcades and

estimate found that 160 million children—63 million girls and 97 million boys—were in child employment at the start of 2020, approximately 1 in 10. Around 53 million youngsters, including 28% aged 5-11 and 35% aged 12-14, are not in school. Given the majority of child labourers excluded, this is disturbing. Against this background, this study investigates child labour and school dropout in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council of Bushenyi District, Uganda.

In the Southern part of Africa, a study of adolescents in South Africa shows that household members who had experienced illness in the last three months were associated with a higher likelihood of dropping out of school for boys than for girls [17]. Furthermore, a study of HIV/AIDS affected families in Kenya show children's reduced chances of completing school from such affected families [18]. According to African women's report, it is indicated that in nine countries (Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Tunisia) the ratio of boys dropping out of school tends to be higher at the primary level than for girls [19].

Belying the national figures are regional disparities in enrolment of school pupils by gender. In 1999, overall enrolment rate nationally was 86.9%. Regional differences manifested with GER in North Eastern reported to be just about 20.5 percent with the ratio for girls being only 14.6 percent as compared to 25.8 percent for boys [20]. In terms of school dropout the rate for boys and girls was almost equal (5 and 4.8 percent respectively). There are however wide variations between regions on the incidence of dropout. While Kampala records the lowest rate (at 1.5%) followed by central (at 2.9%), Eastern and North Eastern register much higher percentages at 6.1% and 6.0% respectively. North Eastern is the only region that registered higher rates for girls than boys [21].

internet bars, which can affect students' physical and mental health, are banned from schools and serving minors [22]. US Department of State, nation report (2006) says orphans drop out of school to support their siblings. LRA abducted and trafficked children from northern Uganda and Southern Sudan to Eastern Republic of Congo and other regions. They become chefs, porters, farm workers, soldiers, and guards after abduction. Many were tortured, raped, and repaired to kill escaping children. Child labour is considered serious.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and sample size

The descriptive sample survey research design was adopted in the study. The design enabled the researcher to use quantitative technique in collecting and analyzing data. The target population was 100 which comprises teachers, parents, pupils and head teachers.

Sample size

The sample size was arrived at using the Solven's formula. The sample size was as follows

Table 1: Sample size determination

Respondents	Number	Percentage
Teacher	12	20
Head teachers	4	05
Parents	15	25
Pupils	29	50
Total	60	100

Field survey, 2023

RESULTS

Table 2: Respondents' responses on whether there is child labour in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	60	100
No		
Total	60	100

Source: field survey, 2023

The table above shows that all the respondents responded that (Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council has child labour at 100%.

Table 3: Respondents responses on the aspects of child labour in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council, Bushenyi District

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Working as maids	7	70
Carrying heavy utensils to fetch water	5	50
Children are made to work in teachers gardens.	6	60
Children spending long hours digging with the older family members.	4	40
Making children walk for long distances to help parents	6	60
Using the children to fetch water and cook for teachers.	3	30
Using the children to wash the clothes of teachers.	6	60
Carrying heavy loads like fire wood	9	90
Teaching the learners without giving them time to rest.	2	20

Source: field survey, 2023

According to the table above, local leaders in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council, Bushenyi District report that 70% of children work as maids, 50% carry heavy utensils to fetch water, 60% work in

teachers' gardens, 40% spend long hours digging with older family members, 20% teach without rest, and 20% use children to wash clothes.

Table 4: Respondents responses on whether inability to pay school fees accounts for high level of school dropouts

Responses	Frequencies	Percentage
Agree	9	15
Disagree	2	3
Strongly agree	49	82
Strongly disagree		
Total	29	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

From the table above, on whether respondents high level of school dropouts, 69% of the thought the inability to pay school fees accountsfor respondents strongly agreed while 31% disagreed.

Table 5: Teachers' responses on what they thought about the level of dropout among children in primary schools of Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council of Bushenyi District

Responses	Frequencies	Percentage
High	12	100
Medium		
Low		
Total	12	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

According to the table above, teachers' responses Kigoma Town Council, Bushenyi District showed on what they thought about the level of dropout that all 12 (100%) believed that its high. among children in primary schools of Kizinda-

Table 6: Respondents' responses on the causes of school dropout in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council of Bushenyi District

Responses	Frequencies	Percentage
Fees problem	32	53.3
Poor learning environment	25	41.6
Teachers negligence	25	41.6
Stigmatization by other pupils	20	33.3
Poor means of transport to and from school	35	58.3
Lack of motivation to the disabled group	18	30
Disabled being vulnerable	15	25
Lack of facilities to feet with the learning ability of the disabled	19	31.6
Discrimination within the community	10	16.7

Source: Field survey, 2023

According to the table above, all respondents gave children in primary schools of Kizinda-Kigoma the following reasons for school dropout among Town Council of Bushenyi District: fees problem

(53.3%), poor learning environment (53.3%), community discrimination (41.6%), stigmatization by other pupils (33.3%), poor means of transport to

and from school (58.3%), and lack of motivation to the disabled group (53.3%).

Table 7: Members of district education responses on whether the labour among the children affects their attaining social economic development

Responses	Frequencies	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	80
Agree	2	20
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Total	10	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

From the table above, the members of district education department's response on whether the labour among the children affects them in attaining

social economic development, 80% strongly agreed while 20% agreed.

Table 8: Respondents' responses on ways of reducing school dropout among children in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council of Bushenyi District

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Governments need to make an extra effort to ensure that education is more accessible to low-income families	10	62.5
Prepare teachers to identify students' strengths and allow them to opt into work-study programs or vocational training	13	81.3
Carrying career guidance to young children	8	50
Expose students to role-models from career fields	10	62.5
Parental and community involvement	12	75
Basic education should be free or cost very little.	12	75
Providing relevant curriculum	9	56.3
Provide equal access to education by developing gender-sensitive learning environments for girls	9	56.3
Educate boys and men about gender equality by engaging them in promoting girls' and women's rights	8	50
Provide school feeding programs that keep girls' stomachs full	5	32.3
Offer parents incentives to send their daughters to school	7	46.7
Keep schools safe for girls by providing them with a learning environment that's free of violence	8	50
Vocational training programs and girls' scholarships	4	25
Early intervention for academic difficulties (such as peer tutoring programs)	3	18.8
Encourage the student to attend school regularly and to be involved in at least one extra-curricular activity at school or with groups of students who are currently in school.	3	18.8

Source: Field survey, 2024

According to the table above, the ways of reducing

school dropout among children include;

governments need to make an extra effort to ensure that education is more accessible to low-income families (62.5%), carrying career guidance to young children (50%), prepare teachers to identify students' strengths and allow them to opt into work-study programs or vocational training (81.3%), expose students to role-models from career fields (62.5%), parental and community involvement (75%), basic education should be free or cost very little (75%), provide equal access to education by developing gender-sensitive learning environments for girls (56.3%), providing relevant curriculum (56.3%), educate boys and men about gender equality by engaging them in promoting

DISCUSSION

Local leaders reported that 70% of children in Kizinda-Kigoma Town work as maids, 50% carry heavy utensils to fetch water, 60% work in teachers' gardens, 40% spend long hours digging with older family members, 20% teach without resting, 60% wash teachers' clothes, and 60% use children to work in dangerous agricultural and domestic service, as stated above. Most Ugandan youngsters engage in agriculture to grow tobacco, coffee, and tea. Children work dangerously in rice production. Children are also involved in dangerous corn cultivation, according to limited data. Long working hours and tobacco smoke put Ugandan tobacco farm children at risk of developmental abnormalities and respiratory ailments. Children working in agriculture may use risky instruments, carry large loads, and be exposed to pesticides, sugarcane, and vanilla. Many Ugandan children work as domestic workers in the poorest conditions[23]. UNESCO[24] reports that Ugandan child domestic servants work long hours for low pay, lack education, are given inadequate food, and face sexual exploitation and physical abuse from their employers. The causes of school dropout among children in primary schools of Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council of Bushenyi District as given by all respondents include fees problem (53.3%), poor learning environment

girls' and women's rights (50%), provide school feeding programs that keep girls' stomachs full (32.3%), offer parents incentives to send their daughters to school (46.7%), keep schools safe for girls by providing them with a learning environment that is free of violence (50%), vocational training programs and girls' scholarships (25%), early intervention for academic difficulties (such as peer tutoring programs) (18.8%), and encouraging the student to attend school regularly and to be involved in at least one extra-curricular activity at school or with groups of students who are currently in school (18.8%).

(53.3%), community discrimination (41.6%), stigmatization by other pupils (33.3%), poor means of transport (58.3%), lack of motivation to the disabled (53.3%), and vulnerable (53%). These findings are in line with Emaus[15] when he stated that the inability to pay school fees by some parents accounts for 62 percent of drop-outs. The second highest cause of drop-out is pregnancy and marriage, accounting for 11 percent. UNESCO[16] report identified causes of drop out in developing countries as low income, poverty, exposure to child labour, conflict and natural disasters, migration and displacement, HIV and AIDS, disability, gender and ethnicity. All the respondents reported a link between child labour and school dropout. Children who work may dislike school due to fatigue and poor performance (62%), reduced likelihood of attendance (58%), and greater barriers to attendance (43%). Rural working children are among the most disadvantaged (47%). Result in dropout (57%), adult unemployment (43%), mental illness (23%), early pregnancy (42%), and abnormal or disrupted attachment development (20%). To add to the above, understanding how child labour affects children's results is crucial given the importance of early childhood for subsequent achievement[25].

CONCLUSION

Child labour in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council includes working as maids, carrying heavy utensils to fetch water, working in teachers' gardens, spending long hours digging with older family members, teaching students without giving them time to rest, washing teachers' clothes, fetching water and cooking for teachers, carrying heavy loads like fire wood, and making children walk for long hours. All respondents listed fees, poor learning environment, community discrimination, stigmatization by other students, poor means of transport to and from school, lack of motivation to the disabled group, vulnerability, lack of facilities that fit with the learning ability of the disabled,

and teacher negligence as the causes of school dropout among children in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council primary schools. All responders in Kizinda-Kigoma Town Council, Bushenyi District, reported a link between child labour and school dropout. Working children sometimes arrive at school tired, which leads to poor performance and hatred. Child labour is harmful to children's intellectual and physical development, working in a household reduces the likelihood of them attending school, and hazardous child labour even more so. Rural working children are among the most disadvantaged. The study recommends that the government must work harder to make

education more accessible to low-income families and rural people, focusing on quality and girls' education. There is need to train teachers to discover students' skills and allow them to choose work and study program or vocational training. It is necessary to create gender-sensitive learning spaces for girls to ensure equitable education, and safeguarding girls in classrooms by eliminating violence there is need to encourage the student to attend school frequently and participate in at least

one extracurricular activity at school or with other students. More so, there is need to Improve education quality to enhance student retention and success. Furthermore, there is urgent need to cost of acquiring education including school feeding facilities, and increase universal child payments as part of a country's social safety system and other policy instruments that could promote more equitable education access.

REFERENCES

1. Venkatanarayana, M. Out-of-School Children: Child Labourers or Educationally Deprived? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2004, 39, 4219–4221.
2. Helpdesk Report: K4D - Data on the prevalence of the worst forms of child labour - World | ReliefWeb, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/helpdesk-report-k4d-data-prevalence-worst-forms-child-labour>
3. Goulart, P. & Bedi, A. Child Labour and Educational Success in Portugal. *Economics of Education Review*, 2008, 27, 575–587. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2007.07.002>. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/4837465_Child_Labour_and_Educational_Success_in_Portugal
4. Rumberger, R. The economics of high school dropouts. [10.1016/B978-0-12-815391-8.00012-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-815391-8.00012-4).(2020). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338665702_The_economics_of_high_school_dropouts
5. Handa, S. Raising primary school enrolment in developing countries. *Journal of Development Economics - J DEVELOP ECON.*, 2002, 69, 103–128. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3878\(02\)00055-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3878(02)00055-X)
6. Progress in getting all children to school stalls but some countries show the way forward - World | ReliefWeb, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/progress-getting-all-children-school-stalls-some-countries-show-way-forward>
7. Gubbels, J., van der Put, C.E., Assink, M. Risk Factors for School Absenteeism and Dropout: A Meta-Analytic Review. *J Youth Adolescence.*, 2019, 48, 1637–1667. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01072-5>
8. Keeping Children in School: Effects of Household and Context Characteristics on School Dropout in 363 Districts of 30 Developing Countries - Janine Huisman, Jeroen Smits, 2015, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244015609666>
9. Gibbs, B., & Heaton, T. Drop out from primary to secondary school in Mexico: A life course perspective. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 2013, 36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2013.11.005>
10. Putnick, D., & Bornstein, M. Is Child Labor a Barrier to School Enrollment in Low- and Middle-Income Countries? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 2015, 41, 112–120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2015.02.001>
11. Child labour is keeping millions of children out of school - European Commission, https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/stories/child-labour-keeping-millions-children-out-school_en
12. Study On the Causes of Dropout Among Primary School Pupils | ProjectClue, <https://www.projectclue.com/education/project-topics-materials-for-undergraduate-students/study-on-the-causes-of-dropout-among-primary-school-pupils>
13. Candia, D., Ashaba, C., Mukoki, J., Jehopio, P., & Kyasiimire, B. Non-School Factors Associated with School Dropouts in Uganda. *People: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 2018, 4, 477–493. <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2018.41.477493>. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324236106_NON-SCHOOL_FACTORS_ASSOCIATED_WITH_H_SCHOOL_DROPOUTS_IN_UGANDA
14. Chinyoka, K. Impact of Poor Nutrition on the Academic Performance of Grade Seven learners: A Case of Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 2014, 4, 73. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v4i3.6169>
15. 62% drop out of secondary schools due to lack of fees - New Vision Official, <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1140686/62-drop-secondary-schools-lack-fees>
16. Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics - UNESCO Digital Library,

- <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000217147>
17. Mokoena, P., & van Breda, A.D.: School dropout among female learners in rural Mpumalanga, South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*. 41, 1–9 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v41n3a1842>
 18. Guo, Y., Li, X., & Sherr, L. The impact of HIV/AIDS on children's educational outcome: A critical review of global literature. *AIDS care*, 2012, 24. 993–1012. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224807964_The_impact_of_HIVAIDS_on_children's_educational_outcome_A_critical_review_of_global_literature
 19. Women and Girls' Education in Africa: Changes and Continuities | SpringerLink, https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-030-28099-4_34
 20. Iqbal, N., & Tasneem, S. The influence of Parents Educational level on Secondary School Students Academic achievements in District Rajanpur. *Journal of Education and Practice*. (2015)
 21. Sustainability | Free Full-Text | Money, a Drain of Educational Opportunity: A Microregional Study of School Dropouts in Mpigi, Uganda, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/10/5875>
 22. State Council issues guidelines for reform of high school education - Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/laws_policies/201906/t20190620_386669.html
 23. Wurth, M. A Bitter Harvest. *Human Rights Watch*. (2018)
 24. Fixing the broken promise of Education for All: findings from the global initiative on out-of-school children - UNESCO Digital Library, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000231511>
 25. Heady, C. The Effect of Child Labor on Learning Achievement. *World Development*, 2003, 31. 385–398. 10.1016/S0305-750X(02)00186-9. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222325349_The_Effect_of_Child_Labor_on_Learning_Achievement

CITE AS: Atuhaire Prudence, Ainembabazi Earnest, Tukur Muhammad, Zulaihat Bagiwa Lawal and Lucy Aja (2024). Child Labour and Academic Performance of Pupils in Kizinda Kigoma Town Council of Bushenyi District, Uganda. *INOSR ARTS AND HUMANITIES* 10(1):17–24. <https://doi.org/10.59298/INOSRAH/2024/101.1724>